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Congress Uses Temporary Crisis to Grow Government Power

C.S. Lewis said, “[T]yranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive.” And in the book “Crisis and Leviathan,” Robert Higgs shows how government power has risen with every national emergency from the Great Depression to the Cold War leading to new federal programs and increased intrusions in the lives of ordinary Americans. He called it the “ratchet effect.”

That’s what the third coronavirus bill, called the CARES Act, does. Crafted in secrecy, it includes $500 million dollars to be used to create a national “public health surveillance and analytic infrastructure.” There was no public debate. It just appeared. Congress took advantage of our temporary crisis to establish a permanent government system to monitor the health of Americans.

“CARES Act Includes $500 Million to Modernize the Nation’s Public Health Data Infrastructure,” HIMSS, March 27, 2020: https://bit.ly/3aJis9j