

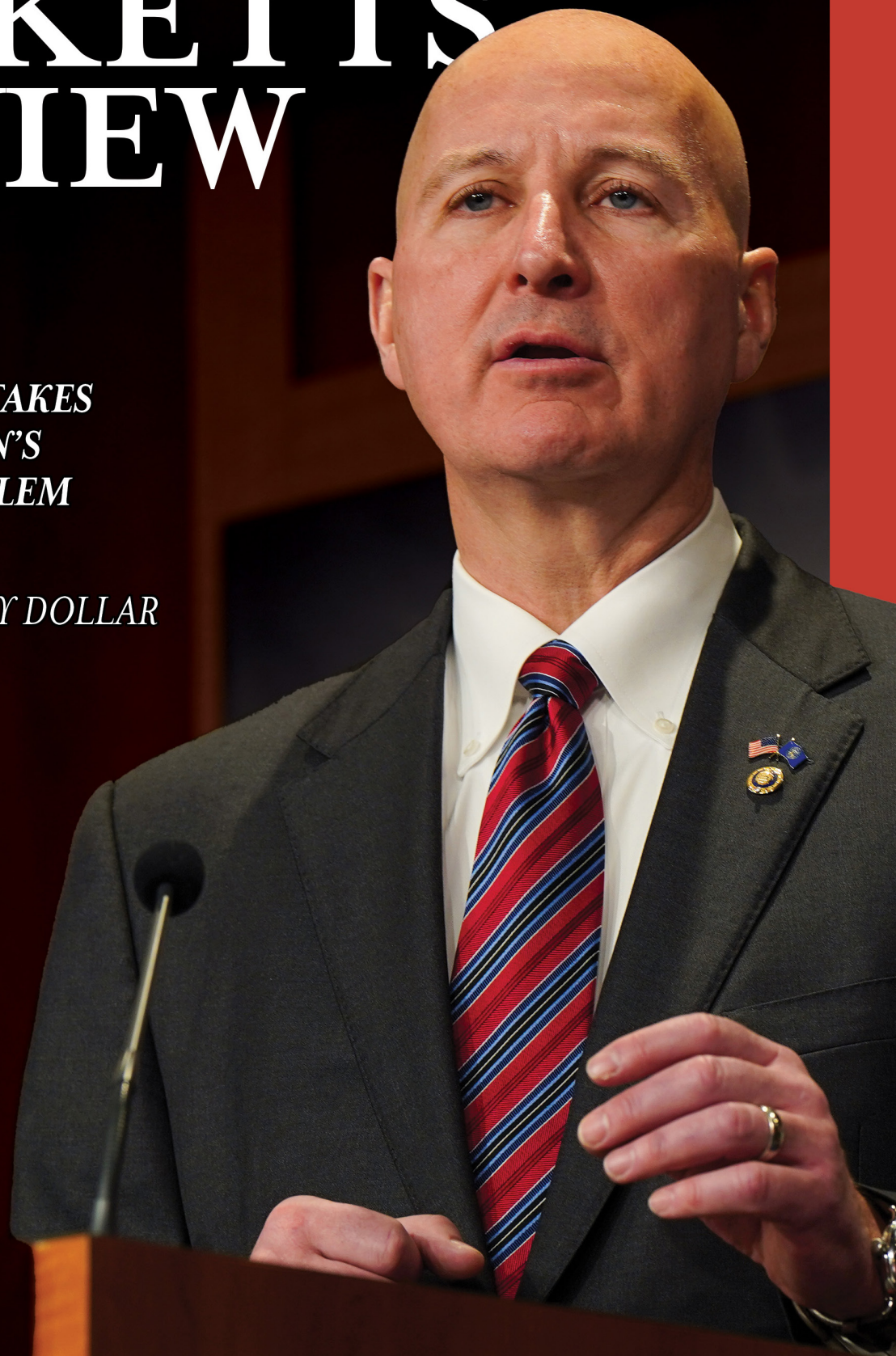
ISSUE NO. 1 • AUGUST 2024

# RICKETTS REVIEW

*PETE RICKETTS TAKES  
ON WASHINGTON'S  
SPENDING PROBLEM*

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*DISSECTING EVERY DOLLAR*



Fellow Nebraskans,

We live in the best place in the world. The reason is our people. It's why Nebraska is what America is supposed to be. As I travel across our state, I am reminded of the values that make Nebraska special. We're committed to family, community, and hard work. These values are the same ones that guide my service to Nebraska.

When I was Governor, we spent eight years delivering on excellence. We put taxpayers first. We kept spending low. We respected individual freedoms, ran government well, and provided \$12.7 billion in tax relief.

On the contrary, the Biden-Harris Administration's federal spending spree has had devastating consequences. Reckless spending has left our nation with a crippling national debt. It's driven up inflation and slowed economic growth. It's forced the average American household to spend \$13,000 more per year to maintain the same standard of living they had when Biden and Harris took office. That's not right.

To restore fiscal sanity in Washington, we must learn from our successes in Nebraska. As Senator, I'm fighting to stop reckless spending, cut the bureaucratic red tape, and make the federal government work better.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you. I will continue fighting to fix the broken process in D.C. so we can get our spending under control.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pete Ricketts". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pete Ricketts  
U.S. Senator for Nebraska

# THE RICKETTS RECORD

## CONTROLLING SPENDING & PROVIDING TAX RELIEF

When I was Governor, I told the Legislature that a balanced budget was our most important job. In fact, it was required by our state constitution. Working together, we kept our spending in check. We held state budgets to an average of 2.8% growth annually – and passed our budgets on schedule. We lived within our means.

At the same time, revenues in Nebraska grew on average around 4% per year – more than our spending growth. That enabled us to deliver \$12.7 billion in tax relief to Nebraska families.

### DELIVERING \$12.7 BILLION IN TOTAL TAX RELIEF

- \$10+ Billion in Direct Property Tax Relief
- Eliminated State Tax on Veterans' Retirement Income
- Eliminated State Tax on Social Security Benefits
- Cut Income Tax on Families and Businesses

## IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICE

We also improved the level of services to Nebraskans. We utilized a process improvement methodology called Lean Six Sigma to reduce the amount of time people spent filling out forms, standing in line, or waiting on hold. It also saved taxpayer dollars.

