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## Who is Al Gore kidding when he says he supports 'smaller government'?

Libertarians—the small-government experts— scoff at Gore's bizarre claim

WASHINGTON, DC — Al Gore uttered, well, an "Al Goreism" when he claimed he supports smaller government, says the party that exemplifies smaller government.

**"Al Gore saying he supports smaller government is like Bill Clinton saying he supports celibacy. It's a nice theory, but it's not going to happen,"** said Steve Dasbach, Libertarian Party national director.

"No matter how you measure it — total cost, number of employees, or number of regulations — Al Gore has helped make the federal government bigger. And he will make it even bigger if he is elected president."

In a campaign speech in Little Rock, Arkansas on Tuesday, Gore said allegations that he favors "big government" are false.

"I'm opposed to big government," said Gore. "I'm for a smaller, smarter government." Gore claimed that as vice president, he helped reduce the federal workforce to only 1.8 million. He also promised, if elected president, that the "number of people doing work for the federal government" would not grow.

But Gore's claims don't pass the "Thomas Jefferson Test," said Dasbach.

"A genuinely smaller government — as envisioned by the Founding Fathers such as Thomas Jefferson — would cost less, employ fewer people, and regulate our lives less," he said. "By almost every measurable standard, Al Gore supports a government that is bigger, and more expensive, and more intrusive." For example:

■ **Gore has helped increase the number of government workers.** Gore's claim that he reduced the federal workforce is only true if you count just salaried employees — and ignore contract workers, people employed by federal grants, and state and local government employees fulfilling federal mandates. According to the Brookings Institution, the federal government now employs (directly or indirectly) a record 16.9 million workers.

■ **Gore wants to increase the cost of the federal government.** According to Citizens Against Government Waste, Gore has proposed \$2.7 trillion in new federal spending over the next decade.

■ **Gore has helped increase the number of federal regulations.** Under the Clinton/Gore administration, 14,167 new federal regulations were implemented between 1997 and 2000, according to Doug Bandow of the Cato Institute.

If you look at Al Gore's record and promises, a clear pattern emerges, said Dasbach.

"Al Gore and big government go together like, well, Al Gore and lying," he said. "Gore supports more government workers, more spending, and more regulations. In short, he supports big government. And that's true no matter what your definition of 'big' is."