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Todo Schwarz: Imagine a day doing without state workers

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by [Todo Schwarz](#) Jun 23, 2009 12:00 AM

Special for the Republic

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While Gov. [Jan Brewer](#) and the Republican legislative leadership play their power games, the state of Arizona quickly approaches a shutdown.

If you were happy to see Jan [Brewer](#) ascend to the Ninth Floor, the governor's office at the Capitol, you are probably feeling pretty good. If you voted for Sen. President Bob Burns or House Speaker Kirk Adams because he signed the Americans for Tax Reform pledge to never raise [taxes](#) by even the slightest amount, you are probably feeling downright giddy. The group's president, Grover Norquist, thinks we need to get government to the size where "it can be drowned in a bathtub."

Well, Arizona, here comes your bathtub moment. A budget for next year must be approved by June 30 or the state's authority to spend runs out.

When you wake up July 1, and you need to get your car registered before you get a ticket, don't bother. The Motor Vehicle Division will be closed.

So cross your fingers and get on the highway. Department of Public Safety officers won't stop you. They won't be on the roads. Just hope that ninny driving 115 miles per hour in a 65-mph zone misses you.

Watch out for that pothole! If only your call to the Arizona Department of Transportation were answered, they might fix it before too many cars needed a fresh wheel alignment. If only ADOT were working.

OK. Skip the commute. Take a day off and go visit your elderly friend in the nursing home down the street. It'll cheer him up. However, if you happen to think your friend isn't getting the level of care he deserves, don't bother to call the Arizona Department of [Health Services](#). The nursing-home inspectors will be at home trying to figure out how they're going to make their mortgage payment.

Like almost everyone else, state employees typically pay their [mortgage](#) on the first day of the month. But since we won't be getting a paycheck on July 3 for the work we did in June, we're saving that last June check for groceries.

Arizona Republican leaders take the stand that government is wasteful and a burden to most Arizonans. But state services touch all of our lives, every day.

And if you can go a day without government service, what about those who can't?

What about the ongoing visits that a child receives after being beaten by his father? Is that child expendable? Do we just forget about him for a few days?

So our leaders seem to think as they decimate Child Protective Services.

What about the elderly and the physically disabled? They rely on the [Arizona Health Care](#) Cost Containment System for their medical care. With no budget authorized to pay doctors, where will they go for care?

Times are tough for all of us. But this is the time to renew the spirit that we are all in this together and we can work our way out of this together. Let's start by insisting our governor and Legislature get back to addressing solutions for all Arizonans and let Grover Norquist get back to cleaning his bathroom.

And if we're locked out of the office on July 1, we'll be at the Legislature. I hope you'll join us.

Todd Schwarz works for Arizona and is a member of the Service Employees International Union. Dorothy Czer, also a state worker and SEIU member, contributed to this column.

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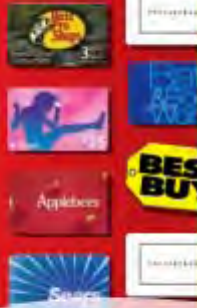
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