



Written by [Wallis W. Wood](#) on January 7, 2012

What Was the Biggest Political Lie of 2011?

Two years ago, the scribes who put together PolitiFact selected Sarah Palin's comment about "death panels" as the biggest lie of 2009. In 2010, they once again sprang to the defense of Obamacare, pooh-poohing claims that it represented a "government takeover of health care" as the year's biggest falsehood.

So imagine my surprise when the PolitiFact declared that the "[Lie of the Year 2011](#)" was the Democrats' claim that "Republicans voted to end Medicare."



The brouhaha began in April, when Republicans in the House of Representatives passed Representative Paul Ryan's plan to reform the hugely expensive government healthcare program. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee jumped on the issue. In a widely circulated Web commercial released just four days after the vote, it warned that senior citizens would have to pay \$12,500 more each year for healthcare "because Republicans voted to end Medicare."

In the most blatantly dishonest attack of all, the Agenda Project, a liberal activist group, produced a [Web video](#) showing a Ryan look-alike pushing an old woman in a wheelchair off a cliff.

The attacks continued, even though the Ryan plan was defeated in the Senate. In November, Nancy Pelosi — the vitriolic former Speaker of the House who was demoted to Minority Leader after the Republican victories in 2010 — sent out a fundraising appeal that read: "House Republicans' vote to end Medicare is a shameful act of betrayal."

When PolitiFact first reported on the Democratic accusations, it found nine separate instances of factual inaccuracies. Some it branded as "False." Others were so blatantly wrong they earned a "Pants on Fire" designation.

For the record, the Ryan plan would not have made a single change in Medicare for anyone who is presently on the program. Nor would anyone be affected who would be eligible for Medicare over the next decade. For anyone 55 or older, the program would be unchanged.

Yet virtually every Democratic attack ad talked about senior citizens or featured pictures and videos of elderly people who were clearly too old to be affected by the Ryan plan. It was some of the worst political demagoguery I've ever seen.

But I don't think it was the "Lie of the Year 2011."



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No, I think the biggest lie of 2011 was “We’re going to cut spending.”

After more than two years of operating without a budget and just before heading home for the holidays, Congress finally passed an omnibus spending bill for Fiscal 2012. The 1,221-page beast calls for the expenditure of more than \$1 trillion, yet doesn’t reduce Federal spending by a penny.

According to an opinion piece in the [Wall Street Journal](#), there was only one major domestic program that cost U.S. taxpayers more than \$100 million that got the ax: the Department of Energy’s loan-guarantee program. Right, that’s the same one that cost U.S. taxpayers more \$500 million when the solar-power favorite Solyndra went under. The total savings from eliminating this boondoggle was less than \$500 million.

Meanwhile, spending on food stamps is scheduled to reach \$80 billion this year — more than double the amount just five years ago.

Since it’s almost impossible for us to grasp the real significance of the numbers Washington bandies about so casually, let me put it in terms that every family in America can understand (some wag put this together). Let’s remove eight zeroes from the Federal numbers and pretend we’re talking about a household budget. If your family operated the same way Washington does, here is what it would look like:

- Annual family income: \$21,700
- Annual family expenditures: \$38,200
- Increase in your credit-card debt: \$16,500
- Outstanding balance on your credit cards: \$142,710
- Amount you agree to cut spending: \$385

If you ever heard of a family operating in this manner, wouldn’t you think they are almost criminally irresponsible?

In fact, wouldn’t you want to delete the word “almost” from my previous sentence?

There were a lot of big lies told last year. That should come as no surprise. As the joke says, “How can you tell when a politician is lying?” Answer: “His lips are moving.” Or in Pelosi’s case, her lips are moving.

In narrowing the field of falsehoods to the biggest of the big ones, I choose the simple promise “We’ll cut spending.” For most of my life, our political masters in both parties have willingly, even gleefully, participated in a massive conspiracy to rob from our children and grandchildren. They have saddled these innocent victims with more than \$15 trillion in debt — plus many times that amount in promises our government has made but cannot possibly keep.

What is the single most important issue facing this country in 2012? I am convinced it’s stopping the spending.

That means electing enough people to the House and Senate who will no longer “go along to get along” — no matter who is in the White House.

That’s my story, and I’m sticking to it. What’s yours?

Until next time, keep some powder dry.

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