



## 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

### Catholics Continue to Battle Obama for Religious Liberty

The week began with a senator attempting to intimidate the U.S. Supreme Court to rule in favor of ObamaCare, all while some 43 Catholic institutions filed suit because of the requirements of the law. No wonder the Obama administration is spending \$20 million with a public-relations firm to bolster perception of the law.

Among the 43 plaintiffs in the 12 new religious liberty lawsuits are the Archdiocese of New York, The Catholic University of America and even the University of Notre Dame, which hosted the president in 2009. The suit alleges, correctly in our view, that the plaintiffs’ “fundamental rights hang in the balance” due to the administration’s requirement that *all* organizations “provide in their insurance plans abortion-inducing drugs, contraceptives and sterilization procedures, which are contrary to Catholic teaching,” as a statement from Notre Dame put it. Furthermore, says the university, “If the Government can force religious institutions to violate their beliefs in such a manner, there is no apparent limit to the Government’s power.”

That’s the general problem with Barack Obama, isn’t it? He doesn’t seem to recognize any limits to executive power.

In a bit of irony, of the more than 30 lawsuits now pending against the contraception mandate, nearly all of them cite the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993, written by then-Rep. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and the late Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA). Notre Dame’s suit cites the law in the first paragraph.

In related news, Ave Maria University in Florida announced that it will no longer offer a health insurance plan for students due in large part to the administration’s con-

traception regulations. The other reason is the rising costs of over-insuring young people so as to subsidize older ones, a prime tenant of ObamaCare. Ave Maria’s students would have seen a 66 percent increase in premiums. “If you like your health plan, you can keep your health plan,” Obama once promised.

As for the Supreme Court, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Pat Leahy (D-VT) warned Chief Justice John Roberts this week that he and other Democrats will consider the Court to be “activist” if they dare overturn ObamaCare. “Given the ideological challenge to the Affordable Care Act and the extensive, supportive precedent,” Leahy said, “it would be extraordinary for the Supreme Court not to defer to Congress in this matter that so clearly affects interstate commerce.” He also lamented, “The conservative activism of recent years has not been good for the Court.”

Memo to Leahy: Judicial activism is also known as “legislating from the bench,” or finding constitutional government powers where none exist. Ruling that Congress has exceeded the bounds set by Article I is not activism; it’s restraint. It will be no surprise, however, that if the Court overturns the law, Democrats rally around their redefinition of “activism.”

All in all, not a good week for the president’s signature “achievement.” Far be it from us to tell the administration how to spend the American people’s hard-earned tax dollars, but it will take a lot more than \$20 million in PR to convince a majority of Americans that ObamaCare is a good thing.

### Hope ‘n’ Change: CBO Warns of ‘Fiscal Cliff’

The Congressional Budget Office warned this week that the economy might slide back into recession (some might argue it never came out of one) if Congress allows the massive tax hikes scheduled to take effect Jan. 1. CBO predicts the economy will contract by 1.3 percent in the first half of 2013 without congressional action. We have warned of what CBO calls a “fiscal cliff” for some time, so we’re pleased to see them publicize the dire straits into which we are sailing.

However, the CBO likewise warns that scheduled spend-

ing cuts -- part of last year's deal to raise the debt ceiling -- will contribute to economic trouble. Granted, government is a major player in many sectors of the economy, but we contend that lower spending will *help* and not hinder the economy. Money spent by the government is money taken out of the economy, not money the government itself generates. As if to acknowledge this fact, CBO says *not* addressing the national debt will imperil future economic growth. Still, addressing it through massive tax hikes and paltry spending cuts *a la* Europe definitely isn't the way to go.

Unfortunately, the uncertainty will likely continue until after November's election because both parties want to run on their policies before hashing out the solution in the year-end lame-duck session. That is unless Barack Obama determines another temporary fix is necessary for his re-election prospects.

