

The Arena

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Vegas spending spree an administration embarrassment?

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What?! Government waste, fraud, and abuse?! I'm shocked! Shocked!

This *could* be a political headache for the Obama administration, but only if Republicans play it right - so Obama probably doesn't have much to worry about. The basic principle could not be simpler: as Milton Friedman so often put it, no one spends someone else's money as carefully as he spends his own. That applies in spades to government.

So here's the political point. Democrats, unlike Republicans (at least nominally), belong to the party of government. For every problem, they see not a private but a government solution. Market competition disciplines private abuses - not perfectly, to be sure, but far better than whatever controls there may be in the public sector. That's one reason we should turn to government not as a first but as a last resort. You don't like being abused as a taxpayer? Then don't vote for the party of government.