



## Michigan COMMENTARY

### Reinventing Michigan Government

by State Representative H. Lynn Jondahl

[The following is adapted from a speech given on December 7, 1992, at the Reinventing Michigan Government Conference of the Michigan State University Institute for Public Policy and Social Research.]

In *Reinventing Government*, authors David Osborne and Ted Gaebler<sup>1</sup> quote a Florida administrator who says that budget shortages provide “some of the best opportunities for finding new ways of doing things.” If that is true, Michigan has been especially blessed in recent years, and our cup of blessing is projected to run over in the weeks and months ahead.

It is unfortunate that commentators are quick to identify “the government problem” as gridlock. When insurance companies propose policies which I feel erode the basic principles of an effective no-fault auto insurance system—a system I support—and I am able, with others, to block their efforts in the legislature and on the ballot, some call that gridlock. I, however, call it temporary success in protecting the most positively evaluated no-fault system in the country. What we have in Michigan government today is not gridlock; it is a basic disagreement about what government should be and do. It is important for us to acknowledge that the context in which we are examining how government works is characterized by a definite clash of ideologies in Michigan on the government problem. The fact that this is not often stated or well reported and understood makes it no less true.

#### WHAT REINVENTING GOVERNMENT MEANS

I understand myself to be an advocate for government, a believer that government has worked, continues to work, and can be made to work even better in the future. I would affirm that our responsibility is to make government work better. Our responsibility is not to diminish *what* government does, but to improve *how* government does it. In fact, the overwhelming evidence—from letters, phone calls, public meetings, responses at their doors—is that the people of Michigan want more, not less, government.

What is the work of government? To improve the quality of life in this state for every citizen by *action*, not merely *reaction* to circumstances and to bring about this improvement by working with the private sector to move our economy forward. Only in partnership can we be successful. *Reinventing* government really means *reenergizing or reinvigorating* government. Examples in our state and local government indicate that reinvention of government is occurring to some extent, although the process is sporadic.

Osborne and Gaebler, for example, give Michigan high marks for Governor Blanchard’s attempt to coordinate all state job training under the Michigan Opportunity Card System. Seventy different job training programs with an \$800 million budget were scattered across several state agencies. Governor Blanchard tried to create a customer-driven system which would provide one-stop-shopping in job training and career planning, proposing a program entitled “Opportunity Stores” to provide job placement and training services for all of Michigan’s citizens and the much-heralded opportunity card to be used like an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) card. With it, a user could receive up-to-date information on job training programs and career opportunities at the touch of a button.

1 David Osborne and Ted Gaebler. *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit Is Transforming the Public Sector* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1992).

Unfortunately, with the election of a new governor, the Opportunity Card program was scrapped immediately. Now opportunity card kiosks sit idle at the Department of Labor, and we're back to square one, with some 70 available job training programs that hardly anyone knows about. It is interesting to note, however, that the ATM opportunity card system did not go unnoticed. Several months ago, President Bush, in announcing his Job Training 2000 program, promised an ATM-type card to be distributed nationwide. Its purpose: to provide up-to-date information on job training and career options.

This example is intended to illustrate the kind of thing that happens when political and ideological agendas drive our thinking about government programs. Such agendas do drive our thinking about government programs and should do so—at least to some degree. These considerations highlight the frustration a practicing politician feels when reading a book largely focused on nonideological management wisdom. Reinventing or reinvigorating government is going to mean pursuing those political agendas in a manner which advances the common good. Can we see the opportunity card, for instance, as good public policy instead of an item on the Blanchard or Bush agenda?

The American government, as we are all too prone to forget, was itself a reinvention, a breathtakingly innovative experiment that took the social contract off the pages of philosophical texts and gave it life. Today it is easy but dangerous to paint government as our enemy. Many run for elected office on such a platform. It is easy because "the government" always is someone else. It is dangerous because it makes us disown something that is ours, something that is strongest and most useful when it is most widely owned and embraced by all of us.

Our government was instituted as part of the basic social contract among all of us. We all combine our resources—private enterprise, taxes, volunteer efforts, and work skills—so that with government we can provide services to those who need them. It is part of our social contract with each other—one that has evolved over the last half-century under the bipartisan leadership of Democratic and Republican governors alike. The current administration in Lansing has launched an all-out assault on this social contract. Taking advantage of both a recession and a serious structural deficit in Michigan, Governor Engler has sought to cut an ideological swath through government as we know it at all levels, and some want to call this a reinvention of government.

