



# *Liberty Brief*

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## Budget Cuts: Less Than Meets the Eye *by Maureen Bader*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Government budget cuts are often clouded in confusion and mystery, and Wyoming's are no different. This *Liberty Brief* begins by revealing the nature of the government's budget cutting exercise with the article, "Budget Cut Confusion Camouflages Charade," and highlights two agencies, the Wyoming Retirement System and the Education Department, to show that these cuts more closely resemble snips. For people wringing their hands over the government's so-called draconian cuts, they needn't have bothered.

The *Liberty Brief* uncovers more facts, with "Government Budget Cut Charade Continues." This highlights the Insurance Department to show how sometimes, cuts are nothing more than a farce.

"Government Budget Cut Charade – Again!" highlights the Department of Fire Prevention and Electrical Safety, and "Budget Cuts – A Fish Story" discusses the budget cut that got away at the Game and Fish Department.

In case you still are not convinced that there is much less than meets the eye when it comes to government budget cuts, "Taking a Ride on the Budget Cut Highway of Dreams" does the run down on Wyoming Department of Transportation's budget snip that, upon close examination, is more like a rounding error than a budget cut.

Just when readers think it cannot get worse, it does, when we find that the eight percent budget cut at the Public Service Commission is a budget cut amounting to zero. The Wyoming Tourism Board comes next, with "A Budget Cut by Half."

The last article in this series is a contribution by Wyoming Liberty Group's journalist, Keith Phucas, who writes, "Despite Secretary of State's Proposed 'Cuts,' Budget Grows 8.6 Percent."

When government talks about budget cuts, it often means something quite different than when a family talks about budget cuts. Unless the confusion is cleared up, Wyoming will remain on the same downward spiral as the rest of the country.

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This *Liberty Brief* contains articles previously published on the Wyoming Liberty Group weblog, some of which have been modified from their original versions.

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## INTRODUCTION

In December 2011, Wyoming Governor Matt Mead called on state agencies to cut their budgets by between five and eight percent. An eight percent budget cut would have amounted to \$75 million, and this news created quite a bit of stir in some quarters, and quite a bit of confusion in others. While some asked: how will people survive such draconian cuts; others asked: how could a government, with a biennium budget of approximately \$8 billion, cut its budget by eight percent and arrive at a \$75 million – a one percent – reduction in spending?

The smokescreen dispersed after a considerable amount of investigation. In fact, agencies were not cutting their budgets by eight percent, they were cutting their 2014 general fund appropriations by eight percent.

No wonder citizens are confused.

When governments talk about cutting budgets, they define budget cuts in the government sense. *The budget cut is not an absolute cut to spending, rather in many cases it is nothing more than a cut to a small part of a spending increase.*

This series of articles begins with an analysis of the budget cut of one of the most straightforward agencies, at least from a budget perspective: the Wyoming Retirement System. Other agencies covered in this brief include the Education Department, the Insurance Department, Fire Prevention and Electrical Safety, the Game and Fish Department and the Wyoming Department of Transportation, the Public Service Commission, the Wyoming Tourism Board, and an installment by WyLiberty's investigative reporter, Keith Phucas, covering the Secretary of State.

In every case we find the same story – miniscule cuts seemingly designed to create the illusion of fiscal restraint.

Budgets are moving targets. In the Governor's latest budget, the total budget cut fell from \$75 million to \$60.5 million, dropping the cut from 8 to 6.5 percent. This was a move in the wrong direction.

The time has come for the Governor and the Wyoming Legislature to make real spending reductions. Otherwise, our children and grandchildren will be left with a legacy of debt and higher taxes.

## BUDGET CUT CONFUSION CAMOUFLAGES CHARADE

Big government types who look to government to solve every problem under the sun always get their nickers in a knot whenever politicians talk about budget cuts. In the case of Wyoming's dreaded eight percent across-the-board budget cut, they needn't have bothered.

The Wyoming Legislature's Joint Appropriations Committee (JAC) is reviewing the eight percent budget cut called for by Governor Mead. It amounts to about \$75 million. This seems odd given the Wyoming government is planning to spend about \$8.1 billion during the 2013-14 biennium. Eight percent of \$8.1 billion is about \$648 million, so reducing this to \$75 million must have been a very tricky process, and you know what? It was.

Let's unravel this mystery.

