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Subject: Big Dig 2.0 comes to New York, and the bill goes to everyone else

Why are New York and New Jersey politicians trying to get the rest of the country to finance the Big Dig 2.0?



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All The News That Doesn't Fit the Page

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Trump, Sessions take critical stand against California's new nullification of federal immigration law

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Daily Caller: 6 Revelations In That Christopher Steele Puff Piece

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Big Dig 2.0 comes to New York, and the bill goes to everyone else



By Printus LeBlanc

There is fight brewing in Congress over the funding of a local transportation project. Senators and House Members from New Jersey and New York are putting pressure on the administration to fund a massive multibillion-dollar local transportation project. President Donald Trump and Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao are pushing back against that idea, not wanting to blow the entire transportation budget on one local project.

Why are New York and New Jersey politicians trying to get the rest of the country to finance the Big Dig 2.0?

The Gateway project is the renovation and expansion of the rail line between Newark and New York City, known as the Northeast Corridor. The project was originally supposed to be completed in 2026 and double the train capacity from 24 per hour to 48 while allowing for the possibility of high-speed rail service. The estimated price range has been anywhere from \$20 billion to \$30 billion, but anyone familiar with the Big Dig knows the price could quickly skyrocket to \$70 billion to \$80 billion. And for some reason, both New York and New Jersey believe the project is so important the rest of the nation should pay for it.

On Tuesday, Secretary Chao was peppered with questions about the lack of commitment from President Trump while testifying before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Members from the New York and New Jersey area wanted to know where the funds for the local Gateway project are.

Chao would not take the Congressional beating lying down. Chao stood her ground, stating, "New York and New Jersey have got to up their local share... New York and New Jersey are two of the richest states in the country ... They need to step up."

Perhaps the most significant line from the hearing was Chao stating, "New York and New Jersey can come up with larger than zero or five percent." The Secretary was noting the paltry \$1.75 billion and \$1.9 billion committed to by New York and New Jersey, respectively, in December.

This is not what the New York and New Jersey politicians wanted to hear. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo (D) believed there was a deal in place with the Obama administration for the Port Authority to finance half of the project through user fees and the federal government would fund the remaining 50 percent.

Chao was also asked about President Trump's involvement in the funding. It has been reported Trump asked House Speaker Pual Ryan to block funding for the project in the upcoming spending bill, which could amount to over \$900 million. The Secretary stated, "The president is concerned about the viability of this project and the fact that New York and New Jersey have no skin in the game. They need to step up and bear their fair share. They are two of the richest states in the country. If they absorb all these funds, there will be no other funds for the rest of the country."

Not only do the President and Secretary Chao not want the feds to pay for the project, but Members of Congress from around the country are also voicing their disappointment with the possibility their communities could be forced to fund the project. Rep. Ted Budd (R-N.C.) stated, "North Carolina and the other 48 states should not have to foot the bill for this hall of fame earmark."

Two questions need to be asked of the New York and New Jersey politicians.

1. If the tunnels are over 100 years old and have needed repair and replacement for a while now, why didn't it get done when the Democrats controlled the House, Senate, and Presidency? Wasn't there a stimulus package for "shovel ready" jobs?
2. If Hurricane Sandy damaged the tunnels and bridges, what did they spend the \$50+ billion of from the Sandy Relief bill on?

If New York and New Jersey cannot answer these simple questions, what is to stop this project from becoming another taxpayer-funded boondoggle?

Americans for Limited Government President Rick Manning stated, "Congress should not force President Trump's hand on funding the Gateway project without states passing legislation to fund the projects themselves at the levels the Trump administration, led by Chao, deems viable to work in a true partnership. Taxpayers from Texas to North Carolina should not have to pay for projects that not even the New York and New Jersey legislatures are willing to finance for their own peoples."

