



## THE FOUNDATION

“Government can do something for the people only in proportion as it can do something to the people.” --Thomas Jefferson

## GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

### Desperate Democrats Head for Home

Amid the mortifying prospect of having to face the voters in one month, congressional Democrats voted to abandon ship and head for home. They hope to boost their poll numbers and stem the Republican tide, but their odds aren't good. The unfinished business they left won't help, either.

The House vote to adjourn was 210-209, a cynically calculated margin that gave House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) the deciding vote. Vulnerable Democrats staged a minor revolt as 39 of them voted to stay in session in order to extend the Bush tax cuts, which are an issue, of course, because Democrats forced a sunset provision on them in 2001 and 2003. Democrats are willing to “sunset” tax cuts but not spending tax dollars on unconstitutional boondoggles.

One imperiled Democrat, Rep. Zack Space (D-OH), said, “I think that small business, big business, individuals, have a right to expect some certainty. The longer we keep this [tax issue] open, the more uncertainty there is. Our economy is such that I don't think we can afford that. I just think we need to deal with this. That'd be the responsible thing.” Forty-seven House Democrats signed on to a letter to Pelosi urging the extension of all the Bush tax cuts, and yet only 39 saw fit to vote against adjournment, thereby possibly letting them expire. Hmm.

Of course, Pelosi, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and other Democrats are too busy waging class warfare to care. As White House adviser David Axelrod spins it, Republicans are “going to have to explain to their constituents why they're holding up tax cuts for the middle class. And I think it's an untenable position to say, ‘We're going to allow your taxes to go up on January 1st unless the president agrees to give tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires.’” In truth, Democrats would rather taxes go up on everybody than to suffer the “rich” (i.e., small business owners) to keep what's theirs.

Instead of addressing taxes and taking that back to their constituents, the Senate likewise voted to adjourn, and Congress will hold a two-week lame-duck session beginning Nov. 15. Before they fled the swamp, both chambers passed a stopgap measure to fund the government until Dec. 3. After all, with the fiscal year having started today, this fear-stricken Congress has yet to pass *any* of the 13 appropriations bills for 2011. Apparently, voter anger over skyrocketing deficits hasn't fallen on completely deaf ears.

Democrats are prioritizing a series of leftist wish-list items they want to ram through in that lame-duck session, including repealing Don't-Ask-Don't-Tell, providing citizenry for American-born children of illegal immigrants, extending unemployment benefits (already at 99 weeks), continuing a freeze of cuts for doctors' Medicare reimbursement payments, etc. However, there's little chance that many of these items will see the light of the debate floor, considering that all of them failed at some stage already. Still, Democrats seem determined to go out in a blaze of glory.

### New & Notable Legislation

Barack Obama signed legislation this week that creates another \$30 billion lending fund for small businesses as well as \$12 billion in additional tax breaks for small companies. Republicans fought to no avail against the bill, which sounds good on the surface but is really just another “stimulus” package writ small. Their Senate caucus would have held together were it not for the defection of retiring RINO Sens. George Voinovich (OH) and George LeMieux (FL).

Also this week, the House passed 348-79 a bill that would allow the U.S. to levy tariffs on nations for undervaluing their currency. The bill targets China, which has been undervaluing the yuan to make its goods relatively cheaper than U.S. goods. That widens the trade gap, but it also supports the value of the dollar and keeps interest rates down. China says the bill would breach World Trade Organization rules, and the Senate is unlikely to take up the measure.

### From the ‘Non Compos Mentis’ File

Democrats didn't have time to extend the Bush tax cuts, but they managed to find time for Stephen Colbert, host of Comedy Central's “The Colbert Report,” to “testify” last week before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and In-

ternational Law. (Time for that and regulating the volume of TV commercials.) Colbert was invited by an admirer, Committee Chairwoman Zoe Lofgren (D-CA). Colbert was supposed to testify about the plight of migrant farm workers, but he refused to depart from the crudely stereotypical “conservative” character that he plays on his show. His so-called testimony was nothing more than a string of stale one-liners that were decidedly inappropriate, considering the venue and the subject.

Republicans were unmoved, and even several Democrats were critical of Colbert’s appearance. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer said, “I think his testimony was not appropriate. What he had to say was not the way it should have been said.” Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), however, was supportive. “Of course I think it’s appropriate,” she said. “He’s an American, right? He comes before the committee, has a point of view, he can bring attention to an important issue like immigration. I think it’s great.” The mediocre comedian certainly fits in with the Democrat caucus. If the harm they’re doing weren’t so serious, it *would* be funny.

