



# Unfunded Liabilities Might DOGE Montana

The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) has made its mark so far, to the tune of \$115 billion, according to [Polymarket.com](https://polymarket.com), a new website that tracks DOGE's progress and every red cent that DOGE redirects from what they're calling "government waste, fraud and abuse."

So far, DOGE has cut more than 100,000 jobs across the 2.3 million-member federal civilian bureaucracy, frozen most foreign aid and canceled thousands of programs and contracts, despite dozens of lawsuits challenging the legality of those moves. DOGE's blunt approach has frustrated several White House officials and Republican lawmakers, some of whom have confronted angry constituents at town halls.

All US government agencies have been ordered to come up with large-scale layoff plans by Thursday, setting up the next phase of Trump's cost-cutting campaign. Several agencies have offered employees payments to retire early to fulfill Trump's demand. Affected Education Department employees will be placed on administrative leave starting on March 21, the department said. Other agencies have offered lump-sum payments of up to \$25,000 before tax to workers who agree to leave their jobs. Among these are the Office of Personnel Management, the Social Security Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services, including its Food and Drug Administration.

As DOGE continues its efforts to downsize government, so do the efforts to slow it down in the courts. 14 Democratic attorneys general have filed a lawsuit arguing that Musk and DOGE's seemingly unchecked power is unconstitutional.

One of those AGs is Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser [has joined a lawsuit](#) with other Democratic states to ensure grant funds from the National Institutes of Health continue to flow. A federal judge Monday temporarily halted the NIH's decision to cut "indirect cost" rates for medical research.

[The court filing](#) said that research institutions in the state received more than \$566 million in NIH grants in 2024. The largest percentage went to the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, with \$360 million in awards. The indirect cost cut would eliminate \$74 million in annual funding.

Colorado officials note that companies, local governments, state agencies and nonprofits in their state, continue to report they can't access their federal grant portals or receive reimbursements they are due, in particular for money stemming from the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Transportation.

The frozen funding includes just over \$70 million for the Home Energy Efficiency Rebate Program from the Inflation Reduction Act, over \$25.5 million in Grid Resilience Formula funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, aka the bipartisan infrastructure law, just under \$70 million for [the Home Electrification and Application Rebate Program](#), \$50 million for the Weatherization Assistance Program and \$44.5 million for [electric vehicle infrastructure](#).

The two largest grants are \$156 million for [the Solar for All program](#) to help low-income and disadvantaged communities access solar energy and \$129 million for the Climate Pollution Reduction Implementation Grant to cut greenhouse gas emissions and boost the clean energy transition.

**Many of the projects have been contracted with work begun. Could the same fate be in store for Montana's companies, local governments, state agencies and nonprofits?**

"Companies are considering staff furloughs. Employers in rural communities are rescinding job offers. Long-standing Colorado businesses, some with over 40 years of operation, now struggle to pay contractors working on facility expansions," Colorado State Senators Hickenlooper, Bennet and Colorado Governor Polis wrote in a letter. "This disruption threatens local economies and the workforce across the state, particularly in rural

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## Audit reveals at least \$56 million in improper Indiana Medicaid payments

**WELFARE**

### Feds ask Mississippi to repay \$101 million in misspent welfare money

*The letter represents the first time since the welfare scandal broke in 2020 that HHS has confirmed rules were broken when Mississippi spent welfare money on things such as building a volleyball stadium and a million-dollar public speaking contract with a celebrity athlete.*

### Texas school districts asked to return \$16 million in federal funding for special education services

The request comes after an audit found Texas improperly billed the federal government for reimbursements related to Medicaid-eligible students.

**LOCAL NEWS**

## Massachusetts owes the federal government \$2.1 billion. Here's why.

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### California will refund more than \$52 million to federal government for immigrant care

### Texas nonprofit housing migrant kids took \$3B in grants from Biden admin — and boosted executive salaries up to 139% — before Trump pulled plug

### Elon Musk reveals DOGE found 14 'magic money computers'

communities, where the funding freeze creates widespread ripple effects."

**Potential Medicaid Cuts Could Mean Trouble for Montana Especially as Medicaid Expansion Moves Through the Legislature**

As congressional Republicans look to slash government spending by [more than \\$1 trillion](#), where are Montana health care and political leaders on the affect this will have on the Medicaid Expansion Bill the moderate Republicans backed by Gianforte, and the Democrat legislators are pushing to pass this session? Why aren't legislators ringing the alarm over what federal cuts to Medicaid could mean for Montana.

The Republican-controlled House Budget Committee has asked several committees to reduce their spending by hundreds of billions of dollars.

"The request to the Energy and Commerce Committee is to find \$880 billion in cuts over the next decade," Colorado Congresswoman DeGette, a Democrat from Denver stated. Who would have thought the Energy and Commerce Committee oversees Medicaid, [which costs about \\$880 billion](#) annually and is paid for by both states and the federal government.

Despite supporting the [recent tax cut proposal](#), top Republicans including President Donald Trump and House Speaker Mike Johnson have maintained that they don't support cuts to Medicaid services, saying that they only want to "eliminate fraud."

