



The Daily Dish

The Legacy of the American Rescue Plan

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The American Rescue Plan (ARP) is the \$1.9 trillion stimulus passed in March 2021. I [testified](#) at that time regarding the plan and argued that:

- The architecture of the plan is largely divorced from the roots of the recession and headwinds to the recovery, and – at best – it will be costly, inefficient, and ineffective;
- The scale and composition of the plan is at odds with the stated goals for economic stimulus toward full employment; and
- A large number of the elements of the plan can only be understood as long-standing and permanent political objectives that are inappropriately advertised as a response to COVID-19.

Nevertheless, Congress went ahead and President Biden signed it into law, [sparking the rapid inflation](#) that plagues us to this day. That will be its primary legacy, something that will surely come up on Thursday when I testify before the House of Representatives on the topic of inflation and whether it was preventable.

But that is not its only legacy. We now know from [here](#) and [here](#) that Northampton, Massachusetts is spending \$20,000 for four manhole covers paying tribute to the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (TMNT). Evidently TMNT was the brainchild of two cartoonists living in Northampton when their moment of inspiration arrived. (Technically, the \$20,000 is for “Funding to invigorate downtown arts by integrating public art tribute to the Northampton born Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles into Main St redesign with 4 custom manhole covers.”) This is part of the [documentation](#) of the \$4 million in spending (including “Funding to support expanded operations for museum for Anchor House of Artists work by artists living with neurodiverse states” – no clue what that means) under the law.

Now inquiring minds are probably quickly dividing \$20,000 by four (answer: \$5,000) and quickly going to their favorite manhole-cover-shopping site, whether it be [top-selling manhole covers](#) that feature 24-hour shipping (“when I need a manhole cover, I NEED a manhole cover”) or places that offer [three-day returns](#) (“I didn’t want Leonardo; I wanted Raphael”). In either event, the key is that manhole covers run in the \$1,000 to \$1,500 range (or less). What a legacy