



Analysis of the Policy Proposals in the October 13th Democratic Presidential Debate: Impact on Spending

Spending Proposals in the First Democratic Debate: Number & Annualized Cost (in Millions) of Policies						
Candidate	Total Cost Per Year	# of Increase Proposals	Cost Per Year of Increase Proposals	# of Decrease Proposals	Cost Per Year of Savings Proposals	# of Proposals with Indeterminate Costs
Lincoln Chafee*	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	0
Hillary Clinton	\$51,570	7	\$51,625	1	-\$55	4
Martin O'Malley	\$77,542	2	\$77,542	0	\$0	4
Bernie Sanders	\$1,170,189	8	\$1,170,264	1	-\$75	3
Webb, Jim	\$24,544	3	\$24,544	0	0	0

Note: Lincoln Chafee had no quantifiable proposals.

Hillary Clinton

Net Change in Spending per Year: \$51.57 billion

Economy, Transportation, & Infrastructure:

“I believe in equal pay for equal work for women”

Cost per Year: \$3 million (\$15 million over five years)

Notes: Related legislation has been introduced in the form of H.R. 1619/S. 862, the [Paycheck Fairness Act](#). The bill would enhance regulations pertaining to equal pay. The text of the bill authorizes \$15 million for compliance training, a grant program for negotiation skills training for girls and women, and research, education and outreach. NTUF assumes the outlays would occur over five years.

“I’ve put forward specific plans about how we’re going to create more good-paying jobs: by investing in infrastructure”

Cost per Year: \$5 billion (\$25 billion over five years)

Notes: Related legislation was introduced in the form of [H.R. 3337](#), the National Infrastructure Development Bank Act of 2015. The text of the bill authorizes \$5 billion per year in order to fund infrastructure improvement projects related to energy, the environment, transportation, and telecommunication. Clinton has voiced support for a similar initiative on her campaign website.”

“At the center of my campaign is how we’re going to raise wages. Yes, of course, raise the minimum wage”

Cost per Year: Indeterminate

Notes: Related legislation was introduced during the 113th Congress in the form of S. 2223, the Minimum Wage Fairness Act. That bill would have gradually increased the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 and indexed it to inflation in years thereafter. CBO determined that the bill would not significantly impact federal outlays. It is unclear if this proposal would be scored similarly. In a related 2014 report, [CBO noted](#) that a minimum wage increase to \$10.10 would reduce total employment by about 500,000 workers.

“I also believe it’s about time we had paid family leave for American families and join the rest of the world”

Cost per Year: \$2.242 billion per year (\$11.21 billion over five years)

Notes: Related legislation was introduced in the form of S. 786, the Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act. The bill would increase payroll taxes to finance a national benefit program. In [2014](#), NTUF examined OMB’s estimates of total social insurance program receipts for years 2015-2019 and increased those amounts by 0.2 percent to approximate the revenue increase that might result from a new payroll tax. Based on those calculations, the FAMILY Act could increase federal spending by \$11.2 billion over five years.

“... [W]e want more states to [offer in-state tuition to undocumented immigrants].”

Cost per Year: Indeterminate

Notes: It is unclear whether Clinton is advocating that the federal government provide benefits. In 2010, [CBO](#) determined that the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act, which would grant conditional nonimmigrant status to certain individuals to attend post-secondary schools, would have increased entitlement spending by \$134 million over five years.

Education, Science, & Research:

“I’ve put forward specific plans about how we’re going to create more good-paying jobs ... by making it possible once again to invest in science and research”

Cost per Year: Indeterminate

Notes: Clinton’s campaign website notes that “she would increase funding for scientific research at agencies like the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation.” However, the site does not specify a funding level. In the 2008 election campaign, Clinton called to increase funding for the National Science Foundation and related science agencies by 50 percent over 10 years. NTUF scored that as a [\\$6.5 billion](#) increase over five years.

“First, all the 40 million Americans who currently have student debt will be able to refinance their debt to a low interest rate.”

