

# THE TRUTH IS NOT CHEAP

## QUICK STATS

- ✘ **CONFERENCE:** Spending
- ✘ **TEAM:** Department of State
- **FUMBLE:** \$545,000 for truth-telling consultants
- **RECOVERY:** Departments should be more selective in the types of training grants they offer; activities that can be handled internally should be handled internally

The cost of telling the truth? Apparently, it is \$545,000 at State.<sup>60</sup> In March 2014 State's School of Leadership and Management sought a contractor to provide training courses to "senior level officials on effective congressional testimony and briefing skills."<sup>61</sup> The name of the course? "Communicating with Congress: Briefing and Testifying."<sup>62</sup> Additionally the contractor would assist with the design of congressional testimony prep classes for individuals who are nominated to be ambassadors and one-on-one classes for individuals set to testify before Congress.



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So basically American taxpayers paid more than \$500,000 to have a contractor teach people how to sit before a congressional committee and answer questions.

It is understandable that State wants to prepare its witnesses, perhaps to avoid embarrassing situations such as the nominee-to-be Ambassador to China saying, "I'm no real expert on China" or its nominee for the U.S. representative in Norway who testified about the non-existent president of that country.<sup>63</sup> But does the federal government really need to hire an outside contractor to train federal officials and nominees on how to testify before Congress and tell the truth? Surely not.

## **RECOVERY**

Congress should use its oversight responsibilities to guide federal agencies (not contractors) to handle training or other internal matters that could be undertaken by staff already on the federal payroll. Another idea is to tell all State Department staff to just honor any mom's advice, "When in doubt, tell the truth."

***For more information, please visit:***

[The Washington Times: State Department hires testimony coach to prepare for congressional grillings](#)  
[Federal Business Opportunities: Congressional Training](#)