



## THE FOUNDATION

“If we can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people, under the pretence of taking care of them, they must become happy.” --Thomas Jefferson

## GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

### When Reconciliation Doesn't Mean Getting Along

Reconciliation is still the buzzword on Capitol Hill as Democrat “leaders” Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi try to figure out how to ram ObamaCare down our throats. Not that they see it that way; as House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer put it, “That’s not ramming something through with a majority. It is doing what democracy calls for.” Well, this isn’t a democracy, it’s a republic: and the Founders set it up that way for a reason.

Accompanied by his teleprompter, Barack Obama began a renewed push for a vote on the health care bill by Easter when he met a group of people wearing lab coats in the Rose Garden on Wednesday (and *he* accused Rep. Eric Cantor of using a “prop” by bringing the 2,400-page bill itself to last week’s health care summit). Obama claimed that “new and improved” legislation “incorporates the best ideas from Democrats and Republicans.” As we said Tuesday, however, the problem isn’t whether the bill is “bipartisan.” A few Republican ideas sprinkled in won’t fix it. The problem, at its core, is that a plan for Congress to take over one-sixth of the U.S. economy is unconstitutional.

In the face of all evidence, the teleprompter continued, “I don’t believe we should give government bureaucrats or insurance company bureaucrats more control over health care in America.” Huh? Giving government bureaucrats control over health care in America is *precisely* what Obama is proposing to do.

For all the talk about reconciliation in the Senate, the House vote may be the more important one. The Associated Press reports, “The House passed health overhaul legislation by a narrow 220-215 vote in November, but since then several Democrats have defected or left the House. To avoid a filibuster in the Senate that Democrats can’t defeat, Obama is now pushing the House to approve the Senate’s version of the bill, along with a package

of changes to fix elements of the Senate bill that House Democrats don’t like, including a special Medicaid deal for Nebraska and a tax on high-value insurance plans that is opposed by organized labor.”

If Pelosi is able to strong-arm the Senate bill through the House with a bare majority, Senate reconciliation becomes moot. With three vacancies, Democrats need just 217 votes for passage, and there are a handful of Democrats who voted “no” in November who now say they’re undecided. On the other hand, 12 pro-life Democrats, led by Bart Stupak of Michigan, say they’re prepared to switch sides and scuttle ObamaCare if sufficient protections against abortion funding aren’t put in place. The Senate bill doesn’t meet their benchmark.

Never underestimate this president’s lack of shame, though -- or his penchant for Chicago-style politics. For example, Rep. Jim Matheson (D-UT) voted against ObamaCare in November, but he is now “undecided.” So on Wednesday, Obama nominated Jim’s brother Scott to the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. Offering jobs for playing the White House way is nothing new, and Scott Matheson is, to be fair, a well-credentialed nominee. However, even the *appearance* of selling judgeships for health care votes would give pause to a more honorable president.

As for leftist sentiment, perhaps MSNBC host Ed Schultz best summed it up this week, saying, “[S]mall government has never gotten anybody any health care.”

“The Republicans have a choice,” Schultz declared. “Lead, follow or get the hell out of the way. ... We have people in need and they need to be helped.”

Memo to Ed: If *government* would get out of the way, those people might be able to help themselves, as our Founders intended. Democrats aren’t about to let that happen because it really isn’t about helping those in need.

### Video of the Week

Barack Obama didn’t always think ramming through health care “reform” with reconciliation was a good idea. In fact, he once preached against it. [See the video](#)

### **This Week's 'Braying Jenny' Award**

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) recently explained what "bipartisanship" means, along with claiming Democrat camaraderie with the Tea Party:

The health care bill "can be bipartisan even though the votes might not be bipartisan. Because [Republicans] have made their imprint on this," she said.

Meanwhile, she also claimed that Democrats "share some of the views of the Tea Partiers in terms of the role of special interests in Washington." Good luck with that outreach, Nan.

