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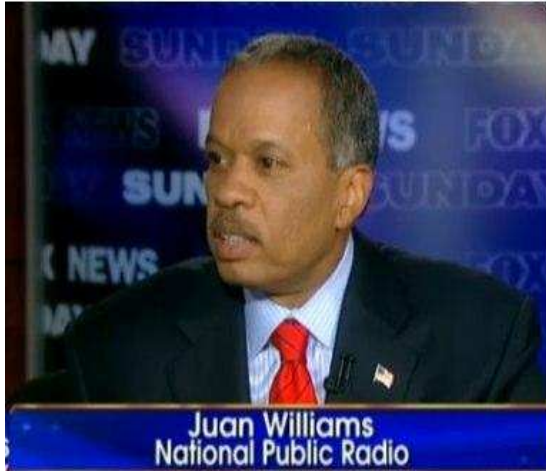


Defund All Public Broadcasting Now

by **Emily Miller** ([more by this author](#))

Posted 10/22/2010 ET

Updated 10/22/2010 ET



The federal government spent \$420 million this year to subsidize public broadcasting. When National Public Radio (NPR) [fired Juan Williams](#) this week for comments he made that did not tow their liberal agenda, the long-held conservative perspective that the taxpayers should not be paying for public radio and TV finally came to a head. The time has come to defund all public broadcasting.

In the wake of the Juan Williams firing, Republicans in the House and Senate have started the [process to redline](#) the Corporate for Public Broadcasting (CPB) entirely.

Sen. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.) announced he is introducing legislation to defund public broadcasting. Rep. Joe Barton (R.-Tex.), the ranking member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee called for a hearing on NPR funding.

“How come CPB still requires an involuntary contribution from taxpayers' pockets after 43 years?” a asked a spokeswoman for Rep. Barton. “Count us among the people who believe the middle-aged CPB needs to get a paying job and move out of the house.”

The CPB is technically a private, non-profit corporation, but in reality, it is a pass-through for federal funds to public broadcasting. Federal funds, through the CPB, are the largest single source of funding for public TV and radio broadcasting. Most

of the funds go to Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and NPR, both of which were created by CPB.

According to the independent Congressional Research Service, Congress appropriated \$420 million this year (FY 2010) for the CPB. The Democrat-controlled Congress also including provisions in the bill “to assist public broadcasters affected by the recent economic downturn.”

Obama and the Congressional Democrats appropriated \$430 million for the CPB next year. And, the president’s budget this year requested that the CPB get another bump up in funds in FY2012 to \$440 million.

(The CPB received two-year advanced appropriations by Congress so the amounts were set, despite the Democrats inability to pass a budget this year. President Bush attempted to CPB’s advanced funding repeatedly in the last several years of his administration, but the Democrats in Congress blocked the effort.)

Established by Congress in 1967, CPB has grown exponentially in funding and reach over the years. The number of radio and TV public broadcasting stations supported by the CPB has increased from 270 in 1969 to 1,050 in 2009. Of the 1,050 public broadcasting outlets getting federal funds, 694 are radio stations and 356 are TV stations.

CATO Senior Fellow and Harvard Professor Jeff Miron said CPB should be defunded and public broadcasting has no economic justification.

“Economists’ default is for non-intervention. You only have the government have a policy if there is a market failure, but I don’t think that argument applies to CPB,” he said. “If people wanted to watch Sesame Street, the market would demand Sesame Street, and someone would produce Sesame Street.”

“There are two kinds of costs for government funding of CPB. One, there is the direct cost of \$420 million extra tax revenue we have to collect every year,” said Miron. “The other cost is that it generates polarization. It’s going to end up having a perspective. Right now, it clearly has a liberal perspective now. No serious person denies that. So people who don’t share that perspective know their tax dollar being used that they disagree with –that makes people angry.”

"CPB is committed to public media that builds on the hard-earned trust and goodwill of our audience by becoming even more diverse and focused on serving the needs of our changing society," said CPB's Executive Vice President Michael Levy on Thursday. "On behalf of the American people who fund public radio and television, we remain committed to diversity of programming content, producers and viewpoints."

The firestorm against NPR started after it summarily fired Williams for saying that since 9/11, he gets nervous flying on airplanes with passengers wearing Muslim attire. NPR claimed that Williams was fired because his comments are “inconsistent with our editorial standards and practices.”

Rep. Barton called NPR's firing Williams a “taxpayer-supported entity suppressing one man's free speech.” He said that “that's why when we reconvene, I agree that Congress should take a look at how their money is being used or, as seems so likely in this case, misused.”

Miss Miller is a senior editor of HUMAN EVENTS. Previously, she served as the deputy press secretary at the State Department during the George W. Bush administration and the communications director to the House Majority Whip, Tom DeLay. Miller also served as an associate producer at ABC News and started her career at NBC News. Follow her on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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