



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

With a budget of nearly \$830 million, the Executive Office of the President (EOP) funds the day-to-day functions of the White House, including offices of the president, vice president and their staffs, as well as a host of others such as the Council of Economic Advisers, the Office of Management and Budget and the National Security Council.¹

While President Obama proposed a 3.5 percent cut for his White House budget in 2012, this time of record deficits calls for bolder measures. This plan adopts the recommendation of the President's National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, which proposed a 15 percent reduction in the White House budget.²

As Congress searches for ways to trim the federal budget, it should take a close look at several White House programs and offices that overlap other White House offices and programs at other federal agencies, particularly the Office of National Drug Control Policy, the Council on Environmental Quality, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

These three programs have been cited repeatedly by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and others for mismanagement, lack of measurable goals, and duplication of efforts. In some instances, previous administrations have tried to prune their authorities and budgets.

Ending these programs and reducing the White House budget would save taxpayers more than \$5.4 billion over the next ten years.³

Relevant executive branch agencies, and the White House's own cadre of 454 highly-paid expert advisers,⁴ can absorb any essential operations and policy functions of the eliminated offices.

¹ Website of the Executive Office of the President, "FY 2012 Congressional Budget Submission," accessed June 18, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/2012-eop-budget.pdf>.

² The National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, "The Moment of Truth," recommendation 1.10.1, December 2011, http://www.fiscalcommission.gov/sites/fiscalcommission.gov/files/documents/TheMomentofTruth12_1_2010.pdf.

³ Total White House Budget was \$829.9 million in FY 2010, funding for the eliminated offices is removed from this total and the 15% reduction is applied to the remaining White House Budget. Total savings from the eliminated offices is \$4.8 billion. Estimate by Staff of Senator Coburn, based on FY 2012 Congressional Budget Submission," accessed June 18, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/2012-eop-budget.pdf>.

⁴ Andrew, "No recession for Obama's 454 White House aides: They'll make \$37,121,463 this year," *Los Angeles Times*, July 5, 2011, <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/washington/2011/07/obama-white-house-salaries-soar.html>.

Eliminate the Office of National Drug Control Policy - \$4.7 billion

Established in 1988, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) does little more than pour more bureaucracy and wasteful spending into a vast sea of existing federal drug-related programs.

Funded at more than \$427 million annually,⁵ the office is part of the ever-expanding role of the federal government in drug issues. ONDCP is directed to “establish policies, priorities, and objectives for the Nation’s drug control program,” with goals “to reduce illicit drug use, manufacturing, and trafficking, drug-related crime and violence, and drug-related health consequences.”⁶

It shares those goals with 49 different federal agencies, departments, offices and task forces, including but not limited to the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force, the Department of Health and Human Services’ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the National Institute of Drug Abuse, the Department of Homeland Security’s Customs and Border Protection, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.⁷

All told, the government spends more than \$22 billion annually on federal drug activities.⁸

One might think a coordinating office for so many well-funded partners could help reduce waste and improve management. Unfortunately, the GAO has conducted several reviews of ONDCP and repeatedly criticized it for a lack of coordination, tendency to overlap other programs, and an inability to evaluate the effectiveness of its programs to reduce and prevent drug abuse.⁹



⁵ Salaries and expenses for ONDCP staff account for \$29 million, while the remaining \$398 million is for the Counterdrug Technology Assessment Center, High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas, and other drug programs, more appropriately handled by the Department of Justice. Funding data: Website of the Executive Office of the President, “FY 2012 Congressional Budget Submission,” accessed June 18, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/2012-eop-budget.pdf>.

⁶ Website of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, “About,” accessed June 18, 2011, <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/about/index.html>.

⁷ Government Accountability Office, “Office of National Drug Control Policy: Agencies View the Budget Process as Useful for Identifying Priorities, but Challenges Exist”, GAO-11-261R May 2, 2011 <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d11261r.pdf>.

⁸ Government Accountability Office, “Office of National Drug Control Policy: Agencies View the Budget Process as Useful for Identifying Priorities, but Challenges Exist”, GAO-11-261R May 2, 2011 <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d11261r.pdf>.

⁹ For example, Government Accountability Office, “Drug Control: The Office of National Drug Control Policy-Strategies Need Performance Measures,” Statement of Henry R. Wray, Director, Administration of Justice Issues General Government Division, November 15, 1993, <http://archive.gao.gov/t2pbat4/150348.pdf>; Government Accountability Office, “Drug Control: Reauthorization of the Office of National Drug Control Policy,” Statement of Norman J. Rabkin Director, Administration of Justice Issues General Government Division, May 1, 1997, <http://www.gao.gov/archive/1997/gg97097t.pdf>.