### **News From the Swamp: Rangel's Time Is Up**

Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) temporarily stepped down as Chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee this week after being admonished in an ethics report for accepting corporation-financed trips to the Caribbean in 2007 and 2008. Rangel laid down the gavel only after Republicans threatened to force a formal vote calling for his removal. It wasn't the first time GOP House members have tried to get him to step aside for his numerous ethical lapses, but it was the first time that such a move had gained Democrat support.

After the report's release late last week, Rangel initially refused to step down, claiming he had no knowledge that the trips were out of line. That's a stretch. Nancy Pelosi noted in an interview that Rangel's actions weren't "something that jeopardized our country in any way." Apparently she doesn't think that ethically challenged and possibly illegal behavior by elected public officials is a harmful thing, at least not when Democrats do it. She had become Speaker in large part for her call to end the "culture of corruption" in Republican-controlled Washington. When it comes to extending that promise to her own party, her "principles" are checked at the door.

Rangel still believes that he will return to the chairmanship of Ways and Means, but his troubles are not over. He still faces ethics inquiries into unpaid taxes on vacation property, fundraising efforts, and his use of rent-stabilized apartments in his Harlem district for government purposes.

### **Bunning's Rise and Fall**

If Democrats pass a bill but then refuse to be bound by its conditions, was it ever really passed? Apparently, only one senator had the fortitude to say "yes." Sen. Jim Bunning (R-KY) drew national media attention and bipartisan attacks from his colleagues this week by daring to call

Democrats on their bluff of passing a pay-as-you-go (pay-go) policy -- allegedly requiring that new discretionary spending be offset by spending cuts or tax increases -- and then summarily ignoring it.

At issue was the 30-day extension of unemployment and health benefits -- measures which will add \$10 billion to the nearly \$1.6 trillion federal deficit. For days, Bunning held up a vote on the measure, noting that Democrats need to live up to their pay-go promise. He even offered a solution (which Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid rejected) of using \$10 billion of the \$500-plus billion in unspent stimu-less funds to offset the measure.

Against the backdrop of our astronomical deficit, \$10 billion is, sad to say, a drop in the bucket. But it's not the first drop. Unfortunately, a deal reached Tuesday night convinced Bunning to let the \$10 billion bill come to a vote, and it passed 78-19. Yet the process illustrates that -- surprise! -- Democrats don't care a whit what they say about controlling spending. Until they're held accountable, their votes will be as meaningless and empty as their promises.

### **New & Notable Legislation**

On Thursday, the House passed a \$35 billion "jobs" bill by a 217-201 vote. It combined the Senate's \$15 billion bill (passed last week) with \$20 billion in federal highway programs, and Democrats reluctantly amended the measure to conform to pay-as-you-go budget rules. The U.S. economy shed another 36,000 jobs in February with headline unemployment holding steady at 9.7 percent. But no worries -- federal government payroll *increased* by 7,000 jobs.

Reps. Mike Pence (R-IN) and Jeb Hensarling (R-TX) have proposed a constitutional amendment that would limit spending by the federal government. "With our nation facing a fiscal crisis, it is time to fundamentally change the way Washington spends the taxpayers' money," Pence said. The amendment would limit spending to one-fifth of U.S. economic output -- the post-World War II average -- unless two-thirds of each chamber of Congress determines otherwise, or waive the provision under a declaration of war.

Speaking of money, Rep. Patrick McHenry (R-NC) introduced legislation that would place Ronald Reagan on the \$50 bill in honor of the Gipper's 100th birthday next year. His image would replace that of President Ulysses S. Grant, the Union army's general-in-chief whose adminis-

tration was one of the most corrupt in our nation's history. Naturally, many Democrats are opposed. Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA) cried, "There is no way. There's absolutely no way. Our currency ought to be something that unites us." We suppose Sherman has a point. Grant did "unify" the nation -- by leading a marauding army through several of its states. He's right up there with Gen. William T. Sherman in stirring feelings of "unity" down here in the South. Reagan, on the other hand, won two presidential elections by landslide, taking 44 and 49 states, respectively. He also rescued our economy and restored our nation's dignity after the Carter years, and he led our nation to victory in the Cold War, freeing hundreds of millions of people from communist oppression without firing a single shot. Now *that's* unity.

