



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on March 8, 2013

Lies and Maximum Pain: Obama's Strategy for Winning the Sequester Debate

President Obama and his administration have revealed their strategy on how to win the sequestration debate: [Exaggerate and lie](#) about the impact of the cuts, which really only serve to slow the growth of federal spending, and [maximize the pain](#) caused by those cuts.

Among the tactics apparently used by at least part of the Obama administration is to make the public as annoyed with the results of the sequester cuts as possible, if a leaked e-mail message from the Department of Agriculture is to be believed. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service official Charles Brown told his department's employees, in an internal [e-mail obtained](#) by the *Washington Times*, that "We have gone on record with a notification to Congress and whoever else that 'APHIS would eliminate assistance to producers in 24 states in managing wildlife damage to the aquaculture industry, unless they provide funding to cover the costs.' So it is our opinion that however you manage that reduction, you need to make sure you are not contradicting what we said the impact would be."



Certainly the Obama administration has made a number of high-profile decisions to cut popular programs that have annoyed voters, such as [cuts to air traffic controllers \(creating airport delays\)](#) and [ending popular White House tours](#) that schools have long planned as field trips. These kind of cuts would fit the profile created by the Agriculture Department e-mail.

The [e-mail](#) — dated Monday, March 4 — was perhaps necessary because so many of the dire Obama administration predictions have proven to be wild exaggerations or outright lies. ABC News [compiled a list of 57 nearly apocalyptic predictions](#) by the Obama administration and its Democratic allies in Congress, including greater damage from severe storms, locust plagues against farmers' crops, more forest fires, opening up federal prisons and setting criminals free, and even the federal government [leaving the nation's nuclear weapons unprotected](#). (Many of the claims come from this [White House "Factsheet."](#))

It sounds like a joke that a two-percent cut in federal spending (all of which are [from projected spending increases](#), not year-over-year actual cuts) could create that kind of an impact, but ABC News



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noted of the Obama administration: “They warned of terrible things: Greater risk of wildfires, fewer OSHA inspections and a risk of more workplace deaths, 125,000 people risking homelessness with cuts to shelters and housing vouchers, neglect for mentally ill and homeless Americans who would lose services, Native Americans getting turned away from hospitals, cuts to schools on reservations and prison lockdowns. There’s also a higher risk of terrorism with surveillance limited and the FBI potentially unable to disrupt plots, closed housing projects, and 600,000 women and children thrown off WIC.”

Egad!

A few, such as [cuts to warrantless surveillance programs and foreign aid giveaways](#) (if they are true cuts), count as unqualified positive reasons for keeping the sequester.

As mentioned above, most of the other predictions turned out to be either wildly exaggerated or outright lies, however. The White House campaign of terror against the sequestration has had media fact-checkers working overtime correcting their exaggerations, and Politico.com [gathered ratings](#) from the *Washington Post*’s “Fact Checker” and Politifact.com, and found that they earned “Mostly False” or worse from both on six major claims. For example, President Obama claimed in a [March 1 press conference](#) that “Starting tomorrow, everybody here, all the folks who are cleaning the floors at the Capitol — now that Congress has left, somebody is going to be vacuuming and cleaning those floors and throwing out the garbage — they’re going to have less pay. The janitors, the security guards, they just got a pay cut, and they’ve got to figure out how to manage that. That’s real.”

Actually, it wasn’t real.

Even the leftist *Washington Post* [admitted](#) that “no pay is being cut for workers at the Architect of the Capitol” and gave it a “Four Pinocchios” rating, its rating for only the most blatant lies. “Obama’s remarks continue the administration’s pattern of overstating the potential impact of the sequester,” the *Post* [reported](#). “But this error is particularly bad — and nerve-wracking to the janitors and security guards who were misled by the president’s comments.” The *Washington Post* found that the Architect of the Capitol reported in an official memo that “We do not anticipate furloughs for AOC employees as a result of Sequestration.” Moreover, the Superintendent of the Capitol Building, Carlos G. Elias, reported in an official e-mail to staff rebuking the president’s remarks that:

The pay and benefits of EACH of our employees **WILL NOT** be impacted as per our current plan.... There was a specific mention in the news today by a high ranking official that said “The employees that clean and maintain the US Capitol will receive a cut in pay” (not specific quote but very close to it). This is **NOT** true. [Emphasis in original.]

Other Obama administration lies include Education Secretary Arne Duncan’s [claim that teachers were already getting pink slips](#) from the sequester, the president’s [claim](#) that “federal prosecutors will have to close cases and let criminals go,” and claims about children’s [“Head Start”](#) and [vaccination](#) programs and [senior citizens’](#) “Meals on Wheels” program.

President Obama has [defined](#) the sequester — which will trim some \$85 billion from the federal government’s projected spending increases in fiscal 2013 — as using a “meat cleaver.” But the reality is that — despite the random method in which they must be administered — the cuts are closer to exfoliation, if they are made to minimize their impact. And with the Agriculture Department’s e-mail, that “if” looks like a big “if.”



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