

Wherever one turns, whether it is on the broadcast news or the Internet, we are bombarded with Swine Flu stories. Government tells us not to "panic," while it simultaneously engages in activities meant to spread widespread fear.

Indeed, as Robert Higgs has written, the very basis of government rests upon cultivating human fear:

The people who have the effrontery to rule us, who call themselves our government, understand this basic fact of human nature (about fear). They exploit it, and they cultivate it. Whether they compose a warfare state or a welfare state, they depend on it to secure popular submission, compliance with official dictates, and, on some occasions, affirmative cooperation with the state's enterprises and adventures. Without popular fear, no government could endure more than twenty-four hours. David Hume taught that all government rests on public opinion, but that opinion, I maintain, is not the bedrock of government. Public opinion itself rests on something deeper: fear.

[More...](#)