



## From Jim's Desk

### The importance and effect of government on our lives

**W**hether we like it or not, government is a part of our lives. And guess what? Government has always been a part of Americans' lives. Think the American Revolution happened by magic? Of course, it did not. The oldest legislative body in the new world, the Virginia House of Delegates (then called the Virginia House of Burgesses), voted to oppose the English King, as did countless other colony governments. And a rag-tag government formed a rag-tag army that defeated the British at Yorktown.

Sure, it's easy to gripe about government "intrusion," I am guilty of that gripe as well. But if we did not have organized government, we would be in a state of chaos. As we brush our teeth every day, the chemicals allowed, or not allowed, in our toothpaste are controlled by government regulations or laws. The water we drink is regulated by government action. The clothes we wear have certain requirements as to content of fabric and dye used in it.

Many "anti-government" individuals believe that government should only provide for the national defense and maybe provide infrastructure like bridges and highways. Some even believe that government has no place in education. And certainly, in our system of democracy, persons are allowed those beliefs and the ability to espouse those issues.

But realistically, we are far beyond only providing for the national defense and infrastructure. It would be very difficult to take regulations and laws out of our educational systems as we know them today. Can you imagine what would happen to unregulated medical standards, medicine content and hospital services without government? To be sure, there are legitimate arguments about government intrusion in our lives. At what point is there too much government?

We have just returned from a situation in our country where a major section of government was "shut down." Ironically, the shutdown was basically an argument over the role

of government in border control. Go figure. We shut down a portion of government over what government can or can't do. (Only in America!) There are plenty of good reasons to debate what government should or should not do in our everyday living. Are helmet laws good or bad for motorcycle riders? Should we have speed limits on interstate highways? Should government privatize any service that it has or will provide for in the future? The list is endless.

But think long and hard next time you are angered by a government action, a government employee or the purpose of government itself. Government is not the enemy. Whether we like it or not, government *is* us. Government *is* people. And all people matter. So does our government.

James A. Gondles Jr., CAE  
ACA Executive Director