

BETTER CHANGE

TAKE BACK THE FEDERAL BUDGET

National Priorities Project's 30th Anniversary

October 18, 2013
Friday 7:30 to 9:00 pm

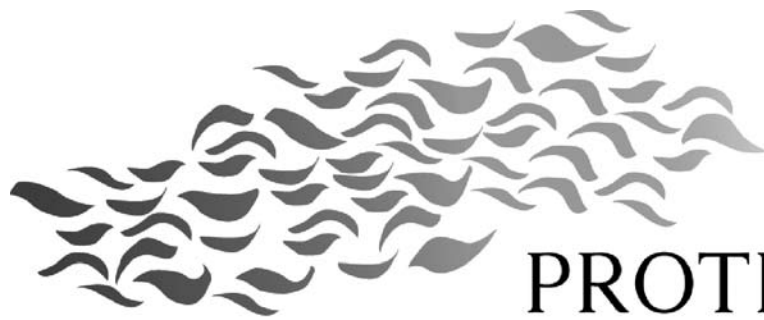
**NATIONAL
PRIORITIES
PROJECT**
**30th
ANNIVERSARY**

The Academy of Music
Northampton, Mass.

nationalpriorities.org



COLOMBE
FOUNDATION



PROTEUS FUND

Colombe Foundation and the
Proteus Fund congratulate the
National Priorities Project
on 30 years of
engaging the public to
make the federal budget
reflect the priorities of
the American people



National Priorities Project Celebrates 30 Years as the People's Guide to the Federal Budget

This fall, NPP is on the front lines of far-reaching, nation-changing debates on the government shutdown, the debt ceiling, stop-gap spending measures, sequestration, tax reform, military spending, and more.

Fueled by impeccable research, eye-opening numbers, and powerful tools for action, NPP's team is on fire – lit by a spark now 30 years old whose time has come.

It all started in 1983, when four friends from Springfield, MA, dug into dusty federal budget tomes at a local university library in a quest to save their city from economic ruin. They needed to understand *why* so many vital social programs were closing.

What they found stunned them. During the first two Cold War-focused years of the Reagan Administration, federal funds for cities like Springfield plummeted – and local economies, jobs, schools, and public health suffered.

Led by National Priorities Project founder, Greg Speeter, the friends set out to change these destructive and misguided budget priorities. They *took back the federal budget* for their own community and communities nationwide. Armed with irrefutable data directly from our nation's budget, they convinced their U.S. Representative, Silvio Conte (R), then the ranking member of the House Appropriations Committee, to change his stance on federal spending.

Emboldened by this experience, Greg formulated a radical vision: a federal budget *by and for the people* – with spending priorities that reflect the interests of all Americans. NPP still operates under the very same moral imperative that inspired Greg, with a healthy mixture of urgency, impatience, and unwavering faith in the absolute necessity of our efforts.

Friends, very simply, today the federal budget is our nation's crossroads. And if we care about education, healthcare, the environment, and our security, we must care – absolutely – about federal spending and revenue decisions.

From the grassroots to the national level, NPP's data, information, and tools are fueling today's activists, who – like Greg Speeter 30 years ago – want to change the destinies of their communities and our nation.

We urge you to become part of this movement. *Every voice matters.*

Greg Speeter knew change couldn't happen overnight. That's why he founded NPP – for just such a moment of political and social opportunity as this.

We dedicate our 30th Anniversary celebration to Greg, to past staff and board members, and to thousands of donors from beautiful western Massachusetts and across the nation who keep us moving forward.

Onward!



