



THE FOUNDATION

“There are more instances of the abridgment of the freedom of the people by gradual and silent encroachments of those in power than by violent and sudden usurpations.”

--James Madison

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

The Chief Regulatory Commissar Talks Deregulation

In a transparent attempt to appear as a supply-side convert, Barack Obama wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* this week about his forthcoming efforts at regulatory review. “[W]e are ... making it our mission to root out regulations that conflict, that are not worth the cost, or that are just plain dumb,” he proclaimed. The regulator in chief, the czar-maker, is now targeting regulations for elimination? The ironies of politics never cease to amaze us.

Obama also now swears he’s a friend to small business, despite having fought tooth and nail against making the Bush tax rates permanent, or even extending them temporarily for the top two brackets, which include most small business owners. “I am directing federal agencies to do more to account for -- and reduce -- the burdens regulations may place on small businesses. Small firms drive growth and create most new jobs in this country. We need to make sure nothing stands in their way.”

We noted just last week that, over the last 25 years, administrations of both parties average between 30 and 40 major regulations (those affecting the economy by \$100 million or more) each year. The Obama administration created 59 such regulations in 2009 and 62 in 2010. The 2,300-page financial regulation bill calls for 11 federal agencies to write 243 new rules. ObamaCare itself includes more than 1,000 instructions for new regulations. [See the chart.](#)

Yet now Obama wants us to believe that he’s really a deregulator at heart, or at least a smart, thrifty, business-friendly regulator. “Despite a lot of heated rhetoric,” he wrote, “our efforts over the past two years to modernize our regulations have led to smarter -- and in some cases tougher -- rules to protect our health, safety and environment. Yet according to current estimates of their economic impact, the benefits of these regulations exceed their costs

by billions of dollars.” Achieving that alleged cost-benefit ratio would be quite a feat since The Heritage Foundation estimates that 2010’s regulations cost \$26.5 billion.

One of the primary offenders is the Environmental Protection Agency, which has written environmental regulations at will for decades. Fittingly, Obama pointed to the EPA as a model of good regulation, as good a sign as any that the president isn’t serious about rolling back the burden of government.

The primary signal that this is all just smoke and mirrors, however, is the very Executive Order he signed calling for review. As James Gattuso at Heritage observed, “Rather than require agencies to identify harmful regulations during the next 120 days, or even to eliminate unwarranted rules, the order merely requires agencies to submit a ‘preliminary plan’ for reviewing regulations sometime in the future, with the goal of making their regulatory program either less burdensome or ‘more effective.’” The order goes on to exclude bureaucracies such as the Federal Communications Commission, the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. In the end, this review will likely result in *more* regulations.

Given how much the federal behemoth has grown since 2008 alone, it’s no wonder that The Heritage Foundation dropped the U.S. one spot to ninth in their 2011 Index of Economic Freedom. We would be grateful if Obama were being sincere here about reversing that trend, but we’re not holding our breath.

An Inconvenient Truth

“I am going to go back to Washington and meet with the president of China. He is a dictator. He can do a lot of things through the form of government they have. Maybe I shouldn’t have said dictator, but they have a different type of government than we have ... so we have to work in the system we have.” --Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV)

Reid’s words are, at their core, words of *admiration* for the Chinese system -- a system in which Hu Jintao can do a lot of things without consent of the governed, while Reid and company actually have to compromise. At least sometimes. No wonder he backpedaled.

Hope 'n' Change: House Passes ObamaCare Repeal

House Republicans made good on their pledge to repeal ObamaCare this week, passing a vote to turn back the whole “job-killing” package 245-189. Too bad they’re not making the case that it’s also “Constitution-killing.” Only three Democrats voted to support the measure. The House also voted to get four committees -- Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce, Education and Workforce, and Judiciary -- to start working on alternatives. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) has vowed not even to let the bill come to a vote in the Senate, though he swears that Democrats have the votes to defeat it and that the public is on their side. If Reid is so certain that repeal would never pass and that it’s a political winner to defeat it, then why not bring it to a vote and prove it?

The Republican strategy doesn’t necessarily require Senate passage of their repeal bill. There are a number of options available to pare down ObamaCare, including removal of funding in the stopgap spending measure that comes up in March. House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI) intends to call state governors to testify about crushing Medicare and Medicaid costs that will continue to rise in order to provide insurance under ObamaCare. Also, there are currently 28 states suing to opt out of ObamaCare, 26 of which have joined Florida’s law suit, while Virginia is suing separately.

