

# **Bullet's Fundamental Rules of Government**

Below are Bullet's Fundamental Rules of Government. These are not "rules for government" specifying how I believe government should behave, but rather rules predicting how government will behave or act, thus "rules of government." Government is not a living being, but it is composed of living beings, and thus these rules are as much about human behavior as they are about how government behavior.

There is one significant difference between government and any other human endeavor: the authority of law. The power to make law also provides government a monopoly on the use of force to enforce those laws. In a democratic system of government, we provide our consent for our government with the explicit requirement that government not abuse its monopoly on the use of force against law-abiding citizens. However, as John Dalberg-Acton (aka Lord Acton) accurately observed, power of this nature tends to corrupt people. A subtle form of corruption is the tendency of people who serve in government to place their wants and desires as the primary concern of government itself. Implicit in this "passive corruption" is a diminishment of whether government's actions will benefit society, instead focusing on a myopic concern over whether they will benefit government. In the end, the ability to use force will lead to government asking two questions: "can we get away with this, and how do we prevent people outside of government from finding out about it?" The moment these questions are being asked is like the moment a star first produces iron in its core; it spells the death of representative government.

A once legitimate government can continue as a husk of its former self because, as Jefferson correctly stated, people are not inclined to change their political systems for light and transient causes. Societies need government because they need laws to control the avarice of their fellow humans. The paradox is that the government we create to enforce our laws sits above the law, and this fact allows governments to indulge the needs and desires of those in government regardless of the impact of government's avarice on those outside of government. Our Framers seemed to understand this as well as any group of people ever have, and they created a powerful government, but a severely limited government. Our job as citizens is to be continually observant of our government so that we can observe when government is beginning to "produce iron" at its core like a dying star.

I first began collecting these rules while serving as a test pilot in the navy when I first encountered high level government officials. I noticed that what motivated them to act was different from what motivated the lower-level uniformed members of the services. Their motivation seemed much more inclined to preserve either their own power, or the power of the bureaucracy in general. Over the years these rules were expanded to include observations of not only the behavior of government, but also the strengths and

weaknesses of American society as well as my ideas on how to address some of the perceived weaknesses.

These are my observations.

1. The primary objective of government is the furtherance of government.
2. The primary indicator of the weakening of democracy and the civil society is the degree to which government has convinced the electorate that the furtherance of government benefits society.
3. Power in society is a “zero-sum-gain” resource.
  - a. Corollary #1: If any one societal element gains power, it must take power from another element of society.
  - b. Corollary #2: Since all power sources from the individual, any gain in government power comes at the expense of individual power.
  - c. Corollary #3: All increases in government power diminish the sovereignty of the people, weakening their ability to maintain control over their government.
4. The four pillars of American excellence:
  - a. Constitutionalism
  - b. Federalism
  - c. Individualism
  - d. Free market capitalism
5. The constitutional system of “Checks and Balances” is meaningless when all branches/levels of government behave in accordance with fundamental rule #1.
6. Constitutionally established “horizontal” checks and balances are the limits placed on any single branch of the Federal government to keep it from gaining power relative to the other branches. Constitutionally established “vertical” checks and balances are the limits placed on the whole of the central/national government from gaining power relative to lower levels of government, the governments closer to the people.
7. Government is inherently inefficient.
8. Once created, government programs are virtually impossible to terminate due to primary rule #1.
9. If allowed to continue without restraint, government will expand until it consumes all available resources.

10. If allowed to continue without restraint, government will expand until it consumes all non-government power.
11. With regard to tax dollars, government will return to the people the minimum amount of money required to ensure the public's reliance on government, keeping the remainder for government.
12. When economic crisis forces government reductions, government will minimize cuts that impact government while maximizing cuts that impact the public/taxpayer.
13. During economic expansions, government will maximize growth in programs that benefit government while minimizing growth in programs that benefit the public/taxpayer.
14. Government never gets smaller; it only slows its rate of growth. Further, government only accepts these rate reductions when unrestrained growth represents a legitimate threat to the furtherance of government, and then only by the smallest amounts and shortest-term reductions required to ensure the future long-term growth of government.
15. Government measures success of government by the size of its budget and the number of people employed by government, not government's efficiency or efficacy.
16. If no constitutional limits are provided, government will tax all forms of human activity at ever increasing rates.
17. Government power is directly proportional to the amount of tax dollars collected. Regardless of any constitutional limits placed on government, as tax revenues increase, government power will increase.
  - a. Corollary #1: The only effective means to restrain the growth of government power is to establish restraints on government's power to levy taxes.
  - b. Corollary #2: Limitations on taxation as a source of government power are meaningless without limitations on government debt authority. IAW rule #1, if taxing authority is limited government will borrow as needed to grow government. Conversely, if debt authority is limited government will tax as needed to grow government.

