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**Sent:** 3/1/2018 2:32:20 PM  
**To:** Abboud, Michael [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b6f5af791a1842f1adcc088cbf9ed3ce-Abboud, Mic]  
**Subject:** Don't let Schumer, Pelosi add the \$63 billion to the non-defense domestic spending baseline in 2018

If this money is going to be spent no matter what happens, why cannot it not at least be for things that would engender widespread public support?

# The Power Beat Daily

*All The News That Doesn't Fit the Page*

**March 1, 2018**

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## **Don't let Schumer, Pelosi add the \$63 billion to the non-defense domestic spending baseline in 2018**

*In the last continuing resolution, Congress increased baseline non-defense discretionary spending by \$131 billion over the next two years. This was in exchange for \$165 billion of new defense spending over that same period. But rather than add to the existing baseline budget on the domestic side — adding tens of thousands of new federal employees to the bureaucracy or increasing entitlement spending — Congress could choose to only spend it once. If this money is going to be spent no matter what happens, why cannot it not at least be for things that would engender widespread public support?*

## **What could possibly go wrong with the government having access to real-time tracking data of every U.S. citizen with a car?**

*As the Trump administration looks for ways to fund infrastructure projects, the Economic Report to the President hinted at one of the options the administration may be looking at. Pages 184-186 highlight a program in Oregon that charges drivers based on the miles driven instead of being taxed at the gas pump. This is a horrendous idea that will more than likely lead to government overreach and more wasteful spending.*

## **Polizette: Pennsylvania Officials Accused of Hiding Data on Noncitizen Voting**

*Pennsylvania state elections officials are hiding data on noncitizen voters, obscuring what could be as many as 100,000 illegal voters in the crucial swing state, according to a federal lawsuit filed Monday.*

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**Don't let Schumer, Pelosi add the \$63 billion to the non-defense domestic spending baseline in 2018**



By Robert Romano

In the last continuing resolution, Congress increased baseline non-defense discretionary spending by \$131 billion over the next two years. This was in exchange for \$165 billion of new defense spending over that same period.

But rather than add to the existing baseline budget on the domestic side — adding tens of thousands of new federal employees to the bureaucracy or increasing entitlement spending — Congress could make a different choice, albeit one that is less than ideal.

Instead, it could choose to spend the money on one-time expenditures. And then it won't get added to the baseline.

For example, President Donald Trump has proposed a new infrastructure plan. Why would Congress vote to increase domestic spending in the upcoming omnibus spending bill and then come back to vote for massive infrastructure bill costing a few hundred billion more dollars?

They probably won't. Congressional Republicans will already be reeling from increasing the spending baseline for domestic agencies. Asking for tens of billions of more dollars on top of that may be a bridge too far — meaning none of them will get fixed with new transportation dollars allocated by Congress.

So, Congress could decide, if they're going to spend the money anyway, to create funding for Trump agenda items he is otherwise asking for.

Infrastructure having already been mentioned, there is also the southern border wall.

Other important things that could be done in the area of building include hardening the nation's electric grid against an electromagnetic pulse for, say, \$7 billion. Without such hardening, if a nuclear explosion went off, it might be able to knock out the electric grid for months, meaning no water processing, no refrigeration, no food. Millions could die.

Congress could also decide to set aside about \$20 billion or so to lay fiber optic cables alongside the interstate highway system and otherwise lay the groundwork for the coming 5G revolution that will make driverless cars and trucks and other gizmos possible.

Such work via the interstate highways could also readily make high-speed broadband more accessible across the rural frontier.

Create a lottery similarly to the cell phone tower lottery in the 1980s for portions of that Internet pipeline to create competition in the high-speed Internet arena.

Such a plan might also include funding for similarly running fiber optics via electric utilities, to ensure that urban and suburban residential areas get a piece of the 5G pie as well.

Another \$10 billion could be put toward a new Apollo program to put a man on Mars and modernizing our space fleet.

In short, if this money is going to be spent no matter what happens, why cannot it not at least be for things that would engender widespread public support?

