

But This Time It'll Be Done Right!

It should never be a surprise that government will do a poor, even nightmarish job when it declares itself the only entity that can oversee what it forces people into participating in.

In a Facebook comment, someone claimed that at least government doesn't profit off insurance plans. That unintentionally illustrates the difference: I *want* someone to profit off providing me with an excellent product I'm willing to pay for, because then he'll have the incentive to keep up any good work, and the lure of profit might just bring in a competitor who can do it even better.

"Profit" is by itself not an evil thing at all. Why should it be when a buyer and seller peacefully agreed on what leads to someone earning more than what he put into providing the other? What's evil is for a government to force a person to give for another, whether goods or his services, for less than what he could have gotten via peaceful exchange. A person can voluntarily choose to work for no profit, but it is wrong if he's forced into it. Now, government by definition is supposedly non-profit, which is part of the myth of "public service." But since the government gets the same tax revenue no matter what, and government employees get paid regardless, there's no incentive to provide beyond what's declares to be "good enough."

Think of how quickly and how well any particular government responds to road repair, and now think of the same level of reaction to someone's health care needs. In theory, different agencies have different mission statements, but in practice, we see the same bureaucracies whether at the DMV, USPS or IRS. Consider that the DMV and USPS are the most compassionate of all the agencies, because agents of the IRS, EPA, FDA, FCC, FTC, EEOC *et al*, may not themselves carry weapons, but they can call in marshals who do.

Advocates of government-run health care like to point to "for-profit" companies as wasting so much on overhead, claiming that single-payer would reduce bureaucracy and paperwork. However, the reputation of other government agencies belies any expectation of streamlining, not to mention that it's government in the first place that's responsible for insurers' and health care providers' high administration costs. Then we're told, "But this time it'll be done right!" — just like communism's apologists have said for a long time.