



THE FOUNDATION

"As riches increase and accumulate in few hands, as luxury prevails in society, virtue will be in a greater degree considered as only a graceful appendage of wealth, and the tendency of things will be to depart from the republican standard. This is the real disposition of human nature." --Alexander Hamilton

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

ACORN -- A Tough Nut to Crack

The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) bills itself as "the nation's largest grassroots community organization of low- and moderate-income people." Its mission is typical leftist activism -- anything from advocating for a higher minimum wage and the type of home loans that precipitated the housing crisis to ballot initiatives and voter registration. We know that ACORN has also submitted fraudulent voter registration forms filled out by "Mickey Mouse" and other fictional characters. But, hey, "get out the vote" knows no bounds. Also, Barack Obama worked alongside ACORN during his own "community organizing" days.

This week, news broke that the Census Bureau, which had planned to partner with ACORN in next year's census, severed all ties with the organization. Then the U.S. House and Senate each voted to deny the group access to further federal housing funds (though who knows what will happen in Conference Committee). Even the Obama White House "distanced" itself from this taxpayer-funded organization.

So why all the fuss? If inquiring minds read only The New York Times, they might be in the same blissfully ignorant boat as ABC News anchor Charlie Gibson, who, when asked about the ACORN scandal, claimed, "I don't even know about it."

The story began when two young conservative activists, James O'Keefe and Hannah Giles, posed as a pimp and a prostitute seeking advice on obtaining a loan for a home to use as a brothel, evading income tax on the young woman's income and claiming as dependents underage El Salvadoran girls they wanted to employ. In five different ACORN offices (Baltimore, DC, New York, and San Diego and San

Bernardino, California), workers bit on the story, hooker, line and sinker, freely giving pointers without so much as batting an eye on how to get illegal loans and evade taxes. The videos are posted on Andrew Breitbart's BigGovernment.com. None showed concern for the obvious implication of child abuse.

The Times, however, with the motto "All the News That's Fit to Print," didn't find anything fit to print until days later, and then only with the laughable headline, "Conservatives Draw Blood From Acorn." As Charlie Gibson condescended, "[M]aybe this is just one you leave to the cables."

The truly unfortunate thing is that ACORN has received more than \$50 million in taxpayer dollars since 1994 and was set to receive \$8.5 billion in "stimulus" cash. Most Democrats are feverishly turning off the funding spigot before this scandal drags their own political skeletons out of the closet. For the record, however, seven senators voted to continue funding this criminal enterprise, and, not surprisingly, they're all Democrats: Sheldon Whitehouse (RI), Dick Durbin (IL), Roland Burris (IL), Kirsten Gillibrand (NY), Bob Casey Jr. (PA), Patrick Leahy (VT) and self-proclaimed socialist independent Bernie Sanders (VT). In addition, 75 (yes, seventy-five) House Democrats voted to continue throwing our money at the group. Space doesn't permit us to list the names of these disgraceful twits, but BigGovernment.com has them for all to see.

One of the ACORN workers did tell O'Keefe, "Honesty is not going to get you the house." Perhaps she meant "House" with a capital "H." In any case, O'Keefe and Giles deserve a medal.

On Cross-Examination

"Good thing I wasn't drinking coffee when I read the Politico headline about Team Obama trying to

run away from ACORN: 'W.H. distances from activist group.' Choking. Up. With. Laughter. Barack Obama can no more disown ACORN than he could disown his own shadow. He IS ACORN. And ACORN is him. The 'accountability' that White House flack Robert Gibbs says they take 'extremely seriously' doesn't extend to Team Obama itself -- and the accountability they have evaded for pouring more than \$800,000 into an ACORN front group for campaign advance work that was mysteriously reclassified as 'get-out-the-vote' work. As for the ACORN 'advisory committee' that will 'audit' the group's illicit activities, I repeat: Choking. Up. With. Laughter." --columnist and blogger Michelle Malkin

From the 'Non Compos Mentis' File

"The truth remains that thousands of New Yorkers who are facing foreclosure depend on charitable organizations like Acorn for assistance." --Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)

But as Investor's Business Daily argues, "The fact is that this 'charitable organization' helped precipitate the mortgage meltdown that shattered the economy. It was Acorn, under the cover of the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), that intimidated banks through mob action into making risky loans in the name of 'fairness' to people who could not afford them. The tactics, taken straight from the pages of Saul Alinsky's 'Rules for Radicals,' were used by Acorn as early as 1991, when it took over the House Banking Committee room for two days to protest efforts to scale back the CRA."