The White House attempted to stave off the growing momentum against Obama’s signature legislative accomplishment this week when the Health and Human Services Department released a report claiming that more than 129 million Americans suffer from ailments that would raise red flags with insurers. According to this piece of propaganda, these people could be denied coverage or face steep premiums if ObamaCare is repealed. The report doesn’t bother to explain why half of all Americans now risk being uninsured when that clearly was not the case before Democrats “saved the day.” If anything, ObamaCare itself will likely lead to more people losing insurance because companies that cover their employees will be forced to dump coverage when it becomes too expensive.

This Week’s ‘Braying Jackass’ Award

“[Republicans] say it’s a government takeover of health care -- a big lie just like [Nazi propagandist Joseph] Goebbels. You say it enough. You repeat the lie, you repeat the lie, you repeat the lie and eventually people believe it. Like, blood libel. That’s the same kind of thing. The Germans said enough about the Jews and the people believed it and you had the Holocaust. You tell a lie over and over

again and we’ve heard it on this floor, government takeover of health care.” --Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN), with yet another gratuitous Nazi reference from the Left

Cohen later issued a non-apology, saying his comments “were not directed toward any group or people” and insisting that he “never called Republicans Nazis.”

Award for Most Creative Defense of ObamaCare

“The Fifth Amendment speaks specifically to denying someone their life and liberty without due process. That is what H.R. 2 [the ObamaCare repeal bill] does and I rise in opposition to it. ... [I]t is important that we preserve lives and we recognize that 40 million-plus are uninsured. Can you tell me what’s more unconstitutional than taking away from the people of America their Fifth Amendment rights, their 14th Amendment rights, and the right to equal protection under the law?” --Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX), who’s definitely not a constitutional scholar

On Cross-Examination

“Democrats are deriding [Wednesday] night’s House vote to repeal ObamaCare as ‘symbolic,’ and it was, but that is not the same as meaningless. The stunning political reality is that a new entitlement that was supposed to be a landmark of liberal governance has been repudiated by a majority of one chamber of Congress only 10 months after it passed. This sort of thing never happens. More House Members -- 245 in total -- voted to rescind the new entitlement than the 219 Democrats who voted to create it last March.” --The Wall Street Journal

New & Notable Legislation

Members of the conservative Republican Study Committee in Congress have introduced the “Spending Reduction Act of 2011,” a plan that lays out specific budget cuts amounting to \$2.5 trillion over the next decade. The number sounds big, but it represents less than 10 percent of annual spending. The bill, according to Paul Bedard of US News, “would reduce current spending for non-defense, non-homeland security and non-veterans programs to 2008 levels, eliminate federal control of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, cut the federal workforce by 15 percent through attrition, and cut some \$80 billion by blocking implementation of Obamacare.” It’s a good first step, but it’s also just that -- a first step.

The Hill reports, “House Republican leaders are considering holding a vote on a constitutional balanced-budget amendment in tandem with an impending vote to increase the debt limit.” Reps. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) and Lee

Terry (R-NE) have introduced different versions of a balanced-budget amendment. Goodlatte's is similar to the one in former House Speaker Newt Gingrich's 1994 "Contract With America," though it wasn't included in last year's "Pledge to America." With a full head of steam from November's election, now is a good time to consider such an amendment.

News From the Swamp: Steele Out As RNC Chief
Wisconsin Republican Party Chairman Reince Priebus was voted in as RNC chairman last Friday, denying the embattled Michael Steele a second term. Priebus will be tasked with erasing the RNC's \$20 million debt and reconnecting with donors who sat out the 2010 cycle. While Steele presided over a historic midterm election victory in 2010, he turned off a lot of Republican supporters with his many verbal miscues, his lavish use of donor funds, and the negative media attention he drew to himself. Priebus pledged to raise \$400 million for the 2012 elections, and he stressed the importance of recapturing the White House.

From the Left: Family Feud, Reagan Style

Atheist Ron Reagan Jr, youngest child of our former president, has once again buried his Leftist hatchet in his late father's back ... this time for his personal financial gain. Unlike his Leftist older sister Patti, who reconciled with their father in the last several years of the president's life, Junior made headlines (thus promoting his new book) on the eve of 100th anniversary of his father's birth by claiming that his father already exhibited symptoms of Alzheimer's while still in office. President Ronald Wilson Reagan eventually succumbed to that ailment in 2004, some 15 years after the conclusion of his term in January 1989.

