

# The Bulletin

## Parochial thinking leads to bigger government

By Martin Fey  
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Two thirds of Americans polled by [Rasmussen](#) recently said they feel the country is on the “wrong track,” and an even greater percentage said they feel the federal government plays too big a role in the lives of average citizens.

Despite that, the electorate in 2012 re-elected a president whose combination of tax increases, massive spending and nationalization of the health care system is the very definition of big government.

Either a majority don't understand who they are voting for, or they believe in less government spending on everything but their own interests.

With union members, past and present government employees, subsidized farmers and businesses, subsidized health insurance recipients, welfare cases, long-term unemployment recipients, Social Security beneficiaries and more voting to preserve their programs, there's no way to stop the growth of government and attendant deficit spending. On average, every working American's share of the \$18 trillion national debt is a quarter of a million dollars.

A [Cato Institute](#) study determined that government spending should ideally be around 25 percent of a country's GDP. In the U.S., we're running around 36 percent and growing. In Europe, many countries are more than 70 percent.

Government starts to suck the life out of an economy when it grows beyond the level a country can comfortably support. That's what happened in Greece, Spain — and it's what is happening here. Most Americans instinctively know this, but they are addicted to government largess and vote accordingly.

Politicians know there would be a voter backlash if they over-tax too many people, so they focus on the wealthy minority. That's why the top 25 percent of American wage earners pay nearly 90 percent of federal expenses. The bottom half, paying around 2 percent, has little reason to object to the spending spree. As Mitt Romney pointed out in the 2012 presidential campaign, this gives the big-government politician a big head start.

But the working and middle classes do pay, as certainly as if the taxes came from their pockets.

When government sucks up capital from those who would otherwise invest it in the private sector, it eradicates job creation that would increase demand for labor and increase wages across the board.

The “wrong track” feelings expressed in the Rasmussen survey have everything to do with a stagnant economy. We need to face the fact that big government is the cause of our discontent.