### The BIG Lie

"I don't know how [Republicans have] been bamboozling folks into thinking that they are the responsible, fiscally disciplined party. They run up these wild debts and then when we take over we've gotta clean it up." --Barack Obama, deficit king and Blame-Caster-in-Chief

"Since I've been president, federal spending has risen at the lowest pace in nearly 60 years." --Obama

Not to absolve George W. Bush of all blame, but Democrats have controlled the purse strings since 2007. And technically, none of Obama's budgets has passed Congress, but if one had, deficits would have been even larger. He has presided over deficits more than *three times* the size of his predecessor's largest one, and he has kept in place the new spending floor at historic highs -- as if the 2008 crisis were permanent. Unusual though it may be, he is responsible for most of FY2009 spending -- when the trillion-dollar ball really got rolling with the "stimulus" and such -- having signed nine of the 12 appropriations bills after taking office. And then there's ObamaCare, for which spending doesn't kick in until 2014.

### Campaign Trail: Stay on Script

Newark Mayor Cory Booker, a Democrat, stirred up quite the political storm Sunday, openly stating his revulsion of Obama campaign attacks against Bain Capital and other private equity firms. Mitt Romney founded Bain, now Obama's favorite corporate target. Booker's rant called out both presidential campaigns for focusing on side issues, but it was the high-profile Democrat's words

in support of Bain's record that drove the news cycle. "If you look at the totality of Bain Capital's record, they've done a lot to support businesses, to grow businesses," Booker said. Of course, this doesn't fit the Democrat narrative of Romney as robber baron and Bain as his weapon of choice.

When Booker posted an Internet message later that day "clarifying" his earlier remarks, it was clear that the Obama campaign was in full damage control mode. But they didn't do a very good job. Ben LaBolt, Obama 2012's press secretary, stated Monday on CNN that the campaign didn't have any conversations with Booker or prompt him to make any kind of retraction. Booker told a completely different story to MSNBC, claiming, "They had good conversations with me. ... [It] made me say, 'You know what, I need to go on and clarify.'" LaBolt later clarified his own clarification, stating that the Obama campaign didn't tell Booker to post a video. We guess it all depends on what the definition of "conversation" is.

Obama said that not only was Bain Capital fair game, but it's "what this campaign's going to be about." The only strategy that may work for Obama is to keep everyone focused on Romney by attacking his success in the private sector. It will come easy for Obama because he rejects capitalism anyway, and he knows he can't run on his own record in public equity.

In fact, the president might actually want to thank Bain for its success. If the private equity firm wasn't good at what it does, Obama may not have top fundraiser Jonathan Lavine on his team. Lavine, who has raised over \$200,000 for Obama, is a current managing director with Bain Capital and has been with the firm since 1997.

### The Washington Post Strikes Out Again

The Washington Post published another lame hit piece aimed at Mitt Romney last week, this time contemplating how an 1857 incident between Mormons and Christians could affect Romney's electoral chances in Arkansas 155 years later. The article, complete with interviews of local descendants, detailed how Mormon militia gunned down Arkansans traveling through Utah in September 1857. The Post justified the story as legitimate political speculation about Romney's ability to win Arkansas, even though the article admits "there is scant evidence that Romney's religion is making much difference in how voters are thinking." Then why run the story? Simple -- attack Romney.

The Post's story last week, representing Romney as a bullying homophobe, was debunked, so the Post attacked from a different angle, trying to produce a hit piece that will stick. It's obvious that the Obama campaign stated it would not attack Romney's Mormon faith because it could rely on the Leftmedia to step up to the plate.

### Obama's Rough Sledding in the Primaries

West Virginia Democrats awarded 40 percent of the May 8 primary vote to a convicted felon serving time in Texas rather than offer their support for the incumbent president. This week saw more of the same, as Tennessee attorney John Wolfe won almost 42 percent of the Democrat primary vote in Arkansas, while about 42 percent of Kentucky Democrats put their hope in "uncommitted" rather than Obama. As columnist John Fund says, however, "[N]o matter how well [Wolfe] does, don't expect Team Obama to allow him or any other candidate to collect delegates who could become a magnet for media attention at the Democratic convention in Charlotte."