To start, the 2013-2014 biennial budget has three main sources of revenue: the "general" fund, "federal" funds, and "other" funds. The general fund gets its revenue from a part of the sales and use taxes, severance taxes, state investment income, and a few other sources. Seems that the eight percent cut *only* comes out of general fund appropriations. The total general fund appropriation for the 2013-14 biennium was about \$3.2 billion. Eight percent of \$3.2 billion is about \$256 million.

Wait a minute! That's not \$75 million either. How did \$256 million shrink to less than a third?

Well, each agency, except health, is supposed to cut eight percent, not from its two-year general fund appropriation, but from its standard budget for 2014. So each agency is *not* going to cut its biannual budget by eight percent, it's going to cut part of its standard budget for 2014 by eight percent.

The simplest way to calculate this is to take an agency's general fund appropriation for the 2013-14 biennium, subtract exceptional funding, multiply by eight percent, divide by two, and voila! You've calculated the proposed budget cut for each agency subject to cuts.

Let's see how this works with a couple of examples.

The Retirement System manages the pension funds for state employees. It has a 2013-2014 biennium budget (its two-year budget for 2013 and 2014) of about \$13.8 million. Of that, \$32,755 comes from the general fund and the rest comes from other funds (such as investment income and employee and taxpayer contributions to the pension funds). If we multiply \$32,775 by eight percent then divide the result by two we get a total budget cut of one-thousand, three hundred and ten dollars.

Yes, you read that right. The Retirement System's eight percent budget cut is \$1,310. Not exactly a bloodletting, hardly even a cut. Let's call it a trim, or better yet — a snippet.

This snippet is to come out of the Emergency Medical Technician budget, the only budget that gets funds from the general fund. Snippets are forthcoming from communications (\$62), advertising (\$83), and in-state travel (\$1,165). I don't know about you but I'm feeling rather underwhelmed.

Another example, the Department of Education, has a biennial budget of \$261 million. Most of the funding for the Department of Education comes from federal funds, so here again we end up with a trim rather than a cut. The general fund appropriation is about \$18.9 million. Multiply that by eight percent and divide by two and you get about \$760,000, but this department only plans to cut about \$753,000. About \$284,000 of that cut is coming from contract services, \$42,000 from in-state travel and \$66,500 from communications.

What is driving these underwhelming budget cuts is the concern about a drop in severance tax revenue from the mineral industry. Senator Phil Nicholas pointed out that if we have another warm winter, it could slash natural gas revenues and overwhelm these cuts.

Then again, if the winter is really cold these agencies may not have to cut at all.

So, if you thought Wyoming's governor was trying to reduce the burden of government on hard-pressed taxpayers, you'd be wrong. This trim trickery creates nothing more than a confusion camouflaging a budget cut charade.

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## GOVERNMENT BUDGET CUT CHARADE CONTINUES

### The Insurance Department

Farce *def*: a foolish show; mockery; a ridiculous sham

When government talks about budget cuts, it pays to listen carefully to understand exactly what it is saying. Usually, when government cuts its budget, it cuts some increase in the budget, rather than the budget itself. The result is higher government spending every year. People have clued in to this farce, so it would appear government is resorting to a new definition of cuts so the spending party can continue.

In the case of Wyoming's dreaded eight percent budget cut, the state *budget* isn't getting cut by eight percent. Instead, part of the 2014 general fund appropriation from some government agencies is getting cut by eight percent. Confused? Please read on.

For example, the Insurance Department regulates the business of insurance in the State of Wyoming. It is an agency with a 2013-2014 biennial budget of almost \$61.6 million. Its eight percent cut amounts to \$240,000. Eight percent of \$61.6 million is \$4.9 million; so how did this get reduced to \$240,000?

Well it, like most other Wyoming government agencies forced to cut their budgets, doesn't have to cut eight percent from its *budget*, it has to cut eight percent from its general fund appropriation for 2014.

Agencies get money from three main sources: the general fund, federal funds and other funds. The general fund gets its revenue from a part of the sales and use taxes, severance taxes, state investment income, and a few other sources. Federal funds come from the federal government, and other funds come from every other way the government has figured out to pick your

pocket.

In the 2013-2014 biennium budget, the Insurance Department gets \$6 million from the general fund. Most of the rest of the Insurance Department's income comes from other funds such as insurance premiums, insurance company taxes and investment income.

In 2014, its general fund appropriation is \$3 million. Eight percent of \$3 million is? You guessed it – \$240,000. Not \$480,000 and for sure not \$4.9 million.

