

United States Senate

Senator Tom Coburn, MD
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October 29, 2008

Gene L. Dodaro
Acting-Controller General
General Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro,

The Senate Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security today released a report entitled "Justice Denied: Waste & Mismanagement at the Department of Justice," which identified more than \$10 billion of waste, mismanagement, and duplication.

Federal funding for recreational activities is one of the areas of duplicative and questionable spending identified in programs throughout the Department of Justice (DOJ). Multiple grant programs and even Congressional earmarks have been found to be paying for white water rafting, field trips, summer camp, talent shows, dance and hip-hop classes, and even the construction of a skateboard park.

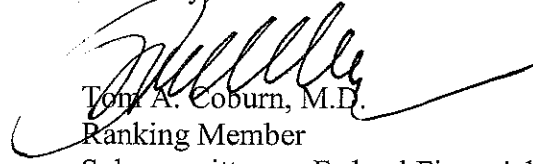
While many of these may be fun or even educational recreational events for children, adolescents and teenagers, it is difficult to demonstrate how these types of initiatives advance the mission of DOJ, which is "to enforce the law and defend the interests of the United States according to the law; to ensure public safety against threats foreign and domestic; to provide federal leadership in preventing and controlling crime; to seek just punishment for those guilty of unlawful behavior; and to ensure fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans."

Clearly, at this time when our nation faces a heightened threat of domestic terrorism and our national debt has surpassed \$10 trillion, local communities should pay for these types of well intentioned recreational activities and federal funds should be focused on investigating federal crimes, locating and prosecuting terrorists, and administering justice.

Could GAO determine the amount of federal funds spent by DOJ on recreational activities, including those funded by grants, earmarks, and other federal assistance? Please also identify all of the programs and offices within DOJ that provide assistance for recreational activities.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Coburn", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tom A. Coburn, M.D.

Ranking Member

Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management,
Government Information, Federal Services, and
International Security