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The federal budget and current deficit are two of the most debated issues in current American politics. However, these topics are often debated in the abstract and without any standard means of comparison between options. Even when concrete information is presented, the immense numbers involved are often difficult to comprehend. There have been many piecemeal attempts to represent budget information, but these generally address a single area (i.e. defense spending) with no means for comparison to other issues. There needs to be a means of representing budget information that is both understandable to the average voter and allows for consistent comparison across issues. Without the ability to accurately weigh different options and understand the numbers involved, voters cannot make informed decisions and attempt to influence policy-makers accordingly.

While the federal budget impacts the lives of every person in the country, the various parts may be of more or less relative importance to different groups (i.e. farmers are more interested in crop subsidies than residents of New York City). It is, however, impractical to tailor different areas to the most interested constituents due to the sheer quantity of information involved. Doing so would also hinder comparison between areas and thus impact people's understanding of the budget as a whole and the way changes to one area might impact another.

Currently the average person gets information on federal spending from the news media or directly from political and lobbying entities. This paradigm presents a number of important problems. The first is the potential for rampant manipulation and misinformation. Political entities have obvious incentives to mold information to fit their agenda as well as possible. News media can also present biased information, whether intentional or not. A standard representation of information to which voters could compare the information they receive would serve to keep those presenting the information honest.

In the ideal case, this kind of standard information would be relatively invisible to the average American. Its mere existence would push media and political entities into a more honest approach, knowing that the information they present

could be checked at any time. The more accurate information these organizations provide would allow citizens to make more informed choices without requiring any additional effort from them.

For the information to be adopted and given proper attention it must be easily accessible as well as being seen as both accurate and without bias. In a rapidly changing world this information would need to be available on the internet, where data could be accessed by any interested person and updated frequently without putting resources into physical materials and updates. This availability and immediacy of information would make the use of inaccurate or out of date information by any group readily apparent to the public. Attempted manipulation would be obvious and the negative public reaction would incentivize organizations to present the best information they could.