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## **Congress can help by doing nothing**

June 1, 2015

Congress gets a lot of advice — from lobbyists, pundits and constituents. Some of that advice is even good. Here's an excellent piece of advice from the Cato Institute's David Boaz: Don't do something; just stand there.

“Congress has a golden opportunity over the next six weeks to significantly improve public policy and expand American freedom by doing nothing,” Boaz writes. “In fact, a long vacation would be just the ticket.”

We've long praised the so-called “Do-Nothing” Congresses. Boaz agrees.

“Considering some of the things that Congresses actually do, doing nothing is often a better idea,” he contends. “In this case, a six-week vacation would give a boost to economic growth and our Fourth Amendment privacy rights. It's a win-win.”

Let's talk about some specifics. On June 30, legislation authorizing the Export-Import Bank will expire. Let it.

“The Ex-Im Bank is the most visible example of cronyism and corporate welfare, which has lately come under fire from both Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street activists,” Boaz points out. “It has an especially close relationship with Boeing, which receives about 40 percent of the bank's subsidies.”

Free markets work when they're truly free. Crony capitalism, as Boaz notes, isn't capitalism at all.

“Free enterprise means that people are free to start and build companies, seek customers, and make profits if they succeed,” he writes. “The system works well if there's competition. But subsidy programs like Ex-Im put a thumb on the scale. They help some companies at the expense of others.”

Allowing the Export-Import Bank to expire and fade away would be a real benefit to the economy.

There are other bad laws set to expire. Portions of the Patriot Act will end soon, unless Congress reauthorizes them.

That's fine, too. There are all kinds of dire warnings about what could happen if the Patriot Act isn't renewed in full.

But as Sen. Rand Paul points out, "I see no reason why we couldn't use the Constitution for a while."

That's a great idea.

"This is a great opportunity for Congress to take a long vacation — go back to their districts and find out what's on voters' minds, take a fact-finding trip to Paris and Rome, or just relax at the beach — and let these misguided laws expire," Boaz says.

The fact is, doing nothing is a particularly effective thing for Congress to do.

That's something U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia likes to emphasize.

"I hear Americans saying this nowadays, and there's a lot of it going around," Scalia told the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2011. "They talk about a dysfunctional government because there's disagreement ... and the Framers would have said, Yes! That's exactly the way we set it up. We wanted this to be power contradicting power because the main ill besetting us ... is an excess of legislation. ... This is 1787; he didn't know what an excess of legislation was."

Here's a worthy resolution for Congress. Let's try to get through this summer doing as little as possible. America will thank you for it.