Essential Liberty Project

On Thursday, Constitution Day, *The Patriot Post* announced the first phase of our new "Essential Liberty Project," the most important initiative we have ever undertaken, one motivated by the most critical need of our time. The goal is to support the restoration of constitutional integrity, an objective that has been foremost in *The Patriot's* mission since our inception in 1996.

To that end, Phase One entails the distribution of *millions* of Constitution booklets to high school and collegiate students nationwide, as a primer on our nation's founding documents and essential liberty. This compact booklet contains the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, as well as a comprehensive introduction on liberty and Rule of Law by Mark Alexander, recently published in *The*

Patriot as Part One and Part Two. It is an outstanding resource for young Patriots.

We are asking you to facilitate a successful launch of this endeavor in two ways:

First, if you are a parent or grandparent of a high school or college student, please consider providing these Constitution booklets to your student's entire class, grade or school. The booklets are available in bulk [here](#).

Second, if you would rather give a donation for the distribution of Constitution booklets to student groups or classes who do not already have sponsors, you can do so at our Essential Liberty Project [support page](#).

Of course, we encourage distribution of the Constitution booklets to other groups, organizations, clubs, ministries and the like.

Help us restore our Constitution's mandate for Rule of Law by distributing Constitution booklets or by [supporting that distribution](#).

ObamaCare, Baucus Style

Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT) made public his health care proposal this week, and no one on either side of the aisle or in the White House liked it very much. As Senate Finance Committee Chairman, Baucus took it upon himself to put a package together that he thought stood the best chance of drawing bipartisan support, but, instead, his plan landed with a resounding thud. None of the Republicans and Democrats from the so-called "Gang of Six" who were working with him on the bill showed up for the press conference to announce the bill, and White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs stated that Baucus's plan did not reflect Barack Obama's vision for health care. This is bad news for Baucus, and it may be bad news for ObamaCare in general -- which, of course, is good news for America.

The plan does not include a public option, but that's about the only good thing that can be said about it. It advocates heavy regulation of insurers, forcing them to accept all comers regardless of pre-existing conditions, and it also establishes "exchanges" where insurers will be required to develop standardized plans for comparison-shopping.

The plan also includes an absolutely brutal tax and fee structure to "pay" for itself. Insurers would be forced to fork over an excise tax of 35 percent for high-value health plans, because liberals won't be able to live with themselves if they allow some Americans to have better health care plans than others, even though it's often a matter of personal choice. (And here we thought liberals believed in "the right to choose.") Arbitrary fees for insurers and makers of drugs and medical devices would also be used to fund the plan. While Congress always seems to forget this, keep in mind that all of these costs will be passed on to you, the consumer.

All Americans would be required to have health insurance or face stiff penalties. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that even after a low-income family receives government subsidies to purchase health insurance, their personal "investment" into a mandatory plan could amount to more than 15 percent of their annual income.

Baucus's plan also takes a swing at business. Companies are not now required by law to offer insurance to their employees, but those with 50 or more employees that don't offer coverage will face a \$400 *per employee* fine. This fine would kick in if any one employee receives subsidies to buy insurance.

Conspicuously absent is tort reform -- the billions of dollars spent by doctors to pay up or settle frivolous lawsuits, the ever-increasing malpractice scam that requires them to buy expensive insurance policies -- all of which raise the costs to the insurers. Could this be a result of all the contributions made by trial lawyers to the Democrats? Surely not!

Criticism of Baucus's plan has come from all sides, and with virtually no support, it may very well die an ignominious death. It will go before the full Senate Finance Committee for dissection and potential rewrites, but there is little reason to believe that it (or any other Democrat proposal) can be made to fit within federal government powers enumerated in the Constitution.

Protesters Come to Washington

A large crowd of Patriots descended on the nation's capital last Saturday to voice their concern and displeasure with Washington's out-of-control spending habits and interference with people's lives. Estimates of the number of participants varied widely, from 70,000 to as many as two million -- but more on that later.