900  
Cost-Savings  
Projects

\$100M  
of Hard Savings  
to Taxpayers

900,000  
State Teammate  
Hours Saved

Reduced Permit  
Turnaround Times  
By As Much As  
80%

In Nebraska, we showed it's possible to control spending, balance the budget, and deliver significant tax relief while still improving services. D.C. should do the same.

# WASHINGTON HAS A SPENDING PROBLEM

Where Nebraska has succeeded, Washington has failed. The federal government – in just the four years from 2019 to 2023 – grew its spending by 40%<sup>1</sup>. Meanwhile, our population only grew 2.5%.<sup>2</sup> Revenues are not the problem. Revenue increased 28% during that period. That reckless spending has given our nation a crippling national debt of \$35 trillion. That's over \$266,000 per household – a second mortgage for Nebraska families.<sup>3</sup>

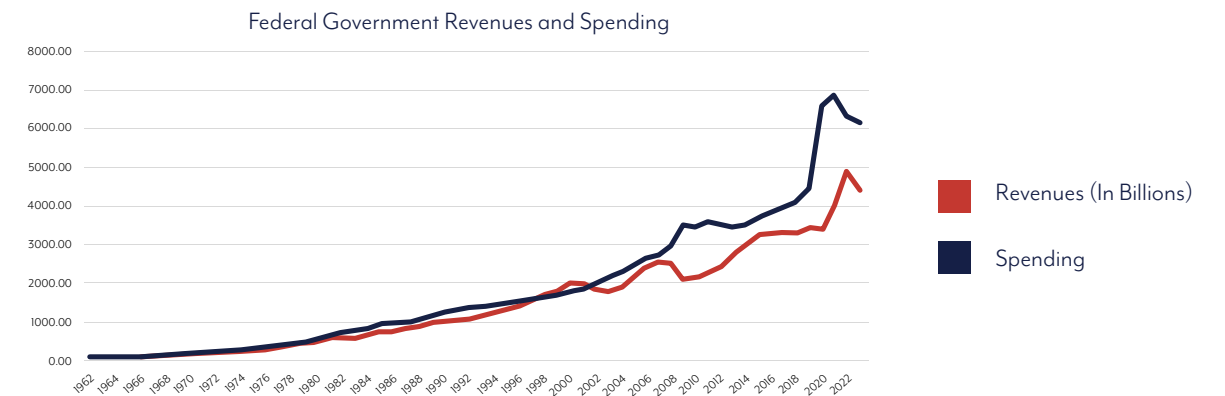
Runaway spending has led to inflation and higher prices for Americans. It's slowed economic growth and stifled opportunities for our families. It's also led to higher interest rates, which makes borrowing money more expensive.

Our country is headed down a path of fiscal disaster. We must reverse course.

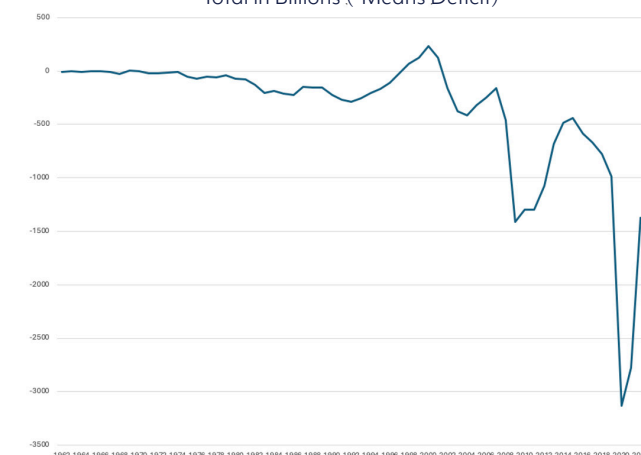
Prices are up  
**20%**  
since Biden took office<sup>4</sup>

**53%**  
of Americans feel they are behind on  
retirement planning and savings<sup>5</sup>

**56%**  
of workers are unable to pay  
a \$1,000 emergency expense<sup>6</sup>



Total in Billions (-Means Deficit)



Source: Office of Management and Budget

1 <https://www.cato.org/blog/federal-spending-40-2019>  
 2 U.S. Census Bureau.  
 3 [https://www.justfacts.com/nationaldebt.asp#\\_ftn11](https://www.justfacts.com/nationaldebt.asp#_ftn11)  
 4 <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/bidens-big-inflation-problem-prices-are-now-up-nearly-20-since-he-took-office-080049551.html?guccounter=1>  
 5 [https://www.cnbc.com/2024/04/03/many-americans-feel-behind-on-retirement-planning-cnbc-survey-finds.html?\\_\\_source=sharebar|email&par=sharebar](https://www.cnbc.com/2024/04/03/many-americans-feel-behind-on-retirement-planning-cnbc-survey-finds.html?__source=sharebar|email&par=sharebar)  
 6 [https://www.cnbc.com/2024/03/19/why-now-is-a-smart-time-to-build-emergency-savings.html?\\_\\_source=sharebar|email&par=sharebar](https://www.cnbc.com/2024/03/19/why-now-is-a-smart-time-to-build-emergency-savings.html?__source=sharebar|email&par=sharebar)

## WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF FEDERAL SPENDING?

There are 3 main buckets of federal spending:

- **Mandatory spending (\$4.1 Trillion in FY24)** - Funding for Social Security, Medicare/Medicaid, Obamacare subsidies to insurance companies, CHIP, veterans benefits, and other benefits programs. This is considered automatic spending, required by law. As a result, mandatory spending is not normally a part of the appropriations process. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, programs like the Refundable Premium Tax Credit and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program were dramatically increased and have failed to return to normal levels. *Mandatory spending is up 50.7% since 2019.*
- **Discretionary spending (\$1.8 Trillion in FY24)** - Federal Agency Funding. This includes everything from defense to National Parks to foreign aid to disaster relief. Congress sets funding levels for these each year through the appropriations process. *This is up 34.0% since 2019.*
- **Interest on the National Debt (\$892 Billion in FY24)** – This is the cost the federal government pays each year for borrowing money through the sale of government bonds. It’s like the interest you pay on a car, home loan, or credit card. As interest rates increase and the national debt grows, the cost to borrow the same dollar increases. This affects how much money is left over for other things like Social Security and Medicare. *This is up 137.9% since 2019.*

Each year, Congress is required to pass 12 appropriations bills to fund the government. The 12 bills relate to the 12 Subcommittees of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees which allocate to agencies within their jurisdictions.