The Insurance Department uses its general fund allocation to pay for part of the Wyoming Health Insurance Pool. This pool assists people below 250 percent of the Federal poverty level who may not have the resources to pay for insurance. The Insurance Commissioner, Tom Hirsig, said during his testimony to the committee, "the cuts will not affect the pool or its participants."

It won't affect government employment either. When it comes to job cuts, the Insurance Department has no "Authorized Employees" funded out of the general fund, so we'll see no reduction in jobs for bureaucrats.

So those wringing their hands over the collapse of big government spending needn't have bothered. Of course, those who thought the government might become less of a burden on their pocketbooks have no reason to cheer either. As we can see with this and other examples, the eight percent budget cutting exercise is little more than a sham.

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### GOVERNMENT BUDGET CUT CHARADE – AGAIN!

#### The Department of Fire Prevention and Electrical Safety

In Wyoming, most government agencies have been asked to cut their budgets by eight percent. This is a deceiving, because they aren't cutting their *budget* by eight percent, if by budget they mean the 2013-2014 biennium budget. They are cutting only a portion of that. This means the eight percent budget cut is much smaller than one might imagine.

How does this work?

For example, the Department of Fire Prevention and Electrical Safety has a 2013-2014 biennial budget of about \$7.6 million. Its eight percent cut amounts to \$291,838. Eight percent of \$7.6 million is \$600,000, so how did this get reduced to \$291,838?

Well, like most other Wyoming government agencies forced to cut their budgets, it doesn't have to cut eight percent from its *budget*, it has to cut eight percent from part of its general fund appropriation for 2014.

Agencies get money from three main sources: the general fund, federal funds and other funds. The general fund gets its revenue from a part of the sales and use taxes, severance taxes, state investment income, and a few other sources. Federal funds come from the federal

government, and other funds come from every other way the government has figured out to pick your pocket.

In the 2013-2014 biennium budget, the Department of Fire Prevention and Electrical Safety gets \$6.8 million from the general fund.

In 2014, its general fund appropriation is about \$3.3 million.

Divide that by 8%, and voila! The budget cut is \$291,838.

How will the Department of Fire Prevention and Electrical Safety achieve this cut? By not filling two vacant positions. The annual salary of the first position, vacant because of the state government's hiring freeze, is \$77,161. The annual salary of the second position, vacant because the person in it went to a government job in another city, is \$109,025. This adds up to \$186,186. Where did the other \$105,652 go? To benefits, at \$53,085 and \$52,567 each. Pretty eye-popping, considering the median salary in Wyoming is \$53,572.

So those wringing their hands over the collapse of big government spending needn't have bothered. Of course, those who thought the government might become less of a burden on their pocketbooks have no reason to cheer either. As we can see with this and other examples, the eight percent budget cutting exercise is little more than a charade.

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## BUDGET CUTS - A FISH STORY

### The Game and Fish Department

*"When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more, nor less."*

Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking-Glass

While the budgets of some Wyoming government agencies are complicated, the budgets of others are positively mazelike. So when different people talk about *budgets*, they are often talking about different things. This makes the talk about budget cuts like a trip through the looking glass into a world where words mean whatever people want them to mean.

The Game and Fish Department is a good example.

According to this department's narrative in their 2013-14 Individual Agency Budget Request, it "operates with a FY 2012 annual commission budget of \$71.5 million and \$9.9 [million] legislatively appropriated general fund biennial budget...." This indicates that the department's total budget in Fiscal Year 2012 is about \$77 million.

The department is recommending an eight percent budget cut of \$349,428, but eight percent of \$77 million is about \$6.2 million, nowhere near \$349,428. How did the Game and Fish Department arrive at \$349,428?

Simple. Agencies don't have to cut their *budgets*. They have to cut eight percent from their 2014 general fund appropriation. The Game and Fish Department's 2013-2014 biennial budget is about \$9.8 million. This comes almost entirely from the general fund. The general fund part gets cut in half and one-time funding of \$302,367 gets taken out and we get \$4,367,852. This is their 2014 general fund appropriation. Multiply that by eight percent and voila! We get \$349,428, which is only 3.9% of \$9.8 million.

To put this into perspective, in terms of their entire *budget*, at least for 2012, it is less than one percent.

How to explain this mystery tour through the looking glass?

When the Legislative Services office (the staff office of the legislature) and the Joint Appropriations Committee talk about the *state budget* they are talking about agency budget requests included in the *scope* of the Governor and the Legislature in the budget process.

