

# EDITORIAL: We can't afford this government

## Costs of bureaucracy spread like a deadly virus

By [THE WASHINGTON TIMES](#)

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Mr. Obama's budget projections face such potential obstacles as interest rates on deficit borrowing and rising discretionary spending. (Associated Press)

Whether by design or incompetence, the Cloward-Piven Strategy lives. Named after two leftist professors at [Columbia University](#), the scheme calls for overwhelming government obligations to the point of collapse, therefore providing an excuse for a radical government takeover of the whole economy. Three news stories yesterday show the Cloward-Piven day of reckoning is creeping perilously closer.

First came word that new jobless claims last week jumped above half a million, a number so large that one economist said "it looks like the economy ran into a wall." Second came a [Congressional Budget Office](#) estimate that this year's federal deficit will be well above \$1.3 trillion for a second straight year and remain above \$1 trillion next year as well - causing as much debt in three years as government built up in the previous 219.

Third came the announcement by [Americans for Tax Reform \(ATR\)](#) that yesterday was the 2010 "Cost of Government Day," which is "the day on which the average American has earned enough gross income to pay off his or her share of the spending and regulatory burdens imposed by government at the federal, state and local levels." Just two years ago,

Cost of Government Day fell an astonishing 34 days earlier. This year, the average American worked 231 days just to support government, which consumes 63.41 percent of national income.

If anything, [ATR](#) underestimates the problem. Of those 231 days, 74 are taken up by regulatory costs. But that includes only the direct costs of new equipment and labor time required by government red tape. "Not counted are ... hidden costs" (such as discouraging new business investment), according to [ATR](#), that "may be as large as the direct compliance costs of regulation. Economists at Washington University in St. Louis, leaders in the study of regulation, estimated these costs to be over \$1.5 trillion per year in 2009."

Taxpayers foot the bill for an increasing number of government workers at outrageously growing wages. [ATR](#) reports that federal employment has increased by 230,000, or nearly 5 percent, in just the past year. USA Today reported Aug. 10 that federal pay and benefits per employee now average more than twice that of private workers: \$123,049 compared to \$61,051. Federal salaries outpaced inflation in the past decade by 33 percent.

Such government extravagance is unsustainable, and all this doesn't even take into account the \$115.8 trillion of unfunded liabilities in Social Security and Medicare, as calculated by Michael D. Tanner of the Cato Institute.

The United States is headed toward financial collapse unless these trends are reversed. The radical change needed is not a government takeover, but a significant downsizing of government's intrusion into our economy and daily lives.

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