

## We still need the champions for The Courageous State

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[Edward Luce has written this in the FT this morning:](#)

*If Harvard Business School did case studies on political incompetence, it should start with the Republican Party's recent default brinkmanship. In the space of the 16-day government shutdown, the party's Gallup approval rating dropped by 10 points to 28 per cent — its lowest to date. It was among the sharpest slaps in polling history. Little wonder Republican leaders dropped all conditions to reopen government and extend the debt ceiling on Wednesday night.*

Luce goes on to explore the impact of the current ending of the US crisis as it relates to the Republican party. But I think there is something more important in this than that.

First, as he notes, support for Obamacare went up during the stand-off.

Second, what the two noted movements in opinion imply is that a clear majority of people believe that the state has a strong and valued role in their lives.

It is obvious that some wish to challenge that. The Tea Party faction in the States and the right wing think tanks that pander to deep neoliberal thinking both in the US and here (Heritage, Cato, the AEI in the US, the Institute for Economic Affairs and TPA here) might want to, and do argue, that we need a small state but the simple fact is that most people do not agree.

I suspect the polls correctly reflect that fact in the US - and it's not fair to assume that all 28% left supporting the republicans do support a US default, although it is likely that many of those from the Republican party who voted against the Bill that ended this impasse do. So a fairly small minority in a country where distrust of government is deep seated in the psyche want to limit its role.

I make no secret that I believe in the power of government to deliver value. I want politicians who say and believe in the same thing. It baffles me that anyone would disagree. Why wouldn't you want someone in power who believes in the merit of what they're doing whilst respecting the limits of what can be done? My book [The](#)

[Courageous State](#) was on such themes.

I happen to think most people agree. But they still need the champions who will say so.