

Cry Me a River

DC throws a pity party for 'underpaid' Congress

CONGRESS' public approval recently fell to a record-low 12%, but the real problem, according to The Washington Post, is members of the House of Representatives do not receive higher pay, more power and boundless adulation.

"Being in the House is undoubtedly terrible" and "a uniquely crummy job": That is the verdict of Philip Bump, the last prominent DC journalist who still insists the Hunter Biden laptop was a Russian plot and a premier Biden bootlicker.

Bump's piffle epitomizes how the liberal media exalt the politicians who have ravaged our prosperity and freedom.

DC protocol prohibits fact-checking pundit pity parties. Bump claims House members "haven't gotten a raise in more than a decade," omitting the unconstitutional de facto pay raise the House awarded itself last year. Members can automatically claim \$258 a night for lodging expenses and \$79 a day for meals for each day spent in DC — up to \$34,000 a year in tax-free dollars, even if they don't spend a dime (no receipts necessary).

House members also receive a yearly salary of \$174,000 — more than triple the average US salary and higher pay than 93% of Americans pocket. But the raw numbers vastly understate their windfalls. The House was in session for only 117 days last year, so members received almost \$1,500 each day they "worked" — even if they only had a 15-minute token appearance in the Capitol.

How much would you pay a lawyer who fails to read the contracts he signs on your behalf — like congressmen who vote for massive bills without reading them? How much would you pay an accountant whose squirrely numbers produce trillion-dollar holes in the balance sheets? Congress' reckless spending helped torpedo the dollar, which has lost almost 20% of its value since Biden took office.

Summoning every violin inside the Beltway, Bump bewails that House members "have to spend a big chunk of their time trying to raise money to campaign to keep their jobs." But I thought they were practically conscripts with



An empty House: Members got \$1,500+ a day its 117 days in session.

hellish jobs? The only way to reconcile those notions is with Leviathan Logic, guaranteeing that government always wins.

The number of House members quitting is roughly 10% — par for congressional elections. Most members have "safe" seats, meaning they won't get the boot without a scandal worse than

New Jersey Sen. Bob "Gold Bars" Menendez's. Brazen gerrymandering protects incumbents and

prevents the "will of the people" from disrupting the gravy train of handouts and kickbacks.

The Founding Fathers presumed Congress would protect citizens from executive-branch oppression. But any oversight duty was cast overboard long before the turn of the last century. In the current Congress, Democrats seek to block almost every investigation Republicans launch into Team Biden perfidy.

Yet Bump grieves that House members cannot seize as much power as they think they deserve — the ultimate Washington agony. Just under 50 bills have been signed into law this year, fewer than half as many as Congress usually passes in election years. According to DC scoring, House members are persecuted because they can't consummate their legislative schemes to take over more of Americans' lives.

Bump has plenty of company in DC with his pro-Congress poppycock. Business Insider in January called for members of Congress to "give themselves a \$100,000 raise." Daniel Schuman of the nonprofit POPVOX Foundation called for a

"big fat raise" for members of Congress so that inflation would not "affect your motivation."

But the Holy Smoke Audacity Prize goes to one current and three former members of Congress who last month filed a federal lawsuit claiming to be "suffering the unconstitutional suppression of their member pay" and "the unconstitutional reduction of the retirement pay" because their salaries didn't keep up with the inflation they helped spawn.

Ex-congressmen are demanding up to \$753,000 compensation apiece — and a "tax bump up on any award" to offset their higher taxes. And who will pay this "compensation"? The same taxpayers whose paychecks have already been fleeced to allow politicians to buy re-election.

House members have never been either the nation's moral or intellectual elite. In the late 1800s, restaurants and bars refused to permit House members to run up a tab because they were notorious deadbeats — at least according to H.L. Mencken's father, a cigar salesman who knew DC. In the 1990s, the House banking scandal featured busloads of representatives plundering the bank they created for themselves at taxpayers' expense. And Congress has still not banned insider trading for its members.

How much would you pay someone who produced nothing while prancing like a peacock and ludicrously boasting of saving the world? Unfortunately, exalting our current crop of legislators Bump-style simply makes congressmen even more deluded. Democracy cannot survive pretending politicians are less vile than they appear.

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