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VOICE OF ESSENTIAL LIBERTY

BRIEF

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THE FOUNDATION

“[A] wise and frugal government ... shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government.”
--Thomas Jefferson

CULTURE

“Can all of America’s political problems be solved by returning to constitutional, limited government? The answer given by many conservatives and libertarians is a resounding yes. Reading the Founding Fathers, the answer would generate a more complex answer. In the Federalist Papers, the authors dedicate considerable space to history’s failed experiments in self-government. John Adams wrote in 1798, ‘Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.’ What Adams suggests is the people’s character impacts our government’s character. The early generations of Americans were independent-minded folks. Help for those in need came from the church, the family, or the community. Citizens expected only a few limited functions to be performed by the state. In 21st century America, we expect the government to provide Social Security retirement and disability, unemployment insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, student loans, and Pell Grants. Parents expect their children to have a free public education through thirteen years of school. ... We cannot effect a permanent reduction in the size and scope of government, or meaningful government reform, unless we change our culture’s demand for the government to provide our every need. ... This isn’t to say government must or can solve our culture’s problems. However, those on the right who think conservative goals for limited government can be achieved through passing economic legislation are spitting in the wind. We will never have a limited government until we have a culture that allows for one.”
--columnist Adam Graham

THE GIPPER

“Our game plan is still the best one in town. The notion that government controls, central planning, and bureaucracy can provide cost-free prosperity has now come and gone the way of the hula-hoop, the Nehru jackets, and the

all-asparagus diet. Throughout the world the failure of socialism is evident.” --Ronald Reagan

GOVERNMENT

“Just three entitlement programs -- Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security -- account for two-fifths of federal spending, representing 10 percent of gross domestic product. Without reform, they are expected to consume half of the budget and about 20 percent of GDP by 2050. It’s true that the fiscal outlook for Social Security, which has about \$18 trillion in unfunded liabilities, is not nearly as bad as the fiscal outlook for Medicare, which has a long-term shortfall five times as big. ... Social Security is neither a pension fund nor a means-tested assistance program for the needy. It is a pay-as-you-go system of transfer payments that takes money from relatively poor workers and gives it to relatively affluent retirees. ... [D]espite all the talk of a ‘\$2.5 trillion surplus,’ Social Security is indeed ‘in trouble,’ thanks to a shrinking ratio of workers to retirees and repeated raids on its revenue by legislators looking for easy spending money. The year of reckoning is not 2037, when the program’s imaginary ‘trust fund’ is expected to run out -- it is now, since the cost of benefits already has begun to exceed annual revenue. There is nothing in the trust fund but IOUs from the federal government, which can be redeemed only through cuts in other programs, more taxes or more debt. ... Transforming Social Security into a true pension program by letting workers invest part of what they now see disappear in payroll taxes is ... anathema to the ‘social solidarity’ crowd, since it would let people go their own way instead of forcing them to participate in the government’s Ponzi scheme.” --columnist Jacob Sullum

FOR THE RECORD

“The vision of getting something for nothing, or getting something that someone else has to pay for, explains why so many Americans are duped by politicians. A congressional hoax that’s flourished for seven decades is the Social Security hoax that half of the Social Security tax (6.2 percent) is paid by employers, the other half (6.2 percent) paid by employees. The law says that if you are self-employed, you get to pay both halves. The fact of the matter is whether you’re self-employed or not, you pay both halves of the Social Security tax that totals 12.4 percent. Let’s look at it. Suppose you hire me and our agreed-

upon weekly salary is \$500. From that \$500, you're going to deduct \$31 as my share of the Social Security tax and you're going to add \$31 as the so-called employer's share, sending a total of \$62 to the IRS. Here's the question: What is the weekly cost for you to hire me? I hope you answered \$531. The next question is: In order to make hiring me profitable, what must be the minimum dollar value of my contribution to your total output? If you said \$531, go to the head of the class because if the value of my contribution to total output is only our agreed-upon salary of \$500, you're making losses hiring me and you're going to be out of business soon. Therefore, if I am producing \$531 worth of value per week, it is I who's paying the so-called employer as well as the employee share. The reason why Congress created the fiction of the employer share was to deceive us into thinking that we're paying fewer taxes than we in fact are." --economist Walter E. Williams

INSIGHT

"Of all tyrannies, a tyranny exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience." --British writer C.S. Lewis (1898-1963)

LIBERTY

"Many have charged that President Obama's decision to begin withdrawing from Afghanistan 10 months from now is hampering our war effort. But now it's official. In a stunning statement last week, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. James Conway admitted that the July 2011 date is 'probably giving our enemy sustenance.' A remarkably bold charge for an active military officer. It stops just short of suggesting aiding and abetting the enemy. Yet the observation is obvious: It is surely harder to prevail in a war that hinges on the allegiance of the locals when they hear the U.S. president talk of beginning a withdrawal that will ultimately leave them to the mercies of the Taliban. How did Obama come to this decision? 'Our Afghan policy was focused as much as anything on domestic politics,' an Obama adviser at the time told The New York Times' Peter Baker. 'He would not risk losing the moderate to centrist Democrats in the middle of health insurance reform and he viewed that legislation as the make-or-break legislation for his administration.' If this is true, then Obama's military leadership can only be called scandalous. During the past week, 22 Americans were

killed over a four-day period in Afghanistan. This is not a place about which decisions should be made in order to placate congressmen, pass health care and thereby maintain a president's political standing. This is a place about which a president should make decisions to best succeed in the military mission he himself has set out. But Obama sees his wartime duties as a threat to his domestic agenda. These wars are a distraction, unwanted interference with his true vocation -- transforming America." --columnist Charles Krauthammer

