

Middle class Minnesotans to feel impact of GOP sequester

Written by
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The choice Republicans have made to not end this sequestration will have a huge impact on middle class Minnesotans in the coming weeks and months. Rather than eliminate tax loopholes for the wealthiest Americans to reduce the deficit, Republicans chose cuts in vital services important to seniors, men and women in uniform, and children and schools.

Minnesota DFL Chair Ken Martin expressed concern that the Republicans' inability to reach agreement before the March 1 deadline could cost gains in economic growth.

"The GOP professes to care deeply about getting the economy on track, yet their actions both today and over the last several years suggests something else," Martin said. "They would rather score political points than improve our state and country."

Cuts under the sequester include:

- Seniors in need will receive fewer Meals on Wheels.
- Two-thirds of active duty Army combat brigades outside of Afghanistan will see a reduction of their basic training, maintenance, and readiness.
- Afterschool programs will be cut; thousands of teachers will be laid off.
- Military families' health care could be cut.
- Reductions in treatment and support for mentally ill children.

Democrats agree the deficit needs to decrease, but Martin said there is a better way than cutting investments in education and programs that help the nation's most vulnerable citizens. President Obama has consistently proposed eliminating tax loopholes, asking the wealthy to do their fair share and cutting wasteful spending.

"Taking resources from people who need them most won't grow our economy or create jobs," Martin said. "While the Republicans continue to protect profit margins, the path to self-reliance and success will become harder to achieve for those on the margins of life."

Impact of GOP sequester on Minnesota

Seniors

- Minnesota will lose approximately \$845,000 in funds that provide meals for seniors.

Children

- Up to 500 disadvantaged and vulnerable children could lose access to child care, which is also essential for working parents to hold down a job.
- Around 2,360 fewer children will receive vaccines for measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, whooping cough, and Hepatitis B because of reduced funding for vaccinations.

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Education

- Minnesota will lose approximately \$7 million for primary and secondary education, putting jobs at risk. More than 20 school districts lost "impact aid" provided to make up for lost property tax revenue because of federal land, such as tribal areas.
- Minnesota will lose about \$9.2 million for staff who help children with disabilities.
- Around 920 fewer low income students in Minnesota would receive aid to help them finance the costs of college; around 500 fewer students will get work-study jobs that help them pay for college.
- Head Start and Early Head Start services would be eliminated for approximately 700 children in Minnesota, reducing access to critical early education and future success.

Environment

- Minnesota will lose about \$3 million in environmental funding to ensure clean water and air quality, as well as prevent pollution from pesticides and hazardous waste.
- Minnesota could lose another \$1.6 million in grants for fish and wildlife protection.

Military readiness

- Approximately 2,000 civilian Department of Defense employees could be furloughed, reducing gross pay by around \$12.5 million in total.
- Base operation funding could be cut by about \$2.5 million.
- A Blue Angels show scheduled for July in St. Cloud could be canceled.

Public safety

- Minnesota will lose about \$201,000 in Justice Assistance Grants that support law enforcement, prosecution and courts, crime prevention, corrections and community corrections, drug treatment and enforcement, and crime victim and witness initiatives.
- Minnesota could lose up to \$113,000 for services to victims of domestic violence, resulting in up to 400 fewer victims being served.

Economic development

- Minnesota will lose about \$689,000 in funding for job search assistance, referral, and placement, meaning 23,000 fewer people will get the help they need to find employment.

Health

- Minnesota will lose approximately \$507,000 to help upgrade its ability to respond to public health threats including infectious diseases, natural disasters, and biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological events.
- Minnesota will lose about \$1.2 million in grants to help prevent and treat substance abuse,

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resulting in around 1,700 fewer admissions to substance abuse programs.

- MDH will lose about \$127,000 resulting in around 3,200 fewer HIV tests.