



THE FOUNDATION

“I am for doing good to the poor, but I differ in opinion of the means. I think the best way of doing good to the poor, is not making them easy in poverty, but leading or driving them out of it.” --Benjamin Franklin

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

‘Doing Good to the Poor’

On Tuesday, Mitt Romney was flying high after trouncing the other Republican presidential candidates in the Florida primary. By Wednesday morning, he was making remarks so boneheaded that Barack Obama’s campaign staff could rejoice over ready-made campaign ads. The rest of us were wondering, “Did he *really* just say that?”

The offending comments came during a Wednesday morning interview on CNN. Romney was explaining his campaign’s focus by saying, “I’m not concerned about the very poor -- we have a safety net there. If it needs repair, I’ll fix it. I’m not concerned about the very rich -- they’re doing just fine. I’m concerned about the very heart of America, the 90-95 percent of Americans who right now are struggling.” Guess which part of that was and will be looped repeatedly by the Leftmedia.

That’s right, we’re going to hear early and often that Romney and his fellow Republicans are “not concerned about the very poor.” We know what Romney meant -- the middle class *has* been hit hardest by the recession, and the poor are not exactly destitute according to the Heritage Foundation -- and his comments are being taken out of context. It’s not as if any GOP candidate was going to win the Occupy vote regardless, but this soundbite repetition surely won’t help with independents.

Aside from his comments being politically tone-deaf, we have more substantive criticism. As Benjamin Franklin said, “I think the best way of doing good to the poor, is not making them easy in poverty, but leading or driving them out of it.” At best, Romney’s comments indicate that he plans to make the poor easy in their poverty by continuing, repairing and possibly extending the government “safety net.” This is not in any way conservative, and it further proves that Romney himself is not conservative, or at least as National Review’s Jonah Goldberg put it, “he

speaks conservatism as a second language.”

The conservative position -- the *constitutional* position -- is that the government has no role in providing a safety net for anyone beyond ensuring that they are safe to pursue their own prosperity under Rule of Law. Not only do redistribution schemes not work, but the Founders withheld the power for government charity because it is antithetical to Liberty.

For a half-century now the so-called “Great Society” has attempted to socially engineer the poor upward at great cost to our nation’s fiscal solvency. Despite transferring \$14 trillion (not so coincidentally close to the national debt), the poor remain poor. Yet the Left has no exit strategy and no withdrawal date for the War on Poverty. On the contrary, their true intention is to enslave the poor to ensure their vote for the politicians who promise to keep the gravy train running at full steam.

The proper way government can contribute to the effort to drive the poor out of poverty is through truly fair taxation and regulation, which will lead to economic expansion and career opportunities for those who are now merely content with living on food stamps and unemployment checks. When given the chance to make that constitutional case for government, however, Romney did the opposite. In fact, he couldn’t even correct his mistake, instead arguing for an automatically increasing minimum wage as if to prove that he does care about the poor. *That’s* a policy that hurts the poor. Romney can choose to make such class-based arguments, but, if he wins the nomination anyway, Obama will beat him at this game on the way back to the White House.

This Week’s ‘Alpha Jackass’ Award

Barack Obama politicized the National Prayer Breakfast by employing the Left’s only justification for Christianity -- the furtherance of the entitlement state. He said, “[W]hen I talk about our financial institutions playing by the same rules as folks on Main Street, when I talk about making sure insurance companies aren’t discriminating against those who are already sick, or making sure that unscrupulous lenders aren’t taking advantage of the most vulnerable among us, I do so because I genuinely believe it will make the economy stronger for everybody. But I

also do it because I know that far too many neighbors in our country have been hurt and treated unfairly over the last few years, and I believe in God's command to 'love thy neighbor as thyself.'"

"[W]hen I talk ... I talk ... I do ... I genuinely believe ... I also ... I know ... I believe ..." and on and on and on. Why is it that when Barack Obama speaks the I's always seem to have it?

