

The government [says it may fine one young man \\$11,000](#) ^[1] for leaving the airport without "permission." He didn't want to be scanned by the invasive new scanners, and he didn't want the TSA touching his "junk."

When they're not touching your junk, the [TSA makes children cry](#) ^[2].

Now Bill O'Reilly demands that I provide my "solution," or endorse his. I admit, I don't know the best solution. But if there is competition, entrepreneurs will come up with solutions I'd never have thought of. Bill doesn't get it, and our government never gets it.

Neither Bill, nor I, nor President Obama should be a central planner. Central planning never brings optimum outcomes. The current central planner, the TSA, has brought us clumsy security and too much of it. Too much security kills too, because some people switch from flying to driving, which is much more dangerous .

The TSA's fancy new body scanners have cost the federal government \$300 million PLUS \$340 million in extra staff costs. But they are not some magical tool. The scanners work well on hard objects such as guns and knives-- but are highly suspect against liquids and gels. A GAO analysis found the scanners probably would not have snared the Christmas Day bomber.

So it's no surprise that Israeli airport security expert Rafi Sela calls the imaging machines "useless":

"I don't know why everybody is running to buy these expensive and useless machines. I can overcome the body scanners with enough explosives to bring down a Boeing 747."

Israel gave up on centrally-planned security in 1995. Instead, private contractors with money on the line compete for the job. Scanners are not used. The government can fire the worst and pick the best. O'Reilly wants me to give him a solution to airport security.

But the United States government is not so smart. After 9/11, Tom Daschle said "you can't professionalize if you don't federalize," and the Senate voted 100 to 0 for the TSA.

What nonsense. When you're scared, it's instinctive to think that the government will step in and do things better, but it NEVER DOES.

Private contractors are allowed to handle security at a few American airports. [A leaked TSA study found that they were better at detecting explosives](#) ^[3].

It's a similar story with O'Reilly's other question for me tonight: he wants my take on [the school that tried to ban a kid from waving the American flag](#) ^[4].

What should the school's policy be? I don't know. I don't know what the circumstances are at that particular school. It's the wrong question. As Cato's Andrew Coulson puts it:

"We fight about this kind of thing in public schools for precisely the same reason that we don't fight about them in our churches, mosques, or synagogues. When the government runs an institution, the government has to decide what you can do in it. That's a huge problem in any delicate area like religion or education. But non-government institutions are free and voluntary so that nobody has to have someone else's ideology rammed down his throat. We should learn from the success of separation of church and state—the peace and freedom it has brought to religion in America—and apply the same principle to education."

Right. If we had school vouchers, we would avoid political conflicts over such things. Kids and parents would vote with their feet.

Privatization is the solution to such conflicts.

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