

Stand With Big Bird

Thanks to last night's presidential debate, public media funding is back in the spotlight again.

Let's be clear: Cutting federal funding for NPR and PBS will hardly make a dent in the budget but will have a huge impact on jobs and journalism in local communities.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting budget is about \$445 million dollars. That's less than \$1.50 per person per year — or about one one-hundredth of one percent of the federal budget.

Here are five things that cost taxpayers more than public media funding:

1. The budget for military marching bands: [\\$500 million a year](#)
2. The U.S. House of Representatives budget for office expenses, mail and personnel: [\\$727 million a year](#)
3. Three Global Hawk Drones (which Congress is pushing for even though the Defense Department hasn't requested them): [\\$633 million a year](#)
4. The foreign tax credit that credits companies for any taxes they pay in other countries: [\\$850 million a year](#)
5. Two days of the war in Afghanistan: [\\$600 million a year](#)

This isn't a funding issue; it's a political issue. It's time to take politics out of public media. All the surveys show that people across the political spectrum support funding for NPR, PBS and their local stations. Let's take the target off Big Bird's back and move on.

In that spirit, we're [giving away free Defend Public Media stickers](#) so you can stand with Big Bird.

But this isn't just about Big Bird. It's about quality journalism, arts programming and educational shows — all that we've come to expect from public media. This programming reaches 99 percent of American homes every day. The dismal state of mainstream election coverage — full of campaign gossip and horse-race coverage — reminds us why we need a vibrant noncommercial media sector now more than ever.

Simply put, commercial media is just not serving the democratic needs of our communities. For many in the U.S., their local NPR and PBS stations are the only independent media institutions left in their communities. We should be talking about defending NPR and PBS, not defunding them.