



Written by [Ralph R. Reiland](#) on March 16, 2013

Squirrely Robot and Closed Control Towers

Right when America's school kids are looking forward to a spring tour of the White House, the Obama administration cancelled all public tours, blaming budget cuts and Republican pigheadedness.

Shutting down the tours was a quick way to teach the next generation of voters that even a tiny reduction in the rate of growth of government results in nothing but tears and regret.



The cost of the 37 uniformed officers who direct the White House tours is \$10,571 a day, according to Brian Leary, a spokesman for the Secret Service.

That's peanuts compared to how the feds blow hundreds of billions of taxpayers' dollars on an ever-expanding array of projects of little or no value.

In her recent *Wall Street Journal* column, "Jumping the Sequester: When the president cancelled the White House tours, he revealed his claims as ludicrous," Kimberly Strassel provided a sample of the fed's wasteful and lavish spending.

"We've learned that the White House employs three calligraphers, who cumulatively earn \$277,000 a year," reported Strassel. "The Environmental Protection Agency gave \$141,000 to fund a Chinese study on swine manure. Part of a \$325,000 National Science Foundation outlay went to building a robotic squirrel."

Just these three expenditures, totaling \$743,000, could keep the White House tours up and running for over two months. The Chinese have the money to pay for a study on China's manure.

Strassel goes on to highlight more spending examples: "The government gave a \$3,700 grant to build a miniature street in West Virginia — out of Legos. It shelled out \$500,000 to support specialty shampoo products for cats and dogs. A San Diego outfit got \$10,000 for trolley dancing. The feds last year held 894 conferences that each cost more than \$100,000 — \$340 million altogether. But Mr. Obama is too broke to let American kids look around the White House."

Just these four additional expenditures, totaling \$340.5 million, could keep the White House tours going for another 89 years.

There's also \$27 million in taxpayer's money to pay for pottery classes in Morocco.

Without emptying the wallets of American taxpayers, Moroccans have known how to make pottery since the Neolithic era, the cultural period of the Stone Age, around 10,000 B.C., characterized by the development of agriculture and the hand-fashioning of some pretty fancy pots without any government handouts.

Oklahoma Sen. Tom Coburn provided additional examples of the lack of prioritizing and common sense in federal spending.

In recent letters to the heads of federal agencies citing waste, Sen. Coburn showed why it's unnecessary, just a cheap political stunt, for the Obama administration to shut down White House tours,



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close control towers, toss public housing residents into the street, stop cancer research, or furlough meat inspectors.

In a letter to Ashton Carter, Deputy Secretary of Defense, Coburn pointed to how “the Pentagon has joined the cooking show craze” by producing “a reality cooking show called Grill it Safe featuring two Grill Sergeants showing off their ‘delicious recipes’ for outdoor cooking.”

While the Navy is “reducing training in four air wings,” Coburn continued, “there are at least eight Pentagon employees who serve on the Board of Geographic Names, which names streams, mountains, hills, and plains across the United States.”

A letter from Coburn to Subra Suresh, Director of the National Science Foundation, highlighted the agency’s spending for “the development of ‘Snooki,’ a robot bird that impersonates a female sage grouse to examine the importance of courtship tactics of males.”

Similarly, the National Science Foundation is “currently spending \$325,000 for studies examining the interaction of robot rodents, such as the ‘robosquirrel,’ with rattlesnakes,” wrote Coburn to Suresh, in addition to paying for a project that’s seeking to determine “how a shrimp running on a treadmill responds to alterations in oxygen and carbon dioxide levels.”

How about a study to see how taxpayers feel about being on a treadmill to fund incompetence and corruption in government?

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