He further pontificated, "I think to myself, if I'm willing to give something up as somebody who's been extraordinarily blessed, and give up some of the tax breaks that I enjoy, I actually think that's going to make economic sense. But for me as a Christian, it also coincides with Jesus's teaching that 'for unto whom much is given, much shall be required.'"

To be fair, he did add, "Our goals should not be to declare our policies as biblical." No, no, of course not. That might mean fewer donations from Obama's anti-religious base.

More to the point, we can't find a *single biblical passage* in which government is prescribed as the agent of charity. When Jesus spoke of much being required, he didn't mean tax payments. He meant voluntary individual charity. We don't expect Obama to understand that, though -- not coming out of Jeremiah Wright's "church."

From the 'Non Compos Mentis' File

En route to his distant second place finish in Florida, Newt Gingrich stooped to a bizarre low. A robocall on his behalf told voters, "As governor of Massachusetts, Mitt Romney vetoed a bill paying for kosher food for our seniors in nursing homes -- Holocaust survivors, who for the first time were forced to eat non-kosher, because Romney thought \$5 was too much to pay for our grandparents to eat kosher. Where is Mitt Romney's compassion for our seniors? Tuesday you can end Mitt Romney's hypocrisy on religious freedom with a vote for Newt Gingrich. Paid for by Newt 2012."

The campaign later backtracked on the ad, saying it didn't go through "the normal vetting process" and shouldn't have been run. No kidding. The issue in question was a Romney veto on Medicaid subsidies to nursing homes as part of larger budget dealings in Massachusetts. No Jews were forced to eat non-kosher, and for the Gingrich camp to bring Holocaust survivors into it is absurd -- even for him.

News From the Swamp: Tax Games

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) is planning a few votes in the coming weeks on taxes, following Barack Obama's class warfare strategy outlined in the State of the Union address. Obama decreed that anyone making over \$1 million a year should pay at least 30 percent in federal taxes, and Reid hopes to meet that goal by calling for another vote to raise tax rates on those earners. Senate Democrats are also looking to raise taxes in general for anyone earning more than \$250,000 a year. The White House and Democrats in the Senate hope to close the budget gap they created by squeezing the very entrepreneurs who can save our economy.

New & Notable Legislation

House Republicans haven't given up on the Keystone XL pipeline. They attached an amendment to the upcoming American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act that is currently moving through the chamber. The pipeline, a \$7 billion project, would create jobs, assert a small amount of energy independence, and further cement America's relations with its steadiest trading partner, Canada. Obama shot it down, however, pandering to his environmentalist supporters. Senate Republicans will introduce a similar bill, and some Democrats support it, but it's not likely to be seriously considered in Reid's chamber. On the House side, Republicans plan to push Keystone again in the coming battle to extend the payroll tax cut.

The House voted 267-159 to repeal a component of ObamaCare called the CLASS Act. CLASS is a long-term care insurance program and we added to ObamaCare as a way to help cook the books -- revenue is already being collected but benefits won't be paid out for another three years. It was a budgetary time bomb designed to go broke after just 10 years. Even Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius shut down the program last fall because it was unworkable. Yet the administration opposes its repeal. Go figure. The repeal's future in the Senate is uncertain, though 12 Democrats tried to remove it from ObamaCare in 2009.

The Senate passed the STOCK (Stop Trading On Congressional Knowledge) Act by a 96-3 vote Thursday. This bill is meant to bring an end to the practice of elected officials and their staffs in Congress profiting in business deals related to their legislative duties. Republicans in the House and Senate have pushed this idea in the past, but it wasn't until the president called for it in the State of the Union that Democrats made any attempt to move it forward. Over the last year several stories in the media have

reported on the corruption of elected officials who have financially profited from being in Congress. The House is expected to take up the debate soon, but Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA) outlined a stronger approach that would also put the executive branch under the same restrictions. The House version is also likely to broaden the definition of profiteering to include compensation beyond just stock market investments.

