

Making USDA Great Again


Lance Kotschwar

- Former volunteer on the Trump Transition Team for USDA
- Recovering DC-aholic: “I used to be somebody!!”

Disclaimer:

I am here today in a personal capacity; not on behalf of my employer.

Any opinions or statements expressed by me today are wholly my own, based on my personal experience of living and working in DC for 20 years, and having served as a volunteer on the Trump transition team for the U.S. Department of Agriculture last January.



Transition Team:

The Experience

- “The more things change, the more they stay the same”

Impressions/Perspectives

- Political Appointees
 - Career Employees
 - Mission Areas
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Expectations:

Issues affecting Ag - Before the Election:

- Climate Change
 - Regulations
 - Food Stamps
 - Trade: NAFTA, TPP, China
 - Immigration
 - Ethanol
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Expectations:

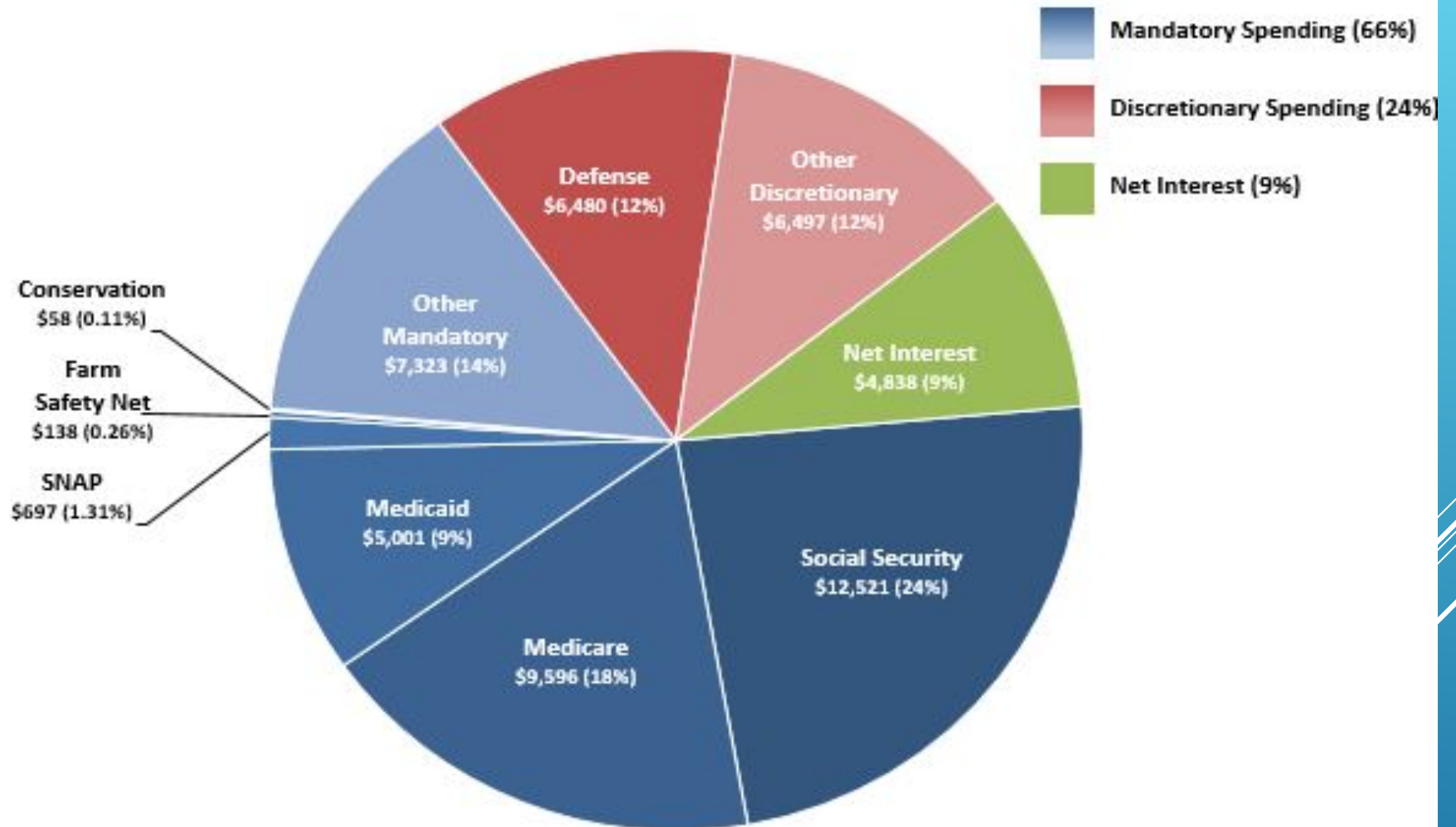
Post Election – President's First Budget

- SNAP – reduce by \$190B/10 yrs
- Crop Insurance:
 - \$40K Cap; eliminate harvest price
- Commodity Support Programs:
 - Reduce AGI to \$500K from ~\$900K
- 21 % reduction in discretionary funding

Whoa, what's going on here?

