



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on January 22, 2025

Can We MAGA Without Making the Fed Bureaucracy SMALL Again?

Texan Michael Cargill had to endure what you might call, well, a bureaucratic colonoscopy. It was a Deep State experience he wouldn't have had in, let's say, 1971. That's because his tormentor was the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), which didn't exist till 1972. The issue?

They aimed to revoke his Federal Firearms License (FFL). The problem?

No, he didn't peddle illegal guns and give them to drug cartels. That was the Obama administration with its [Operation Fast and Furious](#) (which was run by the ATF itself). Rather, the problem was, commentator Mike McDaniel [writes](#), the following:



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[Cargill] made a few minor paperwork errors on form 4473s, the form required when anyone purchases a gun through a FFL dealer. In several instances, people mistook the "county:" blank for "country" and wrote "USA." Cargill didn't catch that, but ATF inspectors, unable to find any real violations, resorted to line-by-line scrutiny of 4473s, which dealers are required to keep, and tried to revoke his license. This sort of thing is known in law enforcement as a "chicken[***]t" charge, a picky, small-minded action that while technically legal destroys public support for law enforcement, a stupid move beneath honest, ethical officers.

In other words, the message was the same one tacitly delivered via [Operation Choke Point](#). (That was the federal effort to destroy firearm-oriented businesses by "[debanking](#)" them.) To wit:

We don't like guns, the Second Amendment, or gun dealers. And we'll use any technicality, no matter how picayune, to destroy anyone in the business.

The good news is that the Texas Public Policy Foundation filed a lawsuit on Cargill's behalf in 2022. The organization then [announced](#), just last week, that the ATF finally reversed its policy (another Trump-inauguration effect?).

Post-constitutional America

Yet while Cargill and others are understandably pleased about winning their battle, what of the war? After all, the case was just one example of a wider problem: unconstitutional federal agencies and continual bureaucratic overreach.

Another outrageous example, which I [reported on just a year ago](#), was that the National Oceanic and



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Atmospheric Administration was not only requiring federal monitors on fishing vessels, but was forcing the boats' owners to pay for them — to the tune of *more than \$700 per day*. (This, of course, raises the cost of the fish we buy.) But this all just brings us to a bigger question:

Why do these bureaucracies even exist in the first place?

That is to say, it [has been estimated](#) that 80 percent of what our federal government comprises today is unconstitutional. And is this surprising? After all, the Tenth Amendment states:

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

And what's delegated to the feds isn't very much (the Constitution isn't very long). Yet the Washington monster has been metastasizing for more than a century now, ever since the so-called "Progressive Era" (Error?). It's at a point, too, at which the federal bureaucracy has assumed the nature of a governmental fourth branch. It has gotten so bad that via the "Chevron doctrine," originated in 1984, the courts even gave the federal bureaucracy broad power to "interpret" ambiguous laws' meaning. (This was [finally overturned](#) last year.)

So Is Denying the Beast a Meal Enough? Or Do You Kill It?

Yet better than fighting "bureaucratic overreach" is this: simply eliminating the overreaching bureaucracies. The good news, too, is that President Trump does aim to nix 19 federal agencies. A sampling, courtesy of [The Hill](#):

- The Chemical Safety Board
- The Corporation for National and Community Service
- The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (which funds PBS and NPR)
- The African Development Foundation (which sends our tax dollars overseas)
- The National Endowment for the Arts
- The National Endowment for the Humanities
- The United States Institute of Peace
- The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness
- The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Do note, the issue here *isn't* whether or not these entities pursue laudable goals; *some* may. It's that their involvement is unconstitutional. Such functions can and must be handled privately or on the state level.

Think Bigger?

The above, however, are still just small big-government players. Even more troubling are the agencies affecting us more profoundly. For a short list, consider the following, [provided by](#) the LONANG Institute:

UNLAWFUL EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS

- Agriculture
- Education
- Energy



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- Health and Human Services
- Housing and Urban Development

We can add to the above, too, the following:

- Consumer Product Safety Commission
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Department of Energy
- National Labor Relations Board

Now, “Whoa!” some will say. “These agencies perform important functions!” Again, though, eliminating federal involvement does *not mean the functions won’t be performed*. In fact, they will likely be performed better — and without violating the Constitution.

Consider, for example, the Department of Education and EPA. States already have their own education and EPA-like departments. So do perhaps all large cities, many counties, and some other municipalities. Why do we need this wasteful replication, with different layers of government all doing the same thing? Note, too, that they sometimes *contradict each other*, in a classic “too many chiefs, not enough Indians” scenario.

Moreover, who cares about Arizona’s environment more than Arizonans? Who’s more concerned about the education of Maine’s children than Mainers? Will outsourcing these responsibilities to nameless, faceless bureaucrats 1,000 miles away yield better results?

Of course, none of this addresses the problem of poor state-level governance (lookin’ at you, Gavin Newsom). That’s grist for a different day. Suffice it to say, however, that if you have a really good idea you want implemented, here’s what’s probably an even better idea: Implement it on the local or state level.



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