Youth Anti Drug Media Campaign

ONDCP oversees a number of anti-drug initiatives, including the Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign and the Drug-Free Communities Support Program. Both have come up short when reviewed by the GAO, lacking in effective drug abuse prevention and general program mismanagement.

Even if they were soundly run, such well-intentioned youth media campaigns may be a questionable use of federal funding given current budget constraints, a lack of measureable results, and similar publically and privately funded efforts.

Established by Congress in 1998, the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign has spent more than \$1 billion in taxpayer funding over the last decade to pay for anti-drug commercials, websites, and other ambiguous drug prevention activities.¹⁰ While funded at \$180 million in 2002, the annual appropriations have steadily declined, with the program receiving \$45 million last year—perhaps a sign of Congress' recognition of the effort's immeasurable and likely nonexistent results.¹¹



Unfortunately for both teens and taxpayers, the campaign has not had a measureable impact on reducing youth drug abuse. An August 2006 GAO review of a multi-year evaluation of the Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, conducted by Westat, Inc, confirmed the study's results, which found that the federal anti-drug campaign did not reduce drug use nationally.¹²

Drug-Free Communities Support Program

Another anti-drug use youth program operated by ONDCP in coordination with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program, distributes grants to more than 700 community coalitions for community efforts to prevent youth abuse of alcohol, drugs, and other harmful and illegal substances.¹³ Since 2002, the program has spent nearly \$790 million taxpayer funding promoting anti-drug efforts nation-wide, with little measurable impact.¹⁴

Grants distributed through this program can be used by communities across the country for various activities, including festivals and movie nights. Just last year, Sullivan County New Hampshire received a \$125,000 grant through the Drug-Free Communities Program and

¹⁰ Website of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign accessed June 18, 2011, <http://www.mediacampaign.org/>.

¹¹ Funding figures compiled by staff from annual congressional appropriations laws.

¹² Government Accountability Office, "ONDCP Media Campaign: Contractor's National Evaluation Did Not Find That the Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign Was Effective in Reducing Youth Drug Use", GAO-06-818, August 2006, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06818.pdf>.

¹³ Office of National Drug Control Policy website, Prevention Programs, http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/prevent/prevention_programs.html, accessed July 17, 2011.

¹⁴ Funding figures compiled by staff from annual congressional appropriations laws.

announced plans to use the anti-drug funding to support a County Theatre Festival, which would have an anti-drug theme that year to “empower youth to make good choices for their lives.”¹⁵

GAO, furthermore, has found the program lacking in management controls. A July 2008 GAO study found program administrators have failed to monitor the program’s effectiveness, despite being required by federal laws and regulations to do so. “Without defined oversight activities for ensuring successful completion of the work,” GAO wrote, “ONDCP lacks reasonable assurance that required tasks are being performed in accordance with its directives.”¹⁶

Under the auspices of “coordination,” the Office of National Drug Policy has continued to be funded by Congress. However, after more than two decades of funding, taxpayers are still funding a national coordinating office, along with numerous other federal drug programs, while measureable results and lower drug abuse rates remain elusive.

The Office of National Drug Policy should be eliminated and any essential functions should be transitioned to the appropriate federal departments already dedicated full-time to addressing the nation’s drug matters. Specifically, if a review by the Government Accountability Office reveals the Counterdrug Technology Assessment Center and the High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program, currently administered by the ONDCP, are not duplicative of existing federal drug-trafficking efforts, these offices, or any essential and non-duplicative functions, could be transitioned to the Department of Justice.

Eliminate the Council on Environmental Quality - \$33 million

Funded at \$3 million annually, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) office at the White House is tasked with advising the president on environmental matters, overseeing agency activities related to the National Environmental Policy Act and coordinating federal environmental activities.¹⁷ However, much like the Office of National Drug Control Policy, the CEQ is a duplicative executive branch office with ambiguous goals and activities with little to show for its 40-year history other than adding more than \$91 million to the national debt.¹⁸

Perhaps indications that CEQ’s authorities and budget are ungainly, President Obama’s predecessors attempted to trim the office. In the late 1970s, the Carter administration transferred some of CEQ’s authority and activities to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).¹⁹ His successor, President Reagan, slashed CEQ’s budget by 80 percent.²⁰



¹⁵ Website of Communities United for Substance Abuse Prevention, accessed June 19, 2011, <http://preventionworksnh.org/?p=1003>.