This civil demonstration followed the message and the momentum of the Tea Parties from earlier this year. Placards called attention to a number of issues: chronic government overspending and taxation, nationalization of various industries, the general ineffectiveness of Congress, and the liberal perception that the Tea Party protest movement is a racist mob. Actually viewing the gathering, however, would shed some bright light on that perception. The crowd represented a broad cross section of the country, from senior citizens concerned about ObamaCare's impact on their health care to college students worried about the tremendous debt their generation faces in the coming years, and everyone in between. They were polite to the police officers on street duty, and they left the Mall and streets significantly cleaner than attendees of Barack Obama's January immaculation. Of course, if the larger media outlets aside from Fox News actually bothered to report on the march as opposed to simply offering their own opinions of it, these facts would be known.

There is no official figure of how many people actually attended the march. Liberal pundits stated earlier last week that two million or so protesters were expected. Their high estimate is a slick tactic employed in protest politics -- pin high expectations on opponents, only to mock them when said "expectations" aren't met. However, the low-end number of 70,000 is absurd. There are photos of *portions* of the crowd that alone contain at least that many people.

Charlie Martin of Pajamas Media pegged the actual size at around 850,000 after performing a series of calculations based upon known facts such as the size of the National Mall, National Park Service definitions of what constitutes a crowd (one person per five square feet), and the number of marchers who passed down Pennsylvania Avenue in a three-hour period. If this number is correct, then it was about the same size of the crowd that attended Obama's inauguration. That event was originally estimated at two million but was later quietly reduced after careful study of satellite photos of the Mall.

New & Notable Legislation

Last month, the Social Security Administration announced that there would be no cost of living adjustment (COLA) in 2010, marking the first time since 1975 that Social Security recipients would

receive no annual raise. Yet Medicare payments by seniors are slated to jump 9 percent, at least according to Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY). She's the sponsor of a House bill to give a one-time payment of \$150 to Medicare recipients as a makeup for losing the 2010 COLA. Can anyone say "stimulus" payment?

For the most part, food and energy costs have gone down, leaving the largest source of increased costs to be the government: One tiny case in point is the \$7 billion cost to make these one-time payments. Of course, the feds will take back some of that money since Social Security benefits are considered taxable income. Beware of the hand that gives since it can take away as well.

News From the Swamp: Wilson Rebuked

On Tuesday, the House voted 240-179 -- largely along party lines -- to "disapprove" the behavior of Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC), who shouted, "You lie!" at President Barack Obama during a particularly galling portion of the Obfuscator-in-Chief's speech to a joint session of Congress last Wednesday. Wilson had already apologized and Obama had accepted, but that wasn't good enough for House Democrats. It is noteworthy that just prior to Wilson's outburst, Obama said that the charge of "panels of bureaucrats with the power to kill off senior citizens" was "a lie, plain and simple." He then called the claim that ObamaCare would cover illegal aliens "false." It was this straw that broke Wilson's back. Oddly enough, immediately after this bit of truth-telling, Wilson's fellow lawmakers began working on health care reform language that would explicitly deny coverage to illegals, while Obama began advocating legalizing illegals so that they can get health care coverage.

In other news, the president has yet to apologize for calling his opponents liars, and the House did not vote to disapprove.

Meanwhile, The Wall Street Journal reports, "Earlier Tuesday, the House Rules Committee circulated guidelines on how lawmakers may refer to the president or his team. It is acceptable to call a presidential message 'a disgrace to the country,' the memo said, or refer to 'our half-baked nitwits handling foreign affairs.' But a lawmaker may not call the president a 'liar' or 'cowardly.'" All of the above easily apply to the current administration.