Cost per Year: \$19.333 billion (\$58 billion over three years)*

Notes: Related legislation was introduced in the 113th Congress as S. 2432, the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act. CBO most recently [scored](#) the bill as a \$58 billion cost over three years.

**The cost for this item is included Clinton's overall college plan and is not double-counted in the total cost of Clinton's agenda.*

“My plan would enable anyone to go to a public college or university tuition free. You would not have to borrow money for tuition.”

Cost per Year: \$35 billion (\$350 billion over ten years)

Notes: Clinton's plan, dubbed “The New College Compact”, includes a number of provisions designed to lower the cost of tuition at public colleges and universities. They include federal grants to states that reduce tuition; student loan refinancing provisions (similar to legislation introduced by Senator Elizabeth Warren); the President's \$6 billion per year plan to make community colleges “free”; and permanently extending the refundable American Opportunity Tax Credit. Her campaign has stated that the plan would cost “in the range of” [\\$350 billion over ten years](#), and would be offset by “limiting certain tax expenditures for high-income taxpayers” (though it does not mention any specifically).

Energy and the Environment:

“I've put forward specific plans about how we're going to create more good-paying jobs: by investing in ... clean energy”

Cost per Year: \$6 billion (\$60 billion over ten years)

Notes: Clinton has proposed to enact a Clean Energy Challenge grant program funded at [\\$60 billion over ten years](#).

Government Reform & Taxes:

“And then we have to figure out how we're going to make the tax system a fairer one. Right now, the wealthy pay too little and the middle class pays too much. So I have specific recommendations about how we're going to close those loopholes, make it clear that the wealthy will have to pay their fair share, and have a series of tax cuts for middle-class families.”

Cost per Year: Indeterminate

Notes: This proposal will increase spending to the extent that Clinton's "tax cuts for middle-class families" include "refundable" credits in addition to the education proposal that she also cited the debate.

Health Care:

“I want to open up the opportunity for immigrants to be able to buy in to the exchanges under the Affordable Care Act. I think to go beyond that, as I understand what Governor O'Malley has recommended, so that they would get the same subsidies.”

Cost per Year: \$3.38 billion (\$16.9 billion over five years)

Notes: CBO estimates that there are approximately 8 million illegal immigrants that are not currently covered by the Affordable Care Act. Legislation in the 113th Congress would have provided them with federal benefits and open the path for increased immigration. CBO's estimate for the [reported version of S. 744](#) (113th Congress) finds that extending the health insurance premium subsidy would cost \$16.9 billion over the next five years.

Homeland Security & Law Enforcement:

“So, what we need to be doing is not only reforming criminal justice -- I have talked about that at some length, including things like body cameras”

Cost per Year: -\$55 million (-\$276 million over five years) (savings)

Notes: Clinton's campaign website notes that as President, she “will reform mandatory minimum sentences for low-level nonviolent offenses, increase support for mental health and drug treatment, pursue alternative punishments for low-level offenders, and phase out private prisons.” Legislation to reform sentencing for nonviolent offenders has been introduced in form of S. 502, the Smarter Sentencing Act of 2015, which would reduce prison sentences for certain non-violent drug-related offenses. CBO scored a previous version of the bill in 2014 and found that it would lead to a net reduction in federal spending by \$376 million over five years. Legislation related to mental health has been introduced in Congress as S. 933, the Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act of 2015 which would provide about \$100 million in grants over the next five years to improve mental health programs at the state and local level. There are additional bills in Congress with a potentially higher cost to taxpayers, such as the Safer Communities Act, H.R. 2994/S. 1738, but it is unclear exactly what level of increased funding she would support.

Martin O'Malley

Net Change in Spending per Year: \$77.542 billion

Economy, Transportation, & Infrastructure:

“[W]e need to separate the casino, speculative, mega-bank gambling that we have to insure with our money, from the commercial banking -- namely, reinstating Glass-Steagall.”