This scope includes all state agencies except the maintenance and operations budget of the Department of Transportation and – wait for it – Game and Fish! Not everything, including most Game and Fish appropriations it seems, comes under the review of the Governor and Legislature during the budgeting process.

Even though the Governor and Legislature have no input into this budget and therefore, the department's spending, taxpayers still have to pay for it. According to the Legislative Service Office,

While those appropriations and revenue streams definitely result in the expenditure of state funds and are a major part of the overall state fiscal picture, they do not come under the direct budget review of the Governor or the Joint Appropriations Committee, thus the appropriations, expenditures, and revenue flows associated with these programs are not included in some of the discussion of the state "budget." This "arrangement" is not a subjective decision made by the Governor or the Joint Appropriations Committee, but rather is dictated by statute.

How do we ensure the Governor, the Legislature, and not to mention, the citizens of Wyoming, control the entire budgeting process? Seems K-12 education was also excluded from the *budget* but the *Budget Modifications Act* of 1993 brought it back into the purview of the Governor and Legislature. Perhaps it is time for a new *Budget Modification Act* to ensure all the money extracted from peoples' pockets is included in the budgeting process for review by our elected representatives. It's time to make government accountable to the citizens who are forced to fund its activities.

When bureaucrats and other special interest groups go on and on about how an eight percent budget cut is cutting their programs to the bone, they are often, to put it nicely, being somewhat disingenuous. The budget isn't being cut by eight percent; only a portion (and a very small portion in some cases) of the general fund appropriation for 2014 is being cut by eight percent. It's time to come back through the looking glass into the real world and make the budgeting process transparent and accountable to the citizens of Wyoming.



## TAKING A RIDE ON THE BUDGET CUT HIGHWAY OF DREAMS

In the real world, when revenues aren't high enough to cover costs, costs have to come down. In the government world, when revenues aren't high enough, taxes have to go up. It's time for government to join the real world and lower its costs, not raise taxes.

Tipping his hat to real-world reality (a redundancy, but a necessary one these days), Wyoming's governor, Matt Mead, has asked each state agency to cut eight percent from its budget. This cut, however, is a cut only in the government sense. It doesn't cut the budget by eight percent; it cuts one, sometimes very small, part of the budget by eight percent.

Worse still, some state agencies have budgets that do not come under the *scope* of the governor and legislators. As a result, a budget cut may be very small indeed. Wyoming's Department of Transportation (WYDOT) is a good example.

Whether it is accountable to legislators or not, an agency's budget is made up of three sources: the general fund, federal funds and other funds. The general fund gets its revenue from a part of the sales and use taxes, severance taxes, state investment income, and a few other sources. Federal funds come from the federal government, and other funds come from every other way the government has figured out how to pick taxpayers' pockets.

According to WYDOT's 2013-14 supplementary budget request, the legislature approved a 2013-14 budget appropriation of \$270.3 million. That includes \$86.5 million from the general fund, \$44.8 million in federal funds, and \$139 million in other funds, such as vehicle and drivers license fees, mineral royalties and fuel taxes.

WYDOT's eight percent cut is \$2.6 million. But eight percent of \$270.3 million is \$21.6 million. That might look a bit like \$2.6 million, but this is no typo. How did WYDOT arrive at an eight percent *budget* cut of \$2.6 million?

The only fund subject to this mysterious eight percent budget cut is the general fund, and WYDOT's general fund for the 2013-14 biennium is \$86.5 million. Eight percent of \$86.5 million is \$7 million, so how did they get to \$2.6 million?

Simple.

The eight percent budget cut is not a cut to the 2013-14 biennium budget; it is a cut to the 2014 general fund appropriation, excluding one time funding. So the easiest way to calculate the budget cut is to take the \$86.5 million, divide by two, subtract one-time funding and multiply by eight percent and voila! An eight percent cut of \$2.6 million.

The cuts will come from reduced spending on WyoLink, airport improvements and highway improvements.

But the 2013-14 budget appropriation of \$270.3 million is only the budget that comes under the *scope* of the governor and legislature. WYDOT has other budgets that don't come under the scope of the governor and legislature. In fact, according to WYDOT's annual report, its 2012 budget is close to \$545 million. That means, in a two-year period, WYDOT spends closer to \$1

billion, not \$270 million. That additional \$730 million is not subject to budget cuts. So the \$2.6 million cut is closer to 0.26 percent of WYDOT's real biennial budget.

This is more like a rounding error than a budget cut.

