

Liberals hide truth about sequester: Actual cuts are relatively minimal

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The sun still came up, Anne Hathaway is still annoying and it still takes 45 minutes to get a stack of pancakes at Aretha Frankenstiens.

Fears that the federal budget sequester, which went in to effect last night, would end life as we know it have been greatly exaggerated -- as have the actual cuts that that will result from sequestration, and the impact of those cuts.

That hasn't stopped lefty lawmakers and pundits, and their sycophants, from breaking out in "Harlem Shake"-style freakouts as they perpetuate the myth that sequestration would significantly affect government services, bureaucrats' jobs and federal spending.

In a news conference on Thursday, Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif, went so far as to claim that sequestration would cost America 170 million jobs. Holy cannoli, Maxine, that's a lot of jobs!

Actually, 170 million is more jobs than there are in the entire country -- about 30 million more, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. (Apparently, Waters is so used to passing budgets that spend more dollars than there actually are to spend, that she didn't realize that it's impossible to lose more jobs than there are jobs to lose.)

Waters, sensing that she was catching a lot of grief for pulling the job loss numbers out of the clear blue sky -- or someplace a lot less pleasant -- marched her spokesman out to admit that the number was incorrect. She meant to say "170,000 jobs," the flack claimed. But even that 1,000-percent reduction to Water's original estimates seem high in the context of the tiny reduction in spending mandated by the sequester.

Water's outrageous job loss exaggeration was far from the only whopper spoken by a Democratic leader on the topic of sequestration. Perhaps the biggest fib of all was told by the head man himself, President Barack Obama.

Obama recently blamed the creation of the sequester -- originally invented as a fallback plan that would be enacted only if more targeted cuts weren't made -- on Republicans. Veteran Washington Post reporter Bob Woodward, who has been chronicling the Obama White House, responded to Obama's assertion with an op-ed that proved that the sequestration was the Obama Administration's idea.

Showing all the class and restraint of schoolyard bullies, liberals engaged in a broad attack on Woodward (who, let's not forget, was a main player in forcing a Republican president from office), led by White House economic adviser Gene Sperling who sent an email that Woodward described as threatening.

With all the misinformation, exaggerations and downright lies about sequestration, it's time for some actual facts.

Fact 1: The sequester doesn't cut federal spending at all. It only limits projected future spending. As Michael Tanner of the Cato Institute points out, "even if the sequester goes through, the federal government will spend more every single year. In fact, in 2023 it will be spending \$2.39 trillion more than it does today."

Fact 2: While the president claims the sequester would "cut" \$85 billion in spending this year, because of ongoing federal contracts that can't be touched, spending would be reduced by a paltry \$44 billion, according to the Congressional Budget Office. That's just over one percent of the federal budget.

Fact 3: Entitlements won't be impacted by sequestration. Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security are exempt from the reductions in future spending.

Fact 4: Discretionary spending will be impacted the most. Even still, with a reduction of only 8 percent, the sequester "would leave domestic discretionary spending, after adjusting for inflation, at roughly the same level as 2009," according to Tanner.

The real problem with sequestration isn't that this invented "crisis" will destroy government's ability to provide services for Americans, it's that it doesn't go far enough in cutting unnecessary spending and reducing the size and scope of government -- even if the left won't admit it.