



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on January 16, 2012

Sen. Rand Paul Refunds \$500,000 of His Budget to U.S. Treasury

The money represents around 16 percent of Paul's Senate office's official budget.

"I ran to stop the reckless spending," said Paul at a press conference announcing the return. "And I ran to end the damaging process of elected officials acting as errand boys, competing to see who could bring back the biggest check and the most amount of pork."

What makes Paul's actions so refreshing is that he was able to record the half-million-dollar federal savings while pursuing one of the most energetic (albeit conservative) legislative agendas of any freshman U.S. Senator. Focusing on his promise of fiscal responsibility, the Kentucky Senator offered spending cut amendments to nearly every relevant bill that came across his desk, while still representing his own constituency's needs — working, for example, to stop the Environmental Protection Agency's assault on Kentucky's crucial coal industry.



According to a press release from his Senate office, Senator Paul was one of the only legislators to produce an entire fiscally responsible blueprint for the federal government, "a promise he made while campaigning in 2010. His plan, introduced in the first few weeks of his term, would balance the federal budget in five years."

Paul also set his sights on Social Security reform, partnering with Senators Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Mike Lee (R-Utah) to introduce a commonsense plan they say would put the system on fiscally sound footing for the next 75 years. Additionally, his office announced that Paul has plans to introduce a blueprint for saving the floundering Medicare system.

According to the [Louisville Courier-Journal](#), Paul said he has 12 staff members in Kentucky and around 15 in Washington, D.C., a staff size that is similar to other U.S. Senators. "Paul said his staff's pay is also commensurate with the offices of other Senators, but that his office has been frugal in making job and salary offers," the paper reported. "We are doing our job, but still saving money," Paul said.

Paul said that he was "sort of aghast" to discover that in his first year as a Senator his office had a budget of \$3 million — which was actually a reduction from the previous year. He said he would like to see further reductions in the budgets of U.S. Senators and Representatives, noting that if every Senator and House member modeled his own efforts over the past year, the federal government could save over \$100 million every year.



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However, the Senator said he realized how difficult it could be to pry that money out of the hands of his colleagues. “When it’s someone else’s money, people look at it like it’s free and they don’t look at it in a frugal way,” he observed.

Not surprisingly, Rand Paul appears to be following the example of his father, [Congressman Ron Paul](#) (R-Texas) who returned \$140,000 of his office’s budget in 2011. Similarly, in 2010 the elder Paul sent back \$100,000 of his congressional office budget to the Treasury, \$90,000 in 2009, and around \$58,000 the year before.

Not to be outdone, two of Senator Paul’s legislative colleagues from Kentucky sent out their own press statements insisting that they, too, had returned money to the nation’s taxpayers. A spokesman for Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said that as “a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars, Sen. McConnell has returned taxpayer funds every year he’s been in office.” In fact, said the spokesman, given the “massive debt crisis facing the country, this past year Sen. McConnell led by example, sending back over a million dollars.”

Similarly a spokesman for Kentucky U.S. Representative John Yarmuth said that the Democratic Congressman had returned \$70,000 of his office’s allotted \$1.4 million office budget over the past year. Additionally, said the spokesman, Yarmuth donates his annual \$174,000 salary to local charities.

Also, according to [Politico.com](#), Senator Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) announced that he had returned \$636,036 of his office’s budget to the Treasury in Fiscal Year 2010 and another \$503,161 in 2011. And [Representative Bill Owens](#) (D-N.Y.) reported that in 2011 his office returned some \$230,000 to the Treasury.

For his own part, Senator Rand Paul said he hoped his actions would serve as a catalyst of sorts for reduced government spending and waste at all levels. “We can carry out our duties in a fiscally responsible way,” Paul admonished his fellow members of Congress and government officials. “Government can be both smart and efficient. We are proving that — and trying to convince the rest of Washington.”



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