



THE FOUNDATION

“There is but one straight course, and that is to seek truth and pursue it steadily.” --George Washington

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Contraception Deception Is No Fluke

Democrats should be on the defensive over the ObamaCare contraception mandate but have instead made the entire issue a circus. They're employing their best smoke and mirrors to distract from the fundamental issue at stake -- whether Barack Obama has the constitutional authority to override religious liberty to achieve his desired insurance coverage -- but they won't get away with it.

As we noted last week, one Sandra Fluke testified before Congress on the need to have free birth control provided for all women at Georgetown University. Fluke is no typical college student, however. She's a 30-year-old self-professed “reproductive rights activist” who is pursuing her law degree, though she chose the Jesuit school for the express purpose of changing its policy on insuring contraception. Birth control is contrary to the religious doctrine of the Catholic Church, of which Jesuits are a part.

Simply put, Fluke wants them to abandon their principles in order to accommodate her and her fellow female students' recreational choices. The Left then cloaks this in the language of “rights” when no one on the Right is talking about taking rights away from anyone.

So how did Fluke gain a hearing before Congress? Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), head of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, called a hearing on the constitutionality of the Obama mandate. Democrats first wanted Americans United for Separation of Church and State executive director Barry Lynn to testify. Lynn is a typical anti-religious leftist, but at least he has some measure of “expertise” on the matter of Obama's interference with the church.

However, in a last-minute effort to misdirect the issue to “women's health,” Democrats asked that Fluke appear. The committee had not vetted her, and Issa denied the request. Undeterred, Democrats held a subcommittee hearing, called their media accomplices for ample cover-

age, and allowed Fluke to testify about the plight of young women at Georgetown who supposedly can't afford their own birth control (despite its availability at the local pharmacy for \$9 a month) and demand that the university buy it for them. She has no expertise on the subject of Obama's mandate, and her testimony was completely irrelevant hearsay.

Then, while discussing the topic last week, radio talk-show host Rush Limbaugh called Fluke a “slut” and a “prostitute” and elaborated on what that meant in terms not fit for a family show. Clearly, he crossed the line with his language, and he issued two apologies -- apologies that also happened to serve to rehash his (quite valid) argument. Fluke dismissed those apologies, and we won't belabor the point; enough has been said on the subject and Limbaugh is perfectly capable of defending himself. (See, for example, [here](#) and [here](#).)

Naturally, the Left went into overdrive to misdirect the issue again, this time to Limbaugh's comments instead of Obama's tyranny. They even hung Limbaugh's comments around the necks of Republicans -- as if they are responsible for him when no such similar standard ever exists for leftist talkingheads -- big mouths like Bill Maher, Chris Matthews, Ed Schultz and Keith Olbermann, whose own vulgar comments about women have heretofore been given a free pass. Predictably, Obama piled on with a politically opportunistic call to Fluke to “see if she was all right,” and to further denounce Limbaugh and his fellow defenders of liberty.

It's critical to remember that the real issue is Obama's determination to deny religious liberty in the name of “women's health.” Democrats realize that if the issue is framed properly, they lose. Their only hope is to distract and deceive by making the issue about women's access to birth control, or whether Rush is a misogynist or whatever other sideshow they can contrive.

Democrats claim that they want reproductive choices left between a woman and her doctor, but it is they who demand government control over health care in general, and, more specifically, authority to force employers and others to pay for certain “health” benefits regardless of the cost. Democrats claim that they love individual rights and

liberties, but it is they who deny them for the sake of their pet causes. ObamaCare is designed to destroy liberty, and we mustn't let the Left's Big Top Circus distract from the mission to repeal it.

Campaign Trail: Super Tuesday

Super Tuesday saw 10 states go to the polls. Mitt Romney won Alaska, Idaho, Massachusetts, Ohio, Vermont and Virginia. Rick Santorum won North Dakota, Oklahoma and Tennessee. Newt Gingrich won his native Georgia. Ron Paul once again came up empty -- he has yet to win a single state. According to the Republican National Committee, the count of bound delegates is now Romney 339, Gingrich 107, Santorum 95, and Paul 22. To win, a candidate needs 1,144. Media reports have Santorum in second place based on projections of how unbound delegates will be allocated in the final count. Iowa, Colorado, Minnesota, Maine, North Dakota and Washington have yet to award their full number of delegates. With Tuesday now behind us, as Mark Alexander writes in *The Politics of Self-Destruction*, the GOP must unite behind a single candidate if it is to have any hope of beating Barack Obama in November -- which is the ultimate goal.

