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Updated February 25, 2010

Senator Coburn Blasts Upcoming AIDS Conference As Waste of Cash

FOXNews.com

Oklahoma Sen. Tom Coburn is calling for an upcoming international AIDS conference in Europe to be canceled, arguing that the money spent to organize the event should go toward research and treatment instead.

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Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., is questioning the costs of this year's AIDS summit in Vienna, Austria.

"museum and castle tours" and "wine tasting."

"While I recognize the International AIDS Conference can provide a unique forum for networking, reviewing scientific developments and sharing information for many stakeholders, modern technology allows us to accomplish these goals for relatively little cost," Coburn wrote in his Feb. 19 letter.

"While these alternatives may not include the museum and castle tours, the visit to Mozart's birth place, or wine tasting offered by the upcoming gathering in Vienna, they can meet the main goals of the conference," he wrote.

The conference, which is the premier gathering of scientists and doctors working in the field of HIV/AIDS, is set to be held July 18 to 23. Organizers expect an estimated 25,000 participants to attend, including 2,500 members of the media, according to the International AIDS Society's Web site.

Coburn also blasted the society's 2008 conference, which reportedly cost \$25 million and included fees for participants' travel and lodging costs.

Oklahoma Sen. Tom Coburn is calling for an upcoming international AIDS conference in Europe to be canceled, arguing that the money spent to organize the event should go toward research and treatment instead.

The Washington Times first reported that Coburn, one of two licensed doctors in the U.S. Senate, fired off a letter last week to the the president of the International AIDS Society, Dr. Julio Montaner, requesting that the money be spent on HIV patients instead.

Coburn, a Republican, also criticized this summer's 2010 AIDS Conference, which is to be held in Vienna, Austria, for including activities in its program like

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