### News From the Swamp: The Ex-Patriot Tax Grab

Sens. Charles Schumer (D-NY) and Robert Casey (D-PA) are proposing punitive new provisions in the tax code to discourage millionaires such as Facebook co-founder Eduardo Saverin from renouncing their citizenship to duck federal income taxes. Citizens who leave the U.S. *already* pay an exit tax, and the Department of Justice has the power to bar expatriates from returning if it determines they left the country for tax reasons. Schumer and Casey's bill goes further, stating that any expatriate with a net worth over \$2 million or a five-year average tax liability of at least \$148,000 will *automatically* be considered to have left the country for tax reasons. As per the IRS doctrine of "guilty until proved innocent," individuals will have to establish the legitimacy of their departure.

The bill is reminiscent of a policy from the former Soviet Union: You can leave the country, but your assets stay behind. Conservatives rightly argue that instead of raising the pain level, the U.S. must change its tax code so that people like Saverin aren't tempted to take such drastic measures. Unfortunately, Speaker John Boehner said that he supports the bill if it's "necessary," which needlessly encouraged Democrat efforts.

Ideally, American citizenship is more than a cost/benefit analysis. However, America should not be a place in which entrepreneurs aren't comfortable with setting down roots elsewhere because the government punishes their hard work with onerous taxes.

## ECONOMY

### Note to Press:

#### No Help Needed in Talking Down Economy

For the last three years, Americans have been force-fed a set of narratives that exonerate the current administration: The recession and deficit are all Bush's fault, the stimulus package needs time to work, greedy businesses are sitting on their billions rather than hiring new workers, and so on. As a final measure to absolve Barack Obama of responsibility for his policies, any poor economic news is considered "unexpected."

Yet almost any thinking American can see that we're really not better off than we were four years ago, and too much time has passed since Bush left office and the various economic stimuli were approved. In fact, during the Obama "recovery," the U.S. has experienced the 30 worst months of employment in the past 25 years. Also, for the first time in history, a majority of the unemployed have attended college.

None of this stopped the Associated Press in its latest blame-the-Republicans story -- Is GOP Trying to Sabotage Economy to Hurt Obama?. Telling the truth about the economy is apparently now "sabotage." Of course, all but conservative media are in the tank for Obama's reelection, so this tone isn't surprising. Even still, it won't be Obama asking voters the "better off" question because he won't like the answer.

### Regulatory Commissars:

#### Let the States Handle Fracking Regs

A study by the University of Buffalo's Shale Resources and Society Institute is being panned by environmentalists for daring to suggest that state regulation of hydraulic fracturing, better known as "fracking," are sufficient to safeguard the interests of both producers and the environment. Critics called the research team "industry shells" and, of course, questioned the funding sources for the pro-fracking study. On the other hand, studies that promote the ecofascists' cause are as pure as the driven snow. Or something.

The study looked at environmental impacts in Pennsylvania, a state that embraced fracking as an economic shot in the arm, and found that through appropriate regulation and improvements spearheaded by the competitiveness of the industry, environmental risks declined over the four-year study period. The study doesn't claim the practice is perfectly safe, but encourages an honest assessment of the

risks and benefits rather than the shrill cacophony perfected by radical environmentalists over the last decade as the practice came into more common use.

The state of New York is a particular hotbed in the fight between those who wish to unlock the rich potential of the Marcellus Shale formation and environmentalists who dug in their heels in an effort to prevent the state from joining in. A moratorium has been in place in New York since 2008 as their state Department of Environmental Conservation began a review of state regulations; meanwhile, neighboring Pennsylvania has prospered. It seems that Radical Green has no problem with onerous state regulations, while others bear the penalty of their zeal.