18. The amount of corruption/waste in government is directly proportional to the amount of tax dollars collected. As tax revenues increase, corruption/waste in government will increase.
- Corollary #1: The only effective means to limit government corruption/waste is to establish restraints on government's power to levy taxes combined with limits placed on government's debt authority.
19. Limiting government's ability to collect taxes combined with a limit on debt authority is instrumental to ensuring the continuation of a free society.
20. Government borrowing/debt is just another form of taxation. It is future taxation on future citizens brought to present time and spent on current citizens.
- Corollary #1: Limiting government's ability to borrow from future tax revenues is instrumental to ensuring the continuation of a free society for future generations.
  - Corollary #2: Limiting government debt authority is critical to limiting government corruption/waste.
  - Corollary #3: Limiting government debt authority is critical to limiting the growth of government power.
21. "Bullet Doctrine #1" for the employment of military forces:  
"If leaders are considering putting American military forces in harm's way they must be prepared for, and must prepare the public for:
- Losses due to hostile fire,
  - Losses due to friendly fire,
  - Losses due to no fires (aka accidents/mistakes).
- If leaders are not prepared to accept, or are not willing to prepare the public to accept, all the above then the mission is not important enough to justify sending American troops into harm's way.
22. "Bullet Doctrine #2" for employment of non-military power:  
"The government should only be used in those activities:
- Which have a defined end date
  - Where government is the ONLY means available to leverage the collective power of society to achieve a societal goal
  - When cost/efficiency is not a significant consideration.
- If all these criteria are not met, then the activity should be left to the private sector."
23. An effective measure of "Bureaucratic Illness" in government (or any institution) can be made by:

- a. Multiplying the number of days from which a deficiency is identified until a corrective action is implemented by the number of people involved in the decision process.
24. How time is used is a critical tool in the exercise of good governance.
- a. Corollary #1: Time can be used as an antiseptic, it allows for passions to settle while allowing facts to surface.
  - b. Corollary #2: Excessive time is a corrosive agent which undermines people's confidence in their government systems. Excessive time saps political will to a level where there may be insufficient energy to correct problems/corruptions.
  - c. Corollary #3: Governments uses time as needed to best achieve fundamental rule #1.
25. Fundamental to recovering discipline in government's use of taxpayer dollars (both present and future tax dollars) is the creation and implementation of a "Generally Accepted Accounting Procedure for Government" (GAAP-G).
26. Fundamental to re-establishing fiscal discipline and budgetary processes is the:
- a. Elimination of the base-line budgeting system
  - b. Creation of systematic pressure to force annual passage of budget legislation.
    - i. This can be achieved by enacting a new budget act which mandates that, failing the passage of budgeting legislation, the continuation of the prior year's spending levels (with no automatic increase or baseline budget growth). This removes the threat of a government shutdown while creating institutional pressure which increases over time to force all parties to pass budgeting legislation.
      - 1. This uses Fundamental Rule #1 to create the checks and balances necessary to pass RESPONSIBLE budgeting legislation.
27. Majority requirements for the passage of budgeting legislation should be a function of the growth in the budget relative to the prior year's budget authorization:
- a. Continuation of prior year's spending levels – simple majority
  - b. Growth up to Consumer Price Index 10-year average of inflation - three-fifths majority
  - c. Growth that exceeds the Consumer Price Index 10-year average of inflation - two-thirds majority.

- i. These majority requirements would be applied to both budget resolutions, continuing resolutions, and all spending authorization bills.
- d. A simple majority would be required for all budgets passed following a declaration of war.
  - i. Normal budgeting majority requirements shall apply no later than the first fiscal year following the signing of a treaty of peace with, or the cessation of hostilities with, the entity specified in the war declaration or the congressional authorization for the use of military force.
- e. A simple majority would be required for all budgets passed following the declaration of a “National Emergency” by two-thirds of both houses of congress and signed by the President.
  - i. National emergency declarations shall expire at the end of the fiscal year in which they are declared unless re-declared each subsequent year by two-thirds of both houses of congress and signed by the President.

28. Always be aware of, and distrustful of, the intellectual class. Their good intentions are the breeding ground of societies worst evils.

29. There can be no more fundamentally anti-democratic philosophy then the concept of “never let a crisis go to waste.”

- a. Corollary #1: People can be motivated to make great sacrifices in times of crisis, including their life and liberty.
- b. Corollary #2: Implementing any long-term changes during a crisis is antithetical to democratic values and the principles of representative government.
- c. Corollary #3: Any legislation passed as a means to cope with a national crisis should have a defined expiration date, not to exceed two years from the date of passage.