¹⁶ Government Accountability Office, GAO-08-57, “Drug-Free Communities Support Program: Stronger Internal Controls and Other Actions Needed to Better Manage the Grant-Making Process,” July 2008, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0857.pdf>.

¹⁷ Website of the Executive Office of the President, “FY 2012 Congressional Budget Submission,” accessed June 26, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/2012-eop-budget.pdf>.

¹⁸ Funding data compiled from annual appropriations bills, information provided by CRS for years 1982 to 2001, and for years 1970-1981 from Report by the Comptroller General of the United States, “The Council on Environmental Quality: A Tool in Shaping National Policy,” March 19, 1981, accessed June 26, 2011, <http://archive.gao.gov/f0102/114638.pdf>.

The president's most recent budget proposes a nine percent increase in the CEQ budget for yet another new and even more duplicative function—handling ocean policy issues.²¹ Despite the current existence of an entire agency dedicated to oceans, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the White House created the new, unwieldy-titled National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Coasts, and Great Lakes, as well as a National Ocean Council—to be directed by the CEQ, *not* NOAA.²² Meanwhile, NOAA's annual budget is more than \$4.5 billion, and this year the president requested a 20 percent increase for the agency, while also proposing this duplicative effort at the CEQ.²³



The president's budget details the additional \$285,000 needed for this new effort at the CEQ, will be directed to various administrative expenses include salaries, official travel and vehicle rentals, shipping costs, cell phone and wireless communication device charges, printing costs, office furniture, photocopiers, and magazine subscriptions.²⁴

A review of its blog reveals the National Ocean Council has done little in the last year. In fact, the blog had a total of only 11 postings.²⁵ The only recent activity of the Council is a series of “listening sessions” being hosted across the country to collect input as they draft a national strategy on oceans, coasts, and Great lakes—travel costs at taxpayers' expense of course.²⁶

Other questionable activities at the CEQ include the new Great Outdoors Initiative. Proposed by the president earlier this year, the new program is directed “to achieve lasting conservation of the outdoor spaces” and plans to do so by creating “accessible parks or green spaces for our children” and establishing “a new generation of great urban parks and community green spaces,” among other goals.²⁷



¹⁹ Report by the Comptroller General of the United States, “The Council on Environmental Quality: A Tool in Shaping National Policy,” March 19, 1981, accessed June 26, 2011, <http://archive.gao.gov/f0102/114638.pdf>.

²⁰ Karp, James, Pollution Issues, accessed July 17, 2011, <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:2JgxjHoAHWgJ:www.pollutionissues.com/Pl-Re/President-s-Council-on-Environmental-Quality.html+clinton+administration+eliminate+CEQ&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&source=www.google.com#ixzz1PYNuXZ8d>.

²¹ Website of the Executive Office of the President, “FY 2012 Congressional Budget Submission,” accessed June 25, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/2012-eop-budget.pdf>.

²² Website of the Council on Environmental Quality, accessed July 17, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/initiatives/oceans>.

²³ Congressional Research Service R41721, “Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies: FY2012 Appropriations,” May 12, 2011, <http://www.crs.gov/pages/Reports.aspx?PRODCODE=R41721&Source=search>.

²⁴ Website of the Executive Office of the President, “FY 2012 Congressional Budget Submission,” accessed June 25, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/2012-eop-budget.pdf>.

²⁵ Blog of the National Ocean Council, accessed July 17, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/oceans/whats-new>.

²⁶ Blog of the National Ocean Council, accessed July 17, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/oceans/whats-new>.

²⁷ Website of the Council on Environmental Quality, “Great Outdoors Initiative,” accessed July 17, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/initiatives/ago>.

According to their report, last year senior administration officials held 51 listening sessions²⁸ to hear “creative ideas about conservation, recreation, and connecting people to the outdoors.” One of their recommendations is to “launch a public awareness initiative to show that experiencing America’s great outdoors is fun, easy, and healthy.”²⁹

Federal promotion of outdoor recreation activities is questionable at best and by most accounts, completely unnecessary and an outright waste of taxpayer funding—especially considering more than 137 million Americans participated in outdoor recreation activities in 2010, according to a 2011 report by the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA).³⁰

The study notes that for the third consecutive year, roughly half of Americans over the age of six enjoyed outdoor recreation, including an increase in the number of diverse participants, as well as a more than 12 percent jump in the number of Americans lacing up their running shoes and hitting the outdoor trails.



