

The Tax Collector Knocketh

Next week Caesar comes calling, demanding that Americans do some serious rendering in the form of federal income taxes. Speaking of old Julius, back in the glory days of the Roman Empire he decreed that citizens should work two days a year to pay their fair share of taxes. Things are a bit different now, with the average American anteing up about a quarter of his or her income to the taxman.

Most folks pay without too much griping; it's a relatively small price for living in a country with remarkable freedom and opportunity. But wouldn't it be good to know that our "contributions" are being well spent, that government officials spend our tax dollars as if it were their own money? Ask yourself: Would any official at HHS spend his or her own money to create infantile ads promoting ObamaCare? Would a bureaucrat at Energy shell out personal bucks to bankroll Solyndra? How would it go over if we took up a collection at the Pentagon to ensure that Fort Hood killer Major Nidal Hasan received his full salary while awaiting trial? The examples of government waste go on and on and on, and one doesn't have to be a libertarian to get enraged.

The problem for President Obama and the big spending liberal movement is accountability. The former boss of Medicare candidly admitted that about 30% of all payments are wasteful, with the health care money either stolen or used for unnecessary treatments. You may have seen the news this week that Florida ophthalmologist Dr. Salomon Melgen billed Medicare for \$21-million in 2012. That's \$21,000,000! We might add that, coincidentally or not, Melgen is a close pal and wing man of Democratic Senator Robert Menendez.

President Obama continues to expand the federal government, and the Democratic Party wants more of our pay diverted to them so they can give it to those not earning very much. But

the Obama administration, like others before it, refuses to watch how the money is dispatched. Therefore, tens of billions of dollars are abused every year. Even as federal debt nears \$17-trillion, government waste continues to climb right along with the red ink.

Meanwhile, progressives bizarrely and brazenly tell us that federal spending is actually kind of skimpy. "The cupboard is bare," Nancy Pelosi actually said last year, adding, "There's no more cuts to make." Big spenders like Ms. Pelosi warn that any cuts, or even a freeze, will break the backs of the poor. In fact, if the government continues racking up debt, all of us will be in traction because the economy will collapse.

There comes a time when the truth must be told. The federal government is not built to run massive entitlement programs or health care or even the post office, which lost about \$5 billion last year. By the way, the New York Times cited that as a "significant improvement over last year, when the agency reported a record \$15.9 billion loss."

There is merit in President Obama's theme that a just society should help the downtrodden. Many of us fall down, and a helping hand is necessary in any fair society. But what's happening in America is not a helping hand – it's more like the back of the hand being given to taxpayers. We notice it more in the middle of April, but it is constant, ongoing, and only getting worse.