These 12 bills only account for discretionary spending, which represents around 30% of total government spending. The rest of federal spending – mandatory spending and interest payments – generally grow on autopilot according to formulas.

### FISCAL YEAR 2019<sup>7</sup>

Revenues, \$3.5 Trillion



Spending, \$4.4 Trillion



Mandatory \$2.7T  
Discretionary \$1.3T

### FISCAL YEAR 2021<sup>8</sup>

Revenues, \$4.0 Trillion



Spending, \$6.8 Trillion



Mandatory \$4.8T  
Discretionary \$1.6T

### FISCAL YEAR 2023<sup>9</sup>

Revenues, \$4.4 Trillion



Spending, \$6.1 Trillion



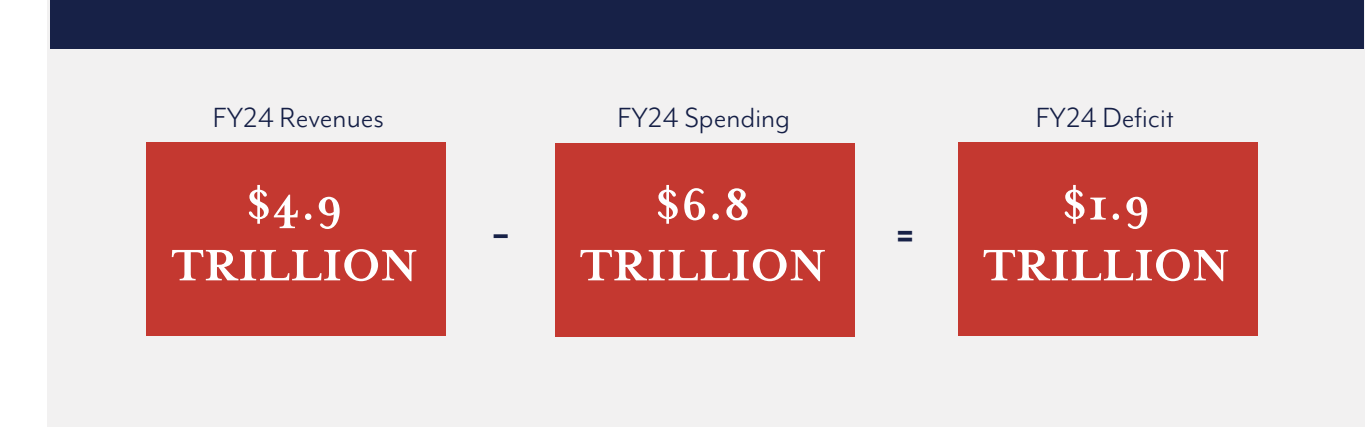
Mandatory \$3.8T  
Discretionary \$1.7T

## AMERICA'S NATIONAL DEBT PROBLEM

The national debt is a major problem with consequences for every taxpayer. According to one estimate, our debt per person living in the U.S. is over \$102,000 each.<sup>10</sup> At more than 125% of GDP, our debt is larger than the total amount of goods and services produced in our country every year – plus 25%!<sup>11</sup> The national debt is so large because Washington has a spending problem. **Nebraska families know that you cannot keep running up your credit card debt without consequences. This unsustainable fiscal policy must be addressed urgently with spending reforms.**

Nebraskans expect their leaders to respect their tax dollars. They expect us to spend their money effectively and efficiently. I'm committed to getting this runaway spending under control. **To do that, we need to reform the broken process that leads to bloated spending.**

### FEDERAL BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2024<sup>12</sup>



<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/56324>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58268>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/59727>

<sup>10</sup> \$35T debt / 342,000,000 people.

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.justfacts.com/nationaldebt.asp#\\_ftn11](https://www.justfacts.com/nationaldebt.asp#_ftn11)

<sup>12</sup> <https://budget.house.gov/press-release/congressional-budget-office-updates-baseline-deficit-spending-is-27-percent-higher-than-previously-estimated#:~:text=Gross%20Federal%20Debt%20totals%20%2456.8,year%20average%20is%203.7%20percent>

# THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

The Congressional Budget Act of 1974 lays out the way the appropriations process **is supposed to work**. The President submits a comprehensive budget request to Congress in February. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees then hold hearings, gather information, and report a budget resolution to the floor. This budget resolution lays out the “top-line” totals (called 302(a) allocations) for revenues and spending. It also specifically allocates spending caps for each of the 12 bills. These allocations, once passed by the House and Senate, create the framework for considering appropriations bills in committee and on the floor.

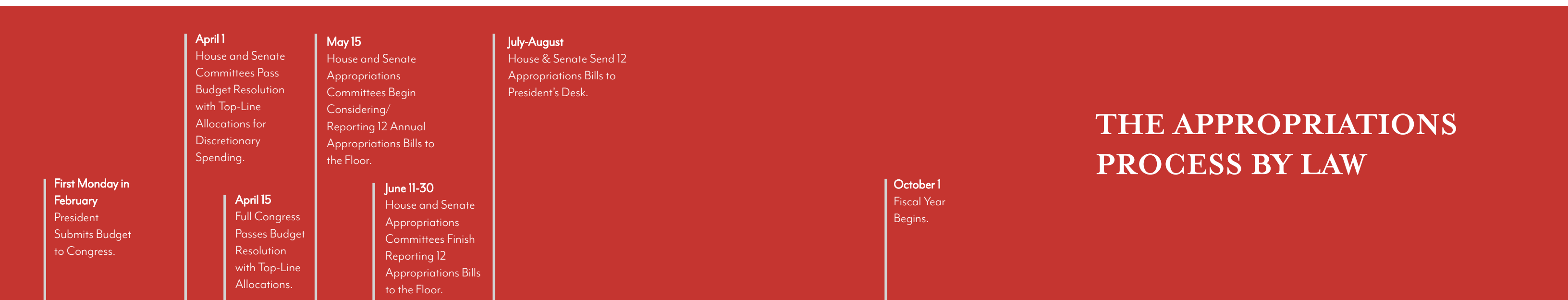
In May and early June, the Appropriations Committees consider the individual appropriations bills and report them to the House and Senate floor. That gives each chamber plenty of time to read, debate, and amend each of the 12 bills. After considering amendments, the House and Senate pass each appropriations bill separately, wrapping up their appropriations responsibilities well in advance of the end of the fiscal year.

