

funded. Here are some of the questions I found researchers were trying to find answers to.

One of the questions they were trying to find answers to at the NIH, and this was part of a taxpayer-funded study or grant, is: Why do some people see Jesus's face on toast? That is right, a taxpayer-funded study to determine why people see the face of Jesus on toast.

Another study that was funded by NIH is: Do drunk birds slur when they sing? That was part of a \$5 million NIH grant that found not only is the answer yes, but according to NIH standards, there is a binge-drinking bird out there now.

They also wanted to answer the question of: What type of music do monkeys and chimpanzees prefer to listen to? I am not sure what is more surprising, the fact that the NIH wanted to study this or that the answer is Metallica.

Another thing they wanted to study: Is yawning contagious? I would say anyone who has ever listened to a Senator give a speech knows the answer is yes, but the NIH decided to spend taxpayer money to study it anyway.

So I began seeing projects being funded by other research arms within the Federal Government, including the National Science Foundation and DARPA in the Defense Department. Here are some of the questions those agencies are using their multibillion-dollar budgets to try to answer: Where does it hurt to be stung most by a bee? One researcher used part of a \$1 million NSF grant to sting each part of his body. He came to the conclusion it is most painful on the nostrils or on the lips or on other, shall we say, more sensitive areas, although he admitted his adviser would not allow him to be stung on the eyeball so we really don't know which body part holds the title of being the most painful.

Another thing that was studied by NSF and DARPA is: Who will be America's next top model? That is right. Taxpayer money was spent to try to find out who would be America's next top model. Researchers used taxpayer money to scour Twitter and Instagram to develop scientific models that could forecast success for models in the fashion industry. It turns out that having a strong social media presence helps more than meeting the industry's "aesthetic standards." This is a phenomenon the researchers dubbed the "Kendall Jenner effect." Not surprising there.

Another study was: Are chimpanzees better gamers than humans? At least one chimpanzee that was sometimes bribed with candy to keep working was better than humans at gaming. Unfortunately, that chimpanzee has since died from complications from diabetes. That study which found that humans are not above trying to cheat in order to beat a chimp at a video game was part of a \$340,000 grant awarded by NSF and NIH.

I am not going around here trying to say that NIH, NSF, DARPA, and other

federally funded research is a waste of money. It is not. To the contrary, I believe federally funded research can do wonderful and amazing things.

In 1961, at the height of the Cold War, the United States faced the Soviet Union in a heated space race. President John F. Kennedy stood before Congress and aimed for the Moon. He said:

I believe this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth. No single space project in this period would be more impressive to mankind, or more important for the long-range exploration of space.

Armed with a clearly defined goal and backed by concentrated research from the Federal Government, America's best scientists, researchers, and engineers got to work. Eight years later, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin were walking on the Moon. That is a towering feat that no country has ever been able to repeat. More than a half century later, that moonshot stands in stark contrast to a massive and disorderly constellation of federally funded science projects floating aimlessly in the Federal budget.

Projects that ask, for example: Are Republicans or Democrats more disgusted by eating worms? This researcher whom you will see in this picture found that the answer is that Republicans are more disgusted. That said, once folks hear that this study was funded with taxpayer money—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 2 additional minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FLAKE. When folks hear that this study was funded by taxpayer dollars, I am sure there will be equal disgust by both Republicans and Democrats.

Another study was funded to see if one can outrun a dinosaur. The NSF and NIH gave taxpayer dollars to enterprising researchers who are not deterred by the fact that dinosaurs are now extinct. They found an alligator was close enough. They had to put him on a treadmill to find out how fast he could run. They found out what nobody—certainly not even the Presiding Officer from Louisiana—would discover; that alligators don't like treadmills very much. He wasn't very cooperative, but they went ahead with the study, and found that humans could probably outrun a dinosaur. It is a good thing.

"Are cheerleaders more attractive when they are a part of a squad?" was another study we funded. This was a NSF taxpayer-funded grant that was actually inspired by the sitcom "How I met Your Mother." They had something on that show called the cheerleader theory. Researchers found that the answer is, yes, cheerleaders are more attractive as part of a squad than individually. Their tongue-in-cheek re-

search paper postulates that "having a few wingmen or wingwomen may indeed be good dating strategy, particularly if their facial features complement, and average out, one's unattractive idiosyncrasies."

That brings us full circle, as the White House has asked Congress to appropriate \$1.5 billion for emergency spending to tackle the latest crisis, Zika. I believe we do need to find a solution and a vaccine for the Zika virus, but we ought to look hard at the other things that these agencies are spending money on as we talk about more money for these research projects.

To that end, I have released "Twenty Questions: Government Studies that will Leave You Scratching Your Head." This is a study—you can see the cover here—the report not only profiles many of the questionable projects I have highlighted today, it seeks to set a path to ensure that our money is spent wisely.

The report recommends that these agencies set clearly defined national goals and objectives for federally funded research. Following the example set by President Kennedy's moonshot more than a half century ago, we ought to give the agencies a clear mission.

The report also recommends that agencies prioritize billions of dollars in existing Federal research funding to best meet the national goals in a manner that strengthens America's scientific leadership. We also need to ensure that these research projects are transparent. So when funding goes to these research projects, we ought to know how much is spent on each individual project, not just the broader grant. We don't know exactly how much money was spent on the cheerleader effect because we can't—they will not tell us.

I have introduced legislation in concert with this report which will require that the Federal agencies actually tell us how much money is spent on these individual projects.

It is time Washington sets clear goals for federally funded research and we improve transparency measures. I hope we can do so.

With that, Mr. President, I yield back.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASIDY). Morning business is closed.

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.R. 2577, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2577) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and