



## WASTE REPORT for May 23, 2016

### 52 Weeks of Waste

This week's edition of *The Waste Report* highlighting the outdated [East-West Center](#) was the 52<sup>nd</sup> in our weekly chronicle of the federal government wasting your tax dollars. To mark this milestone we thought we'd pause and take a look back.

First let's start with the numbers. In total, over the last year, The FSO Subcommittee has found **over \$1.8 billion of wasteful government spending, or about \$35 million a week. That is the total tax liability of more than 250,000 average American taxpayers, or roughly the total city populations of Durham, NC; or Irvine, CA; and just shy of Louisville, KY.**

Of course we did not count in that total the \$255 billion spent this year for interest on our debt, which we highlighted in our March 7<sup>th</sup> edition, [Interested in Waste](#). Interest is the cost of federal borrowing and cannot be pushed off to the future. This year, **it cost each and every American about \$800, but since not everyone pays taxes, those that do saw their first \$2,700 in taxes go just to interest.** Worse still, interest does not pay for one salary or buy a single paperclip.

While wasting taxpayer money is no laughing matter, some of the things we found did prompt a few painful chuckles. Who could forget [paying to send Pakistani kids to Space Camp and Dollywood to learn English?](#) What about the [3-day class to teach federal employees how to write an e-mail...at the Department of Education?](#) Wasteful and ironic. You probably almost laughed out loud when you read about federal studies of [the supernatural in Alaska](#), or the one where researchers planned to [ask college kids why their friends were getting fat](#).

Of course, most of our reports probably made you want to cry. Like when the [Department of Veterans Affairs spent \\$8 million on solar panels that were never used](#) and would have taken 53 years to pay for themselves if they had been. You probably wanted to pull your hair out when you heard the [National Institutes of Health helped fund a conference on balding](#), or that the [Department of Defense lost \\$29 million of heavy equipment \(cranes and tractor-trucks\)](#) in Afghanistan.

To lighten the mood, we had a little fun too. In December, we celebrated Festivus (the made-up holiday from *Seinfeld*) by partaking in the long held tradition of [airing grievances](#) where we highlighted more than 30 examples of waste costing taxpayers more than \$1 billion. Even more exciting was our first [Tournament of Government Waste](#) held in March where we pitted 16 of our favorite examples of waste against each other and let voters decide what the worst example of government waste is. In a real barn burner, [Business Plans for Deported Immigrants](#) topped favored [Millionaires in Public Housing](#) to become the 2016 Champion of Government Waste.

**We wish we could say, we've found all the waste, but we've barely scratched the surface... so, stay tuned next week for yet another example of government waste.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> You can read all our waste reports at: [https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/subcommittees/fso/reports?PageNum\\_rs=1](https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/subcommittees/fso/reports?PageNum_rs=1)