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TODAY'S "SHORT TOPIC" LIMITED GOVERNMENT: WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?



By Stephen L. Bakke  February 8, 2016

Here's what provoked me:

Hey SB! A recent letter proclaimed what I believe is one of the flaws in Donald Trump's world view. His past and current statements lead me to believe he would get rid of some parts of the government and its programs, but those would be replaced by other governmental ambitions. Find that letter and tell me what you think. – Stefano Bachovich – obscure curmudgeon and wise political pundit – a prolific purveyor of opinions on just about everything – SB's primary "go-to guy."

Here's my response:

Limited Government: What Does That Mean?

Donald and Denise MacArthur proclaimed support for Trump and explained their version of "limited government" by writing: "Voters should opt for limited government, limited by the Constitution, but not government so small that it can't do what it is supposed to do. Donald Trump understands that. Ted Cruz does not." ("Pragmatist vs. Ideologue" – January 31)

The writers clearly feel that government should not be reined in as long as it's doing something they approve of. They would probably agree with progressive journalist and professor Eric Alterman who says liberalism is limited only by what is "deliverable justice or fairness." He wrote: "What is not deliverable by government, we leave to parents, and clergy, and the like." I believe this reasoning is very flawed.

The essence of the Constitution is its design for limited government. It determines what the government is "supposed to do," and Amendment 10 clarifies the Founders' intent by explaining that powers reside with the state governments or the people, unless specifically granted by the Constitution to the Federal government. The "Bill of Rights" can be viewed alternatively as a "Bill of Federal Government Limitations." Those limitations are the basis for the liberty and freedom we enjoy.