Hope 'n' Change: Spending All the Change

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released a federal spending analysis this week that presents some interesting facts about the current state of fiscal affairs. Granted, the CBO isn't the most reliable source on government expenditures because it can measure only what Congress gives it -- let's not forget how that office found a way to make ObamaCare profitable on paper. Garbage in, garbage out. Just the same, this latest report puts in print from a government source what many of us have known for years about its fiscal state of affairs.

According to the CBO, fiscal 2012, ending Sept. 30, is expected to show a \$1.1 trillion deficit. Obama has presided over \$1 trillion-plus deficits every year of his presidency. Needless to say, this is unprecedented. Federal spending is up 20 percent over 2008, which, before Obama was elected, carried the largest single-year deficit until Obama -- \$458 billion. Obama shattered that spending record again and again, and, according to the CBO, the scope of the damage is worse than previously feared, or, more accurately, ignored.

The federal debt has grown \$5 trillion since Obama was elected, currently exceeding \$15 trillion in total. Public debt is up 30 percent from what it was in 2008, claiming 72 percent of the economy. The CBO goes on to predict only modest, if any, economic growth this year in the private sector due to the weak job market and the hesitance of investors. The report also notes that revenue taken in by the federal government won't be enough to close the gap because the anemic, maybe even fabricated, recovery is painfully slow. Despite this damning report, Democrats remain undeterred in their plan to propose a number of tax increases targeted at the very segment of the private sector that has the means to invest and create jobs.

At least federal workers will be fine. Another CBO report shows that federal employees are paid higher than their private-sector counterparts -- by about 16 percent with benefits and retirement included. Their cut of federal spending will be about \$400 billion over the next 10 years.

The CBO predictably placates the spendthrifts in its report by categorizing the issue as a lack of revenue rather than an overabundance of spending. The report notes that extending the Bush tax rates, the payroll tax cut, and/or even the so-called Medicare doc-fix would jack up deficits because of the large amounts of revenue that would be cut, giving Democrats ammo for their class war. The idea of cutting spending instead of looking for another group to squeeze has not occurred to many on Capitol Hill. Besides, it bears repeating: The Bush tax cuts brought in more revenue to the treasury, not less. Come to think of it, maybe that's an argument against them.

Europeans Continue to Waste Time on Debt Crisis

Following Greece's bankruptcy, and in light of Europe's precarious perch on the brink of economic collapse, the European Union is attempting to show world financial markets that it's at last serious about getting its financial house in order. This week, 25 of the 27 EU governments agreed to a treaty that caps the dangerous duo of debts and deficits. Sans Britain and the Czech Republic, EU leaders asserted that they "are undertaking strong efforts to correct budgetary imbalances on a sustainable basis." That's all well and good except for the fact that in the next breath they claimed that "further efforts are needed to promote growth and employment," and these efforts come in the form of -- what else? -- government initiatives. As The Washington Post reports, "The E.U.'s economic growth declaration was replete with plans to help train young people and ease their entry into the job market, along with pledges to find new ways to get money to small-business owners in a credit-scare economic environment."

If you're having trouble remembering the last time a government program came without a high price tag, you're not alone. The reality is that all the treaties in the world are useless unless accompanied by drastic spending cuts. It's precisely these cuts that the EU (and the U.S. for that matter) is so loath to make. The EU may be talking a good game, but talk is cheap. Unfortunately, debt is not.

ECONOMY

Economy Adds Jobs, But Many Merely Stop Looking

In 2009, Barack Obama predicted that "if I don't have [the economy turned around] in three years, then there's going to be a one-term proposition." He meant that he would not win re-election if the economy were still struggling. Cue the news today that the economy added 243,000 new jobs in January and headline unemployment dipped to 8.3 percent. It was the biggest gain in jobs since April. Obviously, this is good news for Obama. The

problem is that many of the unemployed have simply quit looking for jobs, which lowers the unemployment rate artificially. Thanks in large part to the minimum wage, unemployment among teenagers is over 23 percent. Among minorities it's nearly 16 percent and for black teens it's an astonishing 39.6 percent. If that's "recovery," we would hate to see a downturn.

