

Government Shutdown, Too Good to be True



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"The Self Owner" is an original column appearing every Wednesday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Spencer W. Morgan. Spencer is a husband and father, and has studied History and Philosophy at the University of Utah. Archived columns can be found [here](#). OVP-only RSS feed available [here](#).

Being an outspoken anarchist (advocate for the absence of the state) is quite an interesting vantage point during a public spectacle such as the recent "government shutdown." While many react with fear, outrage and accusations, mine is one of restrained jubilation. Part of me, like a kid anticipating Christmas, wants to believe it might actually happen... but it's too good to be true.

Although the leaders of the competing gangs of rulers (political parties) have painted themselves into a corner with a public game of "chicken," a real shutdown is not happening. Their threats and fear-mongering remind me of the classic empty threat of a father on a family road trip:

"Don't make me turn this car around! I'll do it! I mean it!"

Everyone in the car knows he's not going to turn around halfway through a road trip. There is too much invested in terms of effort and expectations. It is the same with our supposed "government shutdown." All of the individual office holders have too much at stake to actually shut down the apparatus of their own power and sense of self-importance. They would never actually do so, and risk the rest of us seeing first-hand that life goes on without them. In a real government shutdown, especially of prolonged length, we'd find that the "critical services" they provide can and would be accomplished in other ways. One very real example of this dynamic is the way residents of Detroit have responded with private alternatives after desired government services shut down.

For those of us who would be happy at the prospect of real government shutdowns, don't be too disappointed. Even though government will continue for now, there is a lot that we can do to take advantage of this situation. Use every opportunity to ask questions and highlight the nature of the charade we are witnessing. Two examples:

- If they're only shutting down "non-essential" services, why haven't they done that already since they're billions of dollars in debt?
- Why are they shutting down national parks and other things that many people enjoy, but not shutting down tax collection and the IRS?

Let's use this opportunity to help people realize that their lives continue to go on, and to illustrate the absurdity and irrelevance of the political charade occurring hundreds of miles away.