President Carter had it right, and 30 years later, with a \$10 million budget and more than 17,000 employees, the EPA remains the central federal agency tasked with protecting the environment and administering federal environmental policy.³¹ The Environmental Protection Agency is still the most appropriate place for these activities, and the CEQ should be eliminated as the EPA can absorb any necessary functions.

Eliminate the Office of Science and Technology Policy - \$77 million

According to the White House, the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) has “a broad mandate to advise the President and others within the Executive Office of the President on the effects of science and technology on domestic and international affairs.”³² With an annual budget of \$7 million, OSTP is similar to both the ONDCP and the CEQ in its duplicative policy role both within the White House and across the government.³³

The federal government spends more than \$25 billion every year through three other entities – the National Science Foundation, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy.³⁴ The president’s domestic policy advisors, combined with those he appoints to run these major federal science agencies should be responsible for

²⁸ Website of the Council on Environmental Quality, “Great Outdoors Initiative,” accessed July 17, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/initiatives/ago>.

²⁹ America’s Great Outdoors, “A Promise to Future Generations,” February 2011, <http://americasgreatoutdoors.gov/files/2011/02/AGO-Executive-Summary-2-7-11.pdf>.

³⁰ Outdoor Foundation, “Outdoor Recreation Participation, Topline Report, 2011” http://www.outdoorindustry.org/images/researchfiles/OIA_Participation2011Topline.pdf?133.

³¹ Website of the Environmental Protection Agency, “FY 2012 Budget in Brief,” accessed June 26, 2011, <http://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/annualplan/fy2012.html>.

³² Website of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, “About OSTP,” accessed July 8, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ostp/about>.

³³ Website of the Executive Office of the President, “FY 2012 Congressional Budget Submission,” accessed June 25, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/2012-eop-budget.pdf>.

³⁴ Congressional Research Service R41721, “Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies: FY2012 Appropriations,” May 12, 2011, <http://www.crs.gov/pages/Reports.aspx?PRODCODE=R41721&Source=search>.

carrying out any necessary functions at the OSPT, whose mission is ambiguous at best. Costing taxpayers \$147 million during its 35 year existence, compared to many the office utilizes very few federal resources—all the more reason it is unnecessary.³⁵

OSTP is home to the National Science and Technology Council, which was created in 1993 as the “principal means within the executive branch to coordinate science and technology policy,” and is essentially a meeting of several various science advisors from across the numerous science and technology offices in the executive branch.³⁶ Yet, in 2009, the president created another council— President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, which not only bears nearly the same name, but also a similar purpose as an “advisory group of the nation’s leading scientists and engineers who advise the president” on matters of science and technology.³⁷

On its website, the Office of Science and Technology Policy explains that “their work can be thought of as falling into four main topic areas” of federal policy including science, technology, energy/environment, and national security/international affairs. Yet again, it is clear the involvement in these matters is duplicative and wasteful, given the billions of dollars spent at countless agencies throughout the executive branch and even in the White House, dedicated to these same matters.

For example, the president’s National Security Council and Homeland Security Council, along with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense and many more are responsible for matters of national security and international affairs. As previously noted, the Environmental Protection Agency and NOAA also handle environmental and climate change issues, while the National Institute of Standards and Technology is responsible for technology matters.

Despite these offices, councils, and advisors, with a budget of \$3 million, the office is not operating any actual programs related to science and technology, but is merely another office funding salaries of White House staff. According to its budget justification, funding for the office this year will be used to support the Director of OSTP, to operate the National Science and Technology Council and President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, to carry out national security emergency preparedness communications responsibilities, and provide science and technology advice to federal officials during times of national crisis.³⁸ Given its duplicative nature and ambiguous purpose, this White House office should be eliminated.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT TEN YEAR SAVINGS

Discretionary: \$5.4 billion

Total: \$5.4 billion

³⁵ Data compiled by the Congressional Research Service for OSTP funding since its inception in 1976.

³⁶ Website of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, “National Science and Technology Council,” accessed July 17, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ostp/nstc>.

³⁷ Website of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, “About PCAST,” accessed July 17, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ostp/pcast/about>.

³⁸ Website of the Executive Office of the President, “FY 2012 Congressional Budget Submission,” accessed July 17, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/2012-eop-budget.pdf>.