To be fair, in WYDOT's budget cut summary provided to legislators, it states that the \$2 million reduction in highway improvements will be offset by "cutting other non-general fund budgets within WYDOT." This means that the "amount of revenue flowing to highway improvements are held harmless by the proposed \$2 million general fund budget reduction." In other words, highway maintenance won't be cut, something else in a budget not under the scope of the legislature will.

How nice.

But hold onto your wallet. It looks like the gasoline tax may go up by 10 cents per gallon on July 1, 2013 to offset what is paraded about as a draconian budget cut.

Let's face it – government has a spending problem, not a revenue problem. Budget cuts that resemble rounding errors show that this government is creating nothing more than a charade to fool people into believing it must raise taxes. This makes government the winner and the taxpayer the loser on this highway of dreams.

It is time to wake up in the real world, cut costs instead of raising taxes and make the budgeting process transparent and accountable to the citizens of Wyoming.

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### **BUDGET CUT OF ZERO? SAY IT AIN'T SO!**

*'The time has come,' the Walrus said, 'To talk of many things: Of shoes – and ships – and sealing wax – Of cabbages – and kings – And why the sea is boiling hot – And whether pigs have wings.'*

Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking Glass

As Wyoming's 2013 legislative session approaches, hand wringing continues over the governor's call to cut agency budgets by eight percent. In the case of many agencies however, the cuts are curiously underwhelming.

The cuts at the Public Service Commission (PSC) are curious in the extreme, as they amount to zero.

How could that be? How can cutting eight percent from a budget mean nothing is cut?

Put simply, when it comes to government budget cuts, there is less going on here than meets the eye.

The role of Wyoming's PSC is to regulate electricity, natural gas and telephone service, and to

ensure utilities operate safely and at reasonable rates. To do this, it plans to spend about \$15.7 million during the 2013-14 biennium. Eight percent of \$15.7 million is about \$1.26 million, and yet its budget cut is zero. How did that happen? By magic? Not exactly.

Wyoming government agencies receive funds from three sources: the “general” fund, “federal” funds, and “other” funds. The general fund gets its revenue from part of the sales and use taxes, severance taxes, state investment income, and a few other sources. Federal funds come from the federal government, and other funds come from every other way the government has figured out to pick your pocket.

In the case of the PCS, about nine million of its \$15.7 million budget comes from a tax on the retail revenue of utility and commodity providers, about \$6.6 million from a tax on sales of telecom services, and \$350,000 from federal grants.

The eight percent budget cut, however, is not a cut to an agency’s 2013-14 biennium *budget*; it is a cut to an agency’s 2014 general fund appropriation.

The PSC gets zero from the general fund – and voila, its budget cut is *zero*!

What could the PSC do to spend less? Well, one department in the PSC is called the Office of the Consumer Advocate (OCA). Its job is to represent the interests of utility customers. If you didn’t know a government bureaucracy existed to make sure utility companies weren’t ripping people like you off, join the club.

That department was created in 2003 and now costs about \$1.9 million to run. It was supposed to sunset (government-speak for be shut down) on July 1, 2013. During the recent Corporations Committee meeting however, its supporters lobbied to have it hang around until 2023. (There is nothing so permanent as a temporary government department.)

The OCA has six employees enjoying an annual salary budget of about \$980,000. That means the average salary of those six employees is \$160,000 per year, and that doesn’t include benefits, averaging an additional \$62,000 per year. Not bad for a group most people have never heard of. Given that this department was supposed to disappear in July 2013, the PSC could do its part for hard-pressed Wyoming taxpayers by eliminating this department.

So, if you thought the governor’s budget cuts were going to reduce the burden of government on taxpayers, or alternatively, that these budget cuts were cutting departments to the bone, think again.

As the Walrus said, ‘it seems a shame to play them such a trick.’

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## A BUDGET CUT BY HALF

### The Wyoming Tourism Board

The Wyoming Tourism Board is a Wyoming government agency that promotes tourism in Wyoming. Its role is to market the state for the benefit of the tourism industry and other businesses that could do their own marketing with their own money, but I digress. Although pretty much every government seems to think its role involves subsidizing the tourism sector, this type of subsidization is nothing more than corporate welfare and is a good candidate for real budget cuts.

The Wyoming Tourism Board gets most of its funds to operate and for capital construction from the general fund. Its 2013-14 biennium budget is \$28.7 million. Its eight percent budget cut is \$1.023 million. But eight percent of \$28.7 million is about \$2.3 million.