Despite his talk about downsizing government and reducing spending, Governor Engler has been the only governor to close the state's books with a budget deficit since the adoption of our current State Constitution in 1963. He has accomplished this feat for the third consecutive year. The fiscal year (FY) 1989–90 budget deficit was \$310.3 million; in 1990–91, it amounted to \$169.4 million. Senate Fiscal Agency figures from late December 1992 show that the actual 1991–92 year-end deficit totaled \$47 million.

More than anything else, this administration is reminiscent of Ronald Reagan's. It speaks of fiscal responsibility yet produces unprecedented budget deficits. It advocates trickle-down economics and tax cuts targeted on the wealthiest citizens, while presiding over an economic devastation that has resulted in increased poverty, joblessness, homelessness, and despair. Clearly, Michigan is a reminder of the truth of the saying that those who do not remember history are condemned to repeat it. Is this an efficient and cost effective program?

In the context of this raging debate, I suggest that to reinvent government or reenergize government does not necessarily mean a complete overhaul of the current governmental structure. More appropriately, it means creating an environment where employees are given the room to be creative, responsive, flexible, and efficient. It means encouraging what Osborne and Gaebler call "entrepreneurial government." It does *not* mean dismantling government.

## LONG-TERM FOCUS ON REINVENTION

Our economy—especially here in Michigan—has changed substantially from what became the norm in the post-World War II world. Instead of a series of peaks and valleys brought on by the business cycle, we

have been witnessing a steady decline in our economy over the last two decades. Indeed, we are in the midst of what has been described by Warren Gregory of the House Fiscal Agency as a “silent depression.” This is an economic phenomenon unlike any we have ever faced before. It is not a depression in the traditional sense, in which there is a severe, rapid, and highly visible decline in economic production, employment, and living standards. Instead, a silent depression progresses gradually, with living standards and employment conditions deteriorating almost imperceptibly over time. Because it is less visible to the media and the public, the sense of alarm is missing that is frequently necessary for policymakers and lawmakers to act.

We in government most frequently focus on the short term—the end of the recession, the current unemployment rate, the estimated revenue for this year, next fiscal year’s proposed budget—and it is understandable that we have adopted this short time frame. After all, budgets must be balanced on an annual basis, and elections occur every two years. In addition, with term limits our time horizons may be even shorter than they have been in the past.

Focusing on the near term and ignoring the long term, however, obscures the underlying trends that have a more permanent effect on our economic well-being. For example, a close look at unemployment rates over the past 20 years shows a long-term pattern of rising unemployment in Michigan. Over this period, unemployment rates increased to higher and higher levels with each recession, and during recovery periods unemployment has remained at disturbingly high levels.

This trend, however, has gone virtually unnoticed as decision makers have continued to react to the business cycle. As a result, our solutions have been short-term and ignored the longer term problems which we face. These problems can be seen in virtually every measure of Michigan’s economy:

- Michigan’s gross state product, once among the highest, dropped below the national average and the average for the 11 major industrial states during the 1980s.
- Real per capita personal income in Michigan has declined from a level 20 percent above the national average during the 1950s to 3 percent below the national average today. Real per capita salary and wage income actually declined by 2.4 percent between 1978 and 1990, while real interest and dividend and rental income increased by 56.5 percent during the same period.
- Since 1967 in Michigan the unemployment rate has exceeded the national average every year.
- Poverty rates have risen more rapidly in Michigan than in any other industrial state and faster than the national average between 1979 and 1989, rising from 10.4 percent to 13.1 percent.
- Only 17 states’ poverty rates for all children are higher than Michigan’s. For African-American children, only eight states rank worse. Currently, 18.2 percent of all Michigan children and 46.2 percent of African-American Michigan children live in poverty.
- Revenue growth also reflects Michigan’s poor economic health. Withholding revenues increased by less than one percent between 1978 and 1992, after adjusting for inflation, real sales tax and single business tax revenues actually declined during that same period.

We will not pull ourselves out of this silent depression simply by dealing with the short-term business cycle. Furthermore, we have proven that we cannot cure our economy with tax cuts and trickle-down economics. Instead, we must begin to address the long-term structural problems which began to emerge in the early 1970s.