Ron Jr.'s comments sparked a bitter protest from his adopted older brother Michael, who tweeted, "my brother was an embarrassment to my father when he was alive and today he became an embarrassment to his mother." Michael Reagan counters that his father had sufficient mental acuity for several years after his presidency was over, with one piece of key evidence being his appearance and remarks at the Republican National Convention in 1992. It's well remembered that Reagan himself went public with his diagnosis in 1994, noting, "I now begin the journey that will lead me into the sunset of my life."

For those who recall the era, the Left's animosity toward President Reagan made today's political arguments look tame by comparison. However, many of those who mocked him during the era of his presidency may be in the odd position of honoring him next month as Senators

Jim Webb and Dianne Feinstein are organizing an effort to have fellow senators make floor statements in Reagan's honor on Feb. 3. (His birthday is Sunday, Feb. 6.) Indeed, Ronald Reagan set a benchmark for subsequent presidents to follow. Unfortunately, none since has been his equal.

Thomas J. 'Stonewall' Jackson

Today we mark the birth anniversary of Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson (1824-1863), a great military commander and a man of equally great faith who gave his life for the cause of liberty and states' rights.

Read more and comment [here](#).

NATIONAL SECURITY

Russia Already Skirting START

During the lame-duck session of Congress, the Democrats brazenly took the opportunity to ram through as much legislation as they could while they still had power. Among the fetid pieces of legislation was the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with Russia. While it was widely hailed by the administration and its hacks in the Leftmedia as a win for the U.S., the reality of any treaty with Russia is, as always, a lot less comforting.

Last Thursday, Russia said that if she ever felt "threatened," then she could ignore the terms of the new START. How convenient. Russia's parliament legally advanced this interpretation by passing amendments to the treaty that explicitly allow Moscow to withdraw from it if Russia is ever "threatened" by the West. Of course, Russia views almost anything the West does militarily, especially missile defense, as a "threat" to Mother Russia. The message to the West, and specifically the Obama regime, is clear: If you want this treaty, don't develop any type of missile defense system. Is there any doubt that a spineless Obama will heed this message, regardless of its negative consequences for the U.S.?

Given Russia's violations of the original START, as documented by our own State Department; their assistance to Iran and North Korea in developing ballistic missile and nuclear weapons technology; their continuing modernization of their own nuclear forces, something the U.S. can't do under the new treaty; and the continuing consolidation of power by dictator-in-all-but-name-only Vladimir Putin, one has to ask: How is this treaty a win for the U.S.?

Warfront With Jihadistan: Gulf War Anniversary

Jan. 17 marked the 20th anniversary of the opening salvos of the 1991 Gulf War. Former President George H.W.

Bush, former Vice President Dan Quayle, then-Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Colin Powell, former Secretary of State James Baker and then-National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, among others, gathered at Texas A&M University to discuss the war and its impact with an audience of several thousand.

Also in conjunction with the anniversary, the National Defense University in Washington released new documents regarding the peace deal Saddam Hussein tried to broker with the help of then-Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Hussein remained defiant even in this attempt, however, calling U.S. forces and our allies “treacherous and cowardly,” as well as describing Bush as “the enemy of God and humanity.” Of course, it was Saddam’s treacherous and cowardly invasion of neighboring Kuwait that prompted the U.S. invasion and its subsequent annihilation of Saddam’s vaunted Republican Guard. Iraq’s brutal dictator was finally overthrown in 2003, convicted of crimes against humanity, and hanged by Iraqis in December 2006.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Village Academic Curriculum:

Detroit Could Close Half of Public Schools

The Detroit school district, in an effort to close its \$327 million deficit, is considering closing half of its schools within the next two years. The city has already closed 59 schools, and if it closes half of the remaining 142 it will save an estimated \$31.3 million by 2013. It will also increase the average classroom size to some 62 students.

The deficit, which has grown by \$100 million in the past year alone, was caused by a nasty mix of declining property-tax revenues and student enrollment, with an unhealthy dose of fiscal mismanagement, which included an “unplanned staffing surge.” On top of that, between 2003 and 2009, Michigan teachers were paid at a higher relative rate compared to teachers in any other state. Now the resulting mess has necessitated the state’s hiring of emergency financial manager Robert Bobb.

Bobb’s plan includes allowing these closed school buildings to sit abandoned, unguarded and vulnerable to theft. Not securing the buildings will save an additional \$12.4 million, but the savings would be negated by the DFT’s contract with the city, which mandates that teachers be paid bonuses when there are more than 35 students in a class. So essentially, Bobb’s plan squeezes students into classrooms ill-equipped to handle them and kowtows to the union, while barely making a dent in the deficit.

