

One of the great fallacies of our time is that if government doesn't do something, no one will. Its corollary is that if you are opposed to the government doing something, that you are opposed to anyone performing that function at all. These disastrous fallacies color much of our national debate concerning health care, education, poverty, housing, and disaster relief, and other issues.

This Easter season, I would like to applaud an organization that proves just how much private charity can accomplish without government mandates or intrusion. Convoy of Hope, based in Springfield, Missouri is equal parts grocer, clothier, health care provider, first responder, educator, and logistics expert. It works with communities across America and around the world, bringing together other local charities, businesses, churches, and government agencies to alleviate poverty and help people in the wake of disasters. The tremendous scope of its activities serves as a reminder that government is neither the sole, nor the best, provider of goods and services to people in need.

I recently had the privilege of touring Convoy of Hope's headquarters and distribution center. It was a humbling but encouraging experience. Frankly, I've never seen an organization so focused, efficient, and poised to do so much good for so many people.

Convoy of Hope was founded by Hal and David Donaldson in 1994, who, as young boys suffered the death of their father and subsequent poverty. Both men were struck by the outpouring of support their family received during that time from local churches and the

community. As a result, the two brothers developed a deep sense of responsibility to helping others in need. Convoy of Hope has since helped more than 50 million individuals in more than 100 countries-- giving away nearly \$300 million worth of food and supplies in the process.

They typically spend only about 10% of their budget on overhead while employing a small staff of approximately 85 people. Watchdog group Charity Navigator consistently gives Convoy of Hope high marks for both its financial acumen and transparency.

Convoy of Hope also stretches its resources by developing strategic partnerships with private sector corporations, including Coca Cola, Nestle, Procter & Gamble, Georgia Pacific, Cargill, Del Monte, and FedEx. These corporate donors donate everything from building supplies to bottled water to toiletries. Its massive distribution center and headquarters are centrally located in Missouri, where its fleet of trucks can dispatch quickly to any location in America. It also operates six international distribution centers for logistical efficiency.

The next step for Convoy of Hope is an audacious one: a 50 state tour beginning in May designed to address poverty across the United States. The "Convoy of Hope Tour" will provide an average of \$1 million in goods and services to a community in a single day. Convoy of Hope's fleet of 18 wheel trucks will roll through every state, providing a wide variety of goods and practical services to those in need, including groceries, job counseling, clothing, dental care, breast cancer screenings, haircuts, family portraits, children's activities, as well as prayer and connections with local churches.

Convoy of Hope is doing tremendous work on behalf of mankind. I wish everyone at Convoy of Hope great success with their upcoming tour. It's hard to imagine a government agency operating as efficiently, as nimbly, or as cheerfully as Convoy of Hope. I truly believe it should serve as a model for private, voluntary, nongovernmental solutions to poverty and disaster relief in our communities.