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Comments: (Ab)use of American Rescue Plan Act Funds

Federal coronavirus relief funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) are supposed to be used to address needs of those most impacted by the pandemic. The Tuesday Morning Group has a plan supported by CAG and others, which proposes using a portion of these funds to address long-standing disparities in health care and economic opportunity in minority and low-income communities across West Virginia. Addressing these disparities is long overdue, and the Tuesday Morning Group proposal would address them through common sense investments in education, job training, economic development, housing rehabilitation, programs to support at-risk youth, and initiatives to improve rural and community health access.

Instead of investing in our people, the Governor wants to divert \$500 million of the \$678 million remaining funds to the state Economic Development Authority. Cash handouts to corporations not allowable use for ARPA funds. CAG has joined the TMG, the NAACP and others to request a public hearing on this questionable use of these funds as proposed in HB 2883 and give the citizens of West Virginians an opportunity to weigh in on how they should be spent to help our communities. Black By God an article here and other background stories. On Friday, Rev. Matthew Watts, a Charleston pastor and convener of the TMG gave a presentation to the Senate Workforce Committee where he was able to make the case for using ARPA funds to improve housing, health, workforce, economic and social service coordination. More to come on this.