Cost per Year: Indeterminate

Notes: The Glass-Steagall Act, enacted in 1933, generally prohibited banks from underwriting and dealing in securities. While reinstating this prohibition would primarily be regulatory in nature, it is unclear whether O'Malley would increase regulatory budgets to administer the reinstated provisions.

Education, Science, & Research:

“Our economy isn't money, it's people. It's all of our people, and so we must invest in our country, and the potential of our kids to make college a debt free option for all of our families, instead of settling our kids with a lifetime of crushing debt.”

Cost per Year: Indeterminate

Notes: Governor O'Malley has published a [policy paper](#) outlining some of his proposals to make college a "debt free option." Those include matching federal grants for states that reduce tuition costs; expanding Pell grants and work-study funding; and providing additional funding for colleges that graduate students on-time. However, the campaign has not discussed when those proposals would be implemented, or how much additional funding they would require.

Energy and the Environment:

"We need to move America to a 100 percent clean electric grid by 2050 and create 5 million jobs along the way."

Cost per Year: \$57.252 billion (\$286.26 billion over five years)

Notes: Governor O'Malley's call for a 100 percent clean electric grid is part of his broader proposal to "transition to a clean energy future" within the next 35 years, as outlined on his campaign website. His plan includes provisions to subsidize energy-efficient infrastructure construction, create a Clean Energy Job Corps, issue new regulations that establish efficiency standards, and reduce carbon emissions through "cap and trade" legislation. NTUF assumes that the revenue from the carbon tax proposal (which was scored by CBO as a [\\$257 billion five-year cost](#) in 2009 and has been adjusted for inflation) would be used to fund O'Malley's clean energy plan. It is likely that the total cost of his plan will be higher, though, as it includes at least 20 different proposals and could result in significant administrative costs over the long term.

Homeland Security & Law Enforcement:

"We need comprehensive immigration reform."

Cost per Year: \$20.2 billion (\$101 billion over five years)

Notes: During the 113th Congress, the Senate passed S. 744, which would have overhauled the federal immigration system by providing a path to legal status for many current illegal aliens and authorizing additional funding for border security measures. A [CBO estimate](#) of the bill as passed by the Senate indicated it would increase mandatory spending by \$89 billion over the first five years and discretionary spending by \$12 billion in that same time.

"It's time to stand up and pass comprehensive gun safety legislation as a nation."

Cost per Year: Indeterminate

Notes: O'Malley has [proposed](#) a series of related proposals on his campaign website, including expanding background checks, increasing regulatory enforcement, and establishing a national registry of firearms. While background checks are generally funded via user fees, O'Malley has not specified how much his additional enforcement proposals might cost.

National Defense & International Affairs:

"... [W]e need to do a much better job as a nation of having human intelligence on the ground so that we know who the emerging next generation leaders are that are coming up to replace a dictator when his time on this planet ends."

Cost per Year: Indeterminate

Notes: It is unclear from Governor O'Malley's statement to what extent he would increase funding to bolster intelligence "on the ground".

Bernie Sanders

Net Change in Spending per Year: \$1.17 trillion

Economy, Transportation, & Infrastructure:

"And in my view what we need to do is create millions of jobs by rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure"

Cost per Year: \$146 billion (\$730 billion over five years)

Notes: Senator Sanders introduced related legislation in the form of [S. 268](#), the Rebuild America Act of 2015. The text of the bill authorizes \$730 billion in new funding for infrastructure improvements over the next five years, and establishes a National Infrastructure Development Bank to oversee those projects.

"[R]aise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour"

Cost per Year: Indeterminate

Notes: Related legislation was introduced during the 113th Congress in the form of S. 2223, the Minimum Wage Fairness Act. That bill would have gradually increased the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 and indexed it to inflation in years thereafter. CBO [determined](#) that the bill would not significantly impact federal outlays. It is unclear if this proposal would be scored similarly. In a related 2014 report, CBO noted that a minimum wage increase to \$10.10 would reduce total employment by about 500,000 workers.