Income Redistribution: More on the Dole

So much for Obama's SOTU declaration of "no more bailouts, no more handouts." Food-Stamp President Barack Obama has challenged the Department of Agriculture to increase the number of Americans on food stamps from 46 million to 60 million -- or about one in five Americans -- by waving the prospect of \$75,000 grants to non-profit groups who come up with creative and successful ways to sign up a new crop of dependents. In particular, the federal government believes that elderly and Hispanic populations are dramatically "underserved."

Food stamp expansion pales in comparison to our re-election-crazed president's other promises. Obama has pledged to rein in skyrocketing college tuition. He wants to increase overall subsidies to colleges while withholding federal dollars from those that raise tuition. That's like fighting against gravity, though, and, as usual, the devil is in the details. For example, the president is basing his carrot-and-stick approach on the campus-based Perkins Loan program. But Perkins funding is a \$3 billion drop in the bucket compared to the \$142 billion spent on Stafford Loans and Pell Grants, and colleges will quickly figure out just how much to raise their tuition to make up the difference.

Finally, and most grandly, Obama announced his retread plan to press banks to refinance mortgage loans for homeowners who are "underwater" on their homes, and to create a "homeowner bill of rights." The president's housing program will be only for people who are current on their mortgages and have a good credit score, but the additional mortgage insurance premium added to the loans could actually make the situation worse for some homeowners.

The real key is that Obama can say he's *trying* to do something, and since he knows these programs have no chance in the GOP-controlled House, they will fit nicely with his narrative of blaming a do-nothing Congress for our nation's problems.

Regulatory Commissars: Creating an Electric-Car Market

Over much of the 20th century, California developed a rep-

utation as a trend-setting state. In the first six decades, these trends included higher education, infrastructure development, recreation, a high quality of life and, of course, Hollywood, but all of those are now twisted shadows of their former selves. Now it's the antics in Sacramento that set trends. This was fine when Ronald Reagan was in charge, but now that the radical left-wing has taken hold, we see the tarnished Golden State sliding into a fiscal abyss. Come March, the state may run out of money as it underestimated this fiscal year's revenue by \$2.6 billion while spending \$2.6 billion more than anticipated. Surprise!

Even staring down the barrel of crisis, do-gooders continue their special brand of social engineering. The California Air Resources Board voted unanimously last week to set new emissions standards for automobiles, dictating that one of every seven new cars sold in the state by 2025 be an electric or zero-emission vehicle. This would triple the number currently on the road, to 1.4 million. Generally, California's standards set a pattern for the rest of the country -- 10 other states have followed their lead in setting zero-emissions vehicle mandates.

Not surprisingly, automakers were behind the new regulations, as GM, Ford, Chrysler and Nissan all testified in favor of adoption. To figure out why, one need only follow the money, as these vehicles come with lots of federal subsidies. Meanwhile, the state of California is also investing heavily (with federal assistance) in a high-speed rail scheme that was once predicted to cost \$33 billion but may cost triple that amount. As always, this sort of pandering to the green goons is going to cost the rest of us a whole lot of green.

SECURITY

Second Amendment: 'Mistakes Were Made'

"Obviously I think if the question is referring to things like Fast and Furious, I think everyone has acknowledged that mistakes, serious mistakes, were made there." So said Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano Monday. She added, "The key question [is] to make sure that those mistakes, from my standpoint, are never again repeated." It's appalling that she would characterize the gunrunning at the heart of Fast and Furious as "mistakes." Those guns, now in the hands of Mexican drug cartels, thanks to the aid of the Justice Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, are responsible for hundreds of murders. One of those murdered, of course, was Border Patrol agent Brian Terry, whose family just filed a \$25 million wrongful death claim against the ATF, charging, "ATF's failures were

not only negligent but in violation of ATF's own policies and procedures." Hardly just "mistakes."