Or, you know, we could spend the money hiring new federal workers and doling out new federal worker health care plans and pensions.

Fiscal conservatives in Congress, in a well-intentioned but ultimately futile bid to veto the new spending, could surrender their votes to Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer, since if House Speaker Paul Ryan cannot get a Republican majority has to go to the left for votes.

Meaning, Schumer and Pelosi will get more of what they want out of the \$131 billion of new domestic baseline spending over the next two years.

To be clear, the limited government position is to not spend this money at all. But if that is not a viable option, and the money is going to be spent anyway, the fallback must be to spend it only once.

*Robert Romano is the Vice President of Public Policy at Americans for Limited Government.*

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**What could possibly go wrong with the government having access to real-time tracking data of every U.S. citizen with a car?**



By Printus LeBlanc

As the Trump administration looks for ways to fund infrastructure projects, the Economic Report to the President hinted at one of the options the administration may be looking at. Pages 184-186 highlight a program in Oregon that charges drivers based on the miles driven instead of being taxed at the gas pump. This is a horrendous idea that will more than likely lead to government overreach and more wasteful spending.

Coincidentally, Oregon introduced the first gas tax in the nation at \$0.01 per gallon in 1919. Within ten years all states instituted a gas tax. The federal government got into the act with the passage of the Revenue Act of 1932 by taxing multiple items including gas. Since then the federal government has raised the gas tax several times to where it stands today at \$0.184 for gas and \$0.244 for diesel. States have also continued to increase the tax with Pennsylvania leading the nation at \$0.582 per gallon. This tax revenue goes into what is known as the Highway Trust Fund, which pays for highway maintenance and new transportation projects.

Now many states and the federal government are saying this is not enough. There are a few problems with is this argument. The first is the states and the federal government instituted regulations that were going to decrease the amount of gas consumed by consumers.

In response to the 1973-74 oil embargo, Congress established the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards in 1975 when it passed the Energy Policy and Conservation Act. The legislation was an attempt to increase the fuel economy of U.S. vehicles thereby reducing dependence on foreign oil. It accomplished the feat by gradually raising fuel efficiency levels of the various vehicle categories.

As fuel economy increased, CAFÉ standards had the unintended consequence of putting people on the road longer, increasing the wear and tear on the road system, while not collecting extra revenue. Greater fuel efficiency means fewer fill-ups, which equals less revenue.

The second problem with the highway fund is the money is not being spent on road projects, with approximately 25 percent of the fund being diverted to non-highway projects. The Mass Transit Account spends billions on buses, streetcars, and other boondoggles that do not have a return on investment. In fact, it is next to impossible to find mass transit project in the U.S. that is not hemorrhaging funds. The District of Columbia is considering scrapping its streetcar project after spending hundreds of millions over several years on the barely used rail line.

The Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG), formally the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), is another account siphoning from the HTF. The STBG is responsible for hundreds of millions in bike paths, recreational trails, and scenic overlooks. Gas taxes have gone to grants for squirrel sanctuaries (\$112,000), driving simulators (\$198,000), and resurfacing of bike paths (\$900,000). Once again, projects that should be the responsibility of the local government and not the federal government.

To make up the spending gaps, the Trump administration has highlighted the pilot program in Oregon. The program charges \$0.017 per mile driven on state roads. Chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisors, Kevin Hassett described the program as “innovative” in a recent conference call.

The problem with the program is the only way to know when someone is on a state road or a federal highway is to track them with GPS. Do the American people really want to give governments the ability to track their every move?

Governments at all levels instituted regulations that reduced gas tax revenue while wasting funds on non-highway projects, and the response is to institute a tracking program that collects data on when and where people drive. What could possibly go wrong with allowing the government to track your every movement?