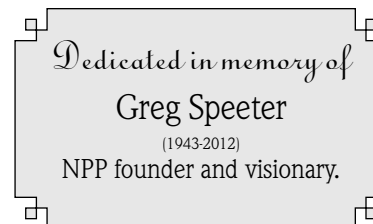
Jo Comerford

Jo Comerford
Executive Director



Dennis B. Bidwell

Dennis Bidwell
Chair, NPP Board of Directors



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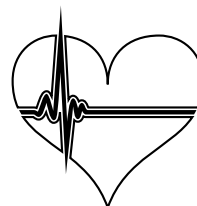
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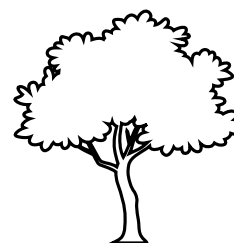
nation.



world.



live.



local.



listen.



About National Priorities Project

National Priorities Project (NPP) is the only nonprofit, non-partisan federal budget research organization in the nation with the mission to make the federal budget accessible to the American public. NPP is the people's guide to the federal budget, and we believe that everyone can understand

and participate in critical debates about federal spending and revenue. We take a complex federal budgeting process and crack it open for ordinary folks – providing the information, tools, and motivation necessary to catalyze strategic citizen action around budget issues that affect us all.

National Priorities Project envisions a nation where Americans understand federal budget choices made by our lawmakers – and where all people, as well as public-serving community and national organizations, have the power to influence our nation's revenue and spending decisions.

How NPP Turns Information Into Action!

Research

Our team spends countless hours analyzing and distilling complex federal budget data and develops a sophisticated analysis of the material.

- We release in-depth publications on the President's budget, Tax Day, and issue areas such as the military, education, environment, health care, entitlements, taxes, and tax expenditures.
- Our easy-to-access data tracks federal money flowing to states, cities, and congressional districts.
- Cost of National Security and Trade-Offs, two of our signature online interactive tools, count the dollars spent on a variety of federal programs by the millisecond – and show what else those dollars could fund if allocated differently within the federal budget.

Data and IT

NPP staff members create online tools that allow constituents to engage with the budget in fun, interactive ways.

Communication

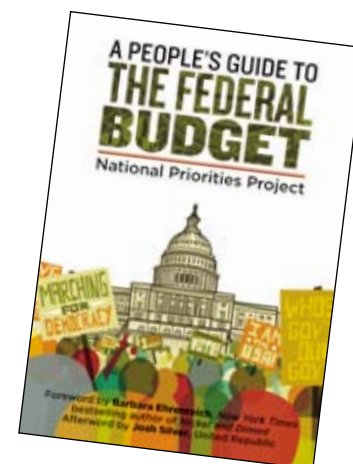
We use creative communication strategies to distribute our work broadly, through social media, and national, regional, and online media. NPP's research and analysis has been cited and profiled in major national news outlets including USA TODAY, The New York Times, The Hill, Washington Post, MSNBC, The Guardian, Christian Science Monitor, Huffington Post, Reuters, The Nation, Bill Moyers, Mother Jones, National Public Radio, Politico, CNN, The Boston Globe, PBS, Democracy Now, Salon, com, and more.

Partnerships

Collaborating with national groups across multiple sectors and issue-areas allows NPP to scale the reach of our materials while supporting important, highly-effective national, state, and local efforts.

- We partner with national organizations to publish reports or provide data that strengthens advocacy campaigns.
- Our partners include: Roosevelt Campus Network, U.S. Student Association, MomsRising, USAction, Jobs With Justice, National People's Action, Coalition on Human Needs, Grassroots Global Justice, National Women's Law Center, Young Invincibles, Center for Effective Government, Free Press, Friends Committee on National Legislation, and many more.

- Through localized trainings nationwide, we support the advocacy efforts of groups organizing around federal budget legislation.
- We conduct webinars, create videos, and speak at conferences and teach-ins across the nation to help Americans understand and weigh in on decisions about how their tax dollars are spent.



The Life of One NPP Publication

One piece published by NPP, "Congress Tweeted While America Burned," focused on the impact of sequestration and imagined what a post-sequestration nation might look like in 10 years. The piece, originally carried by Tom Dispatch, went viral and was ultimately published by 63 outlets nationwide, including Huffington Post, The Nation, The Guardian, Alternet, Bill Moyers, Michael Moore, and more. More than 6 million people saw the article and 28,000 people interacted with it online.

