



Written by [David Kelly](#) on March 15, 2023

## Senator Shines Light on Wasteful Government Spending

Senator Joni Ernst (R-Iowa) called out the Biden administration on Tuesday for keeping taxpayers in the dark about Washington's wasteful spending, in acknowledgment of [Sunshine Week](#), the annual celebration of transparency and openness in government.

"Last week, President Biden proposed massive increases in spending, paid for with higher taxes and more debt. Where all this money will go is anyone's guess because the president continues to ignore sunshine laws requiring taxpayers to be told how their hard-earned money is being spent," stated Ernst's [press release](#).



AP Images  
Sen. Joni Ernst

Sunshine Week was launched in 2005 by the American Society of News Editors (now NLA) "to promote open government and shine light into the dark recesses of government secrecy." And no two ways about it, Biden and Democrats are hiding wasteful spending and playing games with taxpayer money.

Ernst highlighted many examples of government wasteful spending, with "millions of dollars spent training pigs to play [video games](#), building underwater [Whack-a-Mole](#) for dolphins, and cooking up critters into edible [insect entrees](#) for human consumption."

*The Washington Times* [shared](#):

In the pig experiment, funded in part by the Agriculture Department, hogs were taught to push a joystick with their snout to move a cursor on the screen. The four "micro pigs," as the Purdue University researchers dubbed them, performed significantly better than random chance, suggesting they were cognizant of what they were doing.

The "Whack-a-Mole" for dolphins, a game including an eight-foot underwater touchscreen that features specialized dolphin-friendly "apps," was developed by researchers at Rockefeller University and Hunter College, working with the National Aquarium in Baltimore. They stated in their [press release](#) that this touch-pad for dolphins was the first of its kind, using optical technology.

As for insect entrees for human consumption, *The Washington Times* [reported](#) that "Ernst blasted the Agriculture Department for providing \$650,000 to a company that insisted it could come up with cheaper ways to grow mealworms on a large scale."

"Unexplainable expenditures like these really bug taxpayers, yet they keep popping up because no one really knows where the trillions of dollars being doled out every year by Washington are actually going. That is entirely intentional," [said](#) Ernst. "Biden's budgeting is a lot like Whack-a-Mole. He keeps digging the country deeper in the hole while doing everything he can—including ignoring the law—to hide Washington's waste so it doesn't get whacked."

As part of celebrating Sunshine Week, Ernst [announced](#) the reintroduction of the Cost Openness and



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Spending Transparency (COST) Act. That bill “would require all projects paid for with your tax dollars to display the costs. The government would be forced to regularly review projects to ensure compliance. In addition, taxpayers would be allowed to report on projects that are not disclosing the required information.”

If passed and enforced, the COST Act could finally shine light on government spending. Currently the [Stevens Amendment](#), passed originally in 1989 and revised numerous times since, requires transparency and accountability in federal grant spending with accurate reporting by the departments of Labor (DOL), Health and Human Services (HHS), and Education (DOE). But as Ernst pointed out in her [statement](#), the Stevens Amendment reporting is not being enforced.

The Iowa senator stated on her [Squeal Award](#) webpage, “Wasting your money is literally a joke to the [Senate Majority Leader](#) [Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.)], who just announced another \$400,000 will be spent on a [comedy center](#) in his home state of New York. They’re laughing all the way to the bank...at taxpayers’ expense.”

Ernst [announced](#) that she was giving her March 2023 Squeal Award, deservedly, to President Biden, for keeping taxpayers in the dark about how he is spending your money.



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