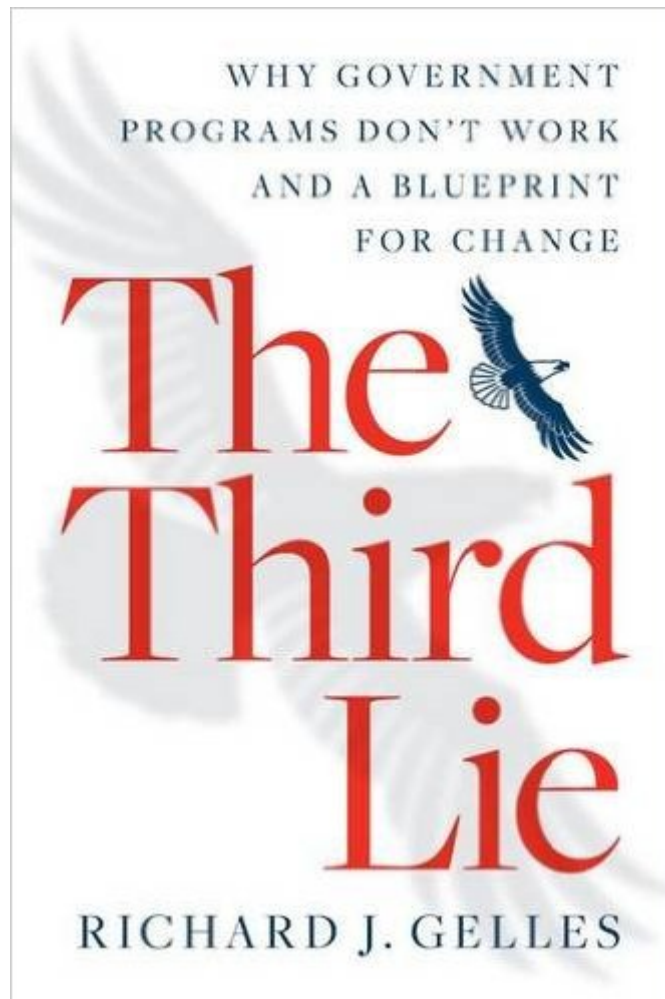


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# The Third Lie: Why Government Programs Don't Work\_and A Blueprint For Change



## Synopsis

“I am from the government and I am here to help you” is one of the three biggest lies, or so the old joke goes. Richard J. Gelles, dean of social policy at University of Pennsylvania, explains why government programs designed to cure social ills don’t work in sector after sector and never could work. He demonstrates how each creates its own bureaucracy to monitor participation in the program, an entrenched administrative apparatus whose needs supersede those for whom the program was designed. Against this, he contrasts universal programs such as the GI Bill, Social Security, and Medicare, the most successful, sustained government programs ever established. Gelles’s provocative, controversial proposal for a universal entitlement to replace a raft of lumbering social programs should be read by all in social services, policy studies, and government.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Third Lie is a smart analysis of government programs that is neither liberal nor conservative. Its gist is that most government programs fail and that the three primary ones that have succeeded are Medicare, Social Security, and the GI Bill, all of which are universal in application (no means testing) and devote almost all their funds to the problems they were intended to remedy (no cumbersome and often corrupt bureaucracy). There a number of very nice, infuriating, and illustrative stories along the way.

Well written. The author does an impressive job getting his points across. He gives a lot of details to

support his positions, but not at the expense of coherence. I was glad to get a comprehensive picture of a subject I knew little about. Proof that any subject may appear boring, but explained well can be fascinating.

Will assign portions or all of the book to my graduate students for policy class. Concise and illustrative. I use the example all the time in class. The emperor is naked.

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