In his defense, however, Bobb is working on three other plans to restructure the finances. One, which included nixing teacher seniority, was already shot down by the lame-duck state legislature last month. Bobb says the school closures are a “worst case scenario” and says he is still committed to working with lawmakers for an alternative. Let’s hope it won’t involve short-changing students in order to placate a greedy union.

UAW Seeks to Unionize Foreign-Owned Auto Plants

Workers of the World Unionize. The United Auto Workers union (UAW) is planning an organizing push on one of three foreign-owned automotive factories in the U.S. UAW president Bob King told members that the survival of the union depends on garnering more members. Apparently, the union learned little from its near-destruction of the American auto industry.

King and his cronies, however, have their work cut out for them. Foreign-owned factories have been historically resistant to attempts at organizing. Some say it’s because they are located in the South, which is typically less union-friendly than the Midwest. While this may be true, it’s also likely that unions haven’t been successful because the foreign companies pay wages comparable to those demanded by the union without the bureaucratic red tape and strong-arm tactics that unions inevitably bring to the table.

The UAW will announce within three months exactly which companies they’re going after but said it will be Japanese-, Korean- or German-owned. In the meantime, King is revving up the union’s one million active and retired members to take part in picketing hundreds of dealerships around the country.

We hope the UAW’s tactics won’t sway these companies and their workers, lest they find themselves in the same dictatorial grip as their American competitors. The UAW drove two of the American Big Three to bankruptcy and now they want their shot at foreign companies.

Income Redistribution:

Mortgage Program Hampered

In 2009, Barack Obama made a great show of the Home Affordability Modification Program (HAMP), an initiative aimed at reducing foreclosure rates for the three to four million households that were having trouble paying their monthly mortgage. The program would help lower mortgage payments to 31 percent of the borrower’s gross monthly income. After 18 months, the program

has achieved a 50 percent penetration of its market, and rejected 52 percent of its applicants -- rather odd results for a free-money program. Why?

Some customers were rejected due to inadequate income, which is a fairly common condition for the unemployed. Others were rejected due to unverifiable employment and earnings information. Amazingly, it seems that some borrowers were rejected due to inadequate equity in their homes. Since these public servants clearly haven't mastered macroeconomics, we hereby offer a brief primer. In an economic contraction, consumers tend to retain cash and limit capital purchases. As fewer buyers enter the marketplace, the existing sellers have to compete for those limited remaining buyers, which causes prices to drop. At the same time, those homeowners who aren't trying to sell watch their home's value plummet. This devaluation consumes equity, reduces the collateral value and discourages lenders from extending additional credit.

So what's a bureaucrat to do? Simple. Deny reality, ignore market cues and create four new TARP-funded programs targeting unemployed and under-collateralized borrowers. As Christopher Walken once said in that famous "Saturday Night Live" skit, "the only prescription is more cowbell."

As for the verification of employment and earnings, may we suggest that if we're going to extend benevolence from the public purse (charity for which there is no constitutional basis), we should at least adequately assess the need before handing over the funds. Otherwise, we risk the moral hazard of encouraging universal penury.

Finally, there have been reports of HAMP specialists encouraging customers to default in order to qualify for HAMP. Financial advice like that seems more attributable to hemp.

CULTURE & POLICY

Faith and Family: Roe v. Wade Turns 38

Tomorrow marks the 38th anniversary of the most tragic Supreme Court decision in American history, Roe v. Wade. The primary issue remains the right to life affirmed in our Declaration of Independence -- a right tragically denied to the 50 million unborn babies who have been sacrificed on the altar of "choice" since 1973.

It has always been evident to us, scientifically and morally, that life begins at conception. For the last word on the matter, we consult our Creator's guidebook. The

Psalmist wrote, "For You formed my inward parts; you wove me in my mother's womb." He then noted, "Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were written all the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them." *Imago Dei!*

It is in this light that we note this week's arrest of an abortion doctor in Philadelphia. Dr. Kermit Gosnell has been charged with eight counts of murder, including the deaths of a patient and seven babies who were born alive but then killed with scissors. Further detail is too gruesome to reprint here. Prosecutors claim that he has made millions of dollars over 30 years by performing any and all abortions -- including illegal late-term ones. Despite numerous complaints, regulators had conveniently not visited his office since 1993. Somehow, we doubt this is the only abortion facility that has gone without inspection for that long. As for media calls for more restrictions (*a la* Tucson), the silence is deafening.

