

*The following excerpt from a speech delivered by **Weekly Standard** Senior Writer Stephen F. Hayes is an example of the wasteful spending in the so-called “stimulus” plan, which Congressman Bachus voted against.*

Barack Obama was inaugurated on January 20, 2009. Within a month he signed a \$787 billion “stimulus package” with virtually no Republican support. It was necessary, we were told, to keep unemployment under eight percent. Overnight, the federal government had, as one of its highest priorities, weatherizing government buildings and housing projects. Streets and highways in no need of repair would be broken up and repaved. The Department of Transportation and other government agencies would spend millions on signs advertising the supposed benefits of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. I saw one of them on Roosevelt Island in Washington, D.C. It boasted that the federal park would be receiving a generous grant to facilitate the involvement of local youth in the removal of “non-indigenous plants.” In other words, kids would be weeding. We need a sign to announce that? And this was going to save the economy?

Then there was American Recovery and Reinvestment Act project number 1R01AA01658001A, a study entitled: “Malt Liquor and Marijuana: Factors in their Concurrent Versus Separate Use.” I’m not making this up. This is a \$400,000 project being directed by a professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo. The following is from the official abstract: “We appreciate the opportunity to refocus this application to achieve a single important aim related to our understanding of young adults’ use of male [sic] liquor (ML), other alcoholic beverages, and marijuana (MJ), all of which confer high risks for experiencing negative consequences, including addiction. As we have noted, reviews of this grant application have noted numerous strength [sic], which are summarized below.”

So what were those strengths? “This research team has previous [sic] been successful in recruiting a large (>600) sample of regular ML drinkers.” Also, “the application is well-written.” Well-written? With three spelling mistakes? But who am I to judge? As for the other strength, there is no question that the team’s recruitment had been strong. But is that really a qualification for federal money? After all, they were paying people to drink beer!

These same scholars were behind a groundbreaking 2007 study that used regression analysis to discover that subjects who got drunk and high were more intoxicated than those who only abused alcohol. The new study pays these pot-smoking malt-liquor drinkers at least \$45 to

participate. They can buy four beers per day for the three-week project—all of it funded, at least indirectly, by the American taxpayer.

Perhaps not surprisingly, when President Obama visited Buffalo in May, he chose to highlight other stimulus grants. On the other hand, he could have pointed out that the beer money goes right back into the economy. Think of all those saved or created jobs! In any case, the findings of this new study are expected to echo those of the first study, which found: “Those who concurrently use both alcohol and marijuana are more likely to report negative consequences of substance use compared with those who use alcohol only.” Reading results like this, I tend to think that those who concurrently get drunk and high are also far more likely to believe the stimulus is working.