Capacity Building

NPP conducts national trainings and presentations to educate individuals and partners nationwide. We recently developed a new popular education training curriculum in partnership with Peace Action and wrote a *A People's Guide to the Federal Budget*, complete with an educator's toolkit to be used in high school and college classrooms.

THE NATIONAL PRIORITIES PROJECT IN CELEBRATION OF 30 YEARS OF CRITICAL WORK

~ ~ ~

Lesser, Newman & Nasser, LLP has proudly served the Pioneer Valley for more than 30 years and witnessed the National Priorities Project elevate awareness around critical issues concerning how our tax dollars are spent, and, alternatively, how our tax dollars could be spent.

We are honored to support the National Priorities Project and to celebrate 30 years of extraordinarily important work. We can't wait to see what's coming next.

LESSER, NEWMAN & NASSER, LLP

Serving the Pioneer Valley for more than 30 years.

39 Main Street, Northampton

(413) 584-7331 ~ www.lessernewman.com



Thomas Lesser



William Newman



Merry Nasser



Michael Aleo

Why The Federal Budget Matters

In 2013, the federal government will spend \$3.67 trillion -- most of it your tax dollars.

A budget is as much about spending as it is about raising revenue, and individuals like you fund the federal government through income taxes and payroll taxes. That means we're all stakeholders in how that money is spent.

Federal funding comes into our communities in many ways, much of it in the form of cash assistance funneled through state and local agencies. Each year the federal government contributes hundreds of billions of dollars to state budgets through grants

and assistance programs. Programs like the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provide support to families, while initiatives like the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allow communities to fund important public and private infrastructure. Both of these initiatives are crucial for states and their citizens, particularly now, as tough economic times have forced states to make tough budget choices.

The federal budget also lands in our communities by supporting government services like building roads and bridges, and through the enforcement of

safety regulations for things like food quality, drinking water, and clean air. Bottom line: all federal spending creates jobs.

And don't forget, individuals receive direct federal spending through Unemployment Insurance, Social Security, and more.

As stakeholders, it is our right and our obligation to see that our tax dollars are spent in ways that reflect our priorities. To do that we need to know where that money is going and how budget decisions are made.

Federal Budget Affects Environment, Health Care, Education, and More

As lawmakers grapple with a mixture of pressing social and political issues, it's imperative that all Americans understand how federal budget decisions affect our lives -- every single day. National Priorities Project's research and tools make it easy to see the connections between federal funding and your child's education, jobs in your community, clean drinking water, support for our troops, care for veterans, and more.

Here are just a few of the ways that the federal budget might affect you.



Food & Nutrition Assistance

This year, U.S. taxpayers will pay \$116 billion towards Food & Nutrition Assistance programs funded by the federal government. These programs include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as food stamps) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Millions of families nationwide have access to healthy foods and avoid chronic hunger as a result of this federal support.



Energy Conservation & Environment

National parks, clean air and water, pollution control measures, and alternative energy initiatives are all funded through the federal budget. In 2013, around \$1 billion of the federal budget was dedicated to energy conservation programs, including renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives. About 1% of the federal budget -- or about \$52 billion this year -- will go to all energy and environment programs.



Education & Schools

The federal government supports a variety of educational initiatives, including \$14 billion in grants to local schools, such as Title I funding for schools that serve primarily low-income children, and \$8 billion in funding for Head Start initiatives that offer health, education, and nutrition services to preschool children from low-income families. The federal budget also provides student financial assistance, such as Pell Grants and Federal Work Study, that enable millions of young people nationwide to pursue higher education.



Health Care

Health care programs supported by federal funds include Medicare, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program, as well as occupational and consumer health and safety and health care for Veterans. For example, this year, U.S. taxpayers will pay \$285 billion towards Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program.