That said, frontrunner Mitt Romney is faced with an interesting conundrum. An exit poll conducted in his home state of Massachusetts asked voters what they thought of the Massachusetts health care law. Their response choices were About Right, Went Too Far, or Did Not Go Far Enough. Some 51 percent said it went too far, while just 37 percent said it was about right. Merely 6 percent said not far enough. Certainly those surveyed are Republicans, but they're still Bay State voters, and Romney has contested that his signature achievement remains popular there. Now with a refresher this week that he *did* advocate his plan at a federal level, it remains, perhaps more than ever, his Achilles heel in the GOP primary, so the opinions of Massachusetts voters are instructive. Too bad the question wasn't asked in other states.

Romney has repeatedly promised during the GOP debates that, if elected, he will repeal ObamaCare "on Day One." If he does manage to win the Republican nomination and defeat Obama in November, all freedom-loving Americans must ensure that this is a promise kept.

Hope 'n' Change: No Spreading the Wealth Around This Time

Barack Obama may be an advocate for spreading the wealth around, but that philosophy doesn't apply to his own campaign cash. The president's campaign recently

rejected a \$30 million request by Democrat leaders Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi for congressional campaign efforts. While that would be approximately what they received in 2008 and 2010, this year is a different story. Obama for America originally boasted that it would raise \$1 billion this cycle, but fundraising thus far hasn't been auspicious, and campaign manager Jim Messina has worked to play down expectations.

The increased role of super PACs, which currently appear to favor Republicans, has also forced the Obama team to rethink their strategy. The cold shoulder extends beyond forking over some money to fellow Democrats, too. Neither Obama nor Joe Biden have committed to any fundraising events for congressional candidates thus far, demonstrating that Obama is out only for Obama in 2012. This change in direction fits the view Obama seems to hold about his own importance and the impediment Congress poses to his goal of reshaping the country.

New & Notable Legislation

The House passed the Jumpstart Our Business Startups (JOBS) Act Thursday by a vote of 390-23. JOBS is a collection of a half-dozen other bills aimed at, among other things, easing the regulatory burden on small businesses and therefore removing some roadblocks to hiring. Though most Democrats voted for the bill, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi called it a "jobs bill light" and said she wasn't touting its passage "because it's so meager." The White House, however, applauded the move, and it does reflect one of the few bipartisan achievements in recent history.

The Senate failed Thursday to pass a measure to bypass the Obama administration's Keystone XL pipeline denial. Even though 56 senators, including 11 Democrats, voted to override the administration, 60 votes were required to move the measure forward. The president contends that he really didn't reject the pipeline, he just couldn't abide by Republican timing, but he lobbied Senate Democrats to block passage.

From the Left: Fun on Your Dime

The Obama family has certainly enjoyed more than its "fair share" of prime vacation time. A scorecard assembled by Mr. Conservative tallies up the destinations and their cost. The First Lady's shopping trip to Europe in 2010, for example, cost upwards of \$250,000 to cover the 68-member security detail, assistants and the trip on Air Force Two. The annual Hawaii Christmas vacation is a multi-million-dollar affair because Michelle and the

girls always fly separately, and the stay lasts two to three weeks. In 2011, the hotel tab for staff alone was \$134,000.

Rent for the “Winter White House” was \$38,000. The family’s 2011 Martha’s Vineyard vacation was at an estate that rents for \$50,000 per week. They see no reason to stop the fun now. Michelle took the girls to a luxury ski resort in Aspen on Washington’s Birthday weekend, the 16th vacation taken since Obama’s election. Citizens around the country are tightening their belts and planning much more modest vacations -- if they are planning any at all. If the Obamas feel America’s pain, their “compassion” doesn’t include your vacations.

ECONOMY

February Sees Job Growth

The news on the employment front appears to be good -- 227,000 jobs added in February, with a level unemployment rate of 8.3 percent. If we go by the so-called U-6 unemployment number, which includes the underemployed and those who have simply dropped out of the job market, the rate is 14.9 percent, which is still down a full percentage point from February 2011. At this rate, it would take more than three years to get back to pre-recession employment. In fact, Obama has presided over the longest jobs recession -- 49 months -- since the Great Depression.

