

# Coronavirus: Politically Created Panic is the Real Pandemic

As of early March, there were fewer than 200 confirmed cases of the COVID-19 coronavirus in the United States. Nonetheless Congress passed, and US president Donald Trump signed, an \$8.3 billion “emergency funding” bill theoretically related to containing the disease.

Had the federal government done nothing at all, the “beer flu” might have conceivably have ended up killing a tiny fraction of the number of Americans who will die of influenza during the same period.

Now that the federal government is blowing \$8.3 billion, the chances of that happening will likely decrease — not because coronavirus will kill fewer people, but because influenza will kill more. Attention paid to, and resources thrown at, victims of the predictable annual flu epidemic will decrease in favor of the minor but newly lucrative COVID-19 nuisance.

Yes, nuisance. Even the US Centers for Disease Control, a big beneficiary of health panics, says that “information so far suggests that most COVID-19 illness is mild” (especially among those without underlying serious health conditions), that the virus “is NOT currently spreading widely in the United States,” and that “[f]or most of the American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low.”

So, why are people losing their minds? In a word, politics. Congress and the president are throwing \$8.3 billion worth of gasoline onto an already raging fire of unjustified panic.

Rahm Emanuel’s Law: “Never let a serious crisis go to waste.”

Every Politician’s Corollary: “Even if you have to manufacture that crisis out of whole cloth.”

Panic kills people, and politicians are just fine with that as long as it increases their stature among, and power over, the survivors.

At this point, the main protective measure I recommend is laying in a couple of weeks’ worth of food and water. Not because you need to stay home to avoid the coronavirus, but because the panic might result in shortages or even idiotic government measures like mass quarantines. And having some food and bottled water around is always a good idea anyway.

If it makes you feel better to avoid travel and large crowds, wear a mask when you can’t

avoid those things, and wash your hands 80 times a day, knock yourself out. But stay calm and be aware that you're just going through self-comforting motions. Politicians, not viral nuisances, are the biggest threat to your survival.