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Sent: Fri, 08 Mar 2013 16:14:25 -0500
From: "Carney, Jay" <james_f_carney@who.eop.gov>
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Subject: pretty good take-down by NY mag

<http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2013/03/peggy-noonan-hotel-stimulus-public-works.html>

Peggy Noonan Wishes Obama Had Done Some Kind of Stimulus-y Thing for Jobs

• * By DAN AMIRA

When she's not predicting national elections based on a [few yard signs she saw somewhere](#), *Wall Street Journal* columnist Peggy Noonan is drawing broad conclusions about the state of America from a single visit to a crappy airport hotel. [In her column](#) today, the former Reagan speechwriter recounts:

Travelers are milling about, but there's no information desk, no doorman, no bellman or concierge, just two harried-looking workers at a front desk on the second level. The man who checked me in put his phones on hold when I asked for someone to accompany me upstairs....

Things are getting pretty bare-bones in America. Doormen, security, bellmen, people working the floor—that's maybe a dozen jobs that should have been filled, at one little hotel on one day in one town. Everyone's keeping costs down, not hiring.

[Everyone.](#)

Incredibly, this anecdote is not the worst part of this column. The worst part is this lament:

Meanwhile, the president is stuck in his games and his history. He should have seen unemployment entering a crisis stage four years ago, and he did not. At that time I was certain he'd go for public-works projects, which could give training to the young and jobs to the experienced underemployed, would create jobs in the private sector and, in the end, yield up something needed—a bridge, a strengthened power grid. He instead gave his first term to health care.

Great advice, Peggy Noonan! It happens to be exactly what President Obama did with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the Stimulus), [which included](#) \$98.3 billion in transportation and infrastructure spending, \$41.4 billion in energy spending, and billions more on things that would be generally be considered public works.

Now, perhaps Noonan is arguing that Obama should have spent more, maybe *much* more. Obama's own economists [would agree](#). But Congress [wouldn't let him](#).

The bill needed 60 votes in the Senate to overcome a Republican filibuster, and the three GOP moderates who supported it insisted that it couldn't exceed \$800 billion. So did at least half a dozen centrist Democrats, including Ben Nelson (Neb.), Mark Begich (Alaska) and Mary Landrieu (La.). Everyone involved in the negotiations — including liberals who favored a larger stimulus — agrees that Obama got as much as he could get.

The other explanation for Noonan's apparent bout of amnesia may be that she does, in fact, remember the Stimulus, but just isn't counting it, because she considers it to have been a failed piece of legislation. As she [wrote in November of 2010](#):

The stimulus bill was a political disaster, and it wasn't the cost, it was the content. We were in crisis, losing jobs. People would have accepted high spending if it looked promising. But the stimulus was the same old same old, pure pork aimed at reliable constituencies. It would course through the economy with little effect.

The [CBO estimates](#) that, as a direct result of the Stimulus, employment was higher in 2010 by somewhere between 900,000 and 4.7 million jobs and increased GDP by as much as 4.1 percent. It's not clear if the CBO took into account that Noonan once stayed in a cheap airport hotel, however.