

Report: Government subsidies going to millionaires

By Daniel Stone and Laura Colarusso, Newsweek

Class warfare is a politically charged term these days, from the Wall Street protests to the Capitol Hill negotiations over curtailing the nation's debt. But a new congressional analysis, obtained by Newsweek, may fuel populist outrage by showing the extent of government subsidies that go to the wealthiest people in America.

From unemployment payments to subsidies and tax breaks on luxury items like vacation homes and yachts, Americans earning more than \$1 million collect more than \$30 billion in government largesse each year, according to the report assembled by Sen. Tom Coburn, a Republican from Oklahoma, who is so often at odds with members of both parties that colleagues call him "Dr. No." The Internal Revenue Service provided the data showing how much money was going to the much-referenced top 1 percent.

In all, millionaires receive hefty help from Uncle Sam. The \$30 billion in handouts, to put it in perspective, amounts to twice as much as the government spends on NASA, and three times the budget of the Environmental Protection Agency. On the other hand, it would only cover the cost of fighting about three months in Iraq and Afghanistan. Still, eliminating them would help make a small dent in the \$1.5 trillion congressional leaders are trying to find by Thanksgiving.

Jon Bon Jovi, the millionaire rock star cited in the report, took federal dollars to raise honeybees on his property. Together billionaire moguls David Rockefeller and Ted Turner have also accepted more than half a million dollars in farm payments. Basketball legend Scottie Pippen took \$210,520 in

agriculture subsidies while making his fortune playing for the Chicago Bulls. To make matters worse, the government disclosed to Coburn that some recipients of farm subsidies got it by mistake. Tax records show that more than three fourths of high earners collecting farming money list their primary residence in a city—land unsuitable for farming.

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