This Week's 'Braying Jackass' Award

"[Congressman Joe Wilson] did not help the cause of, uh, of uh, diversity and, uh, tolerance with his remarks. If I were a betting man I would say that it instigated, uh, more, uh, racist sentiment, feeling that it's okay, you don't have to, you don't have to, uh, bury it now, you can bring it out, talk about it fully. And so, uh, I guess we'll probably have, uh, folks, uh, puttin' on, uh, white hoods and white uniforms again and, uh, riding through the countryside intimidating people. And, um, you know, that, that's the, uh, logical conclusion if, uh, this kind of, um, attitude, uh, uh, is not, uh, rebuked. And uh, uh, Congressman Wilson represents it -- he's the face of it, and, uh, that's why I support the resolution." --Rep. Hank Johnson (D-GA), exhibiting the same verbal tic as Obama -- indicating that both are either lying or spouting B.S.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Choosing Hope Over Experience

Patriot readers will recall that one of the many reasons we opposed Barack Obama's candidacy for president last year was his spectacular lack of experience in international affairs (not to mention everything else). As expected, the results of that inexperience, combined with Obama's far-left bent, can be seen in several of the most important foreign policy issues facing the United States today, particularly what to do about Iran's nuclear program.

Obama thought he could simply extend his hand in peace to the lunatics in Iran and bring them around, as though the mullahs didn't really mean it all those hundreds of times when they said they would never give up their cherished nuclear program. Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also thought they could simply "reset" relations with Russia through the sheer force of their personalities.

Yet, Iran has repeatedly dismissed Obama's overtures, and the rogue state yawned at his latest deadline for nuclear talks by submitting its own proposal that virtually ignores the nuclear issue. Meanwhile, Israel is watching with growing concern as Iran moves closer to obtaining a nuclear weapon. How long can Israel afford to wait? How will Iran react when -- increasingly a matter of when, not if -- Israel takes military action against Tehran's nuclear program?

As for the Russians, they finally convinced Obama to betray our Polish allies on missile defense. In a bitter irony that is a hallmark of this administration, the decision was announced on Thursday, Sept. 17, the 70th anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Poland. In "return," the erstwhile Soviets now indicate that they will *not* support any additional sanctions on Iran -- a threat they can back up with UN Security Council veto power. Why offer any concessions when Obama so readily gives up? (Incidentally, Obama claims that by quitting on missile defense, he is actually going to "strengthen America's defenses against ballistic-missile attack." Up is down, black is white...)

In the end, the heart of Obama's presidency is this: Instead of actually *being* something, Obama thinks it's sufficient to merely *project* something. That might convince the ACORN crowd, but the nuts in charge of Iran (and a nascent USSR) will only laugh.

Warfront With Jihadistan: ROE Cost Lives

It's a scene that has been repeated too many times in recent U.S. conflicts and has cost far too many American soldiers' lives. We send our best and bravest off to fight the enemies of liberty while our politicians tie one hand behind the troops' back, essentially giving aid and comfort to the enemy. That aid and comfort, of course, are the Rules of Engagement (ROE) that define when, where and how our soldiers can fight and kill the enemy. The enemy has no such rules, which all too often leaves our troops unnecessarily exposed to enemy fire on the one hand, or exposed to prosecution by U.S. lawyers on the other, a choice that leads to uncertainty and, therefore, death on the battlefield.

Last week, when four U.S. Marines were killed in an ambush while training Afghan soldiers, the ROE were to blame. Eight Afghan troops and the Marine commander's Afghan interpreter also died in the ambush and the subsequent battle that took place in the village of Ganjgal, near the Pakistan border. The Marines came under heavy fire from jihadis hidden in the hills near the village, where women and children were helping to replenish the insurgents' ammunition. Citing the new ROE implemented by the Obama regime, designed to minimize Afghan civilian casualties, U.S. commanders repeatedly rejected calls from the Marines for artillery and air support aimed at the jihadis, who were dug into the slopes

around the village but not in the village proper. The lack of air support led to a fierce firefight and directly contributed to the Marines' deaths. This is nothing short of criminal.

While minimizing civilian casualties is proper, *we are at war*, and defeating the enemy is priority one. War-fighting decisions must be made by the troops who are actually in battle, not by cynical, agenda-driven politicians safely ensconced in their posh DC offices.

U.S. Air Force Birthday

Relentlessly committed to the defense of liberty, the United States Air Force celebrates its 62nd birthday today, Sept. 18. The Air Force began life as the Army Air Corps but became a separate Armed Services Branch when the Department of the Air Force was created by the National Security Act of 1947. As the U.S. Air Force continues its critical mission "to fly, fight and win ... in air, space and cyberspace," we ask that you pray for these brave Patriots prosecuting "The Long War" against Jihadistan, and for their families awaiting their safe return.