Social Security

All wage earners are affected in some way by Social Security -- either as recipients of benefits or through the portion of our paychecks that go directly to fund this earned-benefit program. Payments to Social Security benefits and the cost of program administration comprise about 22 percent of the total federal budget. Last year, the government paid more than \$685 billion in benefits to millions of Americans receiving Social Security retirement and disability.



Science, Research, & Innovation

Without researchers who test innovations and develop new technologies with the support of the federal government, our nation never would have developed the best aerospace exploration program in the world or developed vaccines for debilitating diseases. Academic research, science, and technology sectors are supported by the federal government, which will spend around \$12 billion on general scientific research this year.



Bringing the Pie in the Sky **Down to Earth**

Baystate Health congratulates the National Priorities Project on three decades of truth telling by making the complicated simple, so we can all be better informed and engaged citizens. Data is a powerful tool, but only if understood. Thanks for having the courage to reveal what our national priorities truly are, so we can all better participate and help shape our country's future.



Baystate Medical Center | Baystate Franklin Medical Center | Baystate Mary Lane Hospital

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baystatehealth.org

30 Years as the People's Guide to the Federal Budget

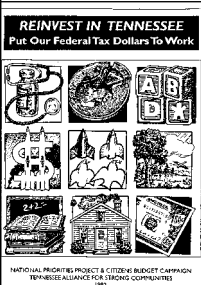


Greg Speeter & colleagues produce "In Defense of the First District" documenting a \$54 million dollar funding loss over two years to the first Massachusetts Congressional District

National Priorities Project is born

1983

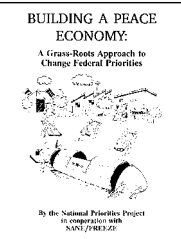
Collaboration with Citizens Budget Campaign on "Reinvest in America," with 16 state-specific reports on economic issues



1991-1992

1989-1990

NPP offers trainings in 30 U.S. cities in support of a Peace Dividend and produces "Building a Peace Economy," a grassroots training manual highlighting the impact of the federal budget on states



NPP's materials on the state and local impact of the cost of the B2 Bomber and F22 Jet Fighter help stop its funding

1997-1998

Cost of War data used by activists across the country helps shape candidate debates during mid-term Congressional election campaigns

Cost of War to the United States	
Total Cost of Wars Since 2001 \$1,442,881,938,978	
Cost of War in Iraq \$810,811,444,876	Cost of War in Afghanistan \$632,070,494,101

2006

NPP publishes "Choices That Matter: Federal Decisions and Your Hometown," a layperson's guide to the federal budget and its local impact for 50 states and dozens of cities and counties

2000

Celebration of NPP's 20th Anniversary

2003



NPP re-launches its Federal Priorities Database with cutting-edge technology and data tracking social indicators, as well as the county, state, and national impact of federal spending



"If Paychecks Could Talk," NPP's first animated video, airs and is widely used by partners as an engagement and mobilization tool

With US Action and a host of national allies, NPP creates "Build a Better Budget," an online game and action tool

2011

NPP releases "Homeland Security: The Second Defense Department" with the first-ever analysis of the total cost of the Department of Homeland Security

NPP transitions Cost of War to Cost of National Security, with running counters for federal spending on programs ranging from the military to health care

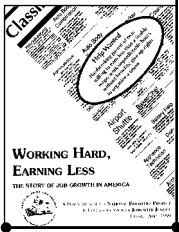
NPP releases an updated Trade-Offs tool to include localized spending data for 9,900 cities and towns

NPP issues a groundbreaking analysis tracking changes in tax breaks over the past 40 years and a breakdown of who benefits the most

2013

1999

"Working Hard, Earning Less," published with Jobs with Justice, is the first to provide living wage information for all 50 states



2002

Launch of "Cost of War" running counter for states and cities, a tool that ultimately is cited by hundreds of national, state, and local media, partners, and individuals over the next eleven years