### **Around the Nation:**

#### **California's Railroad to Nowhere**

It began as a \$33 billion dream, but has ballooned into a \$100 billion nightmare for a state that's already staring at a \$16 billion shortfall in next year's budget. California Democrat Gov. Jerry Brown wants to press ahead with a bullet train that's supposed to eventually traverse the 432-mile route between San Francisco and Los Angeles in just over two-and-a-half hours. Yet the hoped-for \$50 billion contribution from Uncle Sam is probably now a pipe dream.

Touted as part of a "green" initiative by a Moonbeam who hates cars as much as Al Gore, the train will, ironically, depend on electricity created from fossil fuels. However, the real concern is the lack of private investment and willingness by contractors to bid on the project, fearing they might be stuck when the state runs out of money. While voters approved an initial \$9 billion in bonds in 2008, they're having second thoughts now. Unfortunately for them, Democrats won't place another referendum on the ballot because voters now oppose the bullet train by a 2-1 margin. So it's state taxpayers that have to bite the bullet if Brown has his way. It seems the only thing moving on this railroad is the debt total.

#### **Facebook IPO Disappoints**

Facebook's initial public offering, a market debut at \$104 billion, began with warning signs such as "insiders and longtime investors selling out the maximum number of shares at the highest possible price." Beyond that, in the first quarter, revenue fell 6 percent and profit fell 32 percent, while big advertiser General Motors pulled its ads from Facebook due to lack of return. Facebook stock lost a quarter of its value in the first two days.

Some of the investors who were "zuckered" by the hype are now suing Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs for revising forecasts without proper disclosure to potential investors. House and Senate lawmakers are beginning to investigate, as well. It will be interesting to see how this plays out, and whether anyone really learned the lessons of the first tech bubble.

## **SECURITY**

### **The NATO Summit**

Chicago hosted a two-day NATO summit this week, with NATO leaders saying that they set an "irreversible" course to abandon Afghanistan by the middle of next year and with Barack Obama announcing that the war "as we understood it is over." Easy words to say, but the jihadis have yet to chime in. Left unanswered, of course, were questions of how to prevent Afghanistan from descending into chaos and how to stop a Taliban takeover after allied troops leave -- and how to provide for the estimated \$4 billion additional cost of Afghani "independence." After more than 10 years of war, NATO gives every appearance of just being tired of the whole thing, which is quite a change of strategy from just two years ago. Dear Leader also babbled something about a "transformational decade of peace and stability and development" coming to Afghanistan, but given his record in the U.S. on that count, the Afghans shouldn't hold their breath.

In other news from the summit, NATO's chief said that Europe now has limited defense capability against ballistic missiles. Included in this initial system are missile interceptors on a U.S. Navy ship in the Mediterranean and a radar site in Turkey. The final system, scheduled for full capability in 2020, will link all of the allies' missile defense systems, including ships, satellites and radar, under NATO control from a U.S. base in Ramstein, Germany. That is, unless Obama gets too much heat from Russia and decides to stab NATO in the back and give it up, as he did with Poland and the Czech Republic in 2009. Recall earlier this year that he asked then-Russian President Dmitri Medvedev for "space" on the issue, because, he said, "After my election I have more flexibility."

Finally, what's a gathering of Western world leaders without the usual grab bag of leftist thugs, malcontents and bored, spoiled Western ingrates (we're talking about Occupiers, not national leaders). Those arrested were three men for allegedly plotting to firebomb Obama's Chicago campaign headquarters, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel's home, and Chicago police stations and squad cars. One other man was arrested for wanting to blow up

a Chicago bridge, and another for attempted possession of explosives or incendiary devices. So much destruction and mayhem to spread in the name of “peace.”

