



# Escaping Jurassic Government: How to Recover America's Lost Commitment to Competence

*Donald F. Kettl*

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Why big government is not the problem.

The Progressive government movement, founded on support from Republicans and Democrats alike, reined in corporate trusts and improved the lives of sweatshop workers. It created modern government, from the Federal Reserve to the nation's budgetary and civil service policies, and most of the programs on which we depend.

Ask Americans today and they will tell you that our government has hit a wall of low performance and high distrust, with huge implications for governance in the country. Instead of a focus on government effectiveness, the movement that spawned the idea of government for the people has become known for creating a big government disconnected from citizens. Donald F. Kettl finds that both political parties have contributed to the decline of the Progressive ideal of a commitment to competence. They have both fed gridlock and created a government that does not work the way citizens expect and deserve.

Kettl argues for a rebirth of the original Progressive spirit, not in pursuit of bigger government but with a bipartisan dedication to better government, one that works on behalf of all citizens and that delivers services effectively. He outlines the problems in today's government, including political pressures, proxy tools, and managerial failures. *Escaping Jurassic Government* details the strategies, evidence, and people that can strengthen governmental effectiveness and shut down gridlock.

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