## NATIONAL SECURITY

### Patriot (Act) Games

With a magician's sleight of hand, Democrats have managed to keep all eyes on the health care bill while diverting attention from their standard odious conduct. Last Thursday they quietly reauthorized The Patriot Act (officially, Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001), a law Left-o-crats publicly and loudly condemned during the Bush 43 administration. His Hope-&-Changeness signed the reauthorization bill after the House voted 315-97 to extend the measure.

Three primary sections of the Act remain, including court-approved roving wiretaps that permit surveillance on a suspect's multiple phones; court-approved seizure of records and property in anti-terrorism operations; and surveillance operations conducted against a "lone wolf," defined as a non-U.S. citizen engaged in terrorism whose link to a recognized terrorist group is not clearly established.

Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL), a prime mover in getting The Patriot Act reauthorized, said, "The Patriot Act is a bipartisan bill that has helped save countless lives by equipping our national security community with the tools it needs to keep America safe." Sessions highlighted the Ft. Hood massacre and the attempted Christmas Day bombing as vivid reminders of the threat The Patriot Act was intended to counter, and he called for a full, long-term reauthorization of the law.

In their typical hypocritical fashion, Democrats managed to show their contempt for America's front-line homeland security forces, targeting the Central Intelligence Agency by introducing a criminal measure into the bill

that bans "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment." Of course, "Degrading" isn't defined and could mean virtually anything the Demo-gogues want it to. In any case, the provision levies a 15-year imprisonment term on any interrogator who violates it.

Also, "waterboarding" -- the highly effective, if controversial, method of obtaining life-saving, time-critical information from terrorist detainees, is specifically proscribed (though not defined), independent of the fact that it is not "torture" under any reasonable interpretation of either international or U.S. law. That Democrats pushed to pass this legislation only now, even though the opportunity existed from the moment The Chosen One was sworn in, is an implicit admission that waterboarding *was not* illegal under U.S. law when used by the Bush administration. The Demos' low-key approach betrays their need to keep another "inconvenient truth" under wraps.

Finally, House Democrats introduced a host of new restrictions in the reauthorization, as well. These include: "Exploiting the phobias of the individual," whatever that phrase means; stress positions or threatened use of force to maintain stress positions; deprivation of food, water or sleep; use of military working dogs to intimidate (but not attack) the individual; exposure to "excessive cold" or "cramped confinement," though neither of these terms is defined; "prolonged" isolation (no, "prolonged" isn't defined, naturally); and "placing hoods or sacks over the head of the individual."

Given the Demos' newly inserted language, we're surprised -- and relieved, at least for the time being -- that they didn't mandate the "lawyering up" of detainees subject to The Patriot Act. As with the presumed-D.O.A. healthcare bill, however, we've learned not to count our blessings before they're hatched, because when it comes to truly foolhardy schemes, the Democrats hatch only the best.

### Civilian Trials on Trial

"President Obama's advisers are nearing a recommendation that Khalid Sheik Mohammed, the self-proclaimed mastermind of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, be prosecuted in a military tribunal, administration officials said, a step that would reverse Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr.'s plan to try him in civilian court in New York City," The Washington Post reports. The administration has taken considerable heat for Holder's November announcement ever since and appears ready for a change of course.

Rep. Peter King (R-NY) proposed legislation to prevent the administration from trying KSM and other terrorists in any American community. Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) has led a similar charge in the Senate, though as part of a compromise to close the prison at Guantanamo Bay. Naturally, the ACLU is on the terrorists' side. "If this stunning reversal comes to pass, President Obama will deal a death blow to his own Justice Department, not to mention American values," said ACLU attorney Anthony Romero.

According to the Post, "Privately, administration officials are bracing for the ire of disappointed liberals and even some government lawyers should the administration back away from promises to use civilian courts to adjudicate the cases of some of the 188 detainees who remain at Guantanamo." Not disappointed government lawyers! Where will the madness end?

