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## What I Would Do as President

When I announced, with my tongue planted firmly in my cheek, that I was running for president of the United States (see [Why I'm Running for President](#)), I thought I could write a series of articles playing on the political story of the moment. But since then, I've been so despondent over what I've been hearing out of Washington, D.C., that I have found it impossible to joke about the political situation.

By and large, it seems that we have one party that believes the federal government is the *cause* of every problem, and another that sees it as the *solution* to every problem. The reality, of course, is that neither is true.



Government can not solve every problem, and regulations are often stupid and a burden on businesses. But appropriate regulation is necessary for all companies to compete. Every businessperson knows this. Regulations, when handled correctly, are akin to rules in a sport. You can't play baseball unless someone sets the strike zone. Problems arise when the rules become so restrictive that players can no longer play the game.

I do believe that governments can help stimulate demand, as well as play a critical role in educating workers. And despite the debacle with Solyndra, the solar-panel company that received a federal-loan guarantee that is now under investigation, governments also play an essential role in funding primary research. Many technologies were supported by government research when there was no commercial market for them. Countries that wish to remain on the forefront of technological advancements need some government support for research.

Governments also play a critical role in maintaining essential infrastructure, which is essential to the long-term health of any country's economy. Unfortunately, the profligate U.S. federal government never put funding aside for infrastructure, or got a handle on spending, so now we can't afford essential

infrastructure upgrades.

My biggest concern today is that neither major party is willing to do what must be done to reduce the debt while enabling necessary investments in infrastructure and basic research that could lead to better technologies. Democrats will never cut Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, while Republicans will never agree to cuts in military spending and tax increases.

That leaves the country in a precarious position. Spending will continue to spiral out of control. The infrastructure will continue to erode, impacting business and private investment—after all, no one wants to invest in a country in which planes sit on a runway for six hours awaiting takeoff. And investment in primary research will be cut to the bone, making it difficult for the United States to remain a technology leader. Meanwhile, China and other nations will invest in smarter infrastructure, such as using RFID to monitor roads and bridges, and expedite the flow of products through seaports and airports.

If I were the president, I would consider curtailing spending on programs important to both Democrats and Republicans. But rather than cutting important services provided by social welfare programs, or weakening the U.S. Department of Defense's ability to execute its missions, I would focus instead on employing RFID and other new technologies to save money by making operations more efficient. Every politician talks about cutting "waste, fraud and abuse." That's necessary—but it's also vital to invest in new technologies to become leaner and more efficient.

It's time for the two political parties to agree on common-sense solutions that support businesses—including the RFID industry—both now and in the long term.

*Mark Roberti is the founder and editor of RFID Journal. If you would like to comment on this article, click on the link*

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