



Drunk on Debt



A Report from the Foundation to Restore Accountability

Our country is in trouble. The national debt has reached \$19 trillion, with billions added each day. Thousands of Federal programs are losing hundreds of billions of dollars annually to waste, fraud and abuse. Interest payments on the debt and mandatory spending programs like Medicare and Social Security will soon consume all Federal resources. The time is now to make tough decisions and prioritize spending in Washington. Ask yourself, “are the Federal programs in this report worth borrowing against our future? Your children’s future? Their children’s future?” *Drunk on Debt*, comprised of information readily available to the public and mostly from our own archives, is just a fun conversation starter. Agree or disagree with its entries, it is clear that choices will have to be made to secure our future.



Distilled Spirits Council of the United States “aka American liquor”

The Distilled Spirits Council (DISCUS) “is the national trade association representing America’s leading distillers and nearly 70% of all distilled spirits brands sold in this country.” With members that include Miller-Coors, Anheuser-Busch InBev, Jim Beam and Jack Daniels, DISCUS represents an industry that has annual revenues exceeding \$18 billion and has over \$1 billion in exports. Recently, taxpayers funded transportation costs for foreign reporters on a five-day, six “boozy” night tour of American whiskey country. Chris Moody, a Yahoo News reporter, explains¹ the daily routine of the trip: “Wake up early, climb onto the bus, drink whiskey, tour a factory, get back on the road, guzzle the night away.” A DISCUS spokeswoman informed guests on the trip “I brought enough Advil to take care of a small army of children.” “She passed us each a bottle of water and powdered vitamins to help us avoid hangovers, while reminding us, again, to “drink responsibly.”²

Heavy Drinking in Thirties Linked with Immaturity - \$548,731

For some, college partying never stops with age, and heavy drinking extends into post-graduate life. With part of \$548,731 in grants from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), one group of researchers discovered adults in their thirties who drink heavily also feel immature. At age 25, people are not likely to feel immature even when they drink significantly, the federally funded research found. “They also view blacking out, vomiting, and drunk driving as more acceptable because peers are behaving similarly.” “By 29, when many of their peers have settled down, individuals who still drink heavily may start to view themselves as ‘Peter Pans’ of partying, who never fully matured.”³

College Students Who Study Abroad Drink More- \$41,380

Thanks to research funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, taxpayers now know students who study abroad double the amount they drink while away. The \$41,380 federally backed study also found students under the age of 21 nearly tripled their drinking habits.⁴



CDC Funded Magazine Details How to Throw a House Party - \$700,000

The CDC-funded STOP AIDS Project (SAP) of San Francisco receives nearly \$700,000 a year in federal HIV prevention funds from the CDC. SAP published a resource magazine, which states that it was funded “with a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,” and includes an article entitled “Party at BJ’s,” which explains how to have a “house party” and how much alcohol to serve. One tip is to “go and buy a little bit of every kind of drink, [even if] you may look like a suicidal drunk in line at the grocery store.”⁵



Custom Crystal Wine Glasses and Barware - \$5,000,000

The State Department awarded a \$5 million, multi-year contract to Simon Pearce, a Vermont-based specialty glassmaker, for the production of custom, hand-blown crystal stemware and barware for its embassies. The State Department’s solicitation for its fancy new glasses claims that the “United States international relations, national interest and success are, in part, built upon the ability of our ambassadors to entertain host country nationals in our embassies and residences abroad.” The winning glassware was required to produce “a sharp high-pitched resonant sound when tapped with a metal object, such as a fork or spoon” and be emblazoned with the Department of State seal.⁶

Do Koozies Help Keep your Beer Cold? - \$1,300,000

With a \$1.3 million grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF), researchers have confirmed that a koozie keeps condensation from occurring, which is why it is essential for all warm weather drinking events. After their findings, they were published in the magazine Physics Today, with the article “Condensation, Atmospheric Motion, and Cold Beer.” It’s safe to say that these researchers could have just gone to a backyard bar-b-que, to see if a koozie really keeps your beer cold. That’s one less koozie for the American taxpayer...⁷