Profiles of Valor: U.S. Army Sgt. Monti

On June 21, 2006, in the Nuristan Province of Afghanistan near the Pakistan border, United States Army Sgt. First Class Jared C. Monti, then a staff sergeant, was commanding a 16-man patrol from the 3rd Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division. His unit was tasked with staking out a mountaintop position from which to call in artillery and air support for a larger operation. The Taliban were alerted to their position by a helicopter sent to resupply the men and soon surrounded the unit. As one of Monti's men, Pvt. Brian Bradbury, lay wounded and exposed to enemy fire, the sergeant twice ran into the open in an effort to rescue him but was twice forced back by machine-gun fire and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs). On his third attempt, an RPG struck him in the legs. "It was pure courage and love for his soldier," said Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Cunningham, a sniper who was also in the firefight. As Monti lay dying, his only request was that Cunningham tell his parents that he loved them. Before the firefight that claimed his life, Monti had already received other medals, including a Bronze Star, which his father didn't know about until after his son's death. Thursday, he was awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor, the 3,448th recipient, and sixth for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. All six were awarded posthumously.

Just Say 'Si'

Nancy Reagan's 1980s "Just Say No" to drugs campaign has recently been thrown under the autobús in Mexico. That's because President Felipe Calderón is effectively admitting through his actions that the so-called "War on Drugs" is at best a misallocation of Mexico's scarce national resources. This admission comes by way of Mexico's announcement that possession or use of "small amounts of drugs" (i.e., those for personal use) will henceforth be decriminalized. After years of unsuccessfully battling suppliers in the drug war, Calderón has finally realized that as long as demand exists and profit can be made, suppliers will thrive, as well.

Where does such a demand derive? Why, from the U.S., of course! Much as in the Prohibition Era, the entrenched Just-Say-No proponents continue to believe that peer pressure cures all evils. Unfortunately, long-term statistical data on the effectiveness of drug abstinence campaigns do not tend to confirm this belief. Out of desperation, Mexico is now responding with a completely different tactic: apply the principles of Econ 101 to the problem. In this case, decriminalizing personal-use quantities of drugs will increase supply, lower effective demand, and drive prices -- and hence criminal profit motives -- down.

Make no mistake: we're not advocating a Libertarian viewpoint with respect to drugs. Rather, we believe -- as Einstein did -- that "[t]he definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." If the current policy isn't working, change the policy. At a minimum, however, the "new" policy should seek to target the profit motive of would-be drug suppliers, reducing their motive to produce more drugs.

Accordingly, perhaps President Calderón would be well advised to seek counsel from the U.S., since with respect to this issue -- killing profit motives -- the U.S. has proven itself rather adept of late.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Regulatory Commissars:

The Cost of Cap-n-Tax

"The Obama administration has privately concluded that a cap and trade law would cost American taxpayers up to \$200 billion a year, the equivalent of hiking personal income taxes by about 15 percent," CBS News reports. "At the upper end of the admini-

stration's estimate, the cost per American household would be an extra \$1,761 a year." The Treasury Department released the report Tuesday after a Freedom of Information Act request by the free-market Competitive Enterprise Institute pried it out. Given the dismal numbers, it's no wonder the administration kept the report hidden until forced to be transparent -- despite Obama's campaign promise that his administration would be the "most open and transparent in history."

In one Treasury document, the estimated cost of cap-n-tax is blacked out: "While such a program can yield environmental benefits that justify its costs, it will raise energy prices and impose annual costs on the order [redacted]." That's comforting. A separate administration memo notes, "Economic costs will likely be on the order of 1% of GDP, making them equal in scale to *all existing environmental regulation*" [our emphasis].

Cap-n-tax passed the House by a slim margin in June -- only seven votes -- and prospects for passage are not good in the Senate. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) is already suggesting the bill may wait until next year. Treasury's report helps opponents who have warned all along that the massive cost imposed by legislation will have negligible impact on the environment. It would be a victory for liberty indeed if cap-n-tax runs out of gas.

