



Why We Need A Coalition Of The Unwilling

Publish Date:

July 2014

This article from the [July 2014 edition](#) of the [IPA Review](#) is by Researcher with the IPA, James Bolt.

It has been 70 years since Friedrich Hayek released *The Road to Serfdom*, and despite his warnings, that is certainly the road that the West is travelling down. Governments are becoming larger and more people are becoming dependent on the state for their livelihoods.

But there is still hope. This is the central message of *A U-Turn on the Road to Serfdom*, a new monograph by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA). This work features Grover Norquist's 2014 Hayek Lecture, given to the IEA, and contributions from three European economists detailing the prospects for taking Europe off the road as well.

Grover Norquist, the founder and president of Americans for Tax Reform, believes the United States will reverse the expansion of government through the growing 'leave us alone coalition'—a group of constituents that, despite having little in common with each other, are united in their wish



to be left alone by the state. This group consists of small business owners, taxpayers, gun owners, the religious, and those that believe in school choice.

Norquist believes this group has enough influence within America to start changing things now. This group can vote in elections and with their feet. An example Norquist uses is the migration from Illinois to Indiana. In Indiana, taxes are low, regulations are being removed and school choice programs are being introduced. In Illinois, government is expanding, and so many of their citizens are moving to the more free Indiana that the Obama administration is no longer keeping statistics about it, lest their belief in government expansion be shown to be unpopular.

As Norquist argues, this is the ultimate virtue of federalism. Allowing state governments to compete against each other in services and business environment will lead to a freer and more economically stable America.

Norquist is very optimistic about Republican chances at the 2016 and 2020 elections. Not only are those chances boosted by eight years of the Obama administration demonstrating the dangers of the Leviathan state, but the potential Republican candidates are much stronger than in previous years.

Should the Republicans win, it will be a chance to limit the reckless federal government spending. Norquist is a keen advocate of Paul Ryan and the cost-cutting 'Ryan Budget', and believes both will be able to start halting the catastrophic debt levels the US finds itself in.

There is an obstacle to this: what Norquist calls 'the takings coalition'. These are the people that need big government to support their way of life, and as such will fight the leave us alone coalition to keep the state large. However, not every member of the takings coalition is fully signed up to the takings philosophy. They can be convinced to join the leave us alone coalition through reason or by seeing the benefits that competition could bring to the services government currently provides for them.

The contributions from the European economists discuss how the ideas from Norquist's lecture can be adapted for Europe. David Smith explains in great detail how the growth of government over the twentieth century has severely curtailed economic growth across the world. Matthew Sinclair, former chief executive of the Taxpayer's Alliance, details how transitioning tax power to local governments will create more responsible and representative government, and also stimulate more political interest in the citizenship. People can't see how a centralised government is spending their tax dollars as clearly as they could their local government.

Nima Sanandaji discusses how to raise a European leave us alone coalition. Despite that continent having a larger government and not having the same inherent sense of individualism as America, Sanandaji argues that once people are given choice in an area government usually mandates, they are not likely to give it away. When one Swedish municipality introduced a school choice program, it became impossible to convince residents to change back.

So what hope does Australia have to foster a leave us alone coalition? Norquist and his



respondents emphasise that political coalitions are not formed on the floor of the legislature: they come from below. It will fall to the Australian people to reverse the path to serfdom.