

Website shows how to cut the government down to size

DownsizingGovernment.org

In his State of the Union address, President Obama called for fiscal responsibility and the need for Congress to work to reduce the budget deficit. Lawmakers looking for ideas on how to accomplish this feat are visiting Cato's newest website, DownsizingGovernment.org.

Created by director of tax policy studies Chris Edwards and budget analyst Tad DeHaven, the site is designed to help policymakers and the public understand where federal funds are being spent and how to reform each government department. It describes the failings of federal agencies and identifies specific programs to cut. It also discusses the systematic reasons why government programs are often obsolete, mismanaged, or otherwise dysfunctional. Edwards describes the site with more brevity, calling it "a great aid to help the layman understand where his money goes in Washington."

By visiting the sections dedicated to the various agencies, users can quickly find such depressing statistics as the fact that last year the Department of Agriculture, with its 96,000 employees, spent \$991 for every U.S.

household. The Department of Education spent \$667, while the Department of Commerce came in at a relatively frugal \$101.

DownsizingGovernment.org contains detailed information about the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Energy, Education, and Housing and Urban Development, but will soon expand to cover everything from Defense to Justice to Veterans Affairs.

By visiting the pages dedicated to each department, users can quickly assess the growth of budgets over time and how the money is spent, and look at proposed spending cuts. The "Reading Room" feature provides background studies by Cato Scholars, while "Downsize This!" lists quick fixes to runaway costs. Drilling down exposes a wealth of additional detail, from timelines of growth—in 1965 the Department of Education had 2,113 employees and a budget of \$1.5 billion, a far cry from its 4,100 workers and \$78 billion budget today—to lists of



Cato experts.

Videos and podcasts round out the content, along with comparisons of the departments based on federal spending, employee compensation, number of subsidy programs, and more. Nowhere is more information about the awesome and increasing size of the federal government more readily accessible.

Says Edwards, who is also the author of a 2005 book, *Downsizing the Federal Government*, "Government is too big and needs to be cut." DownsizingGovernment.org shows how to do exactly that.

Sensible policies toward Iran, North Korea, and the war on drugs

Cato Scholars Tour for Peace, Nonintervention

Promoting peace both at home and abroad has long been a goal of the Cato Institute, and two recent speaking tours, made possible by grants from the Ploughshares Fund and the Open Society Institute, have provided an opportunity for Cato scholars to spread this important message in person.

The first tour, sponsored by Ploughshares, featured Christopher A. Preble, director of foreign policy studies; Ted Galen Carpenter, vice president for defense and foreign policy studies; senior fellow Doug Bandow; and associate director of foreign policy studies Justin Logan, discussing the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea. The talks ranged from Cato

Policy Forums and Hill Briefings to presentations at the World Affairs Council of Oregon, the Utah Council for Citizen Diplomacy, and Texas A&M University, to name just a few of the venues. Their goal was to draw out the lessons of Iraq as they apply to Iran and North Korea. With that war as a model, Preble said that the costs of a conflict with the latter two countries would "likely be enormous." Carpenter, in a speech in Colorado, criticized the isolation strategy being engaged in with Iran and North Korea, saying that it would create incentives for those countries to sell their nuclear technology to the highest bidder.

Carpenter and Bandow were joined on the second tour, sponsored by the Open

Society Institute, by Ian Vásquez, director of the Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity, and Juan Carlos Hidalgo, project coordinator for Latin America. They spoke about the tragic human cost of the international war on drugs. At a speech at the World Affairs Council in Indianapolis in October, Vásquez discussed the benefits of drug legalization with close to 100 participants, including professors and students from local colleges. Vásquez and Carpenter spoke together at a Cato Institute Capitol Hill Briefing in May, and Hidalgo gave three lectures in Michigan, including one to an audience of more than 200 people at the Dennon Museum Center at Northwestern Michigan College.