

This Is Not Government as Usual

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The U.S. Capitol building in Washington on Dec. 18, 2024. Madalina Vasiliu/The Epoch Times



By Jeffrey A. Tucker

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Commentary

The day of Dec. 18, 2024, should live in infamy as the marker of genuinely changed times.

Everyone knew from the election that something was up in the relationship between public life and the public mind. The establishment took a real beating in the ballot returns. But whether and to what extent this would translate into real action in the halls of government was another matter.

We've all been waiting to see.

The proof came late in the day during the Christmas recess. Congressional leadership attempted to push through one of its usual last-minute spending and debt-increase bills. This was 1,500-plus pages of pork spending and regulatory changes, including a big raise for Congress itself.

For weeks, even the Republican leadership had been saying: Just pass this bill and that way Donald Trump can enter the presidency without having to worry about a government shutdown. Everyone can get to work on the MAGA/MAHA agenda in a month. That was the line of the day.

The huge bill was dumped on Congress and the presumption was that it would fly through without any real resistance. There was no reason to think otherwise. To be sure, there could have been a bill with a clean debt increase without new spending but there is panic in Washington right now, a perception that this is the last hurrah of the old guard.

They tried to take advantage of the recess, with the full cooperation of Republican House leadership, the future of whom is in doubt. Now, there will likely be a new Speaker of the House. Vance, Massie, or perhaps Elon himself will take the job.

There were only a few hours to examine what was in this bill and get the word out. But we have new tools now. We have AI and we have genuinely free media that operates in real time thanks to the platform X. Citizen journalists got busy to find out what was in this package. The results were shocking.

1. The bill quashes all investigations by courts or FOIA requests into all Congressional records including emails, making discovery impossible, forever. It was retroactive to the past so that no commission looking into anything could ever discover what really went on. This was a shocking addition and nearly passed without notice.
2. The bill limits further the period in which the vaccine-injured can be paid for damages, further restricting the statute of limitations, essentially giving all pharma full freedom from all liability, and hobbling efforts to change that with the new administration.
3. It extended liability protection for the COVID shots until 2029.
4. The bill refunds the State Department's censorship arm called the Global Engagement Center, even after it was being prepared for a shutdown.
5. It includes 72 pages of "pandemic preparedness" including funding for vaccine and mask mandates, vaccine passports, intentional emergency powers, and gain-of-function research.
6. It funds an additional dozen biolabs of the very sort that created the problem last time.
7. It includes an outrageous 40 percent increase in the pay of members of Congress.
8. It includes an additional \$60 billion for Ukraine.
9. It includes hundreds of millions in funding for trans activism.

That's only the tip of the iceberg and what we could discover after just a few hours. Congress even tried to bypass the three-day rule to allow people to know what was in the legislation.

The great news is that all of this was discovered very quickly in real time, and broadcast all over the Internet in record time, resulting in a huge public outcry.

At some point during the day, Elon had had enough of the nonsense and flat-out declared this bill to be a crime scene.

Within about 90 minutes, the bill went from sure passage to dead on arrival. Within ten minutes of its certain death, Donald Trump came out against it and put the knife straight into the heart of the bill.

And yet there are still questions about this whole thing. Who precisely wrote all this nonsense into the bill that was clearly designed to thwart any and all fundamental change in Washington? It would have taken all power away from Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., to make any changes to vaccine injury compensation and all power from the courts and citizens to discover exactly what Congress is up to.

We still don't know exactly how this caper came about, and why precisely Republican leadership decided to go along with it.

What's most striking is how it came to be so suddenly defeated by force of exposure and public opinion alone. That's a remarkable fact.

I'm left with a sudden sense that perhaps this kind of thing has gone on for years, decades, maybe even a century. We just haven't known about it. We have never previously had access to tools that permit sharing of documents, analysis of detail, AI to verify hidden meaning of otherwise incomprehensible text, and then broadcast out the results with proof to hundreds of millions and billions of people instantly.

We keep hearing that this was the worst bill in history. But maybe not. Maybe it was just a typical bill of the sort passed all the time. We just know it now and can do something about it for the first time in history.

The long and short is that all this attention—only public attention to the details of the bill—is what killed it. It was like discovering a crime in real time. What happens? The perpetrators flee. That's exactly what happened.

This gigantic monstrosity was then replaced by a 100-plus page bill that raised the debt limit but contained enough pork and suspicious language to cause freedom-minded Republicans to join Democrats in shooting it down, even over the objections of Trump himself.

The result is likely that there will be a government shutdown. A clear debt increase does not seem possible which means that the government will shut down for 30 days until the inauguration.

And all the people said: good!

Yes, this leaves Trump with a problem upon taking office but it is also an opportunity. DOGE and the people can get to work cutting and slashing until there is a bill that can pass popular muster. That could take a while.

Honestly, I'm starting to get truly hopeful that something big has changed in the legislative process and that the results of the election of 2024 might not be merely cosmetic. This is starting to seem real and substantial. All the tools that permitted this bill to go down in flames are not going anywhere but only getting better by the day.

So long as we can keep the censors at bay, we might have a fighting chance for real reform for the first time in our lives or maybe in more than one hundred years.

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Jeffrey A. Tucker

Author

Jeffrey A. Tucker is the founder and president of the Brownstone Institute and the author of many thousands of articles in the scholarly and popular press, as well as 10 books in five languages, most recently "Liberty or Lockdown." He is also the editor of "The Best of

Ludwig von Mises.” He writes a daily column on economics for The Epoch Times and speaks widely on the topics of economics, technology, social philosophy, and culture.



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