WA$TE GIVING

In this holiday season, we give thanks to our loyal readers and fellow waste watchers. As a small thank you, we present "WasteGiving 2016," a compilation of waste identified by our friends and partners. Just as this holiday involves lots of travel, family time, eating, and yes, napping, we take a similarly themed journey through Washington's wasteful spending, complete with all the fixings.

TRAVEL

1

TSA, Flexing its Thanksgiving Travel Muscle – $450,000

Traveling through the woods to Grandmother's house this Thanksgiving? Do we have some great news for you! The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) employees at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport should be fitter than ever thanks to $52,650 worth of gym memberships subsidized by taxpayers. However, Arizona TSA agents aren't the only ones getting fit on the taxpayer's dime. The Department of Homeland Security is spending $400,000 on gym memberships, including 236 memberships at a "state of the art" gym and spa in downtown Washington, D.C. that includes luxurious locker rooms and a rooftop penthouse pool and lounge.

MEALTIME!

2

Farm Subsidies: Sweeter Than Sugar - $138 Million

Pumpkin pie may be a little less sweet this year when you hear about this program costing taxpayers millions. The U.S. Sugar Program provides loans to sugar farmers with a guarantee that if the price of sugar falls below a certain amount, sugar farmers may pay back those loans in sugar. All of the sugar received as a result of these loans is then sold to ethanol plants, most times at a loss. According to CBO, the sugar program could cost taxpayers $138 million over the next 10 years.

3

Food Stamps Paid for WHAT??

Since 2000, participation in the SNAP program (food stamps) has risen from more than 17 million people, costing $17 billion, to more than 45 million people, costing $74 billion. The lax controls of this program have allowed for the purchase of foods with little nutritional value like Kentucky Fried Chicken, energy drinks, Taco Bell, Burger King, Starbucks, and booze. While the program is a vital, short term safety net for Americans, poor oversight is wasting billions that could be better spent helping those with the most urgent needs.

4

Soybeans Go Sour in the Desert - $34 Million

The American people have generously come to the aide of hurting peoples around the world. Thanks to poor oversight and a lack of common sense, however, Washington has often squandered these precious resources. No better example is the case of soybeans and the reconstruction in Afghanistan. In 2009, the USDA created a program to encourage Afghans to eat and grow soybeans. However, just a year before the program started, a British report concluded that Afghans "don't like soybeans" and have a poor growing cycle for producing them. If the USDA would have conducted just a little bit of research, it could have saved taxpayers $34 million and five years of work.

5

"Pointless, Like Giving Caviar to an Elephant" - $300,000

In 2012, the USDA gave Fish Processors of Idaho $300,000 to promote their caviar nationwide. Caviar is considered one of the most luxurious cuisines in the world, selling anywhere from $70 to $400 an ounce. At a time when many Americans struggle to put nutritious meals for their families on the table, it is hard to see how Idaho caviar merits a taxpayer subsidy.

6

I Bet I Can Guess Your Favorite Food! - $800,000

Did you know that pizza is the most popular food in the world? Well, this study funded by your tax dollars proves that pizza is as addictive as crack! The study, preformed by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, studied 100 college students to see which foods they thought were most addictive. Results concluded that the most addictive foods were chocolate, ice cream and French fries. For the past five years the research has cost taxpayers almost $800,000.

7

The Freshman 15. Fact or Fiction? - $1.1 Million

You have undoubtedly heard of the "Freshman 15." It's the phenomenon that freshman college students gain weight their first year in college. The Feds have decided to get to the bottom of this mystery, spending $1.1 million to determine if friends of college students are to blame for students eating more. The study concluded that, "anti-obesity efforts directed specifically at college freshmen will likely have little impact on obesity prevalence among young adults." Unfortunately, the money spent figuring this out could have sent 42 students to Arizona State University, where the study was conducted.

8

Stealing Your Lunch Money - $12.5 Million

The National School Lunch Program provides eligible children, with free or low-cost meals each school day. However, a report from the USDA's OIG revealed that over half of the households sampled in their study were ineligible for these benefits, including one family who is employed by the New York Times and owns a semi-pro football team. In total, about $12.5 million was spent on families from ineligible households.