1995

Partnership with Common Agenda Coalition to launch "Creating a Common Agenda" in Washington D.C. providing an alternative to Newt Gingrich's "Contract with America"

2005

NPP releases military recruitment data by high school, zip code, income level, and race/ethnicity, providing the first-ever analysis of disparities in enlistment, and is featured in USA TODAY, the Washington Post, Boston Globe, Denver Post, and dozens more media outlets

2008

Celebration of NPP's 25th Anniversary

2010

With AFSC, NPP launches the "If I Had a Trillion Dollars National Youth Video Contest"



2012

A People's Guide to the Federal Budget, our critically acclaimed book, is published and is soon carried by bookstores, universities, and libraries in every state in the nation

"If we are to have any hope of navigating the federal budget process and understanding the complex decisions our elected officials will make in future years, we need this book. A People's Guide is our way in."
- Barbara Ehrenreich, best-selling author of *Nickel and Dimed*

NPP issues "Election 2012: The Voter Guide," a comparison of the presidential candidates on 12 key issues, plus fact sheets with key background information on Medicare, Social Security, taxes, and more

With Young Invincibles, NPP issues "A Fight for the Future: Education, Job Training, and The Fiscal Showdown"

30 National Democracy Champions

In honor of **National Priorities Project's 30th Anniversary**, we celebrate thirty allies and valued partners from all around the country and all walks of life who exemplify leadership and tenacity in their commitment to the democratic ideals upon which our nation was founded.

...And because there are so many people doing incredible work for our democracy, we've added a bonus Champion for a total of thirty-one.

Read full bios and learn more about these remarkable individuals at nationalpriorities.org/en/about/npp-turns-30/democracy-champions



Sister Simone Campbell
Executive Director
NETWORK



Anna Galland
Executive Director
MoveOn.org



Katherine McFate
President & CEO
Center for Effective Government



Eli Pariser
Co-founder
Upworthy



Tim Carpenter
Founder and National Director
Progressive Democrats of America



Christie George
Director
New Media Ventures



Heather McGhee
Vice President, Policy & Outreach
Demos



Ai-jen Poo
Director
National Domestic Workers Alliance & Co-director, Caring Across Generations



John Cavanagh
Fellow, Global Economy
Institute for Policy Studies



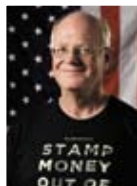
Tiffany Dena Loftin
Power Shift Coordinator
Energy Action Coalition & Organizer, Dream Defenders



Jim McGovern
Member of Congress
(1996 – present)



Robert B. Reich
Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy
University of California



Ben Cohen
President and Head Stamper
Stamp Stampede



Sarita Gupta
Executive Director
Jobs with Justice



Bill McKibben
Founder
350.org



Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner
Executive Director/CEO and Co-Founder
MomsRising



Cheryl Contee
Partner
Fission Strategy



Van Jones
Host
CNN's Crossfire



Ellen Miller
Executive Director and Co-Founder
Sunlight Foundation



Micah L. Sifry
Co-Founder and Editorial Director
Personal Democracy Media



Tom Engelhardt
Tomdispatch.com



Judith Le Blanc
Field Director
Peace Action



Leslie Moody
Executive Director
The Partnership for Working Families



Jessie Spector
Executive Director
Resource Generation



Barney Frank
Member of Congress
(1981-2012); Chairman, House Financial Services Committee (2007-2011)



Annie Leonard
Founder and President
The Story of Stuff Project



Liz Ryan Murray
Policy Director
National People's Action



Deborah Weinstein
Executive Director
Coalition on Human Needs



Seth Flaxman & Kathryn Peters
Co-Founders
TurboVote



Michael Leon Guerrero & Cindy Wiesner
Grassroots Global Justice



Annabel Park & Eric Byler
Co-Founders
Coffee Party USA

Democracy Champion awards are given in honor of Greg Speeter and Frances Crowe.



