



[Advertise here](#)

blog advertising is good for you

Who we are
Gerald Weinand, Editor

DONATE TO DIRIGO BLUE



Search
Diaries

[Advanced Search](#)

Active Users
Currently 1 user(s) logged on.

Event Calendar

October 2010
([view month](#))

S	M	T	W	R	F	S
*	*	*	*	*	01	02
03	04	05	06	07	08	09
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	*	*	*	*	*	*

<< (add event) >>



See Site Visits

Dean Scontras's "excellent starting point" for where to make cuts in the Federal budget

by: [Gerald Weinand](#)
Thu Oct 21, 2010 at 11:46:05 AM EDT

On his website, Dean Scontras, who is challenging Rep. Chellie Pingree for Maine's 1st District seat, points to an "excellent starting point" for [recommended cuts](#):

Many people have been saying to me, "I agree that we need to reduce spending, but where would you end up cutting?"

This is a natural, and very understandable concern.

As a good starting point for discussion, the CATO Institute has given us a resource called "[Downsizing the Federal Government](#)". In it, CATO has given policy makers some tools to help identify areas of the federal government to cut.

My guess is that Scontras knows that many people will not bother to look to see what the CATO Institute where CATO suggests cuts be made. We do below:

Recommended cuts to Agriculture:

Department of Agriculture Proposed Spending Cuts	
Program	Spending in 2010 (\$ million)
Agricultural Subsidies	
Farm Service Agency	\$16,584
Risk Management Agency	\$7,033
Foreign Agricultural Service	\$1,604
Nat. Inst. of Food and Agriculture	\$1,483
Agricultural Research Service	\$1,369
Agricultural Marketing Service	\$1,272
Agricultural Statistics Service	\$162
Economic Research Service	\$80
Food Subsidies	
Food Stamp program (SNAP)	\$72,482
School Lunch and related programs	\$17,307
Nutrition program (WIC)	\$7,704
Other	\$452
Rural Subsidies	
Rural Housing Service	\$1,928
Rural Utilities Service	\$613
Rural Business Coop. Service	\$297
Rural Development	\$296
Forest Service	
State and private forestry grants	\$515
Land acquisition	\$74
Explore options to restructure forests	n/a
Total proposed cuts	\$131,255
Total department outlays	\$142,016

Source: Estimated fiscal year outlays from the *Budget of the U.S. Government, FY2011*.

Yes, it sucks if you count on food stamps to feed your family, or subsidized breakfast or lunch to feed your children at school. And if you live in subsidized housing supported by Rural Development, Scontras thinks you ought to pay up or move out. I wonder what Rosa Scarcell's take is on that.

Recommended cuts to Transportation:

[Advertise here](#)



Menu

[Make a New Account](#)

Username:

Password:

[Forget your username or password?](#)

GOTV 2010 Democrats

Federal

Rep. Mike Michaud
[Constituent Services](#)
[Michaud for Congress](#)

Rep. Chellie Pingree
[Constituent Services](#)
[Pingree for Congress](#)

State

[Maine Democrats](#)

[Libby for Governor](#)
:: [Convention speech](#)

[Advertise here](#)

blog advertising is good for you

GET YOUR HOODIE ON AT THE DIRIGO BLUE STORE



DIRIGO BLUE is available as an **iPhone App** or **Blackberry App**

Blog Roll

[Maine Blogs](#)

**Department of Transportation
Proposed Spending Cuts**

Program	Spending in 2010 (\$ million)
Federal Highway Administration	
Terminate entire agency	\$51,750
Federal Transit Administration	
Terminate entire agency	\$15,476
Federal Aviation Administration	
Air traffic control operations	\$7,299
Air traffic control capital grants	\$3,017
Airport grants	\$3,979
Passenger Rail	
Amtrak	\$2,528
High-speed rail grants	\$339
Maritime Administration	
Assistance to shipyards	\$104
Ocean freight differential	\$175
Title XI loans	\$108
Essential air service	\$53
Total proposed cuts	\$84,888
Total department outlays	\$90,944

Source: Estimated fiscal year outlays from the *Budget of the U.S. Government, FY2011*.