9

Fighting Childhood Obesity with Games and Hip-Hop

Beware of white bread! The NIH is educating children on unhealthy foods, like white bread, through a game called "Go, Slow, and Whoah!" Students were given paddles that were colored green (go), yellow (slow), and red (woah!). The kids were then asked to hold up the correct paddle when a food from each category was specified. According to the NIH, a PB&J sandwich is a "Woah!" food. Childhood obesity may have to be solved with kale and quinoa…or hip-hop songs…

In an effort to eliminate childhood obesity, the USDA and NIH have teamed up to bring you "Hip-Hop to Health Jr." The program creates songs that will influence children to eat healthy, like "Bake Don't Fry" and "Cereal Rhyme." The program has achieved some success, but at a cost $3.5 million to taxpayers. If you're interested in hearing the obesity fighting hip-hop songs you paid for, they're available for $12 through the program's website.

FOOTBALL

10

Turkey Tailgate -$5 Million

Watching the football game or playing backyard catch on Thanksgiving? The USDA cares about football, and what you eat during your tailgate, just as much as you do! The USDA awarded a $5 million grant tasked with linking scientific research to outreach and education, and included funding for "Ultimate Tailgating Packages" for tailgaters at the University of Nebraska last year. The tailgate packages included: a koozie, aprons, and a thermometer to be sure your beef is fully cooked. Be sure your turkey is cooked all the way through this year!

NAPTIME

11

Take a Nap, You've Earned It - $145,000

After a hearty meal and a long afternoon of talking with relatives, you've earned a nap on the recliner. However, employees at the Social Security Administration (SSA), may not have earned their nap like you did. According to a SSA Inspector general report, the SSA paid out "about $145,000 in awards to 240 employees that it had disciplined for conduct issues." These employees were disciplined for sleeping while on duty, possession of a weapon onsite, sexual harassment, and consumption of alcohol on Federal property.

Endnotes

1. U.S. Senator Tom Coburn M.D., Wastebook 2014, Page 22, https://goo.gl/UOGBWC.

2. Morrone Jr., James, "CBO Projects U.S. Sugar Program will Costs Taxpayers $138 Million,"air.org, Americans for Tax Reform, 6 April 2016, https://goo.gl/2bLjld.

3. U.S. Senator Tom Coburn M.D., Wastebook 2012, Page 10, https://goo.gl/TpwzSL.

4. 1. U.S. Senator Tom Coburn M.D., Wastebook 2014, Page 57, https://goo.gl/lQGupB.

5. U.S. Senator Tom Coburn M.D., Wastebook 2012, Page 22, https://goo.gl/KAvwNT.

6. U.S. Senator Jeff Flake, Wastebook The Farce Awakens, Page 17, https://goo.gl/8jMquS.

7. Harrington, Elizabeth, "Feds Spend $1.1 Million Studying the 'Freshman 15'," freebeacon.com, Free Beacon, 21 October 2015, https://goo.gl/KTYrD1.

8. Harrington, Elizabeth, "Audit: USDA Spent $12.5 Million on Free Lunches For Ineligible Households," freebeacon.com, Free Beacon, 6 May 2015, https://goo.gl/2KX3r3.

9. Harrington, Elizabeth, "Feds Spend $3,071 for Kids to Raise Red Paddles to Protest Donuts," freebeacon.com, Free Beacon, 20 April 2016, https://goo.gl/LbBI3Q.

Harrington, Elizabeth, "Feds Spent $3.5 Million on Anti-Obesity Hip-Hop Songs," freebeacon.com, Free Beacon, 11 February 2016, https://goo.gl/9liXk2.

10. U.S. Senator Jeff Flake, Wastebook The Farce Awakens, Page 97, https://goo.gl/49RVAg.

11. Office of the Inspector General - Social Security Administration, Social Security Administration Employees with Conduct Issues Who Received Monetary Awards, Pages 1-5, https://goo.gl/unRDNI.