



Real site of the federal spending problem is Defense Department

Bart Bolger, March 4, 2013

The Feb. 28 article, "Local stakes add up," did a fine job of laying out the challenges facing state and local officials as they adjust to reduced federal funding for local projects. But do those cuts really need to occur?

It's clear the sacred cow in any budget discussion is the bloated Pentagon budget. What if I told you that even after sequestration cuts, the Pentagon budget will continue to grow, but at a reduced pace, from \$593 billion in 2014 to \$663 billion in 2020? (CBO Feb. 2013 report, <http://goo.gl/Szubn>).

The Pentagon draws from the same kitty of discretionary spending (but takes over 50 percent of it) as the federal spending which "trickles down" for local transportation, food programs for our school children, county mental health programs and others.

The Pentagon is spending the same each year as we did during the Cold War. The next 16 countries combined spend less than we do. I don't often agree with the Libertarian Cato Institute, but they make a strong case for deep military spending cuts here: <http://goo.gl/8p0di>.

It's time to tell our federal legislators and the president to change our spending priorities to domestic and local programs which will still support job growth, but stop lining the pockets of military contractors.

Do not listen to government officials who forecast doom if the Pentagon gets cut via sequester. Those are war- profiteer ventriloquists talking, trying to preserve their Learjets and condos in the Bahamas.