The problem for Montana is the federal government is now auditing how federal

money has been spend at the state level. If grant guidelines weren't followed, the federal government has the right to ask for the money back. To the knowledge of The Liberty Bell, Montana has never before audited its federal expenditures this way. That means, the state could have an even larger unfunded liability on its hands, during a time when the legislature is looking to expand the amount of that unfunded liability through passage of HB 245 Medicaid Expansion.

It is intriguing why Gov. Gianforte is teaming up with democrats and extremely democratic party aligned republicans to expand Montana's liabilities with Medicaid expansion at this precise moment in time when there could be an explosion of cuts to the program and requests from DOGE to pay back misapplied or fraudulent paid federal monies within this program.

**Between 2021 and Today-Montana's Budget Increases over 350%**

According to a Montana Free Press article by Eric Dietrichin December of 2020, Both [on the campaign trail](#) and [since his election](#), Gianforte has claimed state spending grew dramatically from 2010 to 2020, implying that Democratic control of the executive branch has left state government with ample fat for cutting.

"With state spending increasing by 60% over the last 10 years, Governor-elect Gianforte thinks it's critical to hold the line on new state spending," Gianforte Press Secretary Brooke Stroyke said in an email last month, the primary comment the incoming governor's office offered on Bullock's budget proposal.



That 60% statistic, however, appears to overstate how much state government grew from 2010-2020.

Asked by Montana Free Press for a citation supporting that figure, Strovke quoted figures from two separate documents — a [University of Montana report](#) on the 2009 Legislature that put the state budget for that session at \$7.95 billion, and [LFD's report on the 2018-19 biennium budget](#), which reported a \$13.18 billion budget total. Translated to a percentage change, that would indicate 66% spending growth across the decade.

According to the Montana Free Press article:

But those numbers don't apparently represent a true apples-to-apples comparison. The 2019 figure includes about \$2 billion in statutory appropriations, spending written into state law so it doesn't have to be reauthorized in the budget bill the Legislature crafts each session. The source for the numbers in the 2009 report, though, LFD's biennium report for 2008-09, indicates that the \$7.95 billion figure excludes more than \$1 billion in statutory appropriations for that earlier biennium — meaning the calculation that produces the 66% figure is inflated, akin to weighing an apple against an apple with an orange slice stacked on top of it.

Presented with that analysis, Strovke noted in an email that the \$7.95 billion figure had been reported by multiple secondary sources as the session's total budget figure, but didn't otherwise defend the comparison.

According to that 2020 Montana Free Press Article:

The state budget has grown over the past decade, but at a slower rate than the Gianforte statistic indicates. Legislative Fiscal Division data tabulating actual spending recorded in the state's accounting system shows spending growing from \$9.97 billion in the 2009 biennium to \$13.27 billion in the 2019 biennium, a 33% increase.

Even those precise figures leave room for interpretation, however, which is usually the case with the complex way budget numbers are tossed around.

This analysis though needs to be carried over into the Gianforte's administration. Figures vary between \$12.7 and 13.18 billion for the budget that Gov. Gianforte inherited from his predecessor, Gov. Bullock and have the same issues as trying to compare earlier budgets with problems like whether statutory spending is included in stats for trying to determine how much the budget has

## A \$20 Billion Slush Fund—Paid by You to Progressive Nonprofits

## Et Tu, Stacey? Stacey Abrams Linked to a \$2 Billion Environmental Grant Rolled Up by DOGE

## Opioid treatment audit forces N.H. to pay back \$7.9 million in federal funds

POLITICS

## Minnesota DHS must pay back federal government \$113 million after billing mistake

## With half a billion dollars of federal funding for Colorado in limbo, top state officials demand answers

By Caitlyn Kim and Sam Brasch · Feb. 11, 2025, 11:41 am

increased. The Liberty Bell plans on diving into a detailed review of budgets in the next edition so stay tuned for more information on this topic.

If we look at Gov. Gianforte's propped \$18 billion dollar budget and compare it to the \$12-13 billion budget he inherited from Gov. Bullock, we see straight through Gov. Gianforte's hypocrisy in complaining about the growth of the budget during 2010-2010 compared to his 4 years in office where we are now looking at almost a 40% increase in less than half the timeframe.

Just looking at one budget item, The budget for the Governor's Office, we see it go from approx.. \$7 million in 2024 to a request for \$32 million in 2026. That is approx. a 357% increase. The Liberty Bell is not drawing

any conclusions on what the money is being spent on and whether or not the money is well spent. The point is to have you the reader dig into the matter yourselves and determine if a Republican Governor who calls himself a conservative, is sticking to the Republican Party Platform of smaller government.

Montanans are already grappling with economic pressures like inflation, trade conflicts, and rising costs for housing, insurance, and property taxes. In this climate, expanding the state budget significantly raises questions about fiscal responsibility. With the added uncertainty of what DOGE audits of Montana will uncover in unfunded liabilities, is rapid government growth truly in the best interest of the people? 🇺🇸



## Department of Government Efficiency

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