



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 17, 2011

House Votes To Defund NPR

Today, the House of Representatives voted 228-192 in favor of stripping federal funding from National Public Radio (NPR). The vote on the bill, which was introduced by Representative Doug Lamborn (R-Colo.), took place after an hour of heated debate.

"They can do it without federal dollars by embracing the private sector. I want NPR to grow on its own. I'd like it to thrive. Just remove taxpayers from the equation," Lamborn asserted.

The legislation bars any of NPR's affiliate radio stations across the country from receiving federal funds. It was introduced by Lamborn as a stand-alone bill after he tried unsuccessfully to strip funding from NPR last year.

"I want NPR to stand for National Private Radio," observed Lamborn. "They can and should stand on their own two feet."

The CPB received \$420 million in federal funding last year, and with the nation facing a \$1.6 trillion budget deficit this year, Republicans turned their attention to NPR, which has been the subject of controversy in recent months.

On [Wednesday](#), the House Rules Committee established the blueprint for how the NPR bill would be addressed on the House floor. Representative Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y.) questioned the Republicans' motive for focusing solely on public radio, observing sarcastically: "Why didn't you go after television? Was Big Bird too much for you?"

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.), asserting that the bill is a partisan attack on NPR, introduced an amendment that would prohibit the federal government from using tax dollars to purchase ads on Fox News, an amendment that was voted down by the Rules Committee on a party line vote. "If we insist on going down this road, Mr. Chairman, we should be fair and balanced in the way we do it," McGovern insisted.

Democratic Representative Alcee Hastings of Florida took similar shots at Fox.

In particular, Democrats bemoaned the way in which the Republican leadership brought the measure to the floor — not by the process of moving the legislation from subcommittee to committee to the floor, but instead through an emergency vote.

"This is what Republicans think is an emergency: not jobs, not healthcare, but defunding NPR," retorted Representative James McGovern.

Republicans held that lawmakers could no longer justify publicly funding NPR, given its liberal bias. NPR has been the subject of public scrutiny after a series of controversies, the most recent of which





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was the result of the release of a hidden camera sting video, masterminded by James O’Keefe, who took down ACORN in 2009. The video features Ron Schiller, NPR’s Vice President for fundraising, at a luncheon with two bogus representatives of a fictitious front for the terrorist-connected Muslim Brotherhood who had convinced him they were willing to donate \$5 million to NPR. During the luncheon, Schiller was caught on tape making outrageous remarks, including that members of the Tea Party are "seriously racist" and "Islamophobes." Because of the incident, Schiller was ultimately forced to resign from NPR.

Likewise, NPR CEO Vivian Schiller (no relation to Ron) was forced to resign following the release of the Ron Schiller video. Vivian Schiller had been involved in earlier controversies, including the ill-advised firing of Juan Williams for comments he made regarding Muslims on the Fox News channel in the autumn of 2010. Following Williams’ firing, Schiller made off-handed remarks questioning Williams’ psychological stability.

Representative Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.) indicated of the vote, "This is something that is long past due. Officials at NPR have said themselves that they do not need this funding. So we’re simply going to accommodate their opinion."

Yesterday, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to cut \$50 million in funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a financial supporter of NPR, as part of a larger bill for government funding.

Likewise, CNN [notes](#):

Separately, the House voted last month to zero out all federal funding for the CPB as part of its bill to fund the government for the rest of the fiscal year. But that bill failed to pass the Senate and Senate Democrats are unlikely to include the NPR provision in any compromise measure they are negotiating with House Republicans.

Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) urged House members to oppose any cuts to NPR:

Every month, more than 170 million Americans tune in to public broadcasting for information about their communities, and recent polling shows that Americans consider federal investment in public broadcasting to be second only to money for our troops as the best use of taxpayer dollars.

Senator Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.) has [broken](#) from the GOP on the issue. Over the weekend, he commented that he did not believe defunding NPR would be the "wisest thing," adding,

If you look at NPR versus particularly the overall public broadcasting issue, NPR doesn’t generate income like the public broadcasting side does. You know, an awful lot of conservatives listen to NPR. It provides a very valuable service. Should we maybe think about a reduction in that?

Senator Jim DeMint (R-S.C.) has introduced in the Senate similar [legislation](#) to today’s House bill to defund NPR. However, it seems unlikely that the Senate would consider the measure, particularly because President Obama has long defended federal funding for NPR.

Photo: NPR headquarters in Washington, D.C.



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