*Printus LeBlanc is a contributing editor at Americans for Limited Government.*



ALG Editor's Note: In the following piece from Polizette: Brendan Kirby reports on efforts of the Public Interest Legal Foundation to investigate an estimated 100,000 illegal voters on the Pennsylvania voting rolls and the lack of cooperation by Pennsylvania authorities:

## Polizette

### Pennsylvania Officials Accused of Hiding Data on Noncitizen Voting

By Brendan Kirby

Pennsylvania state elections officials are hiding data on noncitizen voters, obscuring what could be as many as 100,000 illegal voters in the crucial swing state, according to a federal lawsuit filed Monday.

The Public Interest Legal Foundation (PILF), which promotes “clean” voter registration rolls across the country, has sought records from Pennsylvania required under the so-called motor voter law. The law, formally known as the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), allows members of the public to inspect records related to registered voters.

Pennsylvania twice rejected PILF’s request, triggering Monday’s lawsuit.

“For months, Pennsylvania bureaucrats have concealed facts about noncitizens registering and voting — that ends today,” PILF President and general counsel J. Christian Adams said in a statement. “Before this lawsuit, the state admitted to a ‘glitch’ that exposed thousands of driver’s license customers to voter registration offers despite their noncitizen status since the 1990s.”

Adams noted that the secretary of state abruptly resigned in October. Adams added that his organization “hopes to finally get answers about the true scale of noncitizen voting in Pennsylvania and assist lawmakers in crafting reforms that fix it.”

The civil complaint names acting Secretary of State Robert Torres and Jonathan Marks, the commissioner of the Bureau of Commissions, Elections and Legislation, as defendants. A spokeswoman for the secretary of state’s office said the office does not comment on pending litigation.

PILF has been highlighting voting irregularities since at least 2015, when it reported that 86 registered voters in the city of Philadelphia asked elections officials between 2013 and 2015 to be removed from the rolls because they were not U.S. citizens.

Al Schmidt, a Philadelphia city commissioner, later testified before a state legislative committee that 220 noncitizens successfully registered to vote between 2006 and 2017, and that 90 of them had cast 277 ballots.

Schmidt blamed it on a “glitch” in the driver’s license system.

Marks testified that his agency had found 1,160 canceled voter registrations from 46 counties due to voters alerting officials that they were noncitizens and should not be on the rolls. Of that group, 248 people from 30 counties voted at least once.

According to Schmidt’s testimony, the Department of State has completed the Noncitizen Matching Analysis pointing to more than 100,000 matches, meaning that more than 100,000 noncitizens could be registered to vote in the state.

Hans von Spakovsky, a former member of the Federal Election Commission (FEC), who served on President Donald Trump’s voter integrity commission, said Schmidt’s estimate for the number of illegal voters is troubling if it is close to accurate.

“That’s a lot of illegal votes,” he told LifeZette.

Von Spakovsky, who serves as manager of the Election Law Reform Initiative at the conservative Heritage Foundation, said there is no excuse for withholding information about voter registration.

“Transparency was built into this by both federal law and most state laws,” he said.

Von Spakovsky said he could think of only one explanation.

“The only reason for a state to want to avoid providing that information ... is because they want to avoid embarrassment over allowing it to happen,” he said.

The lawsuit includes eight exhibits detailing actual voters who had been removed from the rolls because they were not citizens. Some of them were able to register again after their removal.

For instance, one record indicates that Othman Alamoudi registered to vote in Allegheny County in 2005 through the driver’s license office. In 2012, officials canceled Alamoudi’s voter registration after determining he was not a citizen. But then in 2014, he re-registered as a voter, this time through an application in the mail, and voted in the 2014 general election.

County officials canceled his registration a second time after he moved to Mercer County. After relocating, he registered a third time — and currently is an active voter, who cast a ballot in the 2016 election.

As another example, the suit points to Susan Hermanoche, who registered in Allegheny County, was canceled in 2006 because she was not a citizen and then registered to vote two more times. Records show she voted in the 2008 primary and the general elections in 2010, 2012 and 2016 — all after officials initially flagged her as a noncitizen. She remains an active voter today, according to the suit.

PILF argues the problem could be bigger since there is no systemic effort to identify and remove ineligible voters.

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