

10 Ways President-Elect Trump Can Cut Waste

Our friends Adam Andrzejewski and Matthew Tyrmand of have done some great work documenting government waste and advocating for efficient constitutionally limited government spending.

Recently, Andrzejewski came out with an interesting pre-Inauguration column offering President-elect Trump advice on places to cut federal government waste.

We like this list of 10 places government waste can be cut because of its constitutional focus, but also because it is not the usual “we can only solve the waste problem by doing something big and difficult” answer we always get from Congress.

Plus, we agree with Adam Andrzejewski’s insight that “One way to encourage economic growth is to stop wasting taxpayer dollars on activities that do nothing to create wealth.”

Here’s the list:

- **Disarm Federal Regulatory Agencies:**

The scope of federal power is growing. Today, there are 200,000 federal officers with arrest and firearm authority across 67 federal agencies vs. only 182,000 U.S. Marines. These 67 federal agencies spent a total of \$ billion on guns, ammunition and military-style equipment (FY2006-FY2014).

- **Fire EPA Lawyers:**

If the EPA were a private-sector law firm, it would rank as the 11th largest. Since 2008, the EPA spent \$1.2 billion in salary for over 1,000 lawyers. More money was spent on “general attorneys” than on chemists, general health scientists, ecologists, chemists, microbiologists, geologists, hydrologists,

toxicologists, biologists, physical scientists and health physicists combined. When the EPA is sued, the Department of Justice defends the EPA in court. The EPA doesn't need 1,020 lawyers to harass the private sector.

- **Blockade Federal Funds for Sanctuary Cities:**

Issue an executive order telling all federal contractors they have three years to move operations from any city that won't follow federal law, or lose their contract. For example, in Austin, Texas, the amount of federal contracting was \$900 million. In Chicago, total federal contracting amounted to \$ billion (FY2016). In San Francisco, the top twenty federal contractors were paid \$18.6 billion last year.

- **Cut Funding for Agency Self-Promotion:**

There's no public purpose for a phalanx of 5,000 federal public relations officers costing \$500 million per year. And it's an abject waste of resources to spend over \$1 billion annually with outside PR firms. Andrzejewski identified these firms, charging the agencies up to \$88 per hour for their interns, billing \$275/hour for graphic designers and \$525/hour for their own executives.

- **Direct Small Business funds to small businesses:**

Lending by the U.S. Small Business Administration should go to small businesses. Andrzejewski identified \$14 billion in SBA financial transactions flowing to anything but small business including some of the most successful Wall Street bankers and boutique investment firms; \$200 million in lending to private country clubs, golf clubs, beach clubs and tennis clubs; \$142 million into ZIP code 90210 (Beverly Hills, CA); and over a quarter-billion to subdivisions of the Fortune 100.

- **Eliminate the Export-Import Bank:**

Andrzejewski studied the U.S. Export-Import Bank and found a cesspool of cronyism. The No. 1 importer beneficiary (\$7.1 billion) was Pemex—the leading oil conglomerate in Mexico, owned by the Mexican government.

The No. 1 export beneficiary (\$60 billion) was The Boeing Company, who received one-third of all export activity. In just one of the transactions, Boeing sold nearly a billion dollars of airplanes to the state-owned airline of Angola, a nation whose people are malnourished and frequently starve, Andrzejewski observed.

- **Reduce Federal Funding for the Ivy League:**

With an endowment averaging \$2 million per undergraduate student and total accumulated assets of nearly \$220 billion, the Ivy League now operates like a hedge fund with classes, says Andrzejewski. Over the last six years, the Ivies pulled in direct federal revenues of \$19 billion, which rivaled the \$23 billion collected in student tuition. In FY2014, tax breaks on their endowment alone totaled \$3.4 billion, or \$60,000 per student.

- **Finish the task of VA Reform:**

During the VA scandal when up to 1,000 sick veterans died while wait-listed to see doctors, the VA added 40,000 new positions to its payroll—yet only 3,600 were doctors, says Andrzejewski. Over the past four years, the VA ramped up hiring of interior decorators, public relations officers, lawyers, gardeners and many other positions. Today, wait times are at all-time highs, with 500,000 sick veterans waiting longer than 30 days to see a doctor. Why? Because there still aren't enough doctors.

- **Open the Books on Federal Employee Pensions:**

Recently, the Obama Administration denied 's Freedom of Information Act request for the federal pensions, citing "a clear invasion of personal privacy." We vehemently disagree. Federal employee salaries are public; why not pensions? Trump should open the books on federal pensions. Trump should clarify the following standard: Public employee retirement pensions are public information subject to open records law, not sheltered

by privacy law.

- **Cut Federal Funding to Municipalities paying lavish salaries to public employees:**

We believe in local control, but taxpayers in Maine shouldn't subsidize excessive compensation packages in California. has identified over 220,000 public employees in California making over \$100,000 per year, costing taxpayers \$35 billion annually. Here's one framework for a Trump policy, suggests Adam Andrzejewski: Any public employee costing over \$200,000 per year shouldn't be subsidized by taxpayers from anywhere else in the country.

Although this list from is by no means comprehensive, we like its innovative and insightful additions to the list of places where Donald Trump and his team can start to drain the swamp.
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