



Issa's agenda: condoms, yoga, pot

By: [Jonathan Allen and Jake Sherman](#)

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Rep. Darrell Issa is focused on menopause, condoms, malt liquor and video games as the House considers how the government should spend taxpayer money over the next seven months.

The California Republican and chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee submitted a slew of amendments yesterday that would ban government-funded studies of how well men use condoms, the effects of integral yoga in treating hot flashes for menopausal women, whether video games improve old folks' mental health, the use of marijuana in conjunction with malt liquor and with opiates, and the impacts of a possible soda tax.

Issa's assault on silly-sounding studies represents just a small slice of the 180 amendments that House Republicans and Democrats prepared yesterday for the trillion-dollar continuing resolution that would fund the government through Sept. 30. There were already 403 amendments in the hopper, meaning nearly 600 were drafted before yesterday's deadline. Many of them are duplicative, will be ruled out of order on the House floor or will not be offered at all. Most amendments are expected to fail.

Issa's staff said some of the amendments target specific National Institutes of Health grants, while others restrict the Department of Health and Human Services and the National Science Foundation.

"We could've done 100 of these if we wanted to," said Kurt Bardella, a spokesman for Issa, who advocates for grant reform. In 2009, the California Republican offered an amendment banning funding for "substance abuse and HIV risk reduction counseling for Thai and Chinese prostitutes and Russian alcoholics." It was adopted in the House but didn't become law.

Republican leaders hope to have work finished on the bill by Thursday, but it's looking increasingly likely that they'll either have to run past that deadline or limit debate.

Among the new batch of amendments:

- * Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo.) doesn't need any more studying of the marijuana issue, either. He'd prohibit the federal government from enforcing marijuana laws.

- * In a fancy power play, New York Democratic Rep. Tim Bishop would prohibit funding for the National Bio Agro-Defense facility at the Kansas State University. Why? Projects at a facility in Plum Island, N.Y., are set to be transferred there in 2018.

- * Rep. Jeff Denham (R-Calif.) would ban funding for high-speed rail in California.

- * Rep. Connie Mack (R-Fla.) would prohibit funding of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (the nation's education laws for students in kindergarten through 12th grade).

* Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) would ban the use of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act to order the production of library circulation records, patron lists, book sales records or bookstore customer lists.

* Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-Ill.) would prevent the Justice Department from engaging in a lawsuit against the state of Arizona for its immigration enforcement law (known as SB 1070).

* Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-Calif.) would stop the federal government from entering into contracts with companies and other business entities that don't disclose their political contributions.

* Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (R-Neb.) wants to stop assistance to the nation of Chad.

* Rep. Cliff Stearns (R-Fla.) wants to make sure that former executives of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac don't get government-funded lawyers.

* Rep. Dennis Cardoza (D-Calif.) would make Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner a prisoner of Washington by prohibiting the use of federal money to assist him in traveling.

But Issa's set of sex, booze and drugs amendments will be sure to grab marquee billing if they're offered on the floor. It's been nearly two years since a Labor-Health and Human Services-Education spending bill was debated on the floor, but such funding-limitation amendments were once a staple of discussion over budget levels for NIH.

Typically, the lawmaker argues that the study is a waste of taxpayer money and the administration — or the researcher who won the grant in question — counters that the research is important for disease prevention or treatment.

Integral yoga, according to Wikipedia, "refers to the process of the union of all the parts of one's being with the Divine, and the transmutation of all of their jarring elements into a harmonious state of higher divine consciousness and existence."

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