



United States Senate Budget Committee

JEFF SESSIONS | Ranking Member

Highlights Of Waste And Abuse In The Obama Administration

In advance of President Obama unveiling his FY 2015 budget, senior White House staff signaled to the Washington Post that the plan would “call for an end to era of austerity.” This despite the fact that the nation has spent \$21.1 trillion since 2009. Gross federal debt has increased by \$7.23 trillion (or more than 68 percent) since that time, yet President Obama and his allies continue to insist that more “investments” are needed.

But the federal government already wastes hundreds of billions of dollars each year. Below are just a few examples of waste compiled by Senate Budget Committee analysts.

Social Security Admin Spends \$300M On Computer System That Doesn’t Work

The Associated Press reported that the Social Security Administration “embarked on an aggressive plan” to spend almost \$300 million replacing an outdated computer system for processing disability claims. In 2008, the agency estimated the project was about two or three years from being ready. “Five years later,” says the AP, “it was still two to three years from being done... The agency can’t say when it will be completed or how much it will [ultimately] cost.”

DOJ Spends \$2 Million On Soccer For DC Youth

In the midst of sequestration, the Department of Justice issued a \$2 million grant out of its “Office of Justice Programs” for a non-profit to provide “sports-based mentoring” for at-risk youth in Washington, D.C.

Government Auditor Warns Border Patrol Has No Plan To Combat Corruption

The Department of Homeland Security is aware of pervasive corruption at Customs and Border Protection, with nearly 150 of its officers and agents being charged with or convicted of corruption-related offenses over the last decade. But the Government Accountability Office warned in December 2012 that the agency “has not [even] set target timelines for completing and implementing” a strategy to address this problem.

High-Level EPA Employees Caught Up In CIA Impersonation Scandal

The case of EPA climate policy adviser John Beale has received much attention. The scandal-plagued former official bilked the federal government out of \$900,000 in salary and almost \$200,000 in travel expenses by falsely claiming to be a CIA agent. But less widely known is that his actions were approved by other senior EPA managers. The *Washington Post* reported that Beth Craig, “director of Climate Protection Partnerships at the Office of Air and Radiation (OAR)[,] approved [Beale’s] unwarranted time and expenses...” And the

Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works has uncovered that EPA employees routinely collect paychecks for “working from home”—without ever turning in any work. In one case, an employee spent more than 20 years “working from home” and receiving a salary of almost \$117,000 a year, all without ever producing any actual work.

Feds To Schools: If Less Than Half Your Students Qualify For Means-Tested Aid, Then All Students Get Free School Lunches

A little-known provision of the Healthy and Hunger-Free Kids Act, passed in 2010, authorized that if a school district can demonstrate that at least 40 percent of their students receive some kind of means-tested aid (food stamps, Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, etc.), then ALL students in that district—regardless of income—will receive free school lunches. The free school lunch program costs taxpayers \$11.5 billion annually.

\$500 Million Stimulus Program Fails To Meet 90 Percent Of Its Employment Target

One cornerstone of President Obama’s 2009 stimulus bill was a \$500 million program to provide training for “green jobs,” with a goal of training around 125,000 people and getting around 80,000 of them into the workforce. But a 2011 audit by the Labor Department revealed that just 8,035 people had jobs as a result of the program. In some cases, the money is used to fund university grants for degrees in fields that don’t exist yet.

Amtrak Tries To Lure Writers With Offers Of Free Trips

The beleaguered railway company, which receives yearly government funding, is projected to post a \$618 million operating deficit in 2015. Yet rather than moving to trim costs, Amtrak announced this year a plan to provide free trips to writers who wished to write on board trains. CNN revealed that “each residency will include accommodation on a sleeper car with all a writer really needs: a bed, a desk and outlets.” For a non-writer customer, these accommodations could cost upwards of \$1,000 for a round trip. A writer for *The Wire* website characterized the arrangement as “absolutely awesome.”

Six Means-Tested Benefits Make Up Almost Half Of Govt’s ‘High Error’ Programs

The Earned Income Tax Credit, unemployment insurance, Supplemental Security Income, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps), the National School Lunch Program, and the Rental Assistance program have together accounted for **\$180 billion in improper payments** since 2009. The Administration’s own budget office has identified 13 “high error” programs, and these six aid programs all fall under one budget function. The amount improperly disbursed under these programs is enough, according to the Office of Management and Budget, to fund NASA for an entire decade.

National Science Foundation Funds Grant To Determine Key To ‘March Madness’ Success

President Obama is known to be an avid basketball fan. Perhaps that explains why the National Science Foundation awarded a grant to Duke University to answer the question “Why do the same teams always dominate March Madness?” The study was elaborately titled “Constructal Theory on Social Dynamics,” but ultimately determined the obvious: that better players prefer to play on teams that tend to win games.