## **Budget**

One area where we need to reinvent government is our state budget. For years, Michigan’s budget has been nothing more than a pay-the-bill type of budget, a consumption budget with no real investment taking place. At the same time, we have built up a massive structural deficit that we must address year in and year

out. A structural deficit is not caused by an economic downturn or a recession; it exists where base program costs exceed base revenues. In other words, a structural deficit results when bills exceed income—this is the position in which we find ourselves in Michigan today.

I know it may surprise you to learn that there are those who suggest that our budget for the current year is not balanced. To the extent that it is balanced, the balance was achieved through one-time accounting changes and the creative use of federal funds on a temporary basis. Without these measures, the FY 1992–93 budget would face a deficit of nearly \$600 million. In fact, we have used similar measures in each of the last three fiscal years. Now, however, the gimmicks have been exhausted and the cookie jars emptied, but the structural deficit still remains. This structural deficit has many causes: skyrocketing health care cost increases, substantial federal disinvestment in state and local government, huge increases in prison expenditures, the rapid and unchecked growth of tax expenditures, and the Michigan economy's shift from higher paying manufacturing jobs to lower paying service jobs.

### The New Competition and Infrastructure Investment Needs

It is important to understand that America's was never a globally competitive economy. From our earliest period until the early 1970s, we always relied on our own internal markets to create wealth. With the emergence of a global economy, we are confronting a new economic phenomenon that requires new economic insights. It is not simply a matter of getting back to basics or getting back on track. The old standards simply no longer apply, and we must think and act anew.

Two basic strategies characterize this new, global competition: the low skill/low wage model and the high skill/high wage model. With the first strategy, nations or states attempt to attract jobs requiring few skills and thus offer low wages. The competition for these jobs is high as nations continue to underbid one another. It is a "get poor" strategy because it undermines the goal of raising living standards. Moreover, industries requiring low-skill workers have much greater mobility than industries requiring more sophisticated job skills.

The second strategy invests heavily in worker skills, modern infrastructure, and research and development. The objective is to attract industries requiring a much greater degree of sophistication and requiring greater job skills. With this approach, wages are higher and the jobs are less mobile because they are dependent on skills not readily available elsewhere. It is a "get smart" strategy characterized by such nations as Germany and Japan.

Clearly, we want to implement a get smart strategy. To do that we must recognize that we have to begin today to invest in our human infrastructure and our physical infrastructure, building the investments that boost the productivity of our economy, increase real incomes of our workers, and provide lower employee costs and higher profit margins for business. For Michigan, they can mean greater attractiveness for private investment and economic health.

There are three fundamental sources of improved productivity: (1) a growing labor force, (2) the quality of labor, and (3) the quality of physical capital—both public and private. Michigan's labor force is not going to expand sufficiently to generate greater productivity. Whether the Michigan work force becomes more or less productive, therefore, depends largely on how effectively workers upgrade their skills and how much investment—public or private—occurs. Although the state can do little about the growth of the labor force, it can do a great deal about the quality of both its human and physical capital.

Michigan is seriously underinvesting in its human and physical infrastructure, as the following examples illustrate.

- Capital expenditure per 1,000 vehicle miles of travel is the lowest among the industrial states at \$8.53. This is 43 percent below the national average and represents a *decline* of nearly 10 percent since 1980.

- Underinvestment in road maintenance is reflected in comparative road conditions. In 1990, only 39 percent of Michigan road miles were rated “good,” compared with 42 percent for other industrial states and 43 percent for the country as a whole.
- Using a broader measure of infrastructure investment—the per capita real change in state expenditures for highways, airports, and utilities from 1978 to 1989—Michigan again compares poorly. The Michigan change is a *negative \$1.93 per capita*, compared to a \$24.50 increase for industrial states and a \$15.49 increase for all states.
- State investment in job training programs fell both nominally and in real terms between 1988 and 1992. The inflation adjusted decline was 15.5 percent.
- Michigan’s training programs have no single focus. In 1991, we had 79 distinct job training or adult education programs, ranging from Job Training Partnership Act programs to welfare training programs. Each was created separately, and most were invisible to the average citizen, hard to access, and confusing.