In reality, this rarely happens. In fact, it’s been 27 years since Congress passed all 12 bills as the law describes. **Washington’s broken appropriations process has led to numerous government shutdown faceoffs and bloated omnibus bills. Americans deserve better.**

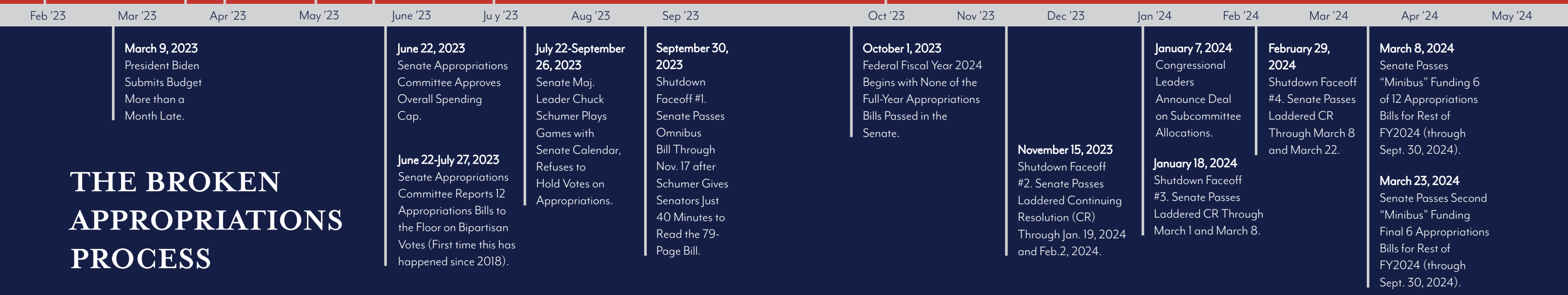
Instead, Washington leadership frequently craft massive “omnibus” bills that roll all 12 appropriations bills into one. These consolidated spending bills are typically negotiated in secret and presented at the last minute before funding deadlines. This “Take It or Leave It” approach presents a false choice between a shutdown and more big government spending.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer did this last year, even though the Appropriations Committee had passed out all 12 funding bills in June and July. For months, Schumer refused to bring those bills to the floor for votes. We could have debated them, offered amendments to make them better, and then voted. Instead, he played games with the Senate calendar. He took entire weeks off. He chose to recess the Senate early or start voting late week after week. He created multiple “Shutdown Faceoffs” and refused to give Senators time to read the bills. The result? The Senate didn’t complete its work for Fiscal Year 2024 until March 2024, nearly six months late.

**A broken process will always lead to a broken product. This report identifies just some of the many examples of wasteful, politicized, abusive, and even fraudulent spending with federal taxpayer dollars.**



## THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS BY LAW



## THE BROKEN APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

# ABUSIVE & POLITICIZED SPENDING

## YOUR TAX DOLLARS FUNDED SUPPORT FOR HAMAS & DRAG SHOWS IN ECUADOR

### Pro-Hamas Climate Justice Alliance:

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded a \$50 million grant to the Social and Environmental Entrepreneurs, Inc.<sup>13</sup> and Climate Justice Alliance.
- Social and Environmental Entrepreneurs, Inc. is an organization that promotes “climate-change alarmism” and funds left-wing projects.<sup>14</sup>
- The Climate Justice Alliance coordinated a “March on Washington”<sup>15</sup> and waved “Free Palestine” banners in support of Hamas’ war against Israel.<sup>16</sup>
- The EPA has no business awarding tax money to partisan and radical causes.
- Americans shouldn’t be forced to fund groups that support Hamas, a terror group responsible for the barbaric October 7th attack on Israel.

That’s why I’m working with Ranking Member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, Senator Shelley Moore Capito to hold the Biden-Harris administration accountable for this spending.

13 [https://www.usaspending.gov/award/ASST\\_NON\\_98T97501\\_6800](https://www.usaspending.gov/award/ASST_NON_98T97501_6800)

14 <https://saveourplanet.org/projects/>

15 <https://www.wsj.com/articles/inflation-reduction-act-climate-justice-alliance-taxpayer-dollars-epa-palestine-4c345171>

16 <https://climatejusticealliance.org/palestine/>

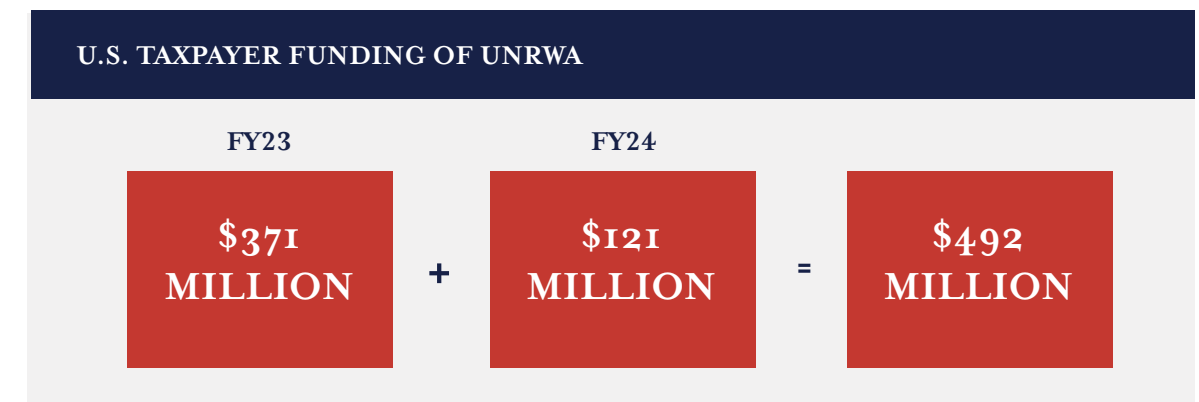
### Taxpayer-Funded Drag Shows in Ecuador:

- The U.S. Department of State gave a \$20,600 grant to the Centro Ecuatoriano Norteamericano (CENA) in Ecuador for drag shows.<sup>17</sup>
- American tax dollars shouldn’t be funding drag shows, in America or anywhere else.
- This grant promotes an ideological agenda and serves no legitimate foreign policy purpose.
- Our foreign aid dollars should support programs and events that serve American citizens’ interests.<sup>18</sup>

### Taxpayer Support for Hamas with UNRWA Funding:

- The United States has sent a total of \$492 million in funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the near East (UNRWA) for fiscal years 2023 and 2024.<sup>19,20</sup>
- UNRWA has been described as “effectively a branch of Hamas” because of its well-documented ties to the terror group.
- At least 12 UNRWA employees were directly involved in the October 7 terror attack against Israel.
- At least 100 UNRWA employees were identified by Israel as “terrorist operatives.”<sup>21</sup>
- 10% of UNRWA’s staff were connected to Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

American money should not support Hamas terrorism, period. We need to pass my Stop Support for Hamas Act to defund UNRWA and prevent this from happening again.



17 [https://www.usaspending.gov/award/ASST\\_NON\\_SEC30022GR0006\\_1900](https://www.usaspending.gov/award/ASST_NON_SEC30022GR0006_1900)

18 <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/state-department-funding-drag-theater-performances-ecuador-promote-diversity-inclusion>

19 <https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/files/reports-statements/mts/mts0923.pdf>

20 <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IN/IN12316/6>

21 <https://www.foxnews.com/world/israel-identifies-100-unrwa-employees-who-work-terrorist-operatives-asks-dismissal.amp>

# THE COST OF WASHINGTON'S WASTEFUL SPENDING

## DEBT INTEREST & IMPROPER PAYMENTS EXPOSED

### Interest on the Debt:

- The U.S. Department of the Treasury reveals a concerning trend of wasteful spending: interest costs have skyrocketed to \$659 billion in FY2023 and \$892 billion in FY2024.<sup>22</sup>
- This is a 138% increase from 2019 and a growing portion of our tax dollars.
- Debt interest payments will exceed both defense and Medicare spending this year, making interest **the second largest government expenditure after Social Security.**
- This rapid growth in interest costs is a result of the increasing national debt, which has risen significantly over the past few years.
- Interest costs now represent 2.5% of our country's GDP, up from 1.6% in 2020.

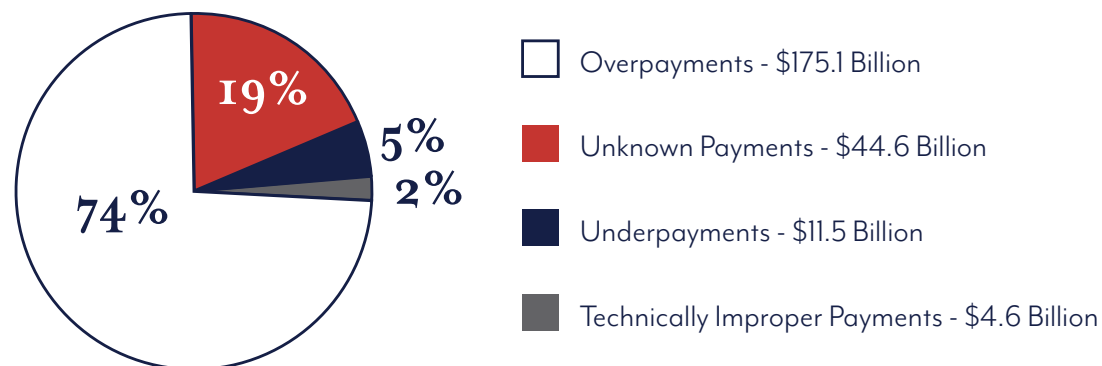
As Biden's federal spending increases, the national debt and its corresponding interest costs have skyrocketed. Interest costs have doubled since 2020. **Interest on the national debt is the fastest-growing part of federal spending.**

## THINGS WASHINGTON SPENDS LESS ON THAN NATIONAL DEBT



### Improper Payments: GAO Report

- Improper payments continue to be a significant contributor to wasteful spending.
- In FY 2023, estimated improper payments totaled **\$236 billion.**<sup>23</sup>
- However, this amount only accounts for certain programs and agencies that have reported estimates.
- According to the Government Accountability Office, cumulative federal improper payment estimates have totaled about \$2.7 trillion since FY 2003.
- Taxpayers should not lose their hard-earned money to irresponsible federal spending.
- **I co-sponsored the Improper Payments Transparency Act to require clear and comprehensive data on improper payments in the President's annual budget each year**



<sup>22</sup> <https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/files/reports-statements/mts/mts0923.pdf>  
<sup>23</sup> <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-24-106927>

### Campaign Cash Abuse

#### Presidential Election Campaign Fund:

The IRS allows taxpayers the opportunity to allocate a portion of their taxes to the Presidential Election Campaign Fund. However, this fund has sat unused since 2008.

## AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2023, \$416 MILLION SAT UNUSED IN THE FUND.

- As of November 1, 2023, **\$416 million**<sup>24</sup> sat unused in the fund.
- The Presidential Election Campaign Fund is financed by a \$3 tax return check box, allowing taxpayers to give a portion of their tax payment towards the fund.<sup>25,26</sup>
- Taxpayers shouldn't be subsidizing presidential election campaigns!
- **This money should be returned to the people.**
- I co-sponsored the Eliminating Leftover Expenses for Campaigns from Taxpayers (ELECT) Act to eliminate this fund and redirect the \$416 million to reducing the deficit.