Last week, we noted that the Department of Justice employs as many as nine lawyers who previously worked defending terrorists. Thanks to Fox News, we now know who they are. Presumably, they're the ones who would be disappointed.

### **Lockerbie Bomber Getting Better**

While the Democrats push to socialize the American medical system, there is relevant news abroad. When the Scottish government released Abdelbaset Ali Mohamed al-Megrahi -- a.k.a. the Lockerbie bomber -- last year, it was because he ostensibly had only three months to live. Megrahi blew up Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988. "But six months later," reports London's Daily Mail, "al-Megrahi is still living -- and doing it in the lap of luxury."

Though cancer had set in while he was under the British socialized health system, apparently, the treatment Megrahi has received since returning from Libya has put the cancer into remission. According to the Daily Mail, "the British cancer specialist who gave the three-month prognosis was forced to defend his prediction. He insisted that Megrahi remained gravely ill and was not expected to live much longer."

That reminds us of another British comedy, "Monty Python and the Holy Grail," in which a collector of dead bodies makes his rounds during The Plague, calling, "Bring out your dead." A second man carries a supposedly dead elderly man to the cart, only to have the old man protest, "I'm not dead ... I'm getting better." After arguing over whether he's really dead ("he will be soon, he's very

ill," says the second man), they club the poor sap over the head and toss him onto the cart anyway. That's pretty close to the way the British system actually works. The Lockerbie bomber, after continuing "treatment" under that system, should now be resting comfortably in a British morgue, not running around Scot free.

## **BUSINESS & ECONOMY**

### **GDP, Jobs and Blizzards**

When the Commerce Department in January reported a 5.7 percent growth in GDP in the fourth quarter of 2009, Barack Obama crowed that the news "affirms our progress and the swift and aggressive actions that made it possible." He may wish to retract that statement.

According to the Associated Press, while the economy actually showed a 5.9 percent growth rate, it isn't expected to last. The National Association for Business Economics forecasts a 3 percent growth rate or similar in the first three quarters of 2010, and PNC Financial Services Group Chief Economist Stuart Hoffman labeled the recent spike "a one-hit wonder." The reason is that the driving force behind the growth wasn't consumers but businesses needing to restock inventory previously depleted to save dollars. In fact, manufacturing accounted for about two-thirds of the growth. Meanwhile, consumer spending grew at just 1.7 percent, significantly below the 2.8 percent rate of the previous quarter, and headline unemployment remains high at 9.7 percent of those seeking work.

Ever the fact-innovators, however, Democrats have found a new scapegoat for the dismal job numbers: winter storms. Yes, indeed, White House Economic Advisor Larry Summers noted, "The blizzards that affected much of the country during the last month are likely to distort the statistics. So it's going to be very important ... to look past whatever the next figures are to gauge the underlying trends." In other words, ignore the numbers and draw whatever conclusions are most convenient -- which is what the White House has been doing for the past 13 months.

### **Regulatory Commissars:**

#### **Foreclosure Overhaul Proposed**

Barack Obama's most recent economic policy trial balloon is a moratorium on foreclosures. Under the proposal, a lender could not foreclose on a homeowner until the loan was 60 days in default, and the borrower was screened for the Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP). Mr. President, those steps are already being pursued because lenders desire payment, not properties.

Leftists have no tolerance for federalism. To a Democrat, the state capital is AA Minor League, while Washington is the Majors. But lending and remedies for loan default are state-level issues, and therein should reside the authority to modify the law and its implementation procedure.

As it is, foreclosure doesn't typically begin until a loan is 90 days past due -- four unpaid installments. When a loan default occurs (first missed payment), the lender initiates a series of past-due notices. If payments are not then remitted, a demand acceleration letter is sent. If the loan is backed by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, or is an FHLB fixed-rate loan, the demand acceleration letter cannot be sent until the borrower is 60 days past due. Along with the demand letter, a counseling letter is sent, notifying the borrower of the availability of financial counseling. Upon receiving these letters, the borrower has another 30 days to take some form of action, be it bringing the loan current, contacting the lender to make a modified payment plan, or contacting an attorney to initiate a bankruptcy filing. Finally, when the loan is 90 days past due, provided that all of the required notices have been sent, foreclosure can be initiated.