POLITICAL FUTURES

"Simply put, Democrats find themselves heading into a midterm election that looks as grisly as any the party has faced in decades. It isn't hard to find Democratic pollsters who privately concede that the numbers they are looking at now are worse than what they saw in 1994. The race-by-race outlook confirms the dire forecasts. Cook Political Report House Editor David Wasserman points out that at this point, 32 Democratic incumbents are running even or behind their Republican challengers in one or more public or private polls. At this point in 2006, when Republicans lost control of Congress, only 11 GOP incumbents were running even or behind. Privately, some Democratic pollsters say that they are routinely seeing districts where Democratic incumbents are running only even with relatively unknown GOP challengers. In other districts where the Republican challengers are reasonably well known, the incumbents are often running 5-10 points behind, a rather extraordinary development at this point. In the Senate, while the odds still favor Democrats holding on to a narrow majority, it is not only mathematically possible for the GOP to capture a majority this year, but it has become plausible. The odds of Democrats capturing even one currently Republican-held seat appear to be getting longer. Meanwhile, Republicans are running ahead or roughly even in 11 Democratic-held seats, one more than necessary for control of the Senate to flip. It's still a tall order but not crazy to say that Republicans will win the Senate. Congress does not come back to town for two more weeks, but it is a pretty safe assumption that the mood among Democrats will be surly and the fingers will begin pointing. A party has not lost a House majority in such a short period of time in over a half-century. This is not going to go down well." --political analyst Charlie Cook

READER COMMENTS

"The Brushfires of Freedom was probably the best put together essay of what's gone on and what's going on in America today that I can remember, anytime or any-

place. No ranting or raving, just plain common sense and history. Ronald Reagan was the only president that I ever voted FOR. By that, I mean I voted for the man, not for the lesser of two evils. I thought W would be more like him. I suppose the alluring song of spending all that money that bites so many Washington types must have become too much for him. Mr. Reagan would spend money when he had to, as in rebuilding our military back from the sorry state it had fallen into. But his answer to budget shortfalls was 'don't spend what ain't yours,' unlike our current crop of politicians on both sides of the aisle. I foresee a new political designation arising. Not Democrat, not Republican, but Conservative, owing allegiance to neither party, but to a principle of conservatism and the Constitutional foundation of this country. Let us all work for and pray for that arising." --Jeff

"Mark, you've recapped the last 25 years of our nation's ups and downs beautifully. And you have identified why we Americans, when faced with a choice of bad and worse in an election cycle sometimes choose worse. You have skillfully identified the enemies of liberty as the Progressive Democrats and the Establishment Republicans, who have worked hand in hand to rob Americans of their freedoms and fortunes. We must preserve our constitutional rights, especially our second amendment rights, or these forces of enslavement will pile more chains upon us. Thanks for the clear and insightful post." --Carl

"It's a free country. I wish it weren't..." --Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick, a Democrat. At last. Honesty from a Democrat." --RiverKing

"The radical environmentalists have a point, [Discovery building hostage taker James J.] Lee died from lead poisoning." --Bill

THE LAST WORD

"On this Labor Day, like most Americans, I come to praise labor, not indulge in it. ... American efficiency, Ameri-

can organization, and therefore American prosperity has been something of an example around the world -- at least since Henry Ford, that half-genius, half-crank and all-American revolutionary, put the world on wheels. And sagely raised his workers' pay to unheard-of levels (\$5 a day!) so they could buy the Model Ts they were making. A few kinks have developed in the American image since -- like the Great Depression and occasional lapses in that once vaunted made-in-USA craftsmanship. Still, no other system seems to have responded so flexibly to the challenge, mystery and psychological thriller known as the 'science' of economics. ... Americans long have sought to avoid the kind of labor that demeans: dull, rote, repetitive, unthinking and literal as the workings of a computer, the kind of brutish labor that will follow binary orders right out the window. But we never seem to tire of the kind of labor that elevates and expands the human consciousness, that approaches a craft or even art. ... To equate labor with inevitable drudgery is a European confusion, and a positively un-American habit of thought. The labor that is celebrated this holiday is the opposite of drudgery; it is intended to set us free, to earn our self-respect, and free us from mere work. Naturally a day of rest has been set aside to honor labor. ... Happy Labor Day." --columnist Paul Greenberg

Veritas vos Liberabit -- Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus, et Fidelis! Mark Alexander, Publisher, for *The Patriot Post's* editors and staff. Read online at <http://patriotpost.us>

(Please pray for our Armed Forces standing in harm's way around the world, and for their families -- especially families of those fallen Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, who granted their lives in defense of American liberty.)