

Obama budget cuts deemed symbolic

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- Some Washington observers are calling U.S. President Barack Obama's projected budget cuts largely symbolic and insufficient.

Critics say the reported cost-cutting measures will do little to restore fiscal responsibility and amount in savings to a fraction of 1 percent of Obama's \$3.6 trillion budget.

"You're cherry-picking the base of the tree on stuff that is not innovative," said Paul C. Light, a scholar of federal bureaucracy at New York University. "None of this stuff is the kind of bold sweep you're hoping Obama will bring to the management of government."

Robert Bixby, executive director of the non-partisan Concord Coalition, called the cost-cutting measures "silly."

Isabel V. Sawhill, a Clinton administration budget official who directs the Budgeting for National Priorities project at the Brookings Institution, voiced doubts the budget plan would help convince people Obama cares about responsibility.

However, the cost-cutting measures are just one part of the administration's actions to curtail spending, a spokesman for the Office of Management and Budget says.

Kenneth Baer says the full federal budget that will be released next month may eliminate programs across many agencies that are deemed inefficient or wasteful.

Proposals such as the various \$100 million cuts and proposed bulk buying, he added, are "by no means the entire approach to making an efficient and effective government. It's just a small part, but it's an important part."

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