We noticed that Obama's trial balloon didn't include any regulatory relief for lenders trying to work with troubled borrowers. Rather, we suspect that lenders will continue to take the brunt of Obama's "misconceptions" about lending practices. He apparently believes that lenders love to foreclose on borrowers, which is nonsense. By definition, a foreclosure means that something has gone terribly wrong. Despite his claim to be "an ardent believer in the free market," Obama's actions speak far more loudly. To him, government is always the solution.

#### **Around the Nation: Public Debt Bombs**

Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher once observed, "The problem with socialism is that eventually you run out of other people's money." One facet of that problem has arrived in the form of unfunded liabilities for public "servant" benefits. According to the Pew Center, a \$1 trillion gap exists between \$3.35 trillion in pension, health care and other retirement benefits promised to current and retired state employees as of fiscal year 2008 and the \$2.35 trillion available to pay them. That's \$1 trillion in unfunded liabilities that must be resolved through higher taxes in concert with drastic benefit reductions.

Not without irony, President Obama's adopted home state of Illinois is in the worst shape of all, managing to fund only 54 percent of those benefits while carrying an

astounding unfunded liability of more than \$54 billion.

Similar data from the crucibles of democracy also show a strong correlation between states with concentrations of liberals and a state's budgetary health. The five states in the worst financial shape are all bastions of leftist policies -- California, Connecticut, Illinois, New Jersey and New York. Each shares strong appetites for public sector unions and pricey social programs. Illinois, again, is in the worst financial condition, with per-capita debt of \$1,877 and unfunded pensions of \$17,230. Moody's rates Illinois' general obligation just ahead of dead-last California. On the other side of the equation, three of the top five fiscally healthiest states are conservative states (Utah, Nebraska and Texas), while the other two (New Hampshire and Virginia) are swing states.

Considering the unchecked acceleration of the federal government's looming fiscal Armageddon, voters must ask themselves this November if they wish to call the tune and deal with the issue before debt becomes uncontrollable. Allowing this current crop of suicidal spenders two additional years is an unacceptable alternative.

## **CULTURE & POLICY**

### **Climate Change This Week:**

#### **Gore Comes Out of Winter Hibernation**

In the wake of the recent irrefutable counterattack on climate change "science," one would think that those who have forecasted the end of civilization would be running for the hills, or -- at the very least -- quietly dropping their phony claims and stepping aside in light of, well, the inconvenient truth. But leave it to Al Gore to make even more excuses for years of incompetence and dishonesty, and leave it to the New York Times to provide him a platform from which to pontificate.

And pontificate he did, in a weekend op-ed worthy of Michael Moore in terms of pure, unadulterated horse pucky. The former vice president once again wailed that we will face an "unimaginable calamity requiring large-scale, preventive measures to protect human civilization as we know it." He should just come clean and tell us what he really means: redistributing the wealth, from our pockets to his.

Gore also valiantly defended those of his brethren exposed in the Climategate scandal, referring to the UK's University of East Anglia Climate Research Unit e-mails as "stolen." (As if that somehow justifies the corrupt content therein.) He further claimed the abused scientists involved had succumbed to the pressure of climate

skeptics, blatantly ignoring that for years other scientists who questioned climate change found themselves either silenced or blacklisted.

He even went so far as to blame the U.S. Senate, by way of stalling the Obama administration's cap-n-tax scheme, for other world leaders' lack of commitment at the Copenhagen Summit. China, Gore confides conspiratorially, was really gung-ho about limiting its carbon emissions until the big, bad U.S. decided to take the low road.

