

Why Does the Federal Government Fail So Miserably Most of the Time?

6.5 M people with active social security numbers are 112 or older.

When I spotted this headline in the *Washington Times*, and misinterpreted it, my heart took a bounce.

First came astonishment and joy. With that many men and women living to be 112 or older, and surely many more living at least past 100, I might have another forty or fifty years ahead of me. I could slow down my work pace a bit. I might get not just another couple of books written, but eight or ten. I might attend all of the commencements and weddings of my grandchildren, some of whom are newborns. I might easily enjoy another three or four decades of sunrises, coffee in the morning, and the laughter of children.

Then came despair. I am approaching the age where piece by piece the body slows or falls apart. Teeth need crowns. The joints ache a bit in the morning. The legs cramp up at night. Food doesn't taste as good as it once did. I have already lost my wife, my parents, three grandchildren, and some friends to death. What did another thirty years hold in store if not more pain and heartbreak?

Then I read the [article](#).

Of course. One more bureaucratic foul-up. Our federal government failed to record the deaths of 6.5 million Americans. As a result, we have illegal immigrants using the social security numbers of men and women long in their graves.

Criminals work the numbers to open fraudulent banking accounts and commit other illicit acts.

How is it that in our computerized age the federal government could fail to record so many deaths? How is it, in fact, that the federal government fails in so many enterprises?

For years now, the feds have interfered in American education, most recently by implementing Common Core. The federal government may have the best interests of students at heart, but the results are dismaying. This past fall, for example, the ACT reported the lowest college entrance examination score in twenty years. More and more, professors tell us that incoming students are unprepared for college—and this in an age when the university curriculum is weaker than ever.

Then there's health care. Here I must confess my ignorance: I have no real idea how the Affordable Care Act works. I do know that during the two years I was still paying health coverage via Blue Cross/Blue Shield—I am now on Medicare—my rates shot up like Roman candles. So how about you, good readers? How are your insurance rates? How is the quality of your coverage now compared to ten years ago?

Our military remains the strongest in the world. This is good. But Google "military waste spending," and you'll find liberals and conservatives attacking the Pentagon for blowing billions of dollars on a tangle of bureaucrats and bogus projects.

Foreign aid? Google "US foreign aid by country" and prepare to be shocked. As you look at these different countries, look at the "administrative costs." If these were private charities running up such costs, their donations would drop like a stone.

America is trillions of dollars in debt. Meanwhile, in the last year of the Obama administration, Health & Human Services

doled out more than \$421 billion in grants, including 1.5 million to the California Prostitutes Education Project for sex-ed for prostitutes, \$183,750 to the University of Alabama for the development of a virtual reality program teaching children in China how to cross a street, and \$200,000 to Hydroglyde Coatings in Massachusetts to develop a better lubricant for condoms.

As I write these words, the federal government was recently "shut-down." "Non-essential workers" were furloughed. One of those furloughed is an acquaintance of mine who works for the Environmental Protection Agency. He despises his job, is looking for employment elsewhere, and reports that most people in his building do little real work.

This shutdown, like its predecessors, reveals the fat in our government. Somehow, despite the absence of these workers, and with a few exceptions, our country continued to function.

So why does the federal government fail so miserably so much of the time?

Size and waste.

Solution?

Reduce the size of the federal government. Over a certain period of time—ten years, perhaps—return more of its duties to state and local governments. Stop duplicating agencies that already exist at the state level. Reduce regulations—Donald Trump has set a record for cutting regulations, but more yet needs to be done—and give common sense a voice.

In addition, our federal government should become as acutely aware of costs and waste as is private industry. Any company or for that matter, any family that operates as does our government would soon find itself in bankruptcy court.

“There is no dignity quite so impressive, and no independence quite so important, as living within your means,” Calvin Coolidge once stated.

Would that our federal government heeded that century-old advice.

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