GUIDE TO TALKING ABOUT GOVERNMENT CUTS

WORST→BEST WAYS TO DESCRIBE CUTS

This is a simple guide for the best→worst language to use when describing Republican budgets, DOGE outcomes, or government shutdowns. <u>As a bottom line, when talking about cuts, you always want to talk about the consequences that come.</u>

Each of these should be read as how you would fill in the end of a sentence that begins, "The Republicans are cutting/taking away…"

RATING	FRAME	EXAMPLE
🟢	XXX that people have earned	"Social Security benefits that seniors have worked decades to earn"
🟢	XXX that people are counting on	"Medicare coverage that cancer patients are counting on for their treatments"
🟢	People's [thing you get from government]	"People's tax refunds" or "Veterans' healthcare benefits"
🟢	Programs which do XXXX for people	"Programs which ensure children don't go to bed hungry" or "Programs which help seniors afford life-saving medications"
🟢	Programs like XXXX	"Programs like school lunches for low-income families" or "Programs like disaster relief for hurricane victims"
🟡	People who [thing gov't workers do]	"People who inspect our food for safety" or "People who protect our national parks"
🟡	Department of [FULL NAME] which XXXX	"The Centers for Disease Control, which prevents disease outbreaks" or "The Department of Veterans Affairs, which provides essential care to those who served"
🟡	Department of [FULL NAME]	"Department of Transportation" or "Consumer Financial Protection Bureau"
🔴	Department [ACRONYM]	"DOT" or "CFPB"
🔴	Government employees	"Federal workers" or "Civil servants"
🔴	Spending by the government	"Government expenditures" or "Federal outlays"
🔴	Government	"The government" or "Federal agencies"
🔴	Bureaucracy	"Government red tape" or "Administrative overhead"
🔴	Waste, Fraud & Abuse	"Wasteful spending" or "Inefficient programs"

FIVE SIMPLE RULES

There are five simple rules that help when communicating on this debate:

1️⃣ People > Programs

It's always better to talk about the impact cuts are having on people instead of the impact they're having on programs.

- ✅ "Taking away healthcare from veterans"
- ❌ "Cutting the VA healthcare program"

2️⃣ People Do Things

It's always better to talk about cutting the government workers (people) who do a specific thing (e.g., process Social Security benefits, control air traffic, inspect food safety) than to talk generally about government workers without specifying what they do.

- ✅ "Firing the people who make sure our drinking water is safe"
- ❌ "Firing EPA employees"

3️⃣ Cutting Is OK, These Cuts Are Wrong

It's useful to acknowledge that cutting spending/waste is needed, but you're against *these specific cuts* because of the harm they do.

- ✅ "We should cut waste, not school lunches for children"
- ❌ "All budget cuts are bad"

4️⃣ Never Say "Spending"

There is never a reason to talk about cutting "spending" as a negative. Spending is always ON SOMETHING, and you're better off talking about that specific thing.

- ✅ "They're cutting funds for disaster relief"
- ❌ "They're cutting government spending"

5️⃣ "Taking Away" > "Cutting"

Where possible, it's better to talk about what they are "taking away from people" than what spending they are "cutting."

- ✅ "Taking away prescription drug benefits from seniors"
- ❌ "Cutting the Medicare prescription program".