DON'T MISS

National Priorities Project's 30th Anniversary Celebration!

Presented by **Cooley Dickinson Hospital**, an affiliate of Massachusetts General Hospital and Partners HealthCare

Friday, October 18, 2013 • 7:30-9:00 pm • The Academy of Music Northampton, MA

Doors open at 6:30 Come early to enjoy a glass of beer or wine with friends! (All refreshment sales benefit the Academy of Music.)

Tickets on sale at academyofmusictheatre.com

Featuring visionaries and change makers in the movements for peace and security, healthcare justice, environment, and education.



Former Congressman Barney Frank

Barney Frank served as Chairman of the House Financial Services Committee from 2007-2011. His legislative legacy includes efforts to

shrink military spending, and fund important quality of life needs at home.



Ai-jen Poo,

National Domestic Workers' Alliance
Ai-jen Poo is a recipient of the Ms. Foundation Woman of Vision Award, Newsweek's 150 Fearless Women list, and TIME's list of the 100 Most Influential People in the World.



Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner,

MomsRising
MomsRising has 1 million members working to increase family economic security, to end discrimination against women and mothers, and to help ensure all children can thrive.



Congressman Jim McGovern

Currently serving his ninth term in Congress, Jim McGovern is the second ranking Democrat on the House Rules Committee, and a member of the House Agriculture Committee.

Musicians

Alecia Chakour



Sonya Kitchell



Mitch Chakour



SciTech Band "The Pride of Springfield"



Celebrity Hosts



Bill Newman



Monte Belmonte



Kelsey Flynn



Ericka Taylor

With Video Appearances By: Bill McKibben • Annie Leonard • Ben Cohen ...and more surprise guests!

30th Anniversary Host Committee

Honorary Chair - Congressman Jim McGovern • Co-Chairs - Dennis Bidwell and Chia Collins

Host Committee

Harriet Barlow
Lisa Baskin
Adi Bemak
Sarah Buttenwieser
Ben Cohen

Michael Cohen
Lori Divine-Hudson
Sally & Al Griggs
Clare Higgins
Jack Horner & Ron Skinn

Representative Peter Kocot
Tom Lesser
George & Ann Levinger
Jim Levey
Terry Mollner
Mayor David Narkewicz

Bill Newman & Dale Melcher
Rus Peotter
Senator Stanley Rosenberg
Jessica Saalfeld
Preston Smith

Sarah Stranahan
Sue Thrasher
Tom Willits
Cate Woolner
Jonathan Wright & Meg Kelsey Wright



Special thanks to: Chia Collins & Michael Cohen and Lucy & Daniel Stroock

With additional support from: American Friends Service Committee; Bart's Homemade/Snow's Ice Cream; Bidwell Advisors; Bova, Harrington & Associates, P.C.; Bueno y Sano; Clayton & Canby Dental; Collective Copies; Kelly & Charlie DeRose; Florence Savings Bank; Friends Committee on National Legislation; Gateway City Arts; Gazebo; Goggins Real Estate; Greenfield Community College; Sally & Al Griggs; The Hotel Northampton; Interlink Publishing; Integrity Development & Construction; Mount Holyoke College Weissman Center for Leadership; Northeast IT Systems, Inc.; The Odyssey Bookshop; Ostberg Associates; Peace Development Fund; Principle Profits Asset Management, Inc.; RAINMAKER Consulting; Valley Home Improvement, Inc.; Webber & Grinnell Insurance; Jon Weissman & Joan Grenier; Women's Action for New Directions & Women Legislators' Lobby; and Wright Builders

What People Are Saying About National Priorities Project

"I've found NPP's work to be an extraordinarily valuable source of insight and analysis with regard to what's at stake for the nation, what our priorities ought to be, and how far we've drifted from those widely-shared goals."

– Robert Reich

"I greatly value NPP's work and use it regularly in my own work."

