



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on April 10, 2025

Gov't Wasted Billions on Furniture When Employees Worked at Home

In yet another eye-opening example of government waste, fraud, and abuse, members of the House DOGE Subcommittee learned yesterday just how much money federal bureaucrats have blown on fancy furniture.

John Hart, chieftain of Open the Books, told the committee that bureaucrats flushed almost \$5 billion down the toilet to buy office furnishings since 2021. During the 2020-2022 China Virus Hoax, bureaucrats threw away \$3.3 billion, Open the Books reported in 2023.



luchunyu/iStock/Getty Images Plus

The spending is all the worse given that most federal office space is unused, as *The New American* reported in February.

via [@DOGECommittee](#): "Since fiscal year 2021, executive agencies have spent more than \$4.6 billion on furniture alone. That amount could buy 9.2 million American families a modest \$500 kitchen table."

— [@johnhart333](#), Open the Books CEO

cc: [@MatthewTyrmand](#) [@DOGE](#) [@elonmusk](#)... pic.twitter.com/cjzgoeU2rQ

— Open the Books (@open_the_books) [April 8, 2025](#)

Fashionable Digs for Bureaucrats Who Work From Home

"Progressives like [Herbert Croly](#) dreamed of managing a complex new world with a managerial class," [Hart began](#). An Harvard egghead and cofounder of the far-left *New Republic*, Croly advocated "increasing control over property in the public interest," Hart continued. "He would no doubt be pleased to see this auditorium and the administrative state's impressive portfolio of office space."

Impressive it is, given what Hart disclosed to the panel members, noting that USASpending.gov was created as a result of a bill he helped craft when he worked for Senator Tom Coburn of Oklahoma, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006.

"Our founders wisely prioritized transparency and wrote it into the Constitution," Hart observed:

Article I, Section 9, Clause 7 says that, "a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time."

Note that these words precede the Bill of Rights, the First Amendment, and our right to free speech itself. In the public square, transparency is like oxygen. We can't speak if we can't breathe.



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When we looked at the federal real estate portfolio and opened the books, we discovered the high cost of decorating and redecorating the administrative state.

To taxpayers, today's hearing is, quite literally, a kitchen table issue. Every family can relate to the cost of furniture. That's why taxpayers are so incensed when they learn that federal agencies are freely spending billions of dollars every year on some high-end pieces.

Hart then disclosed just how much money federal bureaucrats tossed to the wind furnishing their offices. Since fiscal 2021, some \$4.6 billion "on *furniture alone*," which "could buy 9.2 million American families a modest \$500 kitchen table."

Granted, Hart said, a nice place to work helps employee morale and boosts productivity. But "at what cost, and on whose dime?"

[Continued Hart:](#)

Do federal employees need seven figures worth of abstract, modern art to make the government run? The State Department spent \$1.4 million on artwork for various embassies, including \$200,000 to procure a pair of custom paintings from a contemporary abstract artist.

Do they need high-end leather recliners worth thousands of dollars each? Our embassy in Islamabad is a place where you can put your feet up thanks to 40 Ethan Allen chairs, which cost taxpayers \$120,000.

So bureaucrats spent \$3,000 a piece for a place to park their keisters.

Hart also recalled what Open the Books revealed about Covid spending, again 2020-2022: \$3.3 billion despite employees staying home.

[Open the Books divulged](#) these numbers in 2023:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: \$237,960 on solar powered picnic tables.
- Securities and Exchange Commission: \$700,000 on a conference room.
- Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency: almost "\$250,000 on a conference room 'refresh' with expensive, high-end [Herman Miller furniture](#).
- Federal Emergency Management Agency: \$284,000 in Herman Miller furniture for its headquarters conference center.
- Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation: \$14.4 million on new furniture for its 1,000 employees — \$14,400 per employee.

Environmental Protection Agency, Philadelphia: \$6.5 million on high end furniture when relocating to a smaller office.

"Every dollar saved in Washington is a dream realized somewhere in America," Hart testified. "The administrative state's well-decorated real estate portfolio is a worthy place to start."

Hart's testimony amplifies what the [Department of Government Efficiency](#) learned when it began drilling into federal spending: almost \$5 trillion in untraceable payments, which invited GOP Senator Rick Scott of Florida to introduce the [Locating Every Disbursement in Government Expenditure Records \(LEDGER\) Act](#).



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Granted, Open the Books did trace the spending. But its figures illustrated that federal spending is literally uncontrolled. Bureaucrats are spending whatever they want. And in some cases, taxpayers will never know what the spending was for.

Unoccupied Office Space

Hart's testimony is all the more galling — at least for taxpayers — because so many did not work in the office, and federal office space, at least before [President Trump ordered](#) all employees back to work, was largely unoccupied.

As [The New American reported](#) two months ago, The Kobeissi Letter disclosed just how much is unoccupied.

DOGE has specifically noted that Washington, DC federal government buildings are particularly empty.

On average, they are just 12% occupied.

The Department of Agriculture saw just ~456 of 7,400 employees use their office.

The DC real estate market is just getting started. pic.twitter.com/CzcqUXZHvQ

— The Kobeissi Letter (@KobeissiLetter) [February 15, 2025](#)

Noting that DOGE planned to scrap 66 percent of U.S. government office buildings, the letter reported that “not a single major US government agency is currently occupying even 50% of their office space.”

Buildings in Washington, D.C., are “particularly empty,” with bureaucrats using just *12 percent* of the space. “The Department of Agriculture saw just ~456 of 7,400 employees use their office.”

So just six percent of Ag bureaucrats used the office.



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