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INKWELL

Dollars for Dishwashers



by **Nicole Kurokawa**
August 25, 2009, 12:12pm

Cash for Clunkers has been junked, having exhausted its Congressionally-approved funds. Good riddance to bad rubbish ([the program](#), that is, not the useable cars that were unnecessarily retired at a loss to the economy.)

Now, brought to you by the same geniuses that approved that broken-window program, comes: [Cash for Appliances!](#)

Intended to assist struggling U.S. appliance manufacturers, the program will provide rebates of \$50 to \$200 for the purchase of energy-efficient dishwashers, stoves, and fridges.

Why stop there? Many industries are suffering. Why not a "[cash for clogs](#)" program to help U.S. footwear manufacturers (which would also serve the dual purpose of getting those heinous shoes out of circulation, which totally offend my sensibilities)? Or a "bucks for bagels" program to help bakers? Or a "greenbacks for golf balls" program to help, uh, golf ball manufacturers?

The Center for Responsive Politics shows the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers (AHAM) has engaged in a [bit of lobbying](#) recently. I'm sure it's just a coincidence though.

In the grand scheme of Washington politics, the amount AHAM spent is just a drop in the bucket. But the problem remains: when the government starts giving out "free" money, everyone's going to want some.

David Boaz of the Cato Institute [nails it](#):

If you want money flowing to the companies with good lobbyists and powerful congressmen, then all these spending and regulatory bills may accomplish something. But we should all recognize that we're taking money out of the competitive, individually directed part of society and turning it over to the politically controlled sector. Politicians rather than consumers will pick winners and losers.

Just as important, businesses will devote their time, money, and brainpower to influencing decisions made in Washington rather than to developing better products and delivering them to consumers. The tragedy is that the most important factor in America's economic future - in raising everyone's standard of living - is not land, or money, or computers; it's human talent. And an increasing part of the human talent at America's companies is being diverted from productive activity to protecting the company from political predation. With every spending program and every new regulation, the parasite economy sucks in another productive enterprise. Do we really want the best brains at companies from General Motors and General Electric ([this quarter's biggest lobbyist](#)) to Google and Goldman Sachs focused on working Washington rather than serving consumers?

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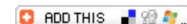
[geezermom](#) | August 25, 2009, 3:41pm | #

I think a better option is Thom Hartmann's Modest Proposal for Medicare. (Commondreams.org) We need to start taking care of our children, and our workers, and then maybe our economy can start taking care of itself

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