The key to Michigan’s economic future depends on whether we invest in that future. To that end, House Democrats have sought to put together a major long-term economic investment plan. The plan would focus on both rebuilding our physical infrastructure and improving our human infrastructure. By immediately investing \$2 billion in our physical infrastructure, we can repair, improve, and develop our roads, bridges, ports, and airports. We also can repair and maintain buildings at our colleges and universities, develop new communications networks, and assist our local governments with drains, sewers, and waste disposal. Up to 50,000 direct and indirect jobs could be created for every billion dollars invested in Michigan’s physical infrastructure, which could reduce our unemployment rate by 25 percent.

A number of immediate investments also would lead us to begin recognizing the crucial role that skills training—and retraining—will play in our economic future: preparing today’s students for the jobs which businesses need today, retraining our current work force where necessary, refocusing adult education and training programs, and establishing a job academy to coordinate and target the many programs which already exist today.

We do not have to continue down the road to decline. We have another choice, one we have recently opted to take at the federal level and one to which Michigan should commit itself. We can remain a high wage state, with good jobs for our workers only if we focus on the long term and if we *invest* strategically. Implementing such a massive building and rebuilding project will require the state’s bureaucracies to learn to operate in new, reinvented ways.

When we first sat down to discuss our infrastructure rebuilding proposal with administrators in the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), for instance, we were told it couldn’t be done—that it would be impossible to implement such a massive project. Why? Because the job is too big for MDOT to do. We then asked private firms whether they are able to implement the planning and building. They reviewed our proposal, said yes, and gave us a time line. MDOT officials then said, “But we can’t speed up the projects and do them now, because then we won’t have them to do later.” This operation begs for reinvention.

### **Privatization**

It should not be this difficult in an administration enthusiastic about the word *privatization*, to accomplish a bit of entrepreneurial action. State government must seek cooperation from the private sector in public-private partnerships to implement the MDOT project and other such major investments. The legislature and state government should provide the policies and evaluate the outcomes while the private sector coordinates and implements all phases of the project and does the actual work.

This new, reinvented role for state government will demand creativity and flexibility from state workers and new ways of thinking. Part of this role should be to set new performance standards for contractors, perhaps requiring a warranty on service or a guarantee of a minimum usable infrastructure life span. Our human investment program will bear important fruit: We will see more people working, some with jobs kept through retraining. We will see a better life for our citizens through jobs in the high-tech industries attracted to Michigan by our well-trained workers, our state-of-the-art telecommunications network, and our top-notch infrastructure. Most important of all, we will see a better future for our children and grandchildren.

Much discussion of reinventing government, both in Michigan and elsewhere, focuses on how to privatize governmental functions. Last July 30 Governor Engler issued an executive order creating the Michigan Public-Private Partnership Commission. The commission was charged with reviewing a draft report on privatization in Michigan and making recommendations to the governor. The commission's final report encourages the examination of *all* tasks and functions of government, and *all* public assets with an eye to privatization or sale.

This administration's vision of government through privatization is comparable to that of the corporate raiders whose goal is short-term profit from the sale of all assets. This is the result of focusing on a *goal* of privatization, rather than a goal of governance—implementation of good public policy. The commission's report does not probe or develop a sound justification for the basic premises, used in the draft report, on which the privatization arguments are shakily built. If we studied auditor general's reports rather than press releases we would see specific questions regarding efficiency in government.

We all agree that efficiency is a desirable goal. I would even concede that efficiency, narrowly defined as cost containment (as in the administration's privatization report), is a highly desirable goal for Michigan government. Direct citations from state agency audit reports make clear, however, that privatization—even in the fairly limited form of contracting for state services—is no guarantee of economic efficiency. A review of state audit reports reveals case after case of cost overruns, inadequate control systems, and contract continuations even in cases where it has been clearly documented that contracting is costing more rather than less.

During his campaign for governor, John Engler promised to eliminate many of the state's service contracts, saving hundreds of millions of dollars. In his first State of the State message, Governor Engler called contracts "incubators for abuse" and accused former Governor Blanchard of awarding contracts to political cronies. Citing management irregularities, he promised that "all contracts that cannot be justified will be canceled." A special task force on contracting was formed. In November 1991 this task force issued a lengthy list of "major problems" and recommendations to improve the system. Three-and-a-half pages of major problems identified by the task force on contracting have yet to be resolved. Recommendations to improve monitoring and accountability, along with other major sections of recommendations issued by the task force, have yet to be implemented.