From the 'Non Compos Mentis' File

Fallout from the Tucson shooting continues this week, as one of the victims, James Eric Fuller, who was shot in the knee and back, was arrested for threatening a Tea Party member at a town hall meeting of victims and eyewitnesses of the original attack. Fuller, 63, is a long-time Democrat activist and blames the Tea Party and conservative media for the shooting, despite all evidence to the contrary.

Fuller said the day before his arrest that key Republicans should be tortured and their ears severed and made into a necklace. "There would be torture and then an ear necklace, with [Minnesota U.S. Rep.] Michele Bachmann and Sarah Palin's ears toward the end, because they're small, female ears, and then Limbaugh, Hannity and the biggest ears of all, Cheney's, in the center," he said. The next day, he took a picture of Tucson Tea Party co-founder Trent Humphries and yelled, "You're dead!" Fuller has been involuntarily committed for psychiatric evaluation. (For the threat, that is, not just for being a Democrat activist.)

In related news, lefty documentarian Michael Moore is baffled about why Americans have so many guns. "Why do we, more than any other country, do this?" he asked. Not only that, but the location of the guns escapes his comprehension skills. "[T]he vast majority of these guns are owned by people who live in safe parts of town or mostly in suburbs and rural areas, places where there are very few murders." Well, imagine that! Maybe -- and we know this is a crazy thought -- the guns *deter* the criminals and help *keep* the people safe.

Climate Change Last Millennium: Global Warming Brought Down Rome

For years, scholars have debated the causes of the rise and fall of the Roman Empire. The latest theory, however, is possibly the most baffling -- global warming. According to a study of tree growth by "experts" in Germany, Austria, the United States and Switzerland, Reuters reports, "Good growth by oak and pine trees ... coincided with periods of wealth among farming societies, for instance around the height of the Roman empire.... Periods of climate instability overlapped with political turmoil, such as during the decline of the Roman empire."

Specifically, the study says, "Wet and warm summers occurred during periods of Roman and medieval prosperity. Increased climate variability from AD 250-600 coincided with the demise of the western Roman empire." Well, eureka! Never mind political, economic or military factors. The world's thermostat was to blame.

Perhaps fearing a similar fate, U.S. global warming alarmists are putting your money where their mouth is. In fact, meteorologist Art Horn notes that the government is spending \$10.6 million per day "to study, combat, and educate about climate change." Requests by government entities for global warming funding have skyrocketed. For 2011, the National Science Foundation wants \$1.616 billion; the Department of Energy, \$627 million; NASA, \$438 million; the Department of the Interior, \$244 million. And the list goes on.

Meanwhile, our federal deficit has hit an astounding \$14 trillion. As Horn notes, "If we don't get a handle on Washington's spending soon ... climate change will be the least of our problems."

Around the Nation: Berkeley to Offer Sex-Change Benefits

From the land that kicked out the Marine Corps comes the latest installment of far-left crusading. The City Council of Berkeley, California, is set to approve a proposal to use taxpayer dollars to pay for city employees to have sex-change operations -- or as radio talker Rush Limbaugh mockingly calls one version, "addadictomies." The measure would create a \$20,000 annual fund to be used for "gender reassignment" surgery. According to City Councilman Darryl Moore, who first pitched the idea in 2007,

it "brings our benefits in line with what's just and fair for the transgender community."

Meanwhile, city employee Lynn Riordan, who is "transgender," believes the measure will remove "discriminatory distinctions against the medical treatment of transsexuals, just in a civil rights point of view." Civil rights aside, however, City Councilman Max Anderson unabashedly admitted the underlying agenda: We "try to be on the forefront of policies to promote people's understanding of same-sex issues. It's okay if it's controversial. We're willing to push the envelope a little bit."

So despite the fact that the city remains under a hiring freeze, and that taxes and fees are rising, and that Berkeley faces an unfunded pension liability of \$252 million, it looks like "Joe" will soon be able to become "Josephine" at taxpayer expense.

And Last...

The FBI made what it calls the largest mafia bust in New York history this week, as 127 mobsters were arrested and charged with everything from illegal gambling, racketeering and extortion to trafficking narcotics and murder. Among those arrested are members of all five New York mafia families, as well as the DeCavalcante family of New Jersey. "This is one of the largest single-day operations against the mafia in the FBI's history, both in terms of the number of defendants arrested and charged and the scope of the criminal activity that is alleged," said Attorney General Eric Holder. It "sends the message that our fight against traditional organized crime is strong, and our commitment is unwavering."

This effort is commendable, but when will they start busting the crime bosses on Capitol Hill?

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.)