The Heritage Foundation explains the slow growth: “[A]n extraordinarily high number of Americans have dropped out of the work force, either choosing not to work, losing heart and abandoning the hunt for jobs, or accepting disability benefits. Because of the meager recovery, very few potential workers have returned to the job market to find work. With fewer people in the work force, the unemployment rate appears lower than it should as a matter of simple arithmetic. But this artificially low rate does not disguise the fact that talented, experienced, discouraged workers are choosing to sit on the sidelines instead of participating in the economy. In short, though the labor market is improving, it’s nowhere near where it should be given America’s potential.”

As for the media’s reporting, Reuters actually cuts to the chase: “It marked the first time since early 2011 that payrolls have grown by more than 200,000 for three months in a row -- bolstering President Barack Obama’s chances for re-election.”

Hot Air on Energy

A president seeking re-election ordinarily wants to avoid high gas prices during his run, but Barack Obama seems

to believe that the steadily climbing price at the pump actually fits into his re-election strategy. He blames the oil companies at every opportunity, railing against what leftists have always claimed to be excessive profits and demanding an end to tax breaks. Of course, raising taxes on energy companies won’t lower the price of gas. Yet higher gas prices are just what Obama and Energy Secretary Steven Chu actually *want*. As the secretary said in 2008, “Somehow we have to figure out how to boost the price of gasoline to the levels in Europe.” Now that it’s an election year, he claimed this week that the administration is doing “what we can to lower the price of gasoline.” We believe his 2008 comment.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and some other Democrats offered another “solution” -- tap the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Pelosi suggested that every time the reserve has been tapped, gas prices have gone down. Yes, but by just a few pennies and only temporarily. She told reporters, “But even if you don’t subscribe to that, that at least puts a question mark to the speculators that you might do this.” Apparently, Pelosi is suggesting a head fake around the public and investors. The government is so inept at developing energy policy that elected officials are reduced to lying about doing something in order to try to achieve a result.

As for those subsidies (i.e., tax credits) for “Big Oil,” we’re all for closing loopholes to lower rates, but that’s not what Obama means. In fact, he wants to redistribute those loopholes to alternative energy, which is already subsidized at a *far* higher rate than fossil fuels. When accounting for what little energy is actually provided by alternative sources, the subsidies are even more lopsided -- but let’s not let facts get in the way of a good campaign narrative.

Chevy Volt: Cars Catch Fire, but Sales Haven’t

We learned last week that Barack Obama wants to buy a Chevy Volt in five years. Yet those who make their living building the dud of a car received a little unexpected R&R time as GM announced earlier this week the temporary furlough of workers at the Hamtramck, Michigan, plant where the sleek beauties are built. Some 1,300 employees are laid off until April 23 as the carmaker tries to clear an inventory backlog.

While GM says Volt sales were brisker in February than in the previous month, leftists blame slow sales on the “relentless attacks” by conservative media and GOP politicians. GM lamented that “we didn’t design the Volt to

be a political punching bag.” We’d call it a lightning rod for criticism, but either way the market speaks for itself. With just 1,626 Volts sold so far this year, GM’s goal of 60,000 Volts sold worldwide in 2012 is looking like a pipe dream. Even a new \$10,000 tax credit -- up from \$7,500 -- promoted by Obama still isn’t enough.

Ironically, just when Detroit halted production, seemingly good news charged from Europe where the Volt’s sister car, the Opel Ampera, was named 2012 European Car of the Year. Then again, Motor Trend named it the 2011 Car of the Year, which didn’t exactly translate into sales. Perhaps the European market, where both gasoline and electricity are far more expensive than here, is a better fit for the GM product. Sluggish sales on this side of the pond make the Volt more of an expensive curiosity than a, er, hot commodity.

The BIG Lie

“Now, because of these new standards for cars and trucks, they’re all going to be able to go further and use less fuel every year. And that means pretty soon you’ll be able to fill up your car every two weeks instead of every week. Over time, that saves you, a typical family, about \$8,000 a year.” --Barack Obama

In reality, it saves at best a few hundred dollars a year. Not too shabby, but not eight grand, either. It also doesn’t account for higher insurance premiums, worse safety risks or higher-priced technology.

Income Redistribution: Bailing Out the Bubble Makers

The administration’s original bailout for underwater mortgages fell woefully short of the three to four million homeowners it was predicted to help. Undeterred, Barack Obama’s Homeowners Assistance Modification Program begins later this spring, accepting those who own multiple homes. Buyers of multiple homes were caught in the housing bust that occurred after the market’s 2006 peak, when one-third of all mortgages were lent to consumers who already had primary residences.

