

**New Hampshire News Connection  
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## **NH Budget Watchdogs Slam Million-Dollar Army Washer**

Concord, NH - Budget watchers say the days of thousand dollar hammers for the Pentagon may be returning - or maybe they never went away. Last week, a South Carolina company was accused of billing the government more than \$20 million in shipping charges for items such as three machine screws and two washers. Steve Varnum, executive director of Priorities NH, says military waste could be better spent on legitimate needs here at home.

**Suggested Script:** If you think shipping costs are high at online auction sites, wait till you see what the Pentagon pays. New Hampshire budget watchdogs are steaming over a South Carolina company charging one million dollars to ship two nineteen-cent washers to an army base in Texas.

Priorities New Hampshire director Steve Varnum says it's a disturbing flashback to the old days of million-dollar toilet seats -- and Congress and the candidates need to tackle the problem.

**Actuality Cut 42777 (:10)** "The way the military does business is very problematic, and some candidates such as Joe Biden and John McCain are talking about it. We'd like to see the rest of them pick up that conversation."

**Suggested Tag:** Varnum said the company took advantage of a Pentagon processing loophole that usually paid bills automatically for items sent to combat areas or bases labeled a priority. He says the Defense Department adopted auditing standards seventeen years ago in response to spending scandals, but it has never complied with them.

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**Second Cut:** Varnum says cutting wasteful Pentagon spending would leave more money for items like education and medical care for wounded soldiers...

**Actuality Cut 43777 (:07)** "\$60 billion could be cut out of that budget right now without harming the military's defense or deterrence." (ends)

**OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP** - uses first soundbite:

**LEAD:** If you think shipping costs are high at online auction sites, wait till you see what the Pentagon pays. John Robinson reports.

**Actuality Cut 44777 TRT: 47** Q...never complied with them.