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.taxpolicycenter.org/taxvox/whats-become-presidential-election-campaign-fund>  
<sup>25</sup> <https://www.fec.gov/introduction-campaign-finance/understanding-ways-support-federal-candidates/presidential-elections/public-fund-ing-presidential-elections/>  
<sup>26</sup> <https://www.businessinsider.com/400-million-in-forgotten-government-account-presidential-election-campaign-fund-2021-7>



## UNUSED BORDER WALL PANELS & MISMANAGED DOD EQUIPMENT

### Unused Border Wall Panels:

- In 2021, President Biden ordered a halt to the construction of the border wall.
- This left the Department of Defense with an inventory of unused bollard panels.
- Despite efforts to repurpose these materials, the Department continues to spend taxpayer dollars to store, maintain, and protect these wall panels.
- According to *Fox News*, the Department of Defense is spending \$130,000 daily.<sup>27</sup>
- Over **\$300 million in taxpayer dollars** has been spent on unused border wall panels since 2021.<sup>28</sup>

We are in an unprecedented national security, drug, and humanitarian crisis at our border. It's astounding that the Department of Defense is wasting \$130,000 daily to do nothing with border wall panels. **The Biden administration has wasted \$300 million to avoid building a wall which will make us safer. That's Washington waste at its worst.**

I've co-sponsored legislation introduced by Senator Ted Cruz to build the border wall.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/dod-spends-nearly-50-million-year-to-do-nothing-trumps-border-wall-materials-drawing-gop-backlash>  
<sup>28</sup> <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/dod-spends-nearly-50-million-year-to-do-nothing-trumps-border-wall-materials-drawing-gop-backlash>, <https://www.wicker.senate.gov/2023/3/wicker-colleagues-biden-s-border-wall-blockade-has-cost-330m>

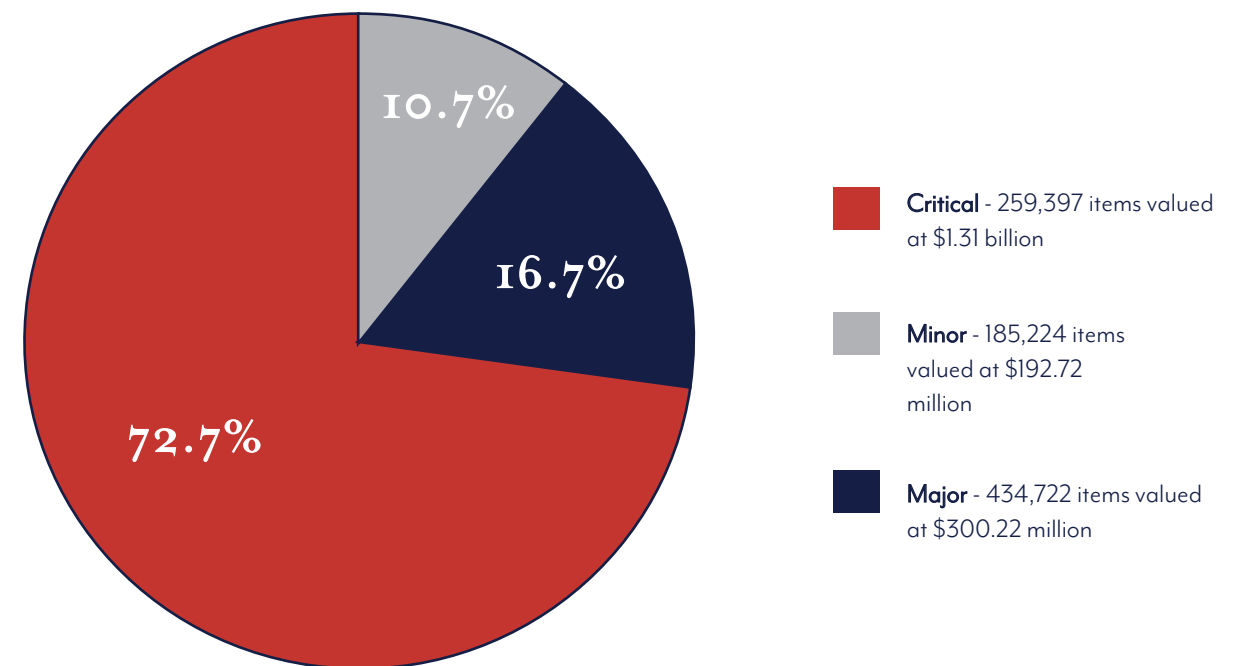
### Mismanaged DoD Equipment:

- A recent audit by the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General (DoD OIG) revealed that the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) failed to store and care for the Army Ground Combat System (GCS) repair parts and components.<sup>29</sup>
- The parts and components were left to deteriorate or are at risk of deterioration due to inadequate storage and care.
- **\$1.8 billion worth of Army GSC repair parts and components were wasted.**

**Conclusion:** The mismanagement of the DoD equipment, resulting in the waste of \$1.8 billion is an example of bureaucratic inefficiency and negligence. To prevent such waste in the future, the DoD should implement inventory management systems and hold responsible parties accountable. We need to ensure taxpayer dollars are used effectively.

### MISMANAGED DOD EQUIPMENT <sup>30</sup>

Total: \$1.8 Billion



<sup>29</sup> <https://media.defense.gov/2023/Oct/24/2003326664/-1/-1/1/DODIG-2024-001%20SECURE.PDF>  
<sup>30</sup> <https://media.defense.gov/2023/Oct/24/2003326664/-1/-1/1/DODIG-2024-001%20SECURE.PDF>