Tired Old Protectionism

Need new tires for your car? Best get them now, as prices are about to jump, courtesy of Barack Obama's decision to hike tariffs from 4 percent to 35 percent on tires imported from China. The president claims increased imports from the Asian nation "cause or threaten to cause market disruption to ... domestic producers." But if you think American tire companies are happy, think again. In fact, no companies supported the tariffs, and Rutgers University Economist Thomas Pruse notes, "Not a single tire company thinks it will change the dynamics of the tire industry."

Then why the change? Well, the United Steelworkers Union brought a complaint against China, and when Big Labor calls, Obama caters. As Pruse explains, however, instead of helping America, the tariffs will hurt both consumers and workers in the form of higher prices, fewer tire purchases and subsequently as many as 15,000 fewer jobs for tire transporters, installers, etc.

Exacerbating the situation, China has threatened to retaliate by investigating complaints against U.S. auto parts and chicken imports, or, in its capacity on the UN Security Council, by vetoing action against Iran. Talk about a steep price.

Census Bureau Poverty Report

A report issued last week by the Census Bureau found that American's median household income declined 3.6 percent from 2007-2008, from \$52,163 to \$50,303. Those numbers reflect "the steepest year-over-year drop in forty years," according to The Wall Street Journal. "The 2008 median income, adjusted for inflation, was the lowest level since 1997, meaning many middle-class Americans have seen their living standards dialed back a decade, undoing advances made during boom years."

The Census also found that the official poverty level for 2008 climbed to 13.2 percent, from 12.5 percent the preceding year. While the current economic climate has created difficult circumstances for the average American, the Heritage Foundation notes, "The average person identified as 'poor' by the government has a living standard far higher than the public imagines. ... According to the government's own surveys, the typical 'poor' American has ... air conditioning, a car, a microwave, a refrigerator, a stove, and a clothes washer and dryer." The list goes on. With the government spending \$714 billion on welfare programs, not including Social Security and Medicare, how can it explain such high levels of apparent poverty? We should all be asking that question as the Obama administration pushes to redistribute even more of our tax dollars.

In other news, housing starts rose in August while jobless claims declined, and Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke declared on Monday that the "recession is very likely over at this point." While the Leftmedia are quick to attribute this to the so-called "stimulus" bill, it's more accurate to say that by constantly comparing the economy to the Great Depression, they grossly overestimated the recession in the first place.

Income Redistribution: A Tale of Two Americas

We in our humble shop have discovered that John Edwards was right after all: There *are* two Americas. However, we don't believe this story was quite what he had in mind.

An analysis by Chris Edwards (no relation to the former senator) of the Cato Institute found that federal civilian employees are a group not exactly hit hard by the recession. They now have an average compensation package (wages plus benefits) that doubles the average compensation package found in the private sector. Furthermore, it's an overall disparity that's increased over the last eight years.

In relating his findings, Edwards notes, "The result [of a lack of fiscal restraint during the Bush administration] has been an increasingly overpaid elite of government workers, who are insulated from the economic reality of recessions and from the tough competitive climate of the private sector." While federal employees tend to complain about their pay scale -- which is "only" about 60 percent higher than the private sector's -- it's telling that they quit their jobs much less often than do those in the private sector. Obviously few are forced out because the federal government never shrinks in size, and, as the data show, federal employees are loath to give up their gold-plated benefit packages.

It's a trend that will only increase with the proclivity of Barack Obama to expand the highly unionized government workforce and create additional bureaucracy. After all, someone has to push pencils for the dozens of czars Obama has appointed to supplement the already burgeoning workforce in place under those Cabinet department heads.

However, there is a chance this difference may be erased soon. With the proposed addition of thousands more workers to referee cap-n-tax and ration our health care, our growing government may finally leave no private sector jobs to be compared. That seems to be the desired result of this administration's policies.

CULTURE & POLICY

Around the Nation:

Guns, Crime and Prison Population

According to new data released by the FBI, violent crime in America continued its downward trend in 2008, proving once again that criminals -- not more guns -- are the problem. While murder, manslaughter and rape have all been on the decline since an all-time high in the early '90s, killings dropped 3.9 percent between 2007 and 2008 alone, even with millions of guns purchased during that time -- espe-

cially those scary "assault rifles" that give liberals such heartburn. "These are rates we haven't seen since the 1960's, even though the change from year to year has been rather small," said Alfred Blumstein, a criminal justice professor at Carnegie-Mellon University.

