

Waste Action Alert

A publication of the RSC Sunset Caucus from co-chairs Kevin Brady (R-TX) and Jason Chaffetz (R-UT)
Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH), RSC Chairman

Eliminate Subsidies for Public Broadcasting

May 16, 2012

Program or Item Targeted: This bill would eliminate taxpayer subsidies for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Cost of Program or Item: This bill would save \$444.1 million annually.

Background on Program or Item to Be Sunseted: The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (C.P.B.) is a non-profit corporation created in 1967 with the signing of the Public Broadcasting Act. The intent of federally-funded public broadcasting in the Public Broadcasting Act was to make “telecommunications services more available to all citizens of the United States” (47 U.S.C. 396). Today C.P.B. provides funding for PBS and NPR, along with local stations. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting is a private, non-profit organization which receives funds both from federal subsidies and through sources such as advertising.

Why This Item Is Wasteful: It should not be the responsibility of the American taxpayer to help fund the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The original intent of the C.P.B. was to give Americans a greater opportunity to receive these services, but with the advent of the television and internet age this goal has been resoundingly met. Federal subsidies for public broadcasting no longer make a significant impact on the number of American citizens with access to these services.

What is more, according to its most recently available tax filings, Director and President of PBS Paula Kerger received \$603,403 in reportable compensation in 2010. Former NPR CEO Vivian Schiller, who was forced to resign after the controversial firing of longtime analyst Juan Williams, received \$479,011 in compensation in 2011. While there is nothing inherently wrong with high salaries in a private company, this sort of expenditure suggests that that these organizations do not need the help of taxpayer subsidies as channeled through C.P.B. The taxpayer should not be in any way responsible for the bill in this instance.

As a final note, President Obama’s 2010 bipartisan deficit reduction commission recommended that funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting be eliminated completely.

MEMBER ACTION ITEM: Rep. Doug Lamborn has introduced H.R. 68, “To amend the Communications Act of 1934 to prohibit Federal funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting after fiscal year 2013.” Rep. Lamborn is also currently circulating a letter to Appropriations asking them to end funding to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in this year’s appropriations bill. For any questions, or if you would like to cosponsor the bill or cosign the letter, please contact Kristine Michalson at Kristine.Michalson@mail.house.gov.

If you would like to participate in eliminating wasteful programs with the RSC Sunset Caucus, please e-mail Rick.Eberstadt@mail.house.gov.

Note: Not every item featured in the Waste Action Alerts is necessarily endorsed by the RSC. These Alerts highlight the individual initiatives of members of the RSC Sunset Caucus.

*“The RSC Sunset Caucus uncovers government waste and seeks to eliminate it,
working to sunset programs that taxpayers shouldn’t be paying for.”*

