

THE DAILY CALLER

How The Modern Politician Advertises His Pork-Bearing Skills

By: Chris Edwards
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Congressional websites are a useful [resource](#) to gain insights into today's politics. So let's take a look at the [website of Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney \(D-NY\)](#) to see what we can find out. Maloney was elected just in 2012, but his website reveals that he is a fast learner in the modern ways of Washington.

Let's start with Maloney's [press release section](#), which contains key messages for his constituents and media in his district. It is chock full of statements discussing how the congressman is bringing federal benefits home, and how local leaders think that he is awesome for doing that.

Maloney has recently scored \$1 million [for airport funding](#), \$1.86 million for [hurricane clean-up](#), \$130,000 [for arts grants](#), \$6.7 million [for bike paths](#), \$3.8 million [to fix highways](#), \$200,000 for [one fire department](#), and \$2.4 million for [another one](#).

[My research has found](#) that such federal aid undermines good governance and is often wasteful. The nation would be better off if airports, hurricane clean-up, arts, bike paths, highways, and fire departments were funded locally.

But members of Congress are political entrepreneurs, not policy experts, and they see it differently. Their goal is to get community leaders on their side, and federal aid is a great tool for gaining support from local [businesses](#), arts groups, union heads, mayors, and other people who hold sway in their districts. To politicians and subsidy recipients, Washington is Santa Claus providing free gifts with no apparent costs.

Politicians wrap a narrative around each subsidy program. Most of Maloney's press releases propagate the idea that federal aid is crucial to jobs and growth. The \$2.4 million fire grant was a "strategic investment that not only creates jobs, but adds valuable personnel to make our community safer." Even the arts grants were "strategic [investments](#) in jobs and the Hudson Valley economy."

However, members know that many citizens are concerned about overspending and rising debt in Washington. So Maloney has a ["Budget and Fiscal Responsibility"](#) section on his website. It says

“we must get our fiscal house in order. If so many New York families struggle to balance their household budgets, Congress should also live within its means and balance its budget.”

That sounds good. But look right underneath that paeon to fiscal rectitude on the same webpage. You will see that Maloney has press releases demanding more spending on seniors’ benefits, unemployment insurance, and numerous other things.

[On Maloney’s biography page](#), he says that balancing the budget is his priority and that he has experience doing it. But look under the “Issues” tabs on his website, and you will mainly see advocacy for more spending. He wants more spending on farmers, disaster relief, education, dam safety, renewable energy, transportation, and other things.

It is interesting that politicians repeatedly contradict themselves in their statements and positions. Sometimes the liberal media will call out Republican contradictions, and sometimes the conservative media will do the same try for Democrats. But there is far too much going on in Washington for the media or most constituents to keep tabs on, and politicians know it.

Politicians have always been good at straddling issues. But what seems to be new is that many politicians today do not seem to care about consistency. Apparently they assume that few people will even notice.

Look under the [Jobs and the Economy](#) section of Maloney’s website. He says, “small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and we must do all we can to help them succeed. I started my own business, I know what it takes to start a company from scratch and create good-paying jobs in New York. I will work to increase small businesses’ access to capital and reduce burdensome government regulations.”

Yet right underneath that, look at the very first press release. It demands that Congress hike the minimum wage, which is an obviously burdensome regulation that kills small-business jobs.

Whoops, I’m letting my policy analysis intrude here. Sorry about that. The important thing for you to remember is this: Maloney wants jobs, gets funding, supports small businesses, and will get our fiscal house in order.

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