

Government Doesn't Serve Community

I believe serving the community can be a wonderful thing. However, the idea of service has undergone some peculiar mutations over the years.

The best way to serve the community is to do the best job you can, being useful, and not violating anyone's life, liberty, or property while doing it. Avoiding violations is the bare minimum to qualify as service. Master this and the rest will fall into place, even if you don't get the same praise and recognition as those who draw attention to themselves.

Those on the government's tax-funded payroll, who are often considered by their peers and a fawning public to be serving the community, aren't. If your job empowers you to violate or control others who have no choice but to fund you and are not permitted to refuse your service, you aren't serving them—no matter the justification. Please quit.

The cashier is serving the community. So are the waiter and the dish washer. As is the good mechanic, and the dog walker. The knowledgeable hardware store employee who can help people avoid costly mistakes is serving heroically. Being paid for your service doesn't diminish it, as long as the pay is completely voluntary and your customers can choose to go elsewhere, or to opt out entirely if they don't want or need your service.

If people have no choice but to fund your job through taxes or other fees, you aren't serving them. You are preying on them. Even if you are doing something they might hire someone to do in a free market, compulsion means they aren't your customers, but your victims.

It would be nice if people would flee those kind of jobs, and seek jobs which are mutually beneficial and one hundred percent consensual. Jobs which actually serve society by helping individuals.

Yet, serving others doesn't even necessarily involve your job.

Pick up litter where you see it, and never contribute to the trash blowing in the wind. Open doors for those behind you. Lend a hand when you can. Don't drive aggressively, or distractedly.

Mind your own business unless invited to give your opinion or assistance. Be a good neighbor in every sense of the concept.

These are things you can do to have a positive impact on the people around you—your community. Don't let self-contradictory definitions warp your view of what constitutes service. You can do it from where you are right now, and if you do, I honor your service.