### Obama Gives Classified Info to Hollywood

Barack Obama *really* loves spiking the football on the raid that killed Osama bin Laden. He loves it so much, that his administration has leaked classified information to Hollywood filmmakers to aid their coming feature film on the subject. Sony Pictures, however, pushed the Oct. 12 release back to December, thwarting the benefit Obama sought in the election. According to documents obtained by Judicial Watch, filmmakers gained access to the Navy SEAL captain who planned, operated and commanded SEAL Team Six, which reportedly killed bin Laden. They also spoke with John Brennan, chief counterterrorism adviser to the president, and to Denis McDonough, deputy national security adviser. Director Kathryn Bigelow, who won an Academy Award for the anti-Iraq War movie “The Hurt Locker,” is doing the project.

### A Study in Contrasts:

#### Lockerbie Bomber vs. Pakistani Doctor

The Scottish government released Abdelbaset Ali Mohamed al-Megrahi -- a.k.a. the Lockerbie Bomber -- in 2009 because he ostensibly had only three months to live. Three *years* later, he is finally dead. That’s small consolation to the families of the 270 people (189 Americans) al-Megrahi killed when he bombed Pan Am Flight 103 over Scotland in December 1988. He spent his final three years not in prison but at home in Libya, foolishly released by the Scots.

By contrast, Shakil Afridi, a Pakistani doctor who aided the CIA in tracking down Osama bin Laden, was sentenced to 33 years in prison for treason by our “ally,” Pakistan. Pakistani authorities arrested Afridi soon after bin Laden met his maker, and the U.S. pushed for his release. So much for that. In response, the Senate Appropriations Committee cut \$33 million in aid to Islamabad -- \$1 million for every year of Afridi’s sentence. That would sound better if we weren’t giving Pakistan *billions* in aid.

#### Muslim Soldier Guilty of Fort Hood Bomb Plot

“A federal jury on Thursday convicted a Muslim soldier on six charges in connection with a failed plot to blow up a Texas restaurant full of Fort Hood troops, his religious mission to get ‘justice’ for the people of Iraq and Afghanistan,” reports the Associated Press. Pfc. Naser Jason Abdo went AWOL from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, last July, and he was arrested on a tip from a gun store. Authorities

found bomb-making components and other weapons in his room, and he confessed to the plot “because I don’t appreciate what my unit did in Afghanistan.” U.S. District Judge Walter Smith will issue a sentence for the “conscientious objector” in July, and he faces a maximum sentence of life in prison.

### Iran and UN Have Tea, Crumpets

Iran and the P5+1 (the five UN Security Council permanent members and Germany) met again this week in Baghdad. Predictably, the only thing both sides agreed upon was the need for more talks. It has become impossible to caricature the Iran-UN process, so we won’t bother. Readers can take their pick as to which of these statements is the most absurd. EU rep Catherine Ashton: “It is clear we both want to make progress, and there is some common ground.” (Both sides *are* carbon-based life forms.) Iran’s chief negotiator Saeed Jalili: “The result of the talks was that we were able to get more familiar with the views of each other.” (After *nine years* of negotiations one would think they should have taken care of this already.) An un-named U.S. rep: “We’re moving in a step-by-step process. ... [I]t’s good for them, good for us, good for the world.” (Depends on how you define “good”; and “us”; and “the world.”)

Meanwhile, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed legislation Monday that increases the sanctions pressure on Iran. The U.S. will join the EU in sanctioning Iran’s oil and banking sectors, leading to an eventual showdown between American voters’ desire to resolve the Iran problem and their desire for affordable gasoline.

## CULTURE

### Faith and Family: ‘Transgender’ at Five?

Stephan and Jean appear to be average American parents, but they deal with a situation unimaginable to most: At the age of two, their daughter Kathryn began proclaiming, “I am a boy.” She didn’t want to wear dresses, have long hair, or do “girl things.” Thinking their child was going through a phase, Stephan and Jean alternately placated and cajoled their daughter to act, well, like a daughter. But by the time she reached the age of four, Kathryn had not “grown out” of it and was more insistent than ever that she is male, so her parents chose to allow her to live as a boy. “Tyler,” as Kathryn is now called, wears boy’s clothes, has a buzz cut, and is even introduced as their son.