"... [W]e are going to have medical and family paid leave"

Cost per Year: \$2.242 billion (\$11.21 billion over five years)

Notes: Senator Sanders is a cosponsor of S. 786, the Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act. The bill would increase payroll taxes to finance a national benefit program. In 2014, NTUF [examined](#) OMB's estimates of total social insurance program receipts for years 2015-2019 and increased those amounts by 0.2 percent to approximate the revenue increase that might result from a new payroll tax. Based on those calculations, the FAMILY Act could increase federal spending by \$11.2 billion over five years.

Education, Science, & Research:

"... [M]ake every public college and university in this country tuition free."

Cost per Year: \$109.9 billion (first-year cost)

Notes: Senator Sanders introduced related legislation in the form of S. 1373, the College for All Act. The bill would provide states with grants to cover two-thirds of their colleges' tuition costs; allow student loan borrowers to refinance their loans at lower interest rates; and increase funding for federal work-study programs. It also institutes a new \$300 billion per year "Inclusive Prosperity" tax on all stock, bond, and derivative transactions. NTUF found that relative to current funding levels, the bill would increase federal spending by [\\$109.9 billion](#) in the first year alone. The required spending levels for subsequent years are indeterminate.

Energy and the Environment:

"Today, the scientific community is virtually unanimous: climate change is real, it is caused by human activity, and we have a moral responsibility to transform our energy system away from fossil fuel to energy efficiency and sustainable energy and leave this planet a habitable planet for our children and our grandchildren."

Cost per Year: \$57.252 billion (\$286.26 billion over five years)

Notes: Related legislation was introduced during the 111th Congress in the form of H.R. 2454, the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009. That legislation included a "cap and trade" system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, along with numerous other initiatives to expand renewable energy research and financial incentives for energy providers who develop efficient energy sources. A [CBO estimate](#) is available. (NTUF adjusted the estimate for inflation.)

Health Care:

"I believe that everybody in this country who has a mental crisis has got to get mental health counseling immediately. ... [W]e have to address the issue of mental health"

Cost per Year: \$20 million (\$100 million over five years)

Notes: Senator Sanders is a cosponsor of related legislation, S. 933 in the 114th Congress. The Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act of 2015 would provide about [\\$100 million](#) in grants over the next five years to improve mental health programs at the state and local level. It is unclear from his statement whether he supports expanding that funding to mental health programs outside of the criminal justice context addressed in the bill.

"We should not be the only major country on Earth that does not guarantee health care to all of our people as a right of citizenship"

Cost per Year: \$824 billion (\$4.12 trillion over five years)

Notes: Senator Sanders has repeatedly supported legislation that would establish a federally-administered universal health care system. Most recently he sponsored S. 1782, which would cost about \$4.12 trillion over the next five years, or [\\$824 billion annually](#).

Homeland Security & Law Enforcement:

"My view right now -- and always has been -- is that when you have 11 million undocumented people in this country, we need comprehensive immigration reform"

Cost per Year: \$20.2 billion (\$101 billion over five years)

Notes: During the 113th Congress, the Senate passed S. 744, which would have overhauled the federal immigration system by providing a path to legal status for many current illegal aliens and authorizing additional funding for border security measures. A [CBO estimate](#) of the bill as passed by the Senate indicated it would increase mandatory spending by \$89 billion over the first five years and discretionary spending by \$12 billion in that same time. Senator Sanders voted in favor of the legislation.

“And I think we’ve got to move aggressively at the federal level in dealing with the straw man purchasers.”

Cost per Year: Indeterminate

Notes: Related legislation has been introduced in the 113th Congress, including S. 54 and S. 649, to add additional penalties on buyers who illegally purchase a gun for somebody else. CBO’s [estimate](#) for S. 54 determined “that S. 54 would apply to a relatively small number of additional offenders, however, so any increase in costs for law enforcement, court proceedings, or prison operations would not be significant. Any such costs would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.” It is unclear what additional measures Sanders would pursue.