In spite of all this, however, the governor seeks to expand dramatically the number and value of state contracts to be made available to private entrepreneurs through the Public-Private Partnership Commission. He also wants to take even greater strides in the direction of dismantling state services. All of these are profound changes in public policy. Do they lead to reinvigorated government? This question needs public attention.

Our concern is not solely with the questionable efficiency of privatization. The administration's bias in favor of privatization is a prime example of the problems that arise from a failure to distinguish between the questions, What to do? and How to do it? The administration seems to view privatization as a panacea for the evils of government. Those who do not view government as evil suspect that privatization may mask a preconceived plan to reduce both the scope and the quality of government services, without benefit of public input and debate.

## Schools of Choice

Much has been said and written about schools of choice as a reinvention of education. Surely, if we are to develop education improvements we must understand what schools of choice programs offer. Schools of choice, however, must be understood as a tool, not a panacea, not *the* solution to all education problems. East Harlem's School District 4 is a frequently cited example of a successful schools of choice program, and it has had important successes. Minnesota has reported successes in schools of choice programs as well.

It is important, however, to understand that one cannot deal with schools of choice without also dealing with the adequacy and equity of school finance. For a few years in the early 1980s School District 4 received more federal aid per pupil than any other district in the country. Per pupil spending varies little among school districts in New York City or in the State of Minnesota. Michigan, in contrast, has a dramatic—and growing—gap in per pupil spending among its 562 school districts, ranging from \$2,500 to over \$9,300. Indeed, the variation among per pupil spending in Michigan is among the worst in the country.

Meaningful choice cannot exist in this kind of environment. This is, of course, another reason why we need to focus attention on efforts to change our way of funding schools. I believe the recently released bi-partisan proposal to shift education funding from the property tax and guarantee a base per pupil spending amount that raises the funding of the lowest-spending districts, serves us well. If it can become the basis for resolving school funding issues we will be able to give more serious attention to all manner of devices to improve our education offerings.

In situations where students can choose among programs that are properly funded and that truly differ, schools of choice can make sense. However, there is nothing all that inventive about simply permitting pupils to choose “nice” neighborhoods instead of unique educational programs. Schools of choice do not exist when decisions are merely between “nice” places and “not-so-nice” places.

Michigan's schools of choice programs now underway under the school aid act do not offer programmatic choice. One program requires school districts to determine how they will offer school building choices within the district. Most schools of choice resulting from this exercise will probably say nothing about educationally unique programs and will instead feature choices between nice and not-so-nice neighborhoods. Michigan's schools of choice programs seem destined to fail. Advocates insist that pupils, especially those from poor families, have access to information about the programs and transportation to the programs they choose; however, everyone believes the state will refuse to pay for this. So far, Michigan schools of choice programs appear to be little more than political rhetoric.

Nonetheless, schools of choice should continue as part of the public debate on education if it leads to unique programs that meet the needs of individual citizens. For example, new telecommunications technology can create a schools of choice climate. Technology could permit choice from among excellent educational programs developed around the world. Rather than schools of choice, however, I submit we need individualized programs of choice—education programs more directly related to the needs of each student.

Teachers would have to learn new ways of teaching that include the ability to help each student link up with programs uniquely suited to him/her. That would be true choice. It would avoid the difficult task of entire school buildings or parts of school buildings agreeing on a particular program that some students might choose. It would require teachers to become comfortable in helping each student progress down a unique educational path. If the schools of choice debate can lead to this result, let the debate rage.

## REINVENTING *HOW* GOVERNMENT WORKS

It is undeniable that we need to reinvigorate government in Michigan. We need to reinvent not what government does or what our social contract is with one another; we need to reinvent how government does its very crucial job. The key for citizens is improved public sector decision making that can address the long-term needs of our state and its economy.

A significant impediment to such improvement relates to political incentives. Considerable risks exist for public leaders who focus on the long term. First, there are no well-defined constituencies to articulate the benefits of investing for the long term. Second, a long-term strategy has few short-term, tangible benefits that public officials can offer to voters. Long-term successes are less noticeable and more intangible than cutting ribbons on new plants about to employ workers. In addition, with the advent of term limits public officials will be even less likely to concern themselves with a long-term perspective. Simply stated, there are few electoral awards associated with a true long-term strategy.

