

Tight budgets and fewer cops Time for citizens to 'arm up'

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Plunging government revenues may have the unintended consequence - so far as tax-and-spend (and spend some more) public officials are concerned - of reminding people that we are ultimately responsible for our own safety.

The pie plate is empty and inevitable cutbacks in important public services, including law enforcement, are on the horizon. It is already happening in Oakland, CA where the police chief has announced that officers will no longer respond to a broad list of crimes, if department layoffs go as planned.

What's a citizen to do? Perhaps they will follow the advice of Ashtabula County, OH Judge Alfred Mackey and Hudspeth County, TX Sheriff Arvin West. In the past few months, both have advised their neighbors to arm themselves. Said the judge, according to a report on WKYC back in April, "Be very careful, be vigilant, get in touch with your neighbors, because we're going to have to look after each other."

Oakland Police Chief Anthony Batts is no less a victim of government spending out of control than, say, King County, WA Sheriff Sue Rahr. She is appealing to voters to approve a small sales tax hike to pay for sheriff's department services, and maintain the county prosecutor's office. It will likely be rejected. Last year, Rahr advised county residents during a series of public meetings on public safety that, faced with the possibility of a burglary or home invasion, or some other crime and the nearest deputy being several minutes away, she would "have a gun." According to King County Sgt. John Urquhart, without additional funds, his agency will be forced to trim 48 sworn positions from its patrol staff for unincorporated areas of the county, Washington's most populous. That is a 20 percent reduction. On top of that 16 sworn positions for regional policing will be cut.

Government is supposed to provide certain services, chief among them public safety. Over the years, budget priorities have become whatever self-serving politicians wanted them to be, however. **Special programs for key special interest groups have taken priority over basic services, and have become "entitlement" projects.** Some who have made a career of elected office rather than a temporary detour from private enterprise - as the Founding Fathers had originally envisioned public service - evidently never believed that the well would run dry. They were horribly wrong and the public is about to pay the price.

The Drudge Report posted this headline: "**Criminals Delight: Oakland Cops Won't Respond to Minor Crimes.**" It is a sad, and sorry, signal to be sent by a law enforcement agency, but this situation must be kept in perspective. Perhaps many Americans will now re-discover what made this nation great in the first place: self-reliance.

This is not a call for anarchy but for a return to reality. Too many in public office have tried to create their Utopian dream on the backs of taxpayers, and at the expense of basic public needs. In the process, they have squandered fortunes on projects that were good for a headline, but didn't work and accomplished nothing.

There is a saying in the firearms community: "**When seconds count, police are minutes away.**" This is about to change, in Oakland and elsewhere that **police agencies are financially strapped and facing reductions in staff** and service. Rural agencies may be hit the hardest. When seconds count, police may be hours away, if they come at all. Faced with that potential, **citizens have two choices: submit to victimization or fight back.**

Nobody is advocating "vigilantism," which is what gun prohibitionists say when private citizens arm themselves for personal protection. Nobody is "taking the law in their own hands." Armed citizens who carry guns or keep them in their homes or businesses are acting within existing law, and thanks to the Supreme Court's recent McDonald ruling, they now have the full force of the Second Amendment behind them.

Some communities may be in for a rough ride, and people who heretofore have been indifferent about their personal safety may find themselves grateful we have a right to keep and bear arms. Instead of anarchy, that right may insure order and civility.