

[Matt Yglesias](#)

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[The Other Non-Discretionary Spending](#)



Sallie James observes that Republicans’ zeal for spending cuts [doesn’t extend to cutting farm subsidies](#). She might have added that though people usually think of “entitlement” spending as meaning Social Security and Medicare, farm subsidies are another category of spending that would be left unmolested by a cap on “domestic discretionary spending.”

Basically the currently elderly, people living in rural areas, and people whose income depends on the military-industrial complex would all be protected from a drive that focuses specifically on domestic discretionary. Not coincidentally, these are many of the people inclined to vote Republican.

I think it’s important for progressives to get smarter about the fact that there’s really very little evidence for the proposition that there’s a debate in America about the merits of “small government.” There’s a conflict, instead, about whose interests the government should serve—a conflict whose basic contours you can learn a lot about by examining the demographics of each party’s core constituency.