Those who own up to four residences and either rent out or have plans to do so are eligible for the modification, which comes in several forms: cutting the interest rate, stretching out the repayment period, forgiving principal, or some combination of those. Some 700,000 landlords become eligible for assistance once the changes are made.

Critics accuse the Obama administration of rescuing those

market speculators who lost while flipping houses at a dizzying pace. One real estate consultant called the scheme “ridiculous” and asked, “Are you going to refund people who lost money on the stock market too?” Yet when banks were coerced into helping the Obama cause, they signed the dotted line for a lot of radical change. Welcome to an America where profits are privatized (after the government gets its cut, of course) while risk is socialized.

Lottery Winner on Food Stamps

Speaking of undeserving recipients of redistributed income, word came out this week that a Michigan lottery winner received food stamps. Apparently, \$1 million wasn’t enough to buy groceries, so the winner kept right on taking the welfare. She thought the state would cut her off, but it didn’t, which she thought was fine since she isn’t working, has “no income,” and has “bills to pay.” Fortunately, once the story broke, her benefits *were* cut off.

SECURITY

Theater of the Absurd: Obama and Israel

In light of Barack Obama’s meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu this week to discuss, among other things, the situation in Iran and Israel’s possible (imminent?) attack, it’s worth revisiting history. “I try not to pat myself too much on the back,” Obama boasted in October 2011, “but this administration has done more in terms of the security of the state of Israel than any previous administration.” Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan might beg to differ. One helped save Israel in wartime and the other regarded as perhaps the most pro-Israel president ever. Obama’s claim is also belied by his call for a return to the pre-1967 borders between Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Syria, something the Israelis rightly reject as akin to disarmament. Obama’s frequent demands regarding Israel’s obligations in the Israel-Palestinian dispute, sometimes approaching the level of ultimatums, further refute his claims about his positive role in U.S.-Israeli relations.

The greatest fault of the Obama administration, from Israel’s perspective, is its approach to Iran. Pretending that UN sanctions can dissuade Iran from developing nuclear weapons, Obama repeatedly argues against Israeli military action. The Israelis are thus discouraged by Obama’s newest election-year claim that he’s “got Israel’s back.” (Can you imagine Ronald Reagan demeaning the office of the president by uttering such juvenile banalities?) In reality, “having Israel’s back” means not lecturing it about its own security in the face of an existential threat from Iran. Perhaps granting Israel’s request for bunker-buster bombs would be a start.

For Israel's part, Netanyahu explained, "The U.S. is big and distant; Israel is smaller and closer to Iran ... so the American clock regarding preventing the nuclearization of Iran is not the Israeli one." Israel must act to preserve itself as it sees fit, and its deadline for military action has become tighter and tighter during the last three years. The United States doesn't want war with Iran, which an Israeli strike would almost certainly ignite; but neither should we back away from it if it is necessary to prevent this rogue state and terrorist benefactor from going nuclear.

Panetta Says White House Doesn't Need Congress

Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta informed Congress this week that it is unnecessary when it comes to military action. Well, at least less necessary than gaining international approval. At issue is whether the administration will take action against Syria to prevent its president, Bashar al-Assad, from brutally suppressing public protest. Panetta says the administration will not take action as it did in Libya, but that, if it did, approval from the UN or NATO would suffice and trump the need for congressional approval.

In a nutshell, this was the problem with Obama's Libyan adventure. For the first time, a president took military action that was not in the immediate national security interest of the United States without so much as giving Congress a formal "heads up." Granted, the War Powers Act gives the president limited authority to conduct military operations, again in the national security interest, before consulting Congress. Panetta, however, contends that the administration has no intention of following this law, regardless of the circumstances.

Congress has the constitutional authority to declare war and must authorize military force with only rare exception. On the other hand, while there are cases in which international approval would be desirable, such as when allies are also threatened, the U.S. never *needs* this permission before acting in its own self-defense. On top of that, the UN is replete with nations that are hostile to the U.S. and its interests. As usual, the Obama White House has it exactly backwards, and it's an issue on which the stakes could be very high.

FOIA Suit Filed Against Navy Over 'Don't Ask' Repeal

The Thomas More Law Center filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit against the Department of the Navy in order to "obtain records believed to show intentional deception by the Pentagon to gain congressional

support for repeal of the 1993 law regarding open homosexual conduct in the military, usually called 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.'" At issue, specifically, is the possible distortion of a study about the effect open homosexuality would have in the military if "Don't Ask" were repealed. The plaintiffs are also seeking to determine if the Department of Defense fulfilled congressional requirements in order for the repeal to take effect. The first FOIA requests were made in August 2011, but the Navy has yet to respond.

