



June 21, 2019

Support Bills to Defund the National Public Radio and the Corporation for Public Broadcast, H.R. 3392 and H.R. 3393

On behalf of our activist community, I urge you to contact your representative and ask him or her to cosponsor the bills to defund the National Public Radio (NPR) and the Corporation for Public Broadcast (CPB), H.R. 3392 and H.R. 3393 respectively, both sponsored by Rep. Doug Lamborn (R-Colo.). Put simply, it is not the role of the federal government to be funding the arts including news outlets or entertainment sources such as NPR and CPB.

Firstly, there is no section in the Constitution that authorizes the federal government to provide funding for the arts. In fact, the only reference made in the Constitution to the arts (or even to science, on an unrelated note) is in Article I, Section 8, Clause 8, which states that “Congress shall have the power...To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries.” The outlined “promotion” of arts is clearly defined and does not include funding.

Rep. Lamborn’s bills would prohibit public radio stations from using federal funds to purchase programming from and/or pay dues to NPR as well as prohibit direct federal funding of NPR and CPB. As he said in his Dear Colleague letter about the bills, “The role of the federal government should not be to subsidize National Public Radio, or any other media.”

We could not agree more, but would also go further in saying that, in fact, media and the arts will be just as well off, if not better, without federal funding or subsidies. The market should respond to the demand in the private sector for the arts and for media, and as we all know, the demand for news is especially high.

As we wrote in 2017, “For example, the show Sesame Street, which had traditionally been on PBS, just [in 2015] moved over the HBO due to the fact that it had been operating at a loss and

needed more funding. An NPR exec even admitted that the organization ‘would be better off in the long run without federal funding.’ Privatizing these organizations would not be a problem at all and is easy to accomplish.”

Furthermore, President Trump proposed full elimination of funding for the National Public Radio over two years in his budget request for Fiscal Year 2020. As noted in the budget request, “CPB grants represent a small share of the total funding for the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and National Public Radio (NPR), which primarily rely on private donations to fund their operations.” Instead, these operations should be entirely privately funded and the administration is correct to acknowledge this truth.

For the simple reason that it is not the federal government’s job to meddle in the demands of the free market in creating media content, news coverage, or simple entertainment via radio and television, I urge you to contact your representative and senators and ask them to cosponsor the bills to defund the National Public Radio (NPR) and the Corporation for Public Broadcast (CPB), H.R. 3392 and H.R. 3393 respectively.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Brandon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adam Brandon
President, FreedomWorks