Of course, despite the drop in crime (or the fact that none of these crimes even require a gun), liberals continue to push for stricter gun control laws in the interests of our "safety," and the Leftmedia (expectantly) points out that crime usually rises during recessions and that the bulk of this data was gathered before the height of the economic crisis.

While government is trying to deprive us of our Second Amendment rights, courts are advancing the rights of criminals. When presented with a class-action suit brought by California inmates, a three-judge district court panel found that prison overcrowding is robbing them of their constitutional rights and decided to free 46,000 criminals in order to make incarceration more comfortable. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court for a stay on the ruling, arguing that the safety of Californians would be at risk if the prisoners are released, but the Supremes refused.

So, if the Left has its way, we should all turn in our firearms and pray that Big Brother will protect us from the thousands of newly released criminals prowling the streets. Another attempt to pay lip service to the Constitution while trampling it.

Judicial Benchmarks:

Court Weighs in on Surgery

From the "Court Jesters" File, the Associated Press reports, "An Indiana court has ruled that a pizza shop must pay for a 340-pound employee's weight-loss surgery to ensure the success of another operation for a back injury he suffered at work." The worker was hurt in March 2007 when struck in the back by a freezer door. Doctors advised that back surgery was needed, but that it wouldn't do much good unless he first lost weight -- he hit 380 pounds after the accident. His employer agreed to pay for the back surgery but claimed no obligation to pay for weight-loss surgery, which would cost between \$20,000 and \$25,000.

The Indiana workers' compensation board said that his weight and the accident combined to form a single injury. The court agreed. Score a jackpot for the

legal lotto. Of course, this decision will have unintended consequences detrimental to other employers and potential employees. The AP notes, "The Indiana Court of Appeals decision, coupled with a recent Oregon court ruling [that the state workers' compensation insurance must pay for gastric bypass surgery to ensure that a man's knee replacement surgery was effective], could make employers think twice before hiring workers with health conditions that might cost their companies thousands of dollars ... down the road." In other words, thinner employment, but not in the intended fashion.

Faith and Family: Murder in Michigan

A 63-year-old disabled man was shot and killed last Friday near a high school in Owosso, Michigan. This murder was particularly noteworthy because of the protest that James Pouillon was engaged in at the time of his death. CNS News reports, "Known as 'the sign man,' Pouillon, who had leg braces and required oxygen, was a pro-life activist for many years and well-known by other pro-life advocates around the country." Pouillon's death received some media coverage, though it was nothing compared to the media storm over the murder of late-term abortionist George Tiller in May. What little coverage of Pouillon there was included such descriptions of him as an "anti-abortion protester" with an "in-your-face" style. George Tiller, on the other hand, was a hero to the media. For his part, Barack Obama said two days after the shooting that the murder was "deplorable" and that "whichever side of a public debate you're on, violence is never the right answer." Tell that to the unborn babies Pouillon was defending.

And Last...

It appears that nothing is sacred in the Era of Hope and Change(TM) -- especially when it comes to advocating for ObamaCare. A trio of thugs knocked on the door of a home in Huntington, New York, claiming to have information supporting Barack Obama's proposed takeover of the health care system. A man dressed as a doctor with a stethoscope around his neck and a woman with a clipboard full of pamphlets forced their way into the home followed by a third perpetrator who had been hiding outside. That man shot the woman's boyfriend several times, shot the woman in the foot while she sat next to her two-year-old daughter and pistol-whipped the woman's mother. The three then fled with \$4,000 cash in a getaway car driven by a fourth thug. A fifth suspect remains at large. Michelle

Malkin observed, "Imagine the national uproar that would be occurring right now if these home invaders had posed as Tea Party activists." That would take quite an imagination, however, since Tea Party folks are calling on government to *stop* stealing our money.

Veritas vos Liberabit -- Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus, et Fidelis! Mark Alexander, Publisher, for The Patriot's editors and staff.

(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.)