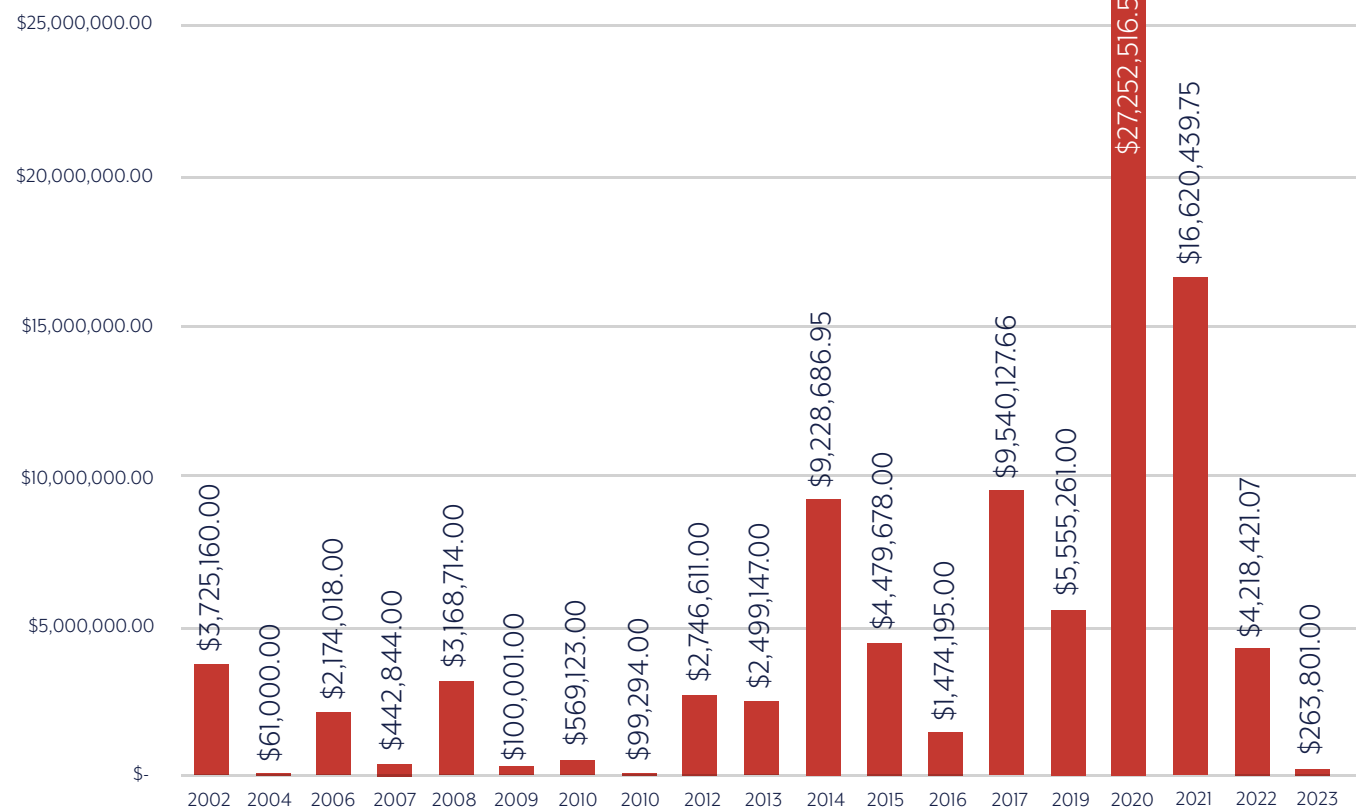


## FUNDING TO FOREIGN ADVERSARIES

### EcoHealth Alliance Funding:

- EcoHealth Alliance received over \$92 million from U.S. taxpayers.<sup>31</sup>
- What did we get for our money?
- EcoHealth facilitated high-risk gain-of-function research on coronaviruses in Wuhan, China, violating the clear requirements of its grant program.
- This grant award was reckless and wasteful.
- American taxpayer dollars should have never supported risky research led by our chief adversary, the People's Republic of China.

### U.S. Taxpayer Funding to EcoHealth Alliance

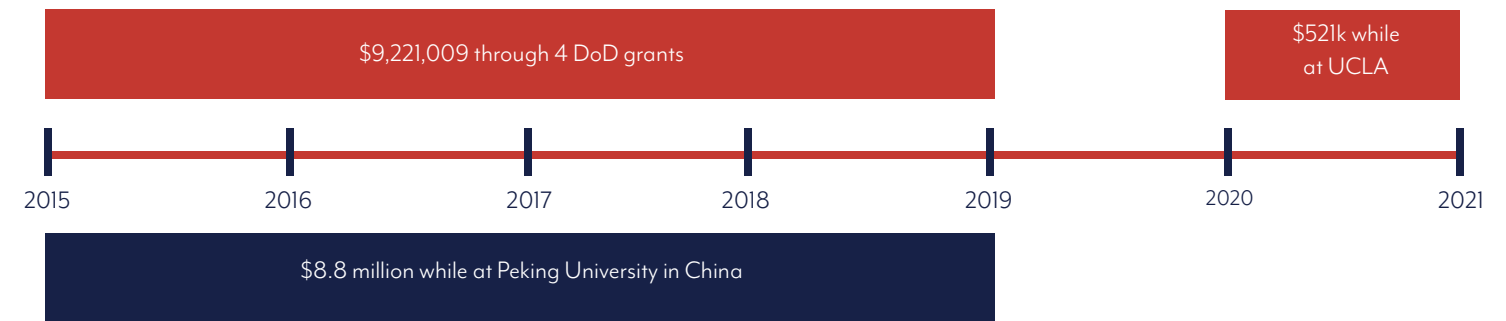


31 <https://www.usaspending.gov/search/?hash=525a33a073f6b3b3a5ed432944736170>

### China's Artificial Intelligence Scientist<sup>32</sup>:

- American taxpayer dollars have even been funding China's artificial intelligence (AI) development.
- A *Newsweek* investigation has raised alarming concerns about U.S. research grants awarded to Song-Chun Zu, China's leading scientist in artificial intelligence development.<sup>33</sup>
- Despite his ties to the Chinese military and Chinese Communist Party (CCP), he received a significant amount of federal funding.<sup>34</sup>
- This is a major national security risk and compromises our technological advantage.
- To end funding like this, I've introduced the Furthering Operations for Resiliency, Transparency, and Integrity to Fortify (FORTIFY) U.S. Research Act with Senator Marco Rubio. Our bill would increase transparency in taxpayer-funded research and close loopholes that allow China's military to benefit from American taxpayer dollars.<sup>35</sup>

### U.S. Taxpayer Funding Received by CCP's AI Scientist<sup>36,37,38,39</sup>



32 <https://energycommerce.house.gov/posts/e-and-c-china-select-committees-launch-inquiry-into-taxpayer-funding-streams-funneled-to-ccp-backed-research-er>

33 <https://www.newsweek.com/us-gave-30-million-top-chinese-scientist-leading-chinas-ai-race-1837772>

34 [https://dtic.dimensions.ai/discover/grant?or\\_facet\\_researcher=ur.011237220773.43&or\\_facet\\_researcher=ur.012430434515.36](https://dtic.dimensions.ai/discover/grant?or_facet_researcher=ur.011237220773.43&or_facet_researcher=ur.012430434515.36)

35 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/4722?s=6&r=19&q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22rubio%22%7D>