However, testifying before Congress again this week, Attorney General Eric Holder gave a clue as to what he and Napolitano consider to be mistakes. He told Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), chairman of the House Oversight Committee, that he would hold accountable not those who ran guns illegally, but those who blew the whistle. From their perspective, the only mistake was blowing the cover of this foolish operation.

At the same time, Fox News reports, "Democrats investigating the failed gun-running probe known as 'Operation Fast and Furious' are laying the blame at the feet of officials in Arizona, saying in a new report that lawmakers from both sides of the aisle have 'obtained no evidence' implicating high-level political appointees in Washington." Once again, Democrats are passing the buck to a favorite whipping boy of late: Arizona.

Department of Military Readiness: Outsized Budget Cuts

It's been known since Day One that Barack Obama and his minions loathe the U.S. military. Now, never letting a crisis go to waste, Obama will use the current budget disaster to gut the military and diminish the ability of the U.S. to project global power when needed. All of this, as history has amply demonstrated, invites danger and war.

Obama plans to cut the nation's military budget by at least a half-trillion dollars over the next decade. Last Thursday the Pentagon revealed those cuts and announced that its 2013 budget will decline in real dollars for the first time since 1998. To offset increases in unconstitutional entitlement spending, Pentagon spending, which *is* constitutional, will be hit disproportionately. Defense spending accounts for a fifth of federal spending but is targeted for more than half of the budget cuts. Obama's cuts are critical, too, as the Army will drop from 562,000 troops now to 490,000 in 2017, the Marine Corps from its current level of 202,000 to 182,000, and the Navy's already sub-300 ship fleet will lose seven cruisers sooner than planned, and new Virginia-class submarines, amphibious assault ships and smaller attack vessels will be delayed or reduced. All of this while Obama's "strategy" asks the Navy to lead an American "pivot" to the Asia-Pacific region, which covers the entire Pacific Ocean.

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, who has previously warned against deep spending cuts, and the Chairman of

the Joint Chiefs, Army General Martin Dempsey, pointed out that when Obama's cuts are implemented, there will be an increased risk that the U.S. military will not be able to do as much as quickly as it can do now. For Obama, that's not a risk. That's exactly his plan.

Around the Nation: Iraq Returnees Honored

Last Saturday in St. Louis, more than 100,000 people turned out for a parade to welcome our troops home formally from Iraq. It was the nation's first such parade. About 600 veterans participated in the march, and they marveled at the adulation given to them by a crowd that wasn't always for the war. One onlooker said she was "not in favor of the war in Iraq, but the soldiers who fought did the right thing and we support them."

The idea was so simple, it's a wonder no one else did it. Certainly Americans have tried hard to avoid the mistakes made during the Vietnam era, when returning servicemen were treated with contempt by a war-weary nation. While the Long War hasn't remained popular, those who have served and returned have generally been treated with the respect they deserve for their personal sacrifice for our country.

Craig Schneider and Tom Appelbaum, two St. Louis area residents who never served in the military, hatched the idea in December and used social media and a modest \$35,000 budget from donations to pull it off. "Things get accomplished when you have a sense of urgency," said Appelbaum. "Now we're going to take this on the road." As a corollary effort, the Welcome Home Foundation is seeking to raise millions for veterans' organizations.

CULTURE

Climate Change This Week: No Warming Since 1997

New data from the UK Met Office has blown yet another hole in the "confirmed science" of climate change. This data, taken from 30,000 measuring stations, indicates that the planet's temperature has not risen since 1997. But this is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg, for not only is the planet not warming; it may actually be *cooling*.