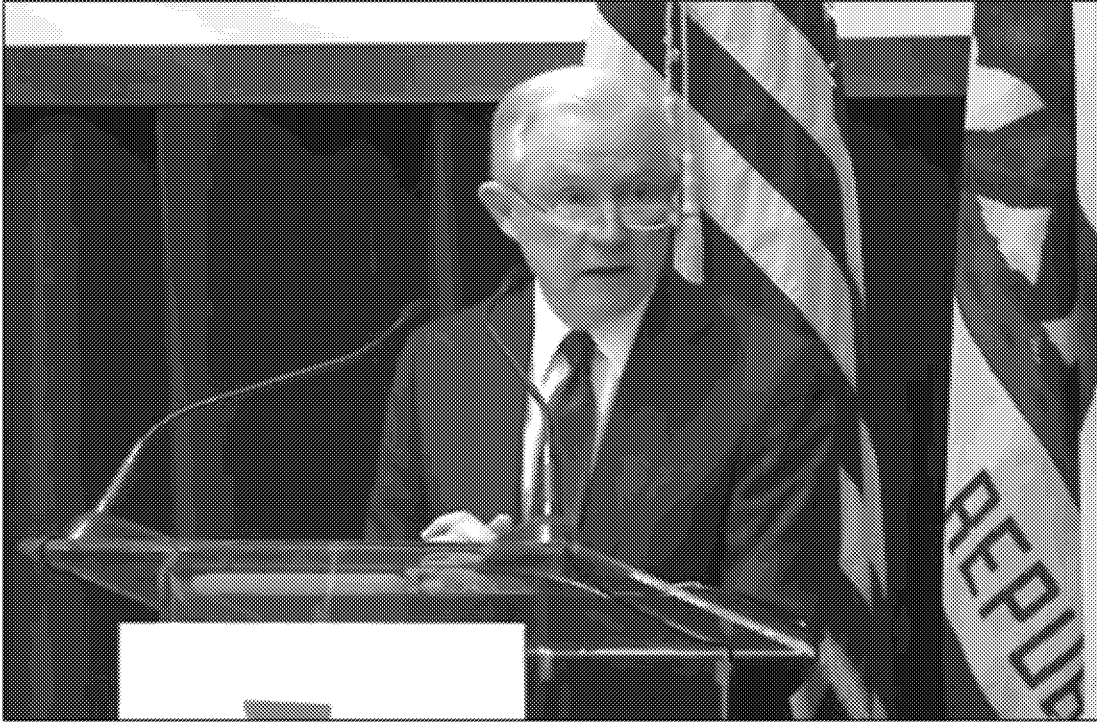
Anyone that has been in the political game for more than five minutes knows how this was going to work. The New York and New Jersey politicians were counting on the federal government to front the money to start the project. Once the project was past the point of no return, tell the federal government it cannot be completed without more federal funds, thereby forcing the American taxpayers to cover the rest of the project.

The whole country laughed at Boston's attempt at the most expensive highway project in the U.S., known as the Big Dig. The project ran a decade behind schedule and cost 190 percent more than the

original estimate. It was plagued by leaks, design flaws, poor execution, and even death. If New York and New Jersey want their own version of the Big Dig, they can have it. Just don't ask the rest of the country to pay for it.

Printus LeBlanc is a contributing editor at Americans for Limited Government.

Trump, Sessions take critical stand against California's new nullification of federal immigration law



By Robert Romano

“Immigration law is the province of the federal government. This Administration and this Justice Department are determined to make it work effectively for the people. I understand that we have a wide variety of political opinions out there on immigration. But the law is in the books and its purpose is clear. There is no nullification. There is no secession. Federal law is ‘the supreme law of the land.’ I would invite any doubters to Gettysburg, and to the graves of John C. Calhoun and Abraham Lincoln.”

That was Attorney General Jeff Sessions addressing the California Peace Officers' Association on March 7, making it clear in no uncertain terms that California's new “law” which makes it illegal for local law enforcement to assist federal officials in detaining illegal immigrants will not stand.

Under Sessions, the Justice Department is suing in federal court to overturn the California policy that prevents police from complying with detainer requests by federal immigration authorities.

It's the new nullification, an unconstitutional attempt by states and cities to claim a "right" not to follow federal law.

And, warns Americans for Limited Government President Rick Manning, it is utterly dangerous. "The time of sanctuary states and cities is over. We either have laws or we have anarchy," Manning said.

"The central presumption that the Constitution rests on is the Supremacy Clause, that the Constitution and all laws made pursuant to it are the supreme law of the land. State laws must conform to the federal in cases where the federal government has constitutional authority. It is Congress, not the states, that have the power to make the nation's immigration laws, and states cannot constitutionally undertake an enterprise to defeat those laws," Manning added.

Following the law is not optional, Manning declared, suggesting, "This isn't even a grey area. It's explicitly in the Constitution. This case tests the very premise that we can have a national union, a Constitution and a uniform rule of law, or if we will have 50 sets of rules."

In the pre-Civil War era, there were many attempts by states to repeal or nullify federal laws that they disagreed with.

In 1832, President Andrew Jackson outlined the correct reading on nullification in his Proclamation to the People of South Carolina, a response to South Carolina's attempt to nullify tariffs enacted by Congress, leaving no ambiguity, "I consider, then, the power to annul a law of the United States, assumed by one State, incompatible with the existence of the Union, contradicted expressly by the letter of the Constitution, unauthorized by its spirit, inconsistent with every principle on which it was founded, and destructive of the great object for which it was formed."

Indeed, what other federal laws could states abolish that they disagree with, if following immigration law is optional? Could also states start printing their own money? Declaring their own wars? Providing and maintaining their own navies? Opting out of paying taxes?