If we are to reinvent government, we must take the risks and focus on the long term. We cannot succeed by allowing ourselves to be buffeted from one crisis to the next, always reacting and having little time to consider where we are going or why. I believe that the following *processes* can and should be implemented in Michigan now. They will prove to be valuable tools which can benefit any policy agenda.

1. Adopt the strategy recommended by Osborne and Gaebler for developing a long-range fiscal planning horizon. In Michigan today we always are preoccupied with three budget years—the year just completed, the current year (the year in which we are spending money or making budget cuts, as the case may be), and the next fiscal year.

We need to look beyond this three-year time frame, however. At a minimum, budget projections should be made over a five-year period, so that we can put today's budget situation into a proper context. For example, General Motors announced just last week that it would be closing three major facilities in Michigan (in Flint, Kalamazoo, and Livonia) after the 1995 model year. Nearly 10,000 direct jobs will be lost, and thousands of secondary job losses will follow. None of this will directly affect the 1993–94 fiscal year for which we are now planning, but how can we realistically budget for that year without considering the effect of General Motors' decisions?

2. For the first time, we need to recognize explicitly the public sector investment function. To that end, I propose that we create a formal investment budget for Michigan to go along with our traditional consumption budget. Michigan's budget would then be proposed, analyzed, and reviewed on the basis of two components: consumption spending and investment spending. Historically, we have combined consumption and investment in a single budget. The state budget today is more consumption based than ever, but, ironically, our failure to invest has greatly reduced our capacity to pay for that consumption.
3. Finally, I would encourage the governor and the legislature to establish the nation's first Economic Stabilization Fund (ESF). Each year, the state would be required to set aside a portion of state revenues into the fund to be used for infrastructure investment during economic downturns. As with our existing Budget Stabilization Fund, the ESF monies would be placed into the fund according to a predetermined formula.

The ESF approach places the cart and the horse in their proper positions. An ESF would actually serve as a budget stabilizer by boosting employment and income during economic slack periods. This would be contrary to state government behavior during past recessions, when actions tended to worsen the downturn by cutting capital budgets when the economy was bad. An ESF, therefore, also would serve as an economic stabilization tool.

This tool would differ in one fundamental way from previous public sector efforts at economic stabilization: The spending would be strictly dedicated to infrastructure investments designed to bolster Michigan's prospects over the long term. Rather than having to reduce capital expenditures and neglect our infrastructure during economic downturns, we would be able to do just the opposite. In that way, by insuring a continued investment in our infrastructure, the ESF would serve both short-term economic and budget stabilization needs—by increasing employment and stimulating the economy and serving the state's long-term growth needs.



These processes have to do with fiscal and budget matters. Whether we are addressing education, economic development, health care, environmental protection, transportation, communications, or corrections, our options are defined in the context of fiscal circumstances. Another general set of concerns exists that we must advance as a priority as we struggle to reinvent our government: The process of decision making must assure that the public business is carried on in such a way as to be most *accessible* to people of all races, all ages, both genders, and every economic level; *open* to creative ideas and solutions from any sources; *responsive* to the desires of the majority as well as the rights and needs of the minority; and *viable*, so as to make the system work for all rather than for the elite.

Clearly, we cannot be afraid of new ideas—albeit politically risky ideas. How can we hope to advance new ideas, risky ideas, and inventive ideas in a system that discourages risk and innovation? Osborne and Gaebler see positive change as inevitable. I want them to be right about that but don't share their confidence in that outcome. Vested interests are as resistant to new ways of doing business as they are protective of old ways of doing business.

## CONCLUSION

If we are going to nurture realistic hope of reinventing government, we are going to have to make the issues of how government works key issues in our political battles. *How* we operate a health care system or a corrections system or an educational system or a budget system has to become as critical an issue as one's position on a property tax freeze, sanctions on drunk drivers, abortion, or gun control.

American government was from the outset—and continues to be—an inventive process. The need today is to reinvigorate government and to reinvest in our social contract. I believe this is the meaning of President Clinton's New Covenant, and this is also the meaning of the House Democrats' investment strategy. Those who believe that minimal government is the best government have some just criticisms. They challenge us to be more efficient, more responsive, and more creative. I agree that we should be all of those. The answer to these challenges is to take what we have and *make it better*. The answer is to reinvigorate government through public-private partnership, wise management, a revitalized infrastructure, and any other new way of doing things that will be fruitful. We must welcome new and inventive ideas.

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