“Absolutely [I would shut down data-collection programs within the NSA].”

Cost per Year: Indeterminate

Notes: Because the NSA’s surveillance programs are classified, it is unclear how Senator Sanders’ proposal would impact the federal budget. Related legislation was introduced in the form of H.R. 2048, the USA FREEDOM Act of 2015. The bill included provisions that would limit the authority of the federal government to collect information on citizens’ private communications and require search warrants to do so. CBO [determined](#) that the bill’s requirements would cost \$3 million per year.

“ ... I am seeing in this country too many lives being destroyed for non-violent offenses. ... I think we have to think through this war on drugs”

Cost per Year: -\$75 million (-\$376 million over five years) (savings)

Notes: Senator Sanders is a cosponsor of S. 502, the Smarter Sentencing Act of 2015, which would reduce prison sentences for certain non-violent drug-related offenses. CBO [scored](#) a previous version of the bill in 2014 and found that it would reduce federal spending by \$376 million over five years.

Social Security:

“My view is that when you have millions of seniors in this country trying to get by -- and I don’t know how they do on \$11,000, \$12,000, \$13,000 a year -- you don’t cut Social Security, you expand it. And the way you expand it is by lifting the cap on taxable incomes so that you do away with the absurdity of a millionaire paying the same amount into the system as somebody making \$118,000.”

Cost per Year: \$10.65 billion (\$106.5 billion over five years)

Notes: Senator Sanders introduced S. 731, the Social Security Expansion Act in the current 114th Congress. Sanders' proposal would increase benefits for most recipients of Social Security, and would also raise taxes on certain individuals. Currently, the payroll tax for Social Security is capped to reflect the level of benefits received. The Office of the Actuary of the Social Security Administration provided a [long-term analysis](#) of the budgetary effects of Sanders' legislation. From FY 2016-2015, the proposal would increase outlays from OASDI by \$106.5 billion. Over that same time period, the tax increase will raise revenues by \$1.6 trillion.

Jim Webb

Net Change in Spending per Year: \$24.544 billion

Energy and the Environment:

“I’m a strong proponent of nuclear power.”

Cost per Year: \$964 million (\$4.82 billion over five years)

Notes: In the 111th Congress, Senator Webb was a cosponsor of S. 2776, [the Clean Energy Act of 2009](#), to double production of clean nuclear energy. The legislation would have provided for loan guarantees for nuclear energy development, grants for nuclear reactor research, and funding for workforce training. NTUF estimated it would have increased outlays by \$4.82 billion over five years.

Health Care:

“I wouldn’t have a problem with [undocumented immigrants receiving Obamacare subsidies].”

Cost per Year: \$3.38 billion (\$16.9 billion over five years)

Notes: CBO estimates that there are approximately 8 million illegal immigrants that are not currently covered by the Affordable Care Act. Legislation in the 113th Congress would have provided them with federal benefits and open the path for increased immigration. CBO’s estimate for the [reported version of S. 744](#) (113th Congress) finds that extending the health insurance premium subsidy would cost \$16.9 billion over the next five years.

Homeland Security & Law Enforcement:

“We need a comprehensive [immigration] reform”

Cost per Year: \$20.2 billion (\$101 billion over five years)

Notes: During the 113th Congress, the Senate passed S. 744, which would have overhauled the federal immigration system by providing a path to legal status for many current illegal aliens and authorizing additional funding for border security measures. A [CBO estimate](#) of the bill as passed by the Senate indicated it would increase mandatory spending by \$89 billion over the first five years and discretionary spending by \$12 billion in that same time.

Notes: Text of candidates’ quotations is as reported in a published [transcript](#).

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NTUF is the research affiliate of the National Taxpayers Union, a non-profit taxpayer advocacy group founded in 1969. **Note: For additional analyses of Presidential candidates' spending agendas, visit www.ntu.org/foundation.**

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