NIH Study Tests Whether Gamblers Lose More While Drunk - \$154,688

The Washington Times reported in 2014, “the NIH granted two universities a combined \$154,688 to determine if drinking excess amounts of alcohol leads to losing more money while gambling.” The researchers conducting the study recruited 21-to 30-year olds to drink alcohol until they were over the legal drinking limit. Gamblers then took to the video poker machines to see how well they performed drunk compared to when they gambled sober. “We don’t need a study to tell Americans that gambling while drunk is a bad idea,” said a prominent government watchdog. “And the government certainly doesn’t need to make taxpayers pay for such an idiotic study.”⁸

Wine Classes for minors - \$853,000

A new report from U.S. Senator Jeff Flake says “the National Science Foundation (NSF) gave an \$853,000 grant to Yakima Valley Community College to expand its Vineyard Technology and Winery programs and get kids “interested and involved with wine making before they are legally old enough to drink alcohol.” According to the Seattle Times, Washington state law now allows underage minors who are 18-to 20-years old “to taste wine while they are enrolled in a community- or technical-college program teaching viticulture, enology or culinary arts.”⁹ The Senator’s report even acknowledged that some programs in the state “require students to try as many as 600 wines a year.”¹⁰



Feds Spend Millions getting Monkeys Drunk - \$3,200,000

Monkeys are drinking up \$3.2 million in “booze” grants from the National Institutes of health (NIH). The Washington Times reports the goal of the study was “to get monkeys to drink alcohol excessively to determine what effect it has long term on their body tissue.” While you and I may think this study is monkey business, the Washington Times states that “researchers justify the expensive project, by claiming it will bridge the gap between rodent and human studies and allow the alcohol research community to better understand disease processes associated with alcoholism.”¹¹



Birds are Getting Drunk on Taxdollars - \$51,326

The Oregon Health and Science University was awarded a \$51,326 grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study if “sloshed Zebra finches slur their birdsongs,” a new report from U.S. Senator John McCain reveals. The Researchers who administered the study observed the birds that drank grape flavored ethanol to see if it altered the birds’ sound structure. According to McCain, research showed that “when allowed access, finches readily drink alcohol, significantly, and sing a song with altered acoustic structure.”¹²

Endnotes

- ¹ Moody, Chris, "My spring break with Big Liquor," news.yahoo.com, Yahoo News, 6 May 2014, <http://news.yahoo.com/whiskey-politics-220448498.html>.
- ² U.S. Senator Tom Coburn M.D., Treasure MAP: The Market Access Program's Bounty of Waste, Loot and Spoils Plundered from Taxpayers, Page 12, http://www.restoreaccountability.com/sites/restoreacc/uploads/documents/library_docs/FINAL_final_MAP_report_2.pdf.
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- ⁴ U.S. Senator Tom Coburn M.D., Wastebook 2010: A Guide to Some of the Most Wasteful Government Spending of 2010, Page 38, http://www.restoreaccountability.com/sites/restoreacc/uploads/documents/library_docs/Correction-Wastebook2010.pdf.
- ⁵ U.S. Senator Tom Coburn M.D., CDC Off Center, Page 104, http://www.restoreaccountability.com/sites/restoreacc/uploads/documents/library_docs/CDCOffCenter1000.pdf.
- ⁶ U.S. Senator Tom Coburn M.D., Wastebook 2013, Page 74, http://www.restoreaccountability.com/sites/restoreacc/uploads/documents/library_docs/Wastebook_2013_FINAL.pdf.
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- ⁸ Johnson, Drew, "Wasted! Feds spend millions of tax dollars getting monkeys drunk," washingtontimes.com, The Washington Times, 11 September 2014, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/sep/11/golden-hammer-feds-spends-millions-to-study-drunke/?page=all>.
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- ¹¹ Johnson, Drew, "Wasted! Feds spend millions of tax dollars getting monkeys drunk," washingtontimes.com, The Washington Times, 11 September 2014, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/sep/11/golden-hammer-feds-spends-millions-to-study-drunke/?page=all>.
- ¹² U.S. Senator John McCain, America's Most Wasted: Runaway Spending, Page 20, http://www.mccain.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/108efca4-05a9-4b57-be1b-1fa11149fea8/americas-most-wasted-runaway-spending.pdf.