It truly is a slippery slope. And if we're not careful, it could spill out into other areas — taking the rule of law with it.

Meaning, the U.S. could be precipitously close to the same crisis that consumed the nation in 1861, when secession by the South in the Civil War very much tested whether the Constitution would be a lasting proposition.

The suit against California's nullification of immigration law is an important move by Attorney General Jeff Sessions and President Donald Trump to restore the rule of law before it is too late to turn back, and they are to be commended.

At the end of the day, we are a nation of laws. And we either have a country or we don't.

Robert Romano is the Vice President of Public Policy at Americans for Limited Government.



ALG Editor's Note: In the following piece from The Daily Caller, Chuck Ross dissects a puff piece in the New Yorker about Christopher Steele and how the piece does more damage to Steele than helps:

6 Revelations In That Christopher Steele Puff Piece

By Chuck Ross

A new profile of dossier author Christopher Steele provided several new revelations about the creation of the salacious and unverified dossier.

The piece, from New Yorker reporter Jane Mayer, was widely hailed by mainstream and left-leaning journalists. MSNBC host Rachel Maddow touted it as a “staggering piece of reporting,” citing it as the biggest bombshell in the revelation that Steele wrote a memo alleging the Kremlin intervened to block President Donald Trump from selecting Mitt Romney as his secretary of state.

The piece does reveal numerous previously unknown facts about Steele and the dossier. Not all of the facts are favorable to the former MI6 officer and his infamous report.

1. Steele likely knew who funded the dossier

Steele learned months after being hired by Fusion GPS that former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s campaign and the Democratic National Committee (DNC) were funding his investigation, according to Mayer. That is a new revelation and raises even more questions about why the FBI failed to disclose the dossier’s funding sources in applications for spy warrants against former Trump campaign adviser Carter Page.

“Several months after Steele signed the deal, he learned that, through this chain, his research was being jointly subsidized by the Clinton campaign and the D.N.C.,” Mayer reported.

Republicans have accused the FBI and Justice Department of abusing the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) process by failing to disclose that the Clinton campaign and DNC funded the dossier.

Instead, the application stated only that Fusion GPS, the opposition research firm that hired Steele, told him its client had a political bias against Trump.

“The identified U.S. Person never advised Source #1 as to the motivation behind the research into Candidate #1’s ties to Russia,” reads the FISA application.

2. Steele used dozens of paid confidential “collectors”

One of the burning questions of the dossier is whether Steele and his firm, Orbis Business Intelligence, paid sources and sub-sources to gather information about Trump.

Glenn Simpson, the founder of Fusion GPS, testified before Congress that Steele did not, but Mayer’s reporting suggests he did pay intermediaries for his information.

“To serve its clients, Orbis employs dozens of confidential ‘collectors’ around the world, whom it pays as contract associates,” Mayer reported. “Some of the collectors are private investigators at smaller firms; others are investigative reporters or highly placed experts in strategically useful jobs.

Depending on the task and the length of engagement, the fee for collectors can be as much as two

thousand dollars a day.” [\(RELATED: Former CIA Official Says No Evidence Of Trump Campaign Collusion\)](#)

The prospect of Steele paying intermediaries has been cause for concern for some former intelligence officials.

Former CIA Deputy Director Michael Morell was concerned about Steele paying for information because sources “are going to tell you truth and innuendo and rumor, and they’re going to call you up and say, ‘Hey, let’s have another meeting, I have more information for you,’ because they want to get paid some more,” he said in 2017.

3. Work for Kremlin-connected oligarch?

Mayer’s report briefly touches on possible links between Steele and Oleg Deripaska, a Russian oligarch with close ties to Vladimir Putin.

It recently emerged that Steele may have worked in the past for Deripaska. Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley, a Republican, raised questions about any ties between the two, in a letter to Adam Waldman, an American lobbyist who has worked for Deripaska on visa issues since 2009.

Waldman exchanged text messages with Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, a Democrat, to set up a meeting with Steele. In those texts, published by Fox News, Waldman also mentioned possible immunity for Deripaska in exchange for his testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

Mayer suggests there is likely a connection between Deripaska and Steele. If so, it will likely raise questions about the former spy.

“If a financial trail between Deripaska and Orbis can be established, it is likely to raise even more questions about Steele, because Deripaska has already figured in the Russia investigation, in an unsavory light,” Mayer reported. [\(RELATED: Russian Oligarch May Have Links To Christopher Steele\)](#)

Deripaska is a former business partner of Paul Manafort, the former Trump campaign chairman who special counsel Robert Mueller recently indicted. Manafort sent emails during the campaign offering briefings to Deripaska, to whom he reportedly owed nearly \$20 million from a failed business venture.

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