

Government: Always a Bad Deal

(Note: To regular readers of my stuff, fear not; while this article starts out sounding like an economics lecture, it quickly becomes an anarchist diatribe.)

If you wanted to start a business making and selling bread, about how much would it cost you to produce it, and what could you sell it for and still make a profit? To try to answer this question you could take the complicated route, and start figuring out start-up costs, how much capital you would need to purchase equipment and supplies, cover expenses related to licenses and compliance with regulations, and so on. Or you could cheat by “peeking at the answers” in the bread aisle at the local grocery store. Assuming you’re competent enough to compete, you would probably end up charging about the same as other producers of bread do, which would probably be a bit above what it costs to produce it.

Unless you have some special knowledge or experience in some industry, how would you know what equipment is needed to produce a certain product, how expensive the equipment is, how labor-intensive the process is, what the needed raw materials cost, and so on? There are so many variables and unknowns that the average person can do little more than make a wild guess.

Or you could just go shopping.

If several different, competing companies produce a certain kind of product, it’s a safe bet that the costs of producing that product are *less* than what they sell it for, but not a whole lot less. After all, if it could be produced for a *lot* less than the usual price, someone else would be doing it, selling it for less, and making millions of dollars in the process.

However, *without* a relatively free market and competition, normal people have almost no way to know what any product “should” cost. For example, if some new electronic gadget comes out with a price tag of \$199, but only one business is *allowed* to make it, and the manufacturing process is a complete mystery, how would you know if that price is at all reasonable? If you don’t know what goes into it, or even how it’s made, how can you tell if it costs \$1 to produce, or \$150 to produce? If there is an *enforced* monopoly, your choices are to either buy it at whatever price the *one* producer decides, or to not have one. If you have no choice in the matter, you may never know whether you’re getting a good deal or not.

And that is always true of everything that “government” does.

(Congrats on making it to the anarchist diatribe. Read on.)

When the average, well-trained statist says, "I'm proud to pay my taxes, because I like to have roads!" they are demonstrating not only a serious degree of Stockholm Syndrome (it's pretty stupid to be "proud" of being *forced* to buy a product, even if the product is good), but they are also demonstrating profound economic ignorance. See if you can find the sliver in this image that represents the federal department of transportation.

Of that, a bit more than *half* has anything to do with highways. So about 1% of federal spending has anything to do with "muh roads." So if the roads are why you like taxes, you should ask for an immediate 99% tax cut ... for starters. Because, of what the feds do spend on roads, how can you tell how well the money is being spent? Do you actually have any idea exactly what construction and repairs are being done, and how much they *should* cost—how much they would cost in an actually free market? Unlikely. You, and other Americans, are forced to fund the whole thing, whether you like those "services" or not, and you don't see or hear about what was actually accomplished. You hear the news talk about a federal budget of this many zillion gajillion dollars for this or that department, but do you ever bother to break it down to find out: a) how much **you** paid for that, and; b) what you actually **got** for it?

Most of us have heard the stories of boondoggles and ridiculous pork barrel projects, and things like the feds paying \$100 for a hammer. But there is a complete and total disconnect between the money they steal from your paycheck, and where it actually goes, what it pays for, or why the hell it would cost what it does. Even at the local level, some resident might gleefully declare, "Well sure, they took a bunch of my money, but now we have a nice little park for my kids to play in!" Swell. But if you don't know how many people were forced to fund it, and what the total was, you have no way to know what kind of a deal you got. If I was allowed to forcibly rob my nearest thousand neighbors of \$1,000 each (and if I was evil enough to want to do such a thing), I bet I could make a pretty nifty park, too ... and keep the leftover \$950,000 for myself.

As a real-world example, yesterday morning I had the displeasure of seeing a stupid little one-page handout created by the local gang of parasites where I live, bragging about how they had spent stolen loot on various things. They beamed about spending \$1,600,000 to convert old, unused railroad tracks into a place to walk. (If you think that old, unused railroad tracks **already are** a place to walk, join the club.) As best I can tell looking at the map, only about a mile of those old tracks are even in the township. A little math therefore seems to indicate that the township spent around \$300 **per foot** to convert a flat place with railroad tracks on it, to ... a flat place without railroad tracks on it. And no, it's not paved. Just graded crushed stone.

Three hundred dollars **per foot**. Hey, me and my sledgehammer, shovel, and iron rake could have done that for a tenth of that price (\$30 a foot), and still made a killing. But the township *bragged* about it in their flier, as if people should be thrilled at having been *forced*

to pay for an insanely inefficient (not to mention entirely unnecessary) project. Sadly, a bunch of people probably *are* happy about it, because they didn't bother to take the five minutes to figure out what a crappy deal they got.

And that's a small, local "government," doing a project right out in the open. The deals get exponentially *worse* when it comes to giant federal projects, where the details are unseen and unknown by normal people. And there are a ridiculous number of them. However, the most absurd has to be when the Pentagon spends **trillions** of dollars—as in multiples of \$1,000,000,000,000—on things that are apparently so important that "taxpayers" aren't even allowed to know anything about them. How well would that sales pitch work in an actually free economy?

"Act now! For only a few thousand dollars from every man, woman and child in the country, I will um do ... something! You'll never know what! But you don't really need to know. Just trust me, it's good, and important, and a really great deal! ... Oh, and if you try to not fund this, we will send men with guns to kidnap you and put you in a cage. ... So act now!"

When **that** is how "government" functions, and people *still* talk about how they don't trust "the market" (i.e., people being able to choose when and how to spend their own damn money), well, that's just an indication of how efficiently the "education" system is making gullible, obedient morons.

And that reminds me: if you're a property owner, take a look at your "school tax" bill, and see how much *you* are being forced to fund the creation of a population of dimwitted, duped slaves. You will find that you're not even getting a good deal on training people to be stupid subjects. They can't even crank out mindless drones in a remotely cost effective way. But hey, apparently they don't have to. Just make the subject class dumb as concrete, and then they won't even notice how badly they're being robbed, or what a damn rip-off scam "government" **always** is.