Petula Dvorak, a former reporter, current leftist columnist and all-around opportunist, had the good fortune of

meeting this family through her own son, who attends school with “Tyler’s” older sister. The result was an article in *The Washington Post* that pushes only the left side of the transgendered children debate. The opinion of the psychiatric community is far from uniform on how parents should deal with this issue, but Dvorak’s article is one-sided. Basically, she says, society’s intolerance is to blame for even making this an issue in the first place, and parents’ only recourse is to encourage their child to live as the other gender until -- not if -- gender reassignment surgery is appropriate.

As columnist Mona Charen writes, “The problem with the Post’s recommended approach -- which amounts to ‘let’s accept a child’s version of reality to avoid causing depression or worse’ -- is that the decision of parents to indulge a child’s whim on gender identity is itself irreversible.” Unfortunately, when it comes to the homosexual agenda, it’s rarely about what’s best for kids.

#### **Village Academic Curriculum: Teacher Tirade and Banned Soda**

A North Carolina teacher has been suspended with pay after she flew off the handle when, during a discussion about Mitt Romney’s alleged high-school bullying, a student pointed out that Barack Obama had admitted to bullying someone in high school, too. Telling the student that he “will not disrespect the president of the United States in this classroom,” the teacher launched into an angry diatribe, going so far as to claim that people were arrested for criticizing President George W. Bush. (If that were the case, undoubtedly the vast majority of the media would have mug shots on file.) In response, the student accurately noted that criticism alone isn’t grounds for arrest. We’re not sure what’s worse: that a social studies teacher understands constitutional liberties less than her student; that the teacher spun high tales of arrested Bush-era discontents; or that the taxpayers of North Carolina are still paying her salary.

Meanwhile, in other education news, a Utah high school has been fined \$15,000 for -- wait for it -- selling soda during lunchtime. It seems federal law cooked up by Café Washington says for some unknown reason that schools can sell carbonated beverages before lunch is served but not after. Ironically, the funds to pay the fine will come from money the school uses to pay for activities including music and art. Additionally, the school now has to find a way to keep the soda machines inaccessible during lunch. Nice to see educational energies spent on such worthy causes.

#### **Second Amendment: Soldier Recovers His Guns**

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Augustine Kim served two tours in Afghanistan, where he was injured severely and spent three months undergoing surgery and recovery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Two years ago, however, Kim was pulled over and arrested by the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, DC, and charged with four felony counts -- for having firearms locked securely in his trunk. His guns were confiscated, but after the ensuing two years of legal wrangling, Kim will regain his property by Memorial Day. All it took was a couple of phone calls from Sens. Jim DeMint and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina to the District’s police chief. Better late than never. According to *The Washington Times*’ Emily Miller, “The Civil Asset Forfeiture Reform Act says the federal government has 60 days from the date of seizure to send out notices to possible claimants. Then if someone files a claim, the feds have 90 days to file a forfeiture case or return the property.” Apparently, the same doesn’t apply in the District.

#### **And Last...**

The U.S. Senate, not to be bothered with passing a budget or tax reform or other things of import, did succeed in one small endeavor this week. The upper chamber passed S. 2367, which requires the removal of the word “lunatic” from all U.S. Code, because it stigmatizes the mentally handicapped. Sen. Kent Conrad (D-ND), who introduced the bill with Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID), said, “[T]he continued use of this pejorative term has no place in the U.S. Code.” As blogger Doug Powers quipped, however, “Forget about a word in the federal code -- there needs to be a bill prohibiting lunatics from serving in federal *government*.” Next thing we know, the Obama White House will be giving financial advice to children. Oh wait -- they’re already doing that. Talk about lunacy...

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

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.)