



U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
Subcommittee on Federal Spending Oversight

Senator Rand Paul, M.D. (Kentucky), Chairman



**WASTE REPORT for August 10, 2015**

**Learn English... at Space Camp and Dollywood**

If you were a kid in the '80s, you probably dreamed of going to Space Camp, especially if you saw the movie. Well, if you have about \$1,000 and can get yourself to Huntsville, Alabama, you too can go to Space Camp. **That is unless you are a kid in Pakistan, because if you are, Uncle Sam will send you to Space Camp on the taxpayer's dime, to the tune of \$250k.**<sup>1</sup>

That's right, last March the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad put out a grant opportunity to send **24 Pakistani students to 6-days of Space Camp in Alabama.** Why is the federal taxpayer financing a trip around the world for Pakistani kids to play astronaut? Well, **"To promote the development of English language, social, and analytical skills of the participants, through first-hand experiences in science and technology."**<sup>2</sup> With seven Space Camps around the world, including Italy and Japan, the State Department might be on to something bigger than Rosetta Stone and Facebook combined.

**Space Camp to learn English?** By that standard doing almost anything in an English speaking country like the U.S. must qualify. **Why not a trip to an amusement park? Well, actually!!!** After splash down in Huntsville, the grant calls for the group to head out on a nearly 700 mile bus trip bound for Washington D.C. which includes **a day's visit, (perhaps from 9 to 5) at the Pigeon Forge, TN, amusement park, Dollywood, named for country legend Dolly Parton.**<sup>3</sup>

And while NASA's FY 2016 Budget request includes \$94 million for education, there is no mention of using that money to send American kids to Space Camp, which itself is not federally financed.<sup>4</sup> In fact, **Space Camp is a luxury even for kids in Huntsville, where the Elks Club takes up the effort to annually send a different 5<sup>th</sup> grade class to the camp.**<sup>5</sup> Perhaps if kids in Alabama were learning Japanese, the State Department would send them to Space Camp-Japan, maybe with a stop off at Tokyo-Disneyland.

**In Waste, Anything is Possible**

<sup>1</sup> Youth Exchange Program – NASA Space Camp, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Islamabad, Opportunity Number: SCA-ISB-15-AW-008-03092015, March 2015

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Note: Space Camp is Run by the State of Alabama and through a private foundation

<sup>5</sup> Bonvillian, Crystal, *Farley Elementary 5th graders get surprise trip to Space Camp*; AL.com, December 2014