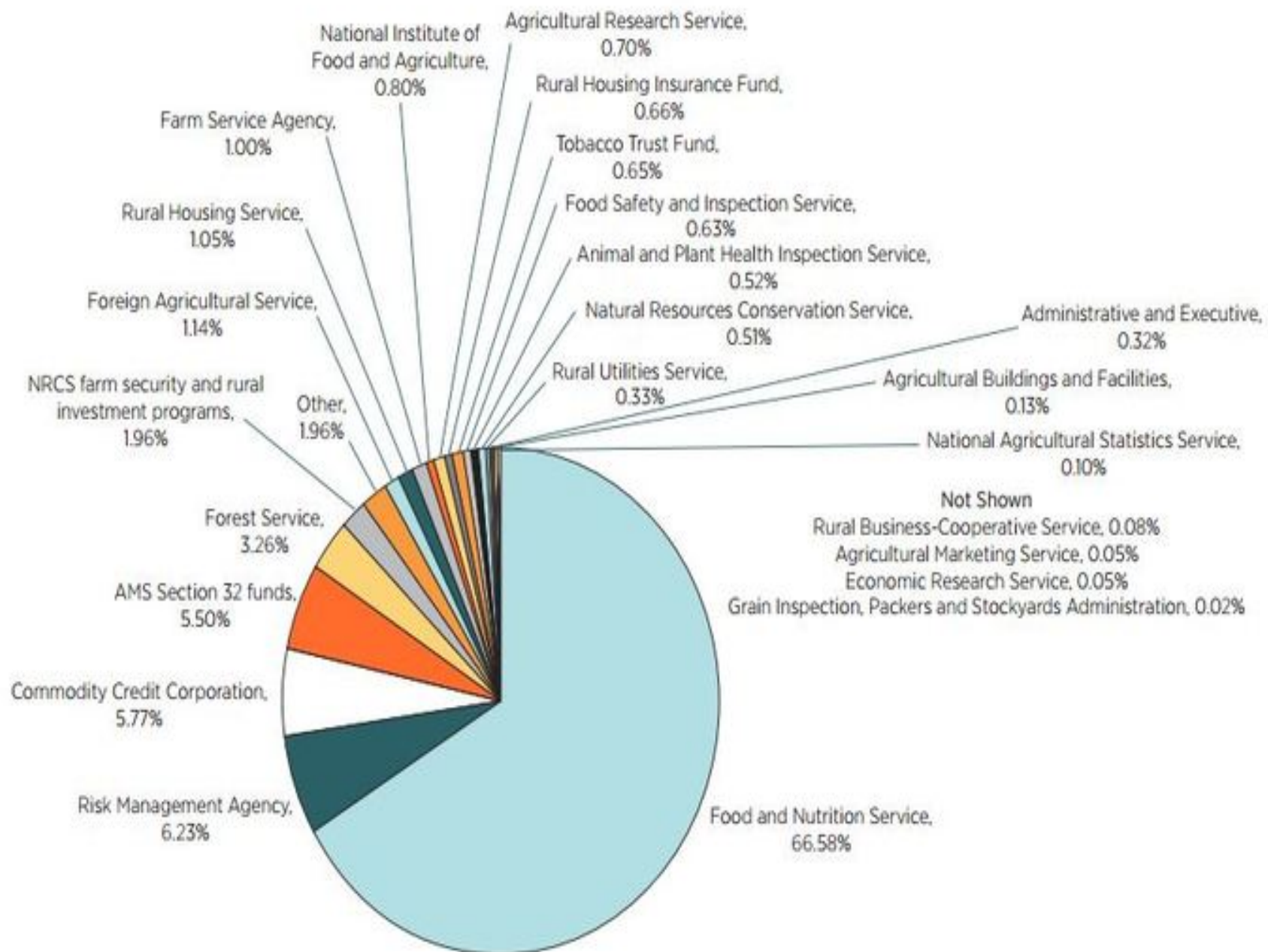
Estimated Federal Outlays (FY2017-2026)

CBO August 2016 Baseline (in billions)



NOTE: total outlays from FY2017 to FY2026—\$53.148 trillion—excludes offsetting receipts of \$2.918 trillion.

FIGURE 10. COMPONENTS OF 2014 USDA BUDGET, TOTALING \$161 BILLION



Beyond the Budget – Positive Changes

- Attitude: “extroverted advocacy”
- The 2050 goal: 2x the food to feed the world
 - Economic opportunity for US agriculture
 - Humanitarian imperative
- USDA Secretary – decisionmaker
- President – listens to his USDA Secretary
 - NAFTA – good example; “do no harm”

Executive Actions & Other Activity

- School lunches
- Trade Undersecretary
- Beef & Rice into China
- Regulation hold
- Presidential Task Force
 - Ag issues outside of USDA
 - Task force gives USDA a voice
- No more GIPSA

Personnel

- Outside of USDA
 - Pruitt, Zinke
- Strong Team inside
 - Special assistants
 - Nominated Undersecretaries
 - Career employees

What's Next?

- Policy & Spending – Congress
- Regulatorily:
 - Production Ag – back in vogue
- Bigger picture - challenges:
 - Tight budgets
 - Trade Deals
 - Ag's been a big beneficiary
 - Lots at stake in deal revisions
 - President – working for others

Questions? Comments?

