



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on February 19, 2014

## \$100 Billion in Improper Welfare Payments Uncovered

Recent news that the federal government [spent \\$100 billion improperly](#) caused barely a ripple in light of the government's enormous budget and the continuous flow of revelations of such waste and corruption that have provided journalists with full-time careers in tracking them down and writing about them.

One hundred billion dollars is less than three percent of the federal government's annual budget, and most observers are probably happy that the misspending isn't any worse than that.

The \$100 billion waste was discovered by two journalists at *National Review* when they uncovered an unheralded report from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that tracked "high-error" programs — those that waste at least \$750 million a year — and discovered that just these 13 programs waste more than \$100 billion every year. The top three, not surprisingly, are all healthcare related: Medicare Fee-for-Service reimbursements, Medicaid payouts to the states, and Part C of Medicare Advantage (which includes the prescription drug program) were responsible for nearly \$62 billion of the "improper" payments.

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Government waste, however, is vastly greater than just that uncovered at *National Review*. For example, there is last year's foreign aid package to Egypt that contained 16 F-16 fighter jets and 200 Abrams tanks. The aid was highly criticized as being gifts to an enemy, which sounds accurate, given that Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi was widely quoted as reminding his citizenry:

Dear brothers, we must not forget to nurse our children and grandchildren on hatred towards those Zionists and Jews, and all those who support them.

They must be nursed on hatred. The hatred must continue.

That, of course, would be the United States, the giver of those gifts.

Then there is the waste discovered by Michael Snyder, writing at The Economic Collapse blog, who is forever creating lists of ways the government is working to undermine the country's economy. In one of his latest lists, "66 Crazy Ways that the U.S. Government Is Wasting Your Hard-Earned Money," Snyder has a field day counting those ways:

- Leaving \$7 billion worth of military equipment behind in Afghanistan
- Spending \$384,949 to have Yale University scientists do a study on sexual conflict among ducks
- Giving \$1.5 million to a Boston Hospital to find out why three-quarters of lesbians in the United States are overweight
- Spending \$27 million to teach Moroccans how to make pottery





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And so on.

There's also Senator Tom Coburn (R-Okla.), who virtually guaranteed himself a lifetime job in the Senate (until announcing his retirement voluntarily last month), with the annual publication of his "Wastebook," which cited 100 of the more egregious ways the government wastes taxpayer monies.

The Heritage Foundation listed its top 10 examples of wasteful government spending which included

- Spending \$100,000 on an outhouse on an Alaskan trail, noting (with picture included) that it "includes a single toilet with no internal plumbing."
- Building a million-dollar bus stop in Arlington, Virginia with heated floors that don't work
- Giving \$125,000 to a 3-D printer company promising to provide plans on how to make pizza-by-printer at home

And so on.

There's even a website — The Waste List — which simply lists, page after page, how the feds manage to bilk taxpayers endlessly in projects bordering on the edge of sanity.

Perhaps the most outrageous of all the big spenders, however, is the First Family. Last summer the Obamas visited Africa on a trip with costs estimated to approach \$100 million. As Fox News recounted:

Among the related costs will be fighter jets; hundreds of Secret Service agents; a Navy ship with a full trauma center; and military cargo planes to bring 56 vehicles including 14 limousines and three trucks loaded with sheets of bulletproof glass to cover the windows of the hotels where the first family will stay.

Happily, the Obamas decided at the last minute to forgo a safari, which would have included the expense of bringing along a team of sharp shooters in case one of the Obamas ventured too close to danger.

And that's just one trip. In 2011, the total cost of catering to the First Family's every whim [came to \\$1.4 billion](#). This included the biggest staff, with the highest wages of any administration in history — 469 of them — with half making more than \$100,000 a year, including a dog handler for First Dog Bo. First Lady Michelle spent \$10 million on her own vacations in just one year.

So, per capita at least, the biggest wastrels in Washington live in the White House.

*A graduate of Cornell University and a former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at [www.LightFromTheRight.com](http://www.LightFromTheRight.com), primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at [badelman@thenewamerican.com](mailto:badelman@thenewamerican.com).*



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