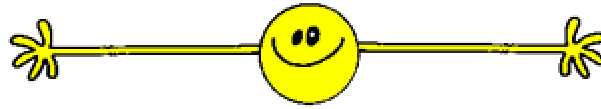


HOW BIG? ... SOOOOO BIG!



Do We Want Big Government or Small Government?

by Vic Berecz

Remember how as toddlers your kids or grand-kids responded to your question “How Big?” by stretching their arms out and saying “Sooooo Big!”? Well, we probably all agree that shouldn’t be our approach to sizing our Government. But, our *Libertarian* friends tell us they in principle would prefer *No Government*. I don’t think even they believe that’s realistic. We *need* government to help organize the activities that we have difficulty handling individually. Don’t forget, that’s been the case from time immemorial, whether the government involved was a clan chieftain, Roman emperor, or the United States Congress.

One innovation of relatively recent origin is multiple levels of government, which are somewhat independent of each other and reponsive to their constituencies. In our case it’s usually local, state, and federal ... with possibly more than one level of local government. In some minds, there is also a degree of global governance that we call the *United Nations*. The idea is to perform governmental functions at the most appropriate level. I, and many others, believe that performing those tasks at the lowest effective level makes government most responsive to people and their needs. It also permits narrower communities to determine which functions they want their government to undertake and how.

I hope you’re all getting the ideas I’m trying to convey. We *need* government. Multiple levels of government are a good thing. Local governments are more responsive to the needs of their specific communities. National governments are more responsive to general-welfare needs such as defense. Perhaps over time, the concept of global governance to deal with truly global needs will take hold. In any case, I’d like to think that when evaluating our governments, size is not the most important consideration. Do we ... most of us anyway ... want a big or a small government?

... We really don’t care. We want *Good Government!*

Next week I’ll get back to taxation ... and specifically some thoughts on how we might go about identifying necessary government functions, and allocating them to the most appropriate level of government.