The government Gore and others like him envision is a danger to our Essential Liberty. Preserving a government that encourages both a free market and free thinkers can mean not only the difference between prosperity and ruin, but literally between life and death. We need only to compare the recent earthquakes in Chile and Haiti to tell us this. The earthquake in Chile registered 8.8 on the Richter Scale, which was hundreds of times more powerful than the one that struck Haiti, but due in part to Chile's superior infrastructure and wealth, only 708 people were killed, as opposed to more than 220,000 in the third-world Caribbean nation. Thankfully, more people are starting to realize that we cannot take our prosperity and our way of life for granted, and that includes vigorously confronting opportunistic charlatans like Al Gore.

In related news, the University of Tennessee is giving Gore an honorary doctoral degree because, gushed Chancellor Jimmy G. Cheek, "his work has quite literally changed our planet for the better." Both the publisher and managing editor of The Patriot Post hold advanced degrees from the University of Tennessee and, accordingly, have submitted protests. (Our editors did actual research for their degrees.)

### **This Week's 'Al-pha Jackass' Award**

"From the standpoint of governance, what is at stake is our ability to use the rule of law as an instrument of human redemption. After all has been said and so little done, the truth about the climate crisis -- inconvenient as ever -- must still be faced." --Gore, the populist potentate of eco-theology

The "rule of law" is certainly not an "instrument of human redemption," nor is it what Gore is advocating.

### **Village Academic Curriculum: A 360-Degree Turnaround**

It's no secret that America's schools are failing to educate, and a succession of presidents have attempted to address

the issue through the federal government with little to show for it. Barack Obama became the latest to step into the realm of education reform by putting \$900 million in taxpayer money on the line, promising our most troubled school districts "turnaround" grants if they could come up with a model plan to bring their schools up to snuff.

Under the new proposal, districts have a number of different models from which to choose, among them the "turn-around" model where the principal and half the staff are replaced, the "restart" model of closing and reopening a school under charter-style management, and the "closure" model where kids are simply uprooted to different schools within the district. Districts will compete against others in their state for a share of the grant money.

Since most of these schools happen to be in large city districts (read: pockets of heavily Democrat voters) one could argue this is simply a payoff, throwing money at a problem that money itself doesn't address. Many of these models can thus be readily compared to rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.

One thing missing from the proposal is the concept of school choice for long-suffering parents, akin to the DC voucher program. Since education unions look at vouchers the way Superman eyes kryptonite, it's a sure bet that any such suggestions will be a no-go for securing the federal dollars. Our hunch is that while a number of new cushy administrative jobs will come from this program, few competent high school graduates will be saved or created under this federal boondoggle.

### **To Keep and Bear Arms**

Three people were shot during a gun battle involving alleged burglars in Harris County, Texas. During the late morning hours on Feb. 19, two armed suspects forced their way through a homeowner's front door. Fortunately, the homeowner was also armed. Shots were exchanged and the homeowner was struck, but one of the suspects was killed. The other suspect, a juvenile, attempted to find refuge at a neighbor's house. That neighbor said, "He told me that he had gotten shot and to call his mother. I thought he was just crazy."

Police soon arrived and the youth was taken to the hospital. The condition of the homeowner remains unknown. According to another neighbor, this is the same area that had recently been hit by several robberies. It is still unclear whether those recent crimes were related.

**And Last...**

The television show “America’s Most Wanted” will mark its 1,000th episode this weekend on Fox. Since its inception, the show has assisted in the capture of more than 1,100 fugitives, as well as reunited 43 missing children with their families. Perhaps this success is why Barack Obama has decided to sit for an interview with host John Walsh for the episode. At first, this interview seemed rather odd, if only because Walsh rarely interviews suspects, but then we remembered that Obama *always* does interviews before big TV events. Besides, he’s trying to garner votes for health care and by golly, if he needs law enforcement assistance to get it done, so be it. Indeed, the nation would be well served if Mr. Walsh posted pictures of Capitol Hill’s “Most Wanted.” We suspect, come November, many of those Beltway troublemakers will be brought to justice.

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.)