Thinking scientists (a.k.a. "deniers") have long claimed that "climate change" is not a manmade travesty but simply part of nature that includes 11-year solar cycles. We are currently in what is called Cycle 24. In Algore's heyday these scientists were promptly blacklisted by many "scientists" with big voices and big mouths, but more recently people are starting to listen. Now these deniers, including some at NASA, predict that solar Cycle 25,

which will begin in 2022, may be the weakest in centuries, and in fact may even rival the “Maunder minimum,” the coldest part of the “Little Ice Age.”

Of course, the envirofascists aren’t going down without a fight. “Forecast the Facts,” a campaign constructed from a hodgepodge of leftist groups, is advocating that meteorologists present their forecast with a climate-change slant. The Forecast folks have compiled a list of climate change “deniers” that they would like to figuratively tar and feather. This rather aggressive plan may have something to do with a recent poll showing that more than 60 percent of Americans feel that any change in the climate has natural -- not manmade -- causes.

As always, Al Gore, the father of climate change hysteria, is also doing his part to keep the fire burning. The former VP is planning a trip to Antarctica, where he will “prove” the existence of climate change to “civil and business leaders, activists, and concerned citizens.” The mere thought evokes an ironic vision of Gore and his followers shivering in an icy wilderness. After years of his pontificating, that vision is indeed heartwarming.

Faith and Family: Komen Foundation Stops Grants to Planned Parenthood

Susan G. Komen for the Cure, the nation’s leading charity for breast cancer, had the Left in quite a tizzy this week with the announcement that it would no longer give grants to Planned Parenthood. Komen gave the nation’s leading abortion provider about \$680,000 in 2011 and \$580,000 in 2010. It will stop the grants because Planned Parenthood is under congressional investigation for various ethical lapses, including in some cases not reporting child abuse when a minor comes in for an abortion, and the alleged use of federal money to provide abortions.

Naturally, the Left went into double-barrel assault mode, and Planned Parenthood cashed in on the controversy, raising \$400,000 in 24 hours. “We know our opponents put their ideology over women’s health and lives,” Planned Parenthood president Cecile Richards wrote in a fundraising appeal. “What we never expected is that an ally like the Komen Foundation would choose to listen to them.” In truth, it is Planned Parenthood and its allies that put ideology above women’s lives, particularly given the link between abortion and breast cancer.

Adding yet more pressure, 22 Democrat senators signed a letter demanding that Komen reverse its decision, as if hundreds of millions in federal funding to Planned Parenthood isn’t enough. Komen is a private charity, and these childish, bullying Democrats have no business strong-arming a private foundation. As The Wall Street Journal’s James Taranto observed, “Planned Parenthood’s bitter campaign against Komen -- aided by left-liberal activists and media -- is analogous to a protection racket: *Nice charity you’ve got there. It’d be a shame if anything happened to it.* The message to other Planned Parenthood donors is that if they don’t play nice and keep coughing up the cash, they’ll get the Komen treatment.”

Of course, we’re pleased to see Komen make this break, as are their donors -- Komen has seen donations go up 100 percent since the decision. We encourage them to stand firm amid the onslaught from “tolerant” leftists, and we hope to see them direct money to more worthy recipients, and we hope and pray that other charities follow suit.

And Last...

The Super Bowl this coming Sunday will be watched for the same reason as each of its predecessors -- the commercials. And as every year, controversy is already swirling around some of the ads’ monkey business. Career-BUILDER is set to continue its run of commercials featuring chimpanzees in business attire, but Steven Ross, assistant director of the Chicago Lincoln Park Zoo’s Fisher Center for the Study and Conservation of Apes, complains that the ads pose a risk to chimpanzees because people will only laugh at them instead of remembering that they’re an endangered species. That, in turn, means people won’t help save them, and Ross wants the ads pulled. We suggest that he rethink his position. If the ads don’t run, that could leave chimpanzees endangered *and* unemployed.

Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus et Fidelis! Nate Jackson for *The Patriot Post* Editorial Team. 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.)