Paul LePage isn't going to have to worry about whether to accept Federal money to repair Maine's roads, because Dean Scontras thinks that Federal Highway Administration should be eliminated in its entirety. LePage will likely be too busy trying to figure out how to keep commercial jets from flying into each other as they fly over Maine, since Scontras wants to severely cut air traffic control operations.

And that successful DownEaster railroad service that some have worked so hard to expand beyond Portland? Cutting the \$2 billion dollars that Amtrak will mean those that ride from Portland to Boston will have to find another route.

Recommended cuts to Housing and Urban Development:

**Department of Housing and Urban Development
Proposed Spending Cuts**

Program	Spending in 2010 (\$ million)
Rental Assistance	\$27,164
Community Development	\$13,092
Housing Finance	\$11,879
Public Housing	\$8,808
Native American/Hawaiian programs	\$893
Other	\$682
Total proposed cuts	\$62,518
Total department outlays	\$62,518

Source: Estimated fiscal year outlays from the *Budget of the U.S. Government, FY2011*.

Community Action grants pay for many projects across the nation and Maine. Right now, dilapidated sidewalks are being replaced along a two block section of Main Street in Rockland, paid for in part by a Community Development grant. The rehab project on Rockland's Rec Center was also made possible in part because of a Community Development grant.

What project(s) in your town would Dean Scontras have wanted to eliminate?

Recommended cuts to Education:

[Alna Harridan](#)
[AsMaineGoes](#)
[AsMaineGoeslolz](#)
[MPBN Capitol Connection](#)
[Center for Public Interest](#)
[Collins Watch](#)
[DCW](#)
[Kennebec Blues](#)
[Maine Owl](#)
[Maine Politics](#)
[Al Diamon's Media Mutt](#)
[My K Street](#)
[Pine Tree Politics](#)
[Political Grind](#)
[Protect Maine Equality](#)
[Simon Says](#)
[Susan Cover on Politics](#)
[Union Maine](#)
[White Noise Insanity](#)

National Blogs

[AMERICAblog](#)
[Atrios](#)
[Blue Hampshire](#)
[Blue Mass Group](#)
[Burnt Orange Report TX](#)
[Calitics CA](#)
[Daily Kos](#)
[FireDogLake](#)
[Hillbilly Report KY](#)
[Hoosier Pundit IN](#)
[Kansas Free Press](#)
[My Left Nutmeg CT](#)
[OpenLeft](#)
[Pam's House Blend](#)
[Square State CO](#)
[Talking Points Memo](#)

Government Blogs

[Flu.gov](#)
[OMB Orszag](#)
[DoT LaHood's Fast Lane](#)

[Allwords Online Dictionary](#)

Maine News Outlets

[All Maine Points](#)
[Bangor Daily News](#)
[Brunswick Times Record](#)
[Free Press \(Midcoast\)](#)
[Lewiston Sun Journal](#)
[Lincoln County News](#)
[Maine Campus](#)
[Quoddy Times](#)
[Portland Phoenix](#)
[Portland Press Herald](#)

State Party Sites

[Maine Democratic Party](#)

[Androscoggin Dems](#)
[Aroostook Dems](#)
[Cumberland Dems](#)
[Franklin Dems](#)
[Hancock Dems](#)
[Kennebec Dems](#)
[Knox Dems](#)
[Lincoln Dems](#)
[Oxford Dems](#)
[Penobscot Dems](#)
[Piscataquis Dems](#)
[Somerset Dems](#)
[Sagadahoc Dems](#)
[Waldo Dems](#)

**Department of Education
Proposed Spending Cuts**

Program	Spending in 2010 (\$ million)
Elementary and Secondary Education	\$61,527
Special Education and Rehabilitation	\$21,022
Student Aid	\$17,116
Postsecondary Education	\$2,960
Vocational and Adult Education	\$2,095
Innovation and Improvement	\$1,177
English Language Acquisition	\$754
Education Sciences	\$697
Safe and Drug-Free Schools	\$675
Departmental Management	\$614
Other	(\$1,693)
Total proposed cuts	\$106,944
Total department outlays	\$106,944

Source: Estimated fiscal year outlays from the *Budget of the U.S. Government, FY2011*. Student aid nets out a temporary spike in proprietary receipts.

I really have no comment on these numbers, except to say that local schools are already have a difficult time dealing with unfunded mandates. These cuts would make a terrible situation worse.

