

# **How Much Government Do Americans Want?**

**By Samuel Blumenfeld**

A better question is: How much government do the American people need? We need our defense forces to protect us from our enemies. We need policemen to protect us against criminals. We need a court system to prosecute criminals and adjudicate disputes among us. Taxes are required to pay for all of these legitimate government functions, and if that's all we needed and wanted, taxes would be extremely low.

But do we need a Department of Education that doesn't educate but costs \$77 billion in Obama's budget for 2012? Do we need a very costly national health care system that will make government much bigger than it already is and require much higher taxes? Has government become too big and too expensive?

The problem in Washington is that liberal politicians have ballooned the size of government by creating bigger and more expensive entitlement programs without requiring the American people to pay their full costs. So it has borrowed the money to keep these programs working and at the same time has enabled us to fight wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and now Libya.

How did all of this ballooning start? Much of it started back in the 1960's, when liberal-Democrat President Johnson decided to declare a War on Poverty in order to create a Great Society, named after a book written by a British socialist. And because the Democrats controlled both houses of Congress, he was able to enact the Civil Rights Act, Food Stamp Act, Economic Opportunities Act, Voting Rights Act, Immigration Act (which liberalized immigration policy and quadrupled the number of first-generation immigrants in the United States from 9.6 million in 1970 to about 38 million in 2007), Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Medicare and Medicaid, Gun Control Act of 1968, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Endowment for the Arts, and National Public Radio.

How much of this new government did we need? How much of it did the American people actually want? But it all expanded the federal budget big time, requiring new taxes. And how much of it has actually benefited the American people? We've had 46 years of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act at a cost of billions of dollars, and reading scores are still in the dumps. In fact, the National Endowment for the Arts issued a scathing report in 2007 on the deplorable state of literacy in America. Its chairman, Dana Gioia stated: "This is a massive social problem. We are losing the majority of the new generation. They will not achieve anything close to their potential because of poor reading."

The only place where high literacy is being achieved is among home-schoolers and private schools. The government's education programs are destroying American literacy and the taxpayer is paying for it all. But even some Republicans will not even think of getting rid of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, presently called the Race to the Top Act. It was Republican President George Bush who joined with Senator Ted Kennedy to get the ESEA's new version, No Child Left Behind, enacted.

In other words, many of these liberal laws passed by liberal Congresses have become Sacred Cows that have become untouchable even by many Republicans. The ESEA has not improved education, but it has doled out billions of dollars to thousands of teachers, administrators, schools, students, research labs, directors and assistant directors of educational programs that do little or no good but enrich an entire constituency that is now dependent on the government's largesse to maintain its comfortable way of life. Whenever there is a gravy train of such immense size, you will find a small army of camp followers eager to partake of the goodies.

Obviously, the American people don't need all of that, but the politicians have made it impossible to get rid of. But the election of November 2010 brought a new breed of politician to the House of Representatives who are willing to grapple with the problems of need and want. In recommending cuts for the 2011 budget, they actually suggested defunding Head Start, one of the liberal's holiest Sacred Cows. They also tried to cut funding for Planned Parenthood, only to be threatened with the shutdown of government if the Republicans did not relent.

Indeed, the Obama administration, with its national health care bill, is anxious to expand government even further when the American people have made it clear that the federal government is big enough and ought not to be made any bigger. But Obama has offered his solution: higher taxes. But the more money you give the government, the more money they spend.

And to pay for all of this bloated government, the United States has incurred a debt of \$14-trillion, a number so large that the average individual has a problem even understanding it. Yet, this debt must be paid by the American people if they want to retain their reputation as a sound borrower. But as the saying goes, if you borrow \$10,000 from a bank, the bank owns you. But if you borrow \$10-million, you own the bank. So, do we own China, or does China own us?

How did we get into this untenable mess? Profligate government spending with no care for tomorrow. As Lord Keynes is supposed to have said: "Why worry? Tomorrow we'll all be dead." But our children and grandchildren will still be alive to pick up the pieces.

The Tea Party movement came into being because a large number of Americans are sane enough to understand what has happened, and that the election of Barack Obama has made everything much worse. He is committed to transforming America into a socialist society in which the government basically controls, if not owns, everything, including everything you earn.

The runaway trend toward socialism must be stopped if America is ever to return to the principles of government espoused by the Founding Fathers. According to the Declaration of Independence, the purpose of government is to secure the God-given, unalienable rights of the people, their rights to: "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The founders envisaged a small, non-intrusive government, leaving people to carry on their lives without interference, without confiscatory taxes. But because our freedom has made us the greatest, richest nation in history, we became careless in guarding our government and we permitted revolutionary leftists to take control of it.

Republicans, who never repealed a single liberal program, are as responsible for this course of events as the liberals and leftists who have deliberately led us to this present state where Americans must choose between a socialist system and a Constitutional republic. What will the American people choose? We shall know in November 2012.