

Evil Republicans Take Aim at "Sesame Street"

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As we all know, the Republican Party is the single most evil organization in human history. Republicans hate the poor, hate the environment, hate teachers, hate foreigners, and generally hate joy and happiness in all its forms. And now the *Daily Beast's* Samuel Jacobs [says](#) the GOP is poised to undertake their most heartless act yet: "kill Big Bird."

Jacobs is citing a [report](#) in the *New York Times* which describes House Republicans' latest batch of proposed budget cuts, meant to reduce federal spending by \$100 billion. "Dozens of programs" are on the chopping block, including the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's government funding.

The CPB, of course, [isn't happy](#):

We understand the challenges to our economy as a result of increasing budget deficits, but the proposed elimination of funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) will not address this challenge in a meaningful way; it represents a disproportionate attack on public media. Further, elimination of CPB would impact millions of Americans who rely on public media for free, quality content that has a mission to educate, inform and inspire. This proposed action would directly result in cuts to the 1,300 public television and radio stations that provide this service; impact thousands of jobs in rural, suburban and urban communities throughout the country already reeling from a faltering economy; and eliminate a valued service – content that strengthens our civil society through children's and educational programming, lifelong learning for all Americans, and quality entertainment.

First things first: This wouldn't destroy *Sesame Street*. For decades, *Sesame Street* has been a staple of kids' TV. Sesame Workshop [boasted in 2010](#) that their 122-time Emmy-winning show "was rated **THE NUMBER ONE** favorite show of preschoolers" (emphasis in the original), and *TV Squad* [says](#):

With so many choices, it's amazing that older shows, like the long-running 'Sesame Street,' can still draw the attention of little folks. Yet, the four-decade-old program is still going strong — so strong, in fact, that the show has garnered its highest ratings in years.

According to [the Hollywood Reporter](#), 'Sesame Street' has reported a 60 percent increase in viewership, with a double-digit increase among 3-4 year olds from last year. The show is averaging a 3.5 rating for its core demo of 2-5 year olds, compared to last year's 2.2 rating. According to Sesame Workshop, the non-profit organization behind the show, these are the best ratings the show has earned since 2007.

In all likelihood, all that would happen is that *Sesame Street* would move to a new home in the private sector. You think Fox, Disney or Nickelodeon wouldn't love the chance to add such a legendary brand to their lineups? Big Bird, Elmo, Oscar, Snuffy, Bert, Ernie, Grover, and Cookie Monster will be just fine.

Market forces would have a similar effect on other CPB programs. For-profit broadcasters would pick up the popular ones, while those whose audience consists of six people in Boise would get the axe. Which is precisely as it should be—if we want shows on the air, we should voluntarily support them ourselves, rather than force our countrymen to fork over their income to keep them on life support. There's a reason subsidizing entertainment isn't among [Congress' enumerated powers](#).

What about those jobs that will allegedly be lost? *Investor's Business Daily* [explains](#):

Truth is, Big Bird and his friends on Sesame Street are in no danger of extinction. Federal spending makes up just 15% of public broadcasting's budget. The other 85% comes from viewers, local government and academic institutions. As the Cato Institute's David Boaz recently pointed out in calling for CPB's privatization, "Businesses and nonprofits deal with 15% revenue losses all the time." With so many loyal viewers and listeners, PBS and National Public Radio could handle such a reduction more easily than many successful for-profit cable channels. Federal funding didn't deter McDonald's heiress Joan Kroc from bequeathing \$200 million to NPR two years ago; there's no reason to believe that ending CPB subsidies wouldn't spur substantial increases in such private assistance.

Besides, when the American people retain more of their own money, the effects are a.) fatter wallets for Americans in need of jobs, and b.) private employers with more money to create new jobs. (Also, it's worth pointing out that voters retain the ability to support public broadcasting at the state level if it's that important to them.)

This isn't a game—our government is in [dire fiscal straits](#), and *not* majorly cutting spending isn't optional if we don't want our country to collapse. Emotionalism and fear-mongering in the face of tough, necessary choices is the last thing America needs right now.

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