

Rotten tomato: Senator Rand Paul misses mark targeting tastier tomatoes as wasteful research

[Editor's note: [Kevin Folta](#) is a molecular biologist and chair of the horticultural sciences department at the University of Florida.]

Senator [Rand] Paul just placed his waste sticker on a gem of a project. He literally trashed a [National Science Foundation \(NSF\)-funded project](#) that is rapidly resolving the genes associated with tomato metabolites as “one of the egregious examples of waste in the U.S. government.” In short, he took a barely-surfacy-cursory glimpse at NSF’s carefully-refereed investment and unilaterally decided it was a frivolous waste of taxpayer funds.

Screen Shot at PM
Rand Paul

He then fabricated a sadly snarky response, ignoring science and evidence for a quick political dig. He saw a few buzzwords that he could toss into the science-funding fray, and score a few points as a hero on waste patrol.

But is he a budget hero if the work he calls a waste actually is an amazing investment?

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Better tasting tomatoes spur more consumption, and a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables has been shown to be associated with long-term health. At a time of escalating health care costs, something as simple as a tastier tomato may translate into massive government savings. One chronic illness can easily cost the same as this entire grant.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Senator Paul- Make Tomatoes Great Again](#)

For more background on the Genetic Literacy Project, read [GLP on Wikipedia](#)