

Misplaced Priorities

Cost of Death Penalty Trials vs. Cuts to Programs and Services

A death penalty trial costs Colorado taxpayers approximately \$3.5 million versus \$150,000 for a life without parole trial. Prosecutors are currently pursuing the death penalty in three counties that have made recent deep cuts to important public priorities and services.

(Cost figures were calculated by Coloradans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty based on open records requests from recent death penalty and life without parole trials in Colorado. The \$3.5 million and \$150,000 estimates include trial costs only, not the additional costs of the appeals process.)

The costs of a death penalty trial would pay for:

- One month of essential services (meals, rides, and in-home services) to **10,000** elderly Coloradans
Retrieved from: Schaufele, Jennifer. "Colorado's elderly are facing dire cuts due to the sequester." The Denver Post 8/30/2013
<http://blogs.denverpost.com/opinion/2013/08/30/drcog-elderly-cuts/41486/>
 - [$\$3,500,000/\$350=10,000$]
- Give nearly **500** more children access to Head Start
Retrieved from: Lu, Adrienne. "Head Start hit with worst cuts in its history." USA Today 8/20/13
<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/08/19/stateline-head-start/2671309/>
 - [$\$400,000,000/\$57,000=\$7.017.54$ per child] [$\$3,500,000/\$7,017.54=498$]
- Pay **77** firefighters' salaries
Retrieved from: Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010 Median Pay
<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/protective-service/firefighters.htm>
 - [$\$3,500,000/45,250=77$]
- Pay **71** teachers' salaries
Retrieved from: Colorado Department of Education, average teacher salary, Fall 2011
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/cdereval/download/pdf/avgteachersal/2011avgteachersalary.pdf>
 - [$\$3,500,000/49,046=71$]
- Pay the salaries of **115** EMT/Paramedics
Retrieved from: Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010 Median Pay
(<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/emts-and-paramedics.htm>)
 - [$\$3,500,000/\$30,360=115$]
- Buy more than **40,000** new high school algebra textbooks
Retrieved from: Holt McDougal online pricing [last accessed 10/2/13]
<http://www.hmhco.com/shop/k12/Holt-McDougal-Larson-Algebra-1/9780547315157>
 - [$\$3,500,000/\$86.65=40,392$]

Taxpayers are spending millions on death penalty trials while:

- Arapahoe County is accruing over **\$200,000,000** in debt obligations.
Retrieved from: "Debt and Lease Obligations. Arapahoe County: Budget 2013. p284.
<http://co-arapahoe-county.civicplus.com/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/114>
 - Arapahoe County accrued \$201,277,016 of debt obligation.
 - *Arapahoe County Government Total Capital Lease Obligations + Arapahoe County Water & Wastewater Public Improvement District Total General Obligation Bonds = Total Outstanding Debt and Capital Lease Obligations (12/21/2013 Principal Balance) = \$50,075,000 + \$151,202,016 = \$201,277,016*
- Denver County is "**furloughing** employees, **reducing** library hours, and **delaying** street repairs."
Retrieved from: Meyer, Jeremy. "Mayor Hancock pushes for "de-Brucing." The Denver Post 09/13/2012
http://www.denverpost.com/ci_21530301/denver-budget-cuts-94-million-mayor-hancock-pushes
 - "Achieves \$94 million in cuts by furloughing employees, reducing library hours and delaying street repairs."
- Douglas County is cutting more than **\$300,000** from developmental disability services.
Retrieved from: "Other Governmental Services." Douglas County 2013 Adopted Budget. p183
<http://www.douglas.co.us/finance/documents/2013-budget-book.pdf>
 - Cutting \$303,742 from Developmental Disability services.
 - *Douglas County 2012 Developmental Disabilities Expenditures – Douglas County 2013 Developmental Disabilities Expenditures = Developmental Disabilities Expenditure Loss/Cuts = \$4,863,565 - \$4,559,823 = \$303,742*

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