– Bill Moyers

"All of our work is data-driven – in fact, we may be the only activist movement on earth that uses a data point as its name and rallying cry. And we're grateful to the NPP for their data – in particular, understanding the pernicious role of fossil fuel subsidies has been highly useful. Thanks!"

– Bill McKibben, 350.org

"MoveOn has often used National Priorities Project data to empower our members to speak knowledgeably and compellingly about huge issues -- from military spending on the Iraq War (or now, the prospect of a military intervention in Syria), to the impacts of the sequester. NPP is a vital resource -- the progressive movement depends on you!"

– Anna Galland, MoveOn.org

"Each year, when the president presents his budget proposal for the coming fiscal year, NPP provides a variety of analyses that help clarify what is in the budget, how that defines the nation's priorities,

and how that affects communities and the lives of individuals. NPP provides a very helpful alternative lens to view and understand the federal budget that we turn to every year. There's no way you can make good, thoughtful decisions and choices without good, thoughtful information and analyses."

– U.S. Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

"National People's Action has relied on our partner NPP for the hard data and lucid explanation they provide for everything from educating neighborhood leaders and staff on the budget process to understanding exactly where our affordable housing dollars have gone. We've used NPP to help write the signs that are carried at direct action marches on Wall Street and on legislative fact sheets carried on Capitol Hill."

– Liz Ryan Murray, National People's Action

"(NPP is) not only dedicated to having a national impact and providing support to national entities through their activities, but they are also admirably supportive of local efforts and are one of the very few national groups dedicated to providing local networks with data specific to their geographies."

– Sarita Gupta, Jobs with Justice

"NPP's work has demonstrated that another way is possible, and that we could start building it right now with a shift in spending and policy priorities.

Whenever we're faced with a doubter telling us that health care or education or pretty much any social good is just too expensive and we can't afford it, we pull out numbers from NPP to show them the hard data that we can afford a better future. What we can't afford is ignoring this data and continuing business as usual."

– Annie Leonard, Story of Stuff

"Without NPP the movements for justice and peace would be less likely to win. The stronger NPP becomes the more likely a more just, equitable and peaceful world will become a reality."

– Judith Le Blanc, Peace Action

"Our budget problem is not that we spend too much, but that we spend far too much in areas where we shouldn't, and far too little in other places, which could do so much to improve the quality of the lives of all Americans. National Priorities Project has consistently been one of the few organizations to draw attention to this point. Providing vital advocacy as we shift away from grossly excessive military spending and into categories that will be far more productive for our quality of life is a great asset, and one that I believe will become increasingly important as we deal with a budget crisis that will only be resolved sensibly if the country pays attention to NPP's advice."

– Former Congressman Barney Frank



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Dear **NATIONAL PRIORITIES PROJECT;**

Thanks for so many years of deciphering the federal budget for the rest of us. We couldn't have done it without you! Maybe some day it will all make sense. Until then keep up the good work!

Sincerely, everyone at Paradise Copies



Be The Change

Join The Change Makers Club

By supporting the work that NPP does,
you give them the power to help make change!

