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Mar. 14, 2010
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EDITORIAL: Subsidize this

Perhaps the one area -- if not the only area -- in which our beltway denizens can claim proficiency is spending other people's money.

But, then again, who wouldn't be good at that?

Trouble is, members of Congress haven't just perfected the skill, they've run it into the ground.

As the federal budget shortfall soars to previously unheard of levels, as Democrats sit on the precipice of creating a brand new multitrillion-dollar health care entitlement, the Obama administration moves forward with its sham of a deficit commission.

If the 18 members of the panel are serious about getting a handle on spending -- rather than just soaking the rich and middle class with tax hikes -- a good place to start would be to call the Cato Institute's Chris Edwards in to testify.

Mr. Edwards, the think tank's director of tax policy, noted this month that on Jan. 22 the federal government added its 2,000th subsidy program. "The entire nation is jumping aboard Washington's gravy train," he notes in a recent issue of the Heartland Institute's Budget & Tax News.

The number of federal subsidy programs -- which dole out taxpayer money to individuals, businesses, nonprofits, and state and local governments -- has almost doubled since 1975. The Department of Health and Human Services leads the way offering almost 400 different subsidy programs. The departments of Agriculture, Interior and Education round out the top four purveyors of taxpayer handouts.

All this, Mr. Edwards points out, comes at a price -- a price beyond what Washington lifts from our wallets.

"As the federal octopus extends its



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tentacles even further," he writes, "state governments are becoming no more than regional subdivisions of the national government, businesses and nonprofit groups are becoming tools of the state, and individualism is giving way to a more European desire for cradle-to-grave dependency."

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Don't worry you' wrote on *March 14, 2010 08:17 PM*:

You'll be covered under President Obama's Health Care Program.

And, the deficit will be reduced, post haste.

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Remember, PresPresident Obama got us out of the depression (poor people).

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Anthony Wright wrote on *March 14, 2010 04:54 PM*:

Soon the State will be upchucking the federal programs back to them.

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Athos wrote on *March 14, 2010 12:55 PM*:

The federal subsidy spent on turning corn to gas, is a perfect example of government spending gone wrong. SOMEONE is getting rich on this insanity. And it's the elected elite in DC that decide who wins and who loses.

That is corruption. Pure and simple.

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Fire Fichte's haven't just perfected the skill of payroll spiking , they've run it into the ground. wrote on *March 14, 2010 11:03 AM*:

Contract guarantees a pay raise !

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Sam wrote on *March 14, 2010 10:11 AM*:

Tax and spend.
Or is it now Spend and Tax with Obama's "change"?

More handouts for everyone! Step right up sir! What's your ailment?! We have a remedy just for that! Need to be bailed out? No problem! Need a government job? No problem! Need free healthcare? No problem! Got an old clunker? No problem! Need more unemployment benefits? No problem!

Step right up! Get everything you need from Uncle Obama (and please don't forget this at then next election).

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Randy wrote on *March 14, 2010 08:25 AM*:

All Michael just said was "rob from other people to give some rich dudes cash at your expense"

If you want the economy to grow and diversify (and it has in the past) cut taxes and government spending and let the people and businesses of Nevada buy the goods and services THEY NEED. This means the economy grows around the needs of Nevada's citizens, not the needs of Nevada's political class.

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Michael McAuliffe wrote on *March 14, 2010 07:25 AM*:

Let's make an example.

Everyone agrees that Nevada needs to diversify it's economy. I repeatedly read that Nevada has in the ground, every single mineral component necessary to produce solar panels in industrial quantities. The last I recall seeing said it was a potential \$9 billion/yr industry, with many of the dollars recirculating in the state's economy.

The problem is there's no way to jump start it. The state's broke, and private industry is funding most of the production in Asia.


The only player in town who's a big enough whale to tackle that problem is the combined force of citizenry as represented by the economic might of the federal purse.


If that purse were opened to subsidize development of this kind of sustainable industry that would benefit not only Nevadans but the rest of the citizenry as well, please explain how that would be bad.

Even if elements of the left and right opposed it, would not the great majority of moderately minded people in this country support such a goal?



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