Recommended cuts to Health and Human Services:

**Table 1. Proposed Spending Cuts
to HHS Programs Other Than Medicare and Medicaid**

Program	Spending in 2010 (\$ million)
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	\$17,754
Children's Health Insurance Program	\$8,903
Foster care grants	\$7,403
Head Start	\$7,235
Low income energy assistance	\$4,993
Child support grants	\$4,710
Child care development grant	\$3,394
Substance abuse	\$3,349
Child care entitlement	\$2,925
Social services grant	\$2,118
Administration on Aging	\$1,600
Other state grant programs	\$16,961
Total proposed cuts	\$81,345
HHS outlays (excluding Medicare/Medicaid)	\$142,379

Source: Author, based on estimated fiscal year outlays from the *Budget of the U.S. Government, FY2011*.

A mark of a society is how it treats the least fortunate in it. These cuts illustrate how Dean Scontras views our society.

::

Regarding Medicare, CATO does not list what it proposes in handy charts like those above, so I'll simply paste what they say on their website:

Medicare "Reform":

*** Increasing premiums.** Part B premiums originally covered 50 percent of Part B outlays, but today they cover just 25 percent with taxpayers picking up the other 75 percent. Enrollees currently pay for

about 10 percent of Medicare's overall outlays, so it's not unreasonable to ask them to pay a larger share. Were Congress to increase Part B premiums to 35 percent of outlays, the 10-year savings would be \$217 billion.

*** Increasing cost sharing.** In 2009, Part B had a deductible of just \$135 annually and 20 percent coinsurance above that. Such low cost sharing leads to overconsumption, as do Medigap policies that often provide first-dollar coverage. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that increasing and conforming the deductibles for Parts A and B and Medigap policies would save taxpayers \$73 billion by 2020. Those changes would reduce Medigap premiums, which would partly offset enrollees' higher out-of-pocket costs.

*** Increasing the eligibility age.** Average life expectancy in the United States has risen from about 70 in 1965 to 78 today, and it may reach 80 by 2020. In 1983, Congress began gradually increasing Social Security's normal retirement age from 65 to 67. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that doing the same with Medicare could reduce federal outlays by \$92 billion over 10 years.

Maine has the oldest population in the United States, and Dean Scontras doesn't seem to realize that these "reforms" would negatively impact the constituents he would represent.

Indeed, Mr. Scontras - let's have that conversation. By all means.

Gerald Weinand :: Dean Scontras's "excellent starting point" for where to make cuts in the Federal budget

Tags: [ME-1](#), [Chellie Pingree](#), [dean scontras](#), [CATO Institute](#), [Koch Brothers](#), (All Tags)

[Print Friendly View](#)  [Send As Email](#) 



0

[Dean Scontras's "excellent starting point" for where to make cuts in the Federal budget](#) | 6 comments

I'll note that the CATO Institute (0.00 / 0)
has Charles Koch as its co-founder. The Kochtopus.

by: [Gerald Weinand](#) @ Thu Oct 21, 2010 at 10:51:54 AM CDT

Well aren't YOU clever, Dean? (0.00 / 0)
No way YOU'LL be fooled by those oh-so-awful hardballs that [notorious GOP-haters like Chris Wallace](#) enjoy throwing.

But if we should use the CATO Institute's criteria for cuts, why even bother electing YOU? Cut out the middleman, I say. In this bold new era of *Citizens' United*, corporations can do ANYTHING. Even, I suspect, run for public office!

CATO Institute for Congress: "Independent" like Maine!

Regards,
Corporate Dog

by: [Corporate Dog](#) @ Thu Oct 21, 2010 at 13:39:04 PM CDT

Would love to know... (0.00 / 0)
what percentage of the Ag cuts are corn industry subsidies. Am I reading right that the table suggests some \$30 billion in cuts from Ag?

by: [leolabeth](#) @ Thu Oct 21, 2010 at 14:17:43 PM CDT

Yes, some \$30 billion in cuts (0.00 / 0)
is correct, and some of it would cut crop subsidies. See Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, aka the Farm Bill.

by: [Gerald Weinand](#) @ Thu Oct 21, 2010 at 14:30:02 PM CDT
[Parent]