Feeling a bit shorted? Here's why.

The governor's dreaded eight percent budget cut is a cut, not to an agency's *budget*, but to its 2014 general fund appropriation.

This rather Orwellian eight percent budget cut is calculated like so. From the \$28.7 million we take out one-time funding of \$3.16 million and divide the result by two, and we get the 2014 general fund appropriation of \$12.8 million. Eight percent of that is \$1.023 million, which is, in fact, what they say they will cut.

What sort of sacrifices is the Wyoming Tourism office planning to make? It plans to cut \$123,000 from supportive services including: promotion, printing and postage and reduced in and out-of-state travel for staff and the board, and two fewer tradeshow. It also plans to cut \$900,000 from contractual services, which means less research and fewer signage grants, sponsorships and contract services.

And in a classic example of one agency working against the interests of another, Wyoming Tourism notes in its budget narrative that if gas prices go up, say for example, from a gas tax hike, travel to Wyoming will decline. This would reduce the income of businesses taxpayers are being forced to subsidize. Talk about a lose-lose proposition.

Taxpayers, many of whom are worrying about how to make ends meet, should not be forced to subsidize business. If the government is looking to make real reductions in spending, it should start by cutting corporate welfare, and the Wyoming Tourism Board would be a good place to start.

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**DESPITE SECRETARY OF STATE'S PROPOSED "CUTS," BUDGET GROWS 8.6 PERCENT  
(KEITH PHUCAS)**

Wyoming Secretary of State

Reluctant *def.* unwilling; disinclined; a reluctant candidate

One clever way for a state agency to avoid the budget axe when pleading its case before a legislative committee is to invoke statutory mandates.

Such was the case with Wyoming's Deputy Secretary of State Patricia O'Brien Arp, who told inquisitive members of the Joint Corporations, Elections and Political Subdivisions Interim Committee in August, that her office "cannot cut any programs, as they are statutorily mandated," and tinkering with funding for those programs could compromise quality.

As a result, Arp offered precious few budget items to put on the chopping block – one lawyer, and funding for publications and computer program maintenance.

With natural gas revenues in a slump earlier this year, Gov. Matt Mead requested state departments cut their 2014 budgets by as much as 8 percent, and this summer agencies submitted proposed reductions. To a casual observer, the call for cuts sounded like tough medicine; while advocates of smaller government welcomed the proposal.

The Secretary of State, called the record keeper of Wyoming, registers the state's businesses, and oversees elections and securities trading, among many other duties, it is governed by about four dozen state statutes.

The agency's total budget is \$7.9 million, and 8 percent of that amounts to \$632,000. But only an unsheltered portion of the \$3.3 million general fund appropriation for 2014 is on the fiscal firing line. And even with planned "cuts," the agency's 2013-2014 budget will grow by 8.6 percent.

In her letter to the governor, Arp reluctantly offered cuts "the Secretary of State does not endorse" that would terminate the office's attorney (\$121,009 salary), forego funding to publish state government directories and Wyoming Constitution (\$15,000) and maintenance money for computer programs (\$124,037).

This would chop \$260,046, which is nearly 8 percent of the \$3.3 million one-year appropriation – but only 3.3 percent of the department's entire budget. So when one considers the department's current two-year budget is projected to increase about \$661,000 from the previous biennium, it's difficult to be sympathetic about the agency's supposed fiscal plight.

Though the joint committee voted to accept the proposed reductions, the legislature could restore the funding to publish the directory and Constitution as lawmakers did in 2010.

And considering the Deputy Secretary's "strong plea that the Governor and Legislature not take the attorney position," it's possible even the lawyer might be spared. After all, the attorney

ney designated "number 0027" is "doing a good job."


If the axed funding is restored, the Secretary of State's budget would go unscathed and cost taxpayers more than its 2011-2012 biennium budget. If the planned reductions hold, that merely trims the department's spending growth. So despite the hand wringing over meeting the governor's budget cut request, this government agency's spending continues to go up.

But then government always seems to grow larger and costlier with time doesn't it? Will things ever change?

Incidentally, by finishing up hearings a day early, the joint committee was able to cancel its Friday hearing schedule, thus "saving" about \$8,000, according to one committee member's "conservative estimate," given that state government would not paying the additional expense of keeping out-of-town legislators in Cheyenne another day.

Now wouldn't it be nice if this savings were passed on to the taxpayers before Wyoming lawmakers find somewhere else to spend the money?





Previous Issues of the *Liberty Brief*

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