



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on October 7, 2013

## Obama's "Shutdown" Shenanigans Stir Outrage, Defiance

As part of what critics have called a presidential "temper tantrum" aimed at extorting taxpayer money to fund ObamaCare, the Obama administration has been hard at work trying to make the partial federal government "shutdown" feel as painful as possible. In fact, according to numerous sources and news reports from across the country, the president is actually going out of his way and wasting additional taxpayer money on petty gimmicks to inconvenience the public by making federal authorities even more of a nuisance than usual. Now, Congress [wants answers](#).



At the same time, the White House and various establishment media outlets are pathetically asking for Americans to submit sad shutdown stories for propaganda purposes. "How has the government shutdown affected you?" [asked](#) Obama's "director of digital strategy" on the White House blog, apparently an "essential" part of government. CNN, meanwhile, which was recently the subject of [intense ridicule](#) for attempting to dramatize the partial shutdown, [asked](#) readers: "Are you affected by the shutdown?... Send it to iReport and be part of CNN's coverage." The American people and their representatives, though, appear to be catching on to the games, and outrage over the administration's antics is growing.

Perhaps the most revealing look at what is going on came from a Park Service ranger quoted in the *Washington Times*. "We've been told to make life as difficult for people as we can. It's disgusting," the federal employee [said](#) about the harassment aimed at taxpayers, suggesting that bureaucrats have actually been ordered to deliberately do their best to annoy the American people. "It's a cheap way to deal with the situation." The comments exposing the administration's asinine antics quickly made headlines across the Internet in the increasingly influential world of conservative and alternative media.

Indeed, based on reports from across America, it appears that the administration really is squandering extra taxpayer money specifically to cause as much pain as possible. Consider, for example, the administration's absurd scheme to [shut down the open-air World War II memorial](#) in Washington, D.C., by wasting taxpayer funds to pay government workers to erect barriers — "Barrycades," as they are being called — around the normally unmanned monument that was paid for overwhelmingly with private donations. In a pathetic spectacle of government gone wild that ended up backfiring on the administration when the public found out, federal employees tried to prevent elderly WWII veterans — ranging from octogenarians up to age 99 — from visiting the site erected in their honor.

The public backlash has been intense. Lawmakers, too, were outraged, using the scandal to paint Obama as a petty, out-of-touch schemer. "Unbelievable!" declared Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) about the news that "some idiot" sent federal "goons" to barricade the memorial as part of a "charade" to extort Republicans and the public. "These barricades are preventing our heroic World War II veterans from



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visiting a memorial their blood and sacrifice was built to honor. And just this morning President Obama sent seven security guards to the World War II memorial to keep out our veterans. Sadly, that is two more than were present in Benghazi.”

Separately, members of Congress who were at the memorial to greet veterans decided to help them defy the administration’s bizarre scheme, with the visitors simply moving the “Barrycades” to get in as the federal employees watched the civil disobedience. “These men and women didn’t cower to the Japanese and Germans,” said Rep. Steve Palazzo (R-Miss.), who helped the veterans in as the crowd cheered. “I don’t think they’re about to let a few National Park Police stand in their way.” The park police, out of respect for veterans, refused to intervene, though the next day they were ordered to add more “barrycades” that are now wired together.

The ridiculous scheme appears to have backfired, however. Following the news and the public outrage, lawmakers decided to get to the bottom of the matter — and somebody may eventually be held accountable. In a [letter](#) to the National Parks Service from House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chair Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) and Government Operations Subcommittee Chair John Mica (R., Fla.), the senior Republicans demanded to know by October 17 why the WWII memorial and other monuments were needlessly barricaded during the partial shutdown — apparently at an additional cost to taxpayers.

“The Committee is concerned with NPS’s allocation of resources during this time of lapsed funding. Our concerns are heightened due to NPS’s suspicious decisions during the lead-up to the sequester,” the lawmakers explained. “This past spring the Committee uncovered evidence that NPS’s budgetary decisions were designed to intentionally cause the most disruption to the public in a time of reduced funding.... Specifically, the Committee received information that proposed budget adjustments submitted by an NPS official in the field to deal with sequestration impacts were rejected by NPS superiors in favor of cuts that would be more visible and disruptive.”

However, the federal government’s disruptive and bizarre behavior goes beyond simply trying to stop veterans from visiting their own memorial. In Florida, according to [news reports](#), the National Park Service actually tried to close down large swaths of ocean. Boat captains were informed that rangers would be policing the area in a ham-handed attempt to close down 1,100 square miles in the Florida Bay and Biscayne National Park until the shutdown is over. Analysts say it will probably cost more to shut the area than is normally spent, and that the whole scheme is tantamount to “governing by tantrum.”

In Wisconsin, meanwhile, the federal government reportedly tried to order state officials to shut down parks, too. State authorities refused, noting that most of the funds for the parks came from state taxpayers anyway. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, citing a decades-old agreement with D.C., also reportedly removed barricades from a popular boat launching spot on federal lands, drawing [applause](#) from commentators seeking to rein in the out-of-control U.S. government on a broad range of issues.

Even [homes](#) and private businesses located on federal lands that do not cost the government any money have been declared off limits during the shutdown, according to news reports — again costing taxpayers more money than simply leaving them alone. “You do have to wonder about the wisdom of an organization that would use staff they don’t have the money to pay to evict visitors from a park site that operates without costing them any money,” Claude Moore Colonial Farm Managing Director Anna Eberly was quoted as saying about the scheme.



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Of course, the National Parks Service has engaged in similar shenanigans before, so the childish behavior is not unique to the current administration's leadership. However, the closing of the memorials — even going so far as to refuse private donations to keep them open — is unprecedented, according to news reports. Also, according to Bush-era Interior Secretary Gale Norton, many of the closures were probably politically motivated — and the orders likely came from the top, in cooperation with the White House.

"The National Parks Service has a long history of dramatizing budget issues by inconveniencing the public," Norton [told](#) National Review Online. "They often choose the most dramatic type of action in order to get their message across. It's something I had to guard against when I was secretary — not letting them play budget games.... Given the fact that they have closed so much, and acted so broadly, I imagine that decision was made at the highest levels of park service leadership, in cooperation with department leadership and the White House."

It appears that in its fiendish drive to ensure that ObamaCare is foisted on the American people despite the overwhelming public opposition, the administration has gone completely off the rails. Even before the shutdown began, polls [showed a majority of likely voters supported shutting down the federal government](#) until the healthcare scheme could be defunded and the budget slashed. Indeed, even now, commentators are calling the shutdown a "[welcome development](#)" for exposing some of the myriad problems with a national government that has grown way too huge and far too powerful in defiance of the Constitution. Obama cannot afford to let that sentiment spread.

In what looks to be a sad and desperate effort to ensure that Americans do not realize that aside from being unconstitutional, most of what the federal government does is beyond useless, Obama and federal authorities seem determined to try to make the public suffer as much as possible. What the administration was not counting on, however, is that people would start discovering that much of the effort was deliberate, costly, and unnecessary — and that the president and like-minded senators were responsible for it in the first place by refusing to consider funding bills from the House of Representatives without ObamaCare funds.

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Photo at top shows people — many WW II vets — visiting the World War II Memorial in defiance of the administration's attempts to close the open-air memorial: AP Images

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