



Is “Efficient” Government the Answer?

President Barack Obama said in his weekly address last Saturday that we can “get our deficits under control and move from recovery to prosperity” by getting rid of “dozens of government programs shown to be wasteful or ineffective” and, in general, making government more “efficient” and “accountable.” He also said that he has “assembled a team of management, technology, and budget experts to guide us in this work.”



Obama specifically pointed to the following experts:

- Jeffrey Zients, who “as the first ever Chief Performance Officer ... will work to streamline processes, cut costs, and find best practices throughout our government”;
- Aneesh Chopra, who in his role “as America’s Chief Technology Officer ... will promote technological innovation to help achieve our most urgent priorities — from creating jobs and reducing health care costs to keeping our nation secure.”; and
- Vivek Kundra, who as Chief Information Officer “is responsible for setting technology policy across the government, and using technology to improve security, ensure transparency, and lower costs.”

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But is there enough waste and inefficiency in government to solve the government’s fiscal crisis and restore prosperity to the nation by making government more accountable and efficient? “None of this will be easy. Big change never is,” Obama said in his weekly address.

The president continued: “With the leadership of these individuals, I am confident that we can break our bad habits, put an end to the mismanagement that has plagued our government, and start living within our means again. That is how we will get our deficits under control and move from recovery to prosperity. And that is how we will give the American people the kind of government they expect and deserve — one that is efficient, accountable and fully worthy of their trust.”

But can the “experts” Obama has appointed really help us to accomplish this? The fact that Obama himself has not demonstrated fiscal frugality as either a senator or president does not give cause for hope. In the U.S. Senate, for instance, he voted for creating the \$700 billion TARP fund to bail out the major financial institutions, thereby helping to create the projected deficit of over \$1 trillion he inherited for the current fiscal year. He even lobbied fellow lawmakers for the TARP legislation. Then as president he lobbied for the \$787 billion “stimulus” legislation and proposed a budget forecasting a \$1.75 trillion deficit for the current fiscal year. His budget also called for spending \$3.9 trillion this fiscal year and spending \$3.6 trillion next year as compared to \$3.0 trillion for the fiscal year that ended last October.

The numbers reflect the fact that Obama wants to spend and borrow our way out of recession, as opposed to reining in government spending and deficits and getting big government out of the



Written by [Gary Benoit](#) on April 20, 2009

marketplace so that market forces can end the recession. Obama wants the government to spend money wisely and has even appointed a team of experts to help in that task, but how wisely can he and his experts spend money? How wisely can they manage the economy? According to Obama:

If we're to going to rebuild our economy on a solid foundation, we need to restore the American people's confidence in their government — that it is on their side, spending their money wisely, to meet their families' needs.

That starts with the painstaking work of examining every program, every entitlement, every dollar of government spending and asking ourselves: Is this program really essential? Are taxpayers getting their money's worth? Can we accomplish our goals more efficiently or effectively some other way?

Of course, there is another way: the taxpayers' money would be spent more wisely and would better meet families' needs if spent by the people who earned it. But Obama's approach is to siphon money out of the economy into government (not just through taxes, but through inflation of the money supply in order to finance the deficits) and then redirect it back into the economy again. What kind of efficiency is that?

President Obama is advocating more government, not less. He wants to make the socialism he advocates more efficient, but efficient socialism is not the answer.

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