



# US government shutdown? Libertarians may secretly applaud

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What's the likely outcome of the government shutdown fight? Well, in my libertarian fantasy world, we leave it closed. Or at least we never bother to reopen counterproductive bureaucracies such as the Department of Education, Department of Agriculture, Department of Energy, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Commerce, Department of Transportation, etc, etc.

In my *realistic/optimistic* world, the federal Leviathan remains, but we get some sort of delay for parts of Obamacare.

In my *realistic/pessimistic* world, the media and the left work together to not only protect Obamacare, but they also get additional spending to circumvent the sequester.

For what it's worth, I think the final outcome will be somewhere between optimism and pessimism. The government will be funded, including Obamacare, but at least we protect the sequestration, which was the biggest victory for taxpayers this century.

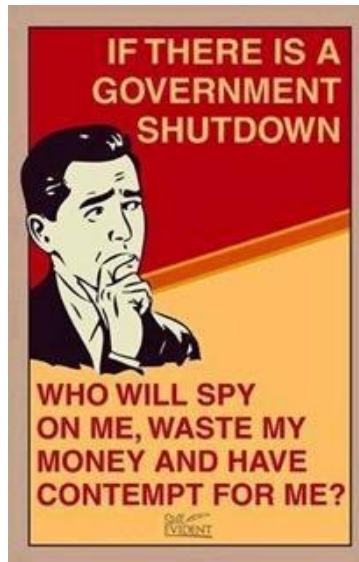
I'd like to be more hopeful, but Republicans are probably too divided to prevail in this battle.

Which is a shame, because when they had more unity during the 1995 shutdown fight, they won a very important victory. Here's what I wrote about that battle:

"...they succeeded in dramatically reducing the growth of federal spending. They did not get everything they wanted, to be sure, but government spending grew by just 2.9 percent during the first four years of GOP control, helping to turn a \$164 billion deficit in 1995 into a \$126 billion surplus in 1999. And they enacted a big tax cut in 1997."

So let's cross our fingers and hope for the best. But we're relying on politicians, so prepare for the worst.

Per tradition, let's try to close with a laugh. I've already shared my collection of government shutdown humor (here, here and here), but I did get this amusing image in my inbox yesterday, so there's something new to laugh – or cry – about.



Now there's an argument for a shutdown! Imagine, no IRS to make our lives miserable. Though let's not jump to conclusions. Knowing Obama, he's probably declared that all IRS bureaucrats are "essential personnel."

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