National Priorities Project

www.nationalpriorities.org

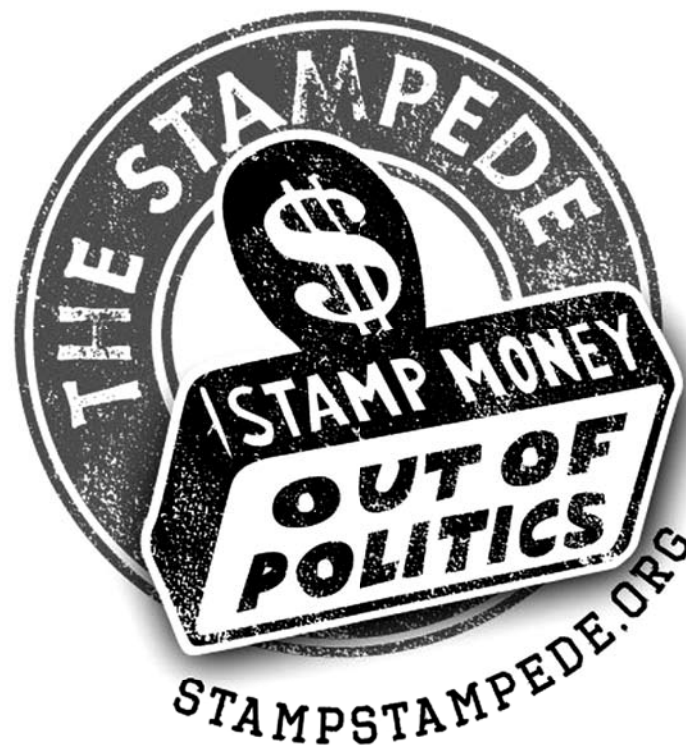
Anonymous local supporters

The Stampede

is tens of thousands of Americans legally stamping messages on our Nation's currency to #GetMoneyOut of Politics. As more and more stamped money spreads, so will the movement to amend the Constitution.

So far, 16 states have passed resolutions calling on Congress to support a constitutional amendment, and 125 members of Congress have sponsored or co-sponsored a bill calling on an amendment. That means we're 1/3 of the way there. But more work needs to be done.

Stampstamped.org
@StampStampede



**EVERY BILL
YOU STAMP**
helps demonstrate
growing and ongoing
support for the
movement.

Join the stampede and
help #GetMoneyOut of
politics!



User Profile: Alia Holness

"I'm going to go home and tell people we can make a difference. Because I learned about the federal budget and came to Washington. Where I come from, people think nothing we do matters. But they're wrong. I know they're wrong after today."

Growing up in Boston, Alia remembers being shocked by the juxtaposition of the State House and homeless people on the Boston Commons. She wished there was something she could do to help the people she saw suffering, but she didn't know how.

When she got her first job, she saw the taxes being taken out of her weekly paycheck, and she wondered where that money was going. Was it going to the State House, while the homeless shivered in the cold winters outside?

Alia began to understand the connection between her tax dollars and the services in her community after participating in federal budget trainings provided by National Priorities Project as part of the If I Had a Trillion Dollars Youth Video Contest, co-organized by NPP and American Friends Service

Committee. She realized that her tax dollars could be spent by the federal government in ways that would improve opportunity and support for struggling families -- but that her priorities were not reflected in the decisions made by her lawmakers about federal spending.

As part of NPP's training, Alia and dozens of youth from around the country met with lawmakers in Washington, D.C. They testified about the challenges

facing their families and communities, and told their legislators what they believed should be the priorities for our nation.

Alia's experience in Washington changed her profoundly. After years of being told that she couldn't change anything, she realized that her opinion about

federal issues matters, and that she can make a difference by speaking up. She reclaimed her power as a citizen in our democracy. Alia has said that NPP's information, tools, and educational resources provided her with the opportunity to know that her priorities deserve to be heard.



Alia (far left) leads a panel of youth testifying before lawmakers in Washington D.C.

User Profile: United States Student Association

"Amazing workshop! More time for NPP, please!"

The United States Student Association is the nation's oldest, largest, and most-inclusive student association

fighting for an accessible, affordable education for all. For the last three years, NPP staff members have traveled to Washington, D.C. to help build the capacity of young people from across the

country who have come to our nation's capitol for USSA's National Grassroots Legislative Conference and National Student Lobby Day. This three-day gathering provides students with the opportunity to broaden their knowledge base, learn new skills, lobby their elected representatives on student issues, march through historic downtown Washington, D.C., and rally on Capitol Hill. Year after year, we're heartened by the rave reviews of our workshops and the ability of our research and training to strengthen the dynamic leaders of future generations.



USSA 2013 President Tiffany Loftin -- an NPP Democracy Champion -- meets with President Obama on college access and affordability.

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**To see the rest of my story,
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