CULTURE

Second Amendment: Two Victories

Score one -- make that two -- bull's-eyes for the Constitution. This week, judges in two court cases reaffirmed the Second Amendment right to bear arms by striking down two separate gun bans. In Maryland, a federal judge ruled as unconstitutional the state's requirement that individuals provide "good and substantial reason" to purchase a handgun. Addressing a case in which a resident had obtained a gun permit a decade ago after warding off an intruder only to have the permit *renewal* application denied because he could not show he had been threatened "beyond his residence," the judge noted, "A citizen may not be required to offer a 'good and substantial reason' why he should be permitted to exercise his rights. The right's existence is all the reason he needs." Tally, one.

Meanwhile, in Colorado, the state Supreme Court ruled that the University of Colorado's ban on carrying concealed handguns on campus didn't pass legal muster because the state legislature never approved the ban. Under the state's Concealed Carry Act of 2003, local governments cannot stifle concealed carry rights except in certain specific places, such as private property and K-12 schools. Colleges are not among the exceptions. Tally, two.

Naturally, Second Amendment foes will whine that more guns mean more violence. The evidence, however, is not on their side. Neither, for that matter, is the Constitution.

Obama Bumps Female Commencement Speaker

A few years ago, an article entitled "Obama Invites Self to Deliver Commencement at Women's College" would have been more likely to appear in the satirical rag *The Onion*. Today, however, it's just another day on the job for a president who will do anything to get re-elected. A large part of his base was, of course, women so appalled by Sarah Palin that socialism became the more palatable choice.

The White House confirmed that it "offered" Obama to speak at Barnard, the prestigious 123-year-old women's

college in New York City. Obviously, this was an offer the school couldn't refuse, despite having already announced New York Times executive editor Judith Abramson as the speaker. The irony of this, of course, went unnoticed by Obama, who will use the platform to "advocate for women's rights" -- Leftist-speak for the ObamaCare contraception mandate -- by bumping a woman from the role.

Imagine if George W. Bush had caused the ouster of a female speaker to boost his own popularity. We don't have to imagine the hypocrisy. As already noted, feminists went nuts over Rush Limbaugh's admittedly misguided comments. Yet again, they go for the obvious target and ignore the insidious, infinitely more dangerous one.

It Would Be Top News If...

"A 13-year-old boy who police say was doused with gasoline and lit on fire last week while walking home from school is recovering from first-degree burns to his face and head," reports New York Daily News. The attack happened in Kansas City when two teenagers followed the boy home from school, but what's particularly disturbing is that the perpetrators are black and the victim white. As they lit the fire, the attackers allegedly shouted, "You get what you deserve, white boy!" The boy is in serious condition and we wish him well.

We also wonder, though, if the Obama Justice Department and FBI are calling in agents from all across the nation to deal with this obvious and vicious hate crime. If the races had been reversed, this heinous crime would have trumped every other headline for the next month with regular updates for a year. Such is the double standard under which we live.

Village Academic Curriculum: Teachers Get Free Plastic Surgery

Never mind that Buffalo, New York, schools face a \$42 million deficit in next year's budget. Never mind the laid

off teachers across the country. Some teachers in the Buffalo school system enjoy the benefits of plastic surgery with absolutely no deductible. Last year, the city's schools spent \$5.9 million on plastic surgery such as hair removal, liposuction, rhinoplasty and even breast enhancement. Why? The teachers' contract with the city, including this provision, expired almost *10 years ago*, and a new one has not yet been negotiated, so the two parties have merely kept it going by default. The teachers indicate they are willing to part with this particular benefit, but not "unilaterally." Nice to see them putting the kids first.

And Last...

"Campaign officials for President Obama's reelection race announced Wednesday that they are planning to release a 17-minute documentary about his first term in office next week," reports The Washington Post. According to Obama's campaign manager, Jim Messina, the documentary will "put into perspective the enormous challenges that the nation faced when the president took office and the strides we've made together." So it's not so much a documentary as it is a fantasy adventure. Putting aside the spirit of partisanship, however, many conservatives chose to help out with the movie's title. Our staff favorites are "Volt Chariots of Fire," "You've Got Fail," "Dependence Day" and "The Lyin' King." If you can think of any more, we'll be glad to forward them along.

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.)