36 [https://dtic.dimensions.ai/discover/grant?or\\_facet\\_researcher=ur.011237220773.43&or\\_facet\\_researcher=ur.012430434515.36](https://dtic.dimensions.ai/discover/grant?or_facet_researcher=ur.011237220773.43&or_facet_researcher=ur.012430434515.36)

37 [https://dtic.dimensions.ai/discover/grant?or\\_facet\\_researcher=ur.011237220773.43&or\\_facet\\_researcher=ur.012430434515.36](https://dtic.dimensions.ai/discover/grant?or_facet_researcher=ur.011237220773.43&or_facet_researcher=ur.012430434515.36)

38 [https://dtic.dimensions.ai/details/grant/grant.7076904?or\\_facet\\_researcher=ur.011237220773.43&or\\_facet\\_researcher=ur.012430434515.36](https://dtic.dimensions.ai/details/grant/grant.7076904?or_facet_researcher=ur.011237220773.43&or_facet_researcher=ur.012430434515.36)

39 [https://dtic.dimensions.ai/details/grant/grant.8454483?or\\_facet\\_researcher=ur.011237220773.43&or\\_facet\\_researcher=ur.012430434515.36](https://dtic.dimensions.ai/details/grant/grant.8454483?or_facet_researcher=ur.011237220773.43&or_facet_researcher=ur.012430434515.36)

# HOW TO FIX IT?

Families across the country – including those on fixed incomes – have to tighten their belts and stretch their budgets when times get tough. Congress has a duty to do the same.

We need to fund our national defense and what's needed to ensure our national security. We need to fund essential government services. We must stop throwing money around on partisan causes or unnecessary and wasteful spending. The time to discuss solutions to achieve that is during government funding bills. The Senate must return to Regular Order.

## What Is Regular Order?

Most Americans work Monday through Friday – and even on weekends - until their jobs are done. Washington should do the same. The Senate should be debating legislation, voting on amendments from both parties, and passing the 12 appropriations bills on the schedule set by Congress in the Congressional Budget Act of 1974. Funding the government is Congress' job. We should take the time needed to do our jobs the right way.

I've repeatedly led my colleagues in calling on Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer to change our schedule, cancel our state work periods, and let us vote. We have the time to take the necessary votes. We have a lack of will in leadership to make it happen. We must put the American people ahead of politics.

This process will allow us to better review every dollar we're spending. To start, my goal is to limit the growth of non-defense discretionary spending to 3% per year – just like we did in Nebraska when I was Governor. From 2019 to 2023, the federal government grew this spending by 39%. Meanwhile, revenues increased 28%. Limiting the growth of spending is the best way to help us get our fiscal house in order. We must also look at rolling back spending that was expanded during the COVID pandemic and has remained bloated.

Additionally, I'm utilizing my experience as Governor to find efficiencies in agencies and save taxpayer dollars. We need to fix the broken appropriations process so we can get our fiscal house in order. I'm committed to fighting until we get it done.



# TARGETED SOLUTIONS TO BRING FISCAL REFORM TO WASHINGTON

I support a **Balanced Budget Amendment**<sup>40</sup> that would require Congress and the President to live within its means. We passed balanced budgets in Nebraska every year. Congress can and should do the same.

**The Fiscal State of the Nation Act**<sup>41</sup>, which I co-sponsored, would require the Comptroller General to present to Congress the Financial Report of the United States Government each year. This legislation will provide lawmakers and the American public with current, nonpartisan data on our country's fiscal health. It will give us the tools we need to make and economically sound decisions.

**The Improper Payments Transparency Act**<sup>42</sup>, which I co-sponsored, is a bill I'm working to pass that would require clear and comprehensive data on improper payments in the President's annual budget request each year. In 2023, federal agencies reported \$236 billion in improper payments, but the true scale of improper payments is unknown because reporting requirements are lacking.<sup>43</sup>

**The Stop Support for Hamas Act**<sup>44</sup> I introduced would enact a permanent ban on U.S. funding for United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). It would also strengthen existing legislation to ensure no U.S. funding directly or indirectly benefits the Palestinian Authority until it ends payments to terrorists or their families.

I am a co-sponsor of the **The Eliminating Leftover Expenses for Campaigns from Taxpayers (ELECT) Act**<sup>45</sup>, which would eliminate the Presidential Election Campaign Fund and redirect the remaining \$416 million in the fund to reducing the deficit.<sup>46</sup>

**The Secure the Border Act**<sup>47</sup>, which I co-sponsored, is a comprehensive border security bill that would require the Department of Homeland Security to resume border wall construction.

**The Furthering Operations for Resiliency, Transparency, and Integrity to Fortify (FORTIFY) U.S. Research Act**<sup>48</sup>, which I co-sponsored would increase transparency in taxpayer-funded research and close loopholes that allow China's military to benefit from American taxpayer dollars.

40 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-joint-resolution/13?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22hyde-smith%22%7D&s=2&r=2>

41 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/4665?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22braun%22%7D&s=6&r=13>

42 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/4661?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22braun%22%7D&s=6&r=15>

43 <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-24-106927>

44 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/3174?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22Stop+Support+for+Hamas+Act%22%7D&s=3&r=1>

45 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/500?s=2&r=29>

46 <https://www.taxpolicycenter.org/taxvox/whats-become-presidential-election-campaign-fund>

47 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/2824>

48 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/4722?s=6&r=19&q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22rubio%22%7D>

# CONTACT US

My team and I are here to serve you. Contact us anytime by phone at 202-224-4224.  
You can also reach out through my website at [www.ricketts.senate.gov/contact](http://www.ricketts.senate.gov/contact).



Scottsbluff  
115 Railway St., Suite C102  
Scottsbluff, NE 69361  
(308) 632-6032

Kearney  
4111 4th Ave., Suite 26  
Kearney, NE 68845  
(308) 233-3677

Lincoln  
1248 'O' St., Suite 1000  
Lincoln NE, 68508  
(402) 476-1400

Omaha  
304 N. 168th Circle, Suite 213  
Omaha, NE 68118  
(402) 550-8040

Washington, D.C.  
139 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
(202) 224-4224

# NOTES

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**PETE RICKETTS**  
U.S. SENATOR FOR NEBRASKA