### **This Week’s ‘Alpha Jackass’ Awards**

Words of encouragement: “People need to shake off this lethargy. People need to buck up. ... If people now want to take their ball and go home, that tells me folks weren’t serious in the first place. ... It is inexcusable for any Democrat or progressive right now to stand on the sidelines in this midterm election. ... The idea that we’ve got a lack of enthusiasm in the Democratic base, that people are sitting on their hands complaining, is just irresponsible. ... People are frustrated, their anxious, they’re scared about the future. And they have a right to be impatient about the pace of change. I’m impatient. But I also know this: Now is not the time to quit. ... It took time to free the slaves.” --Barack Obama

“[I want to] remind our base constituency to stop whining and get out there and look at the alternatives. This president has done an incredible job. He’s kept his promises. ... And so those who don’t get -- didn’t get everything they wanted, it’s time to just buck up here, understand that we can make things better, continue to move forward and -- but not yield the playing field to those folks who are against everything that we stand for in terms of the initiatives we put forward.” --Joe Biden, echoing the theme

### **Emanuel to Head for Chicago**

White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel announced today that he will leave the White House and run for mayor of Chicago, a job he has supposedly coveted for quite some time. Many observers figured that Emanuel

would leave before long, particularly after six-term Chicago Mayor Richard Daley announced recently that he wouldn’t seek another term. But Emanuel’s departure from the White House just weeks before the midterm elections speaks volumes and provokes more questions.

Is Emanuel leaving early to avoid an electoral bloodbath that would hinder his mayoral candidacy if he stayed? Is he eager to get into the mayoral race now because the field of candidates is coming together rather quickly? Is he even eligible to run? Or, is he just one of those louts Barack Obama chastised for taking his ball and going home? In any case, it seems that a lot of high-placed rats are suddenly leaving the Not-So-Good Ship Obama.

### **Driving the Electoral Stakes Even Higher**

Now that the census is complete, state officials will soon begin the process of gerrymandering congressional districts. That means the stakes are even higher for state legislative and gubernatorial races around the nation. It’s even more imperative in states that will gain or lose congressional districts -- Democrats seek control, attempting to diminish their losses from the Northeast and Rust Belt to a number of states in the South and West, while Republicans will try to embellish those gains. The Tom DeLay-inspired redistricting in Texas netted a four-seat gain for the GOP in the next cycle; on the other hand, Democrats took a Maryland congressional delegation which was evenly split among its eight members in 2000 and turned it into a 6-2 advantage the next election, building it to 7-1 by decade’s end.

More interesting is the fact that most states set to lose congressional representation went for Barack Obama in 2008, while most states set to gain seats went for John McCain. Needless to say, drawing fair and compact districts isn’t on the mind of either party. The lines drawn and tradeoffs made will be keys to their success or failure for the next decade.

## **NATIONAL SECURITY**

### **Immigration Front: The Great Wall of Mexico**

Under cover of media darkness, Mexico has been building a wall on its southern border with Guatemala, ostensibly to stop the flow of drugs. Yet Mexican Superintendent of Tax Administration Raul Diaz admits the wall will also prevent the free passage of illegal aliens.

Some 500,000 illegals sneak into Mexico annually. Compared to all Mexicans currently living illegally in American cities, taking full advantage of the benefits stubbornly preserved for them by bankrupt city, state and govern-

ments, Mexico's illegal influx is a mere pittance, but it's enough to anger opponents. Still, Guatemala doesn't want its escape hatch closed. As Vice President Rafael Espada opined, "The walls are not the solution to the problems."

The Catholic Church entered the fray quickly in the person of Fr. Francisco Pellizari, an Italian working in Mexico with illegals. In an interesting, if somewhat daft, line of reasoning, Pellizari claims, "The dramatic increase in the cost of 'polleros' (human traffickers) and the corruption of the authorities is the result of the walls the United States plans to build and has built along the border. [The] results will be the same" in Guatemala. More to the point is the *mordida*, Mexican slang for "bribe": in the "small" sense, the bribe given a Mexican official to look the other way; but in the larger sense, it's the corruption endemic in the Mexican government.

Mexican President Felipe Calderon as yet hasn't commented. However, when Arizona's SB 1070 passed, Calderon blew a gasket, denouncing the law as an invitation "to intolerance, hate, discrimination and abuse in law enforcement" -- each one an attribute that Mexico's immigration laws exhibit. Calderon's own government will bar outsiders "found to be physically or mentally unhealthy ... economic burdens on society" or anyone who shows contempt for national sovereignty. Being in Mexico illegally is punishable by two years in a Mexican prison.

As we've seen time and time again, the guiltiest are always the first to point fingers. Oh, Mexico! Thy name is Hypocrisy!

### **Warfront With Jihadistan: I Scream, You Scream...**

The "horrors" continue for the jihadis housed at the U.S. prison camp at Guantanamo Bay. An intrepid journalist from the Miami Herald recently photographed two signs on a refrigerator there. One said "DETAINEE FOOD ONLY," while the other read, "Only 1 ice cream for each detainee!"

Imagine, only one ice cream! What more must these poor souls endure? After being captured on the battlefield, shipped to Club Gitmo, given first-rate medical and dental care, fed decent food for the first time in their lives -- such that they gained 10-20 pounds or more -- given Muslim prayer mats and sanitized Korans, then gently questioned under strict rules, and now this? Where's Amnesty International when you need them?

In serious news, ABC News reports, "US and European

officials said Tuesday they have detected a plot to carry out a major, coordinated series of commando-style terror attacks in Britain, France, Germany and possibly the United States. A senior US official said that while there is a 'credible' threat, no specific time or place is known." It seems that terrorists wanted a series of commando raids based on the 2008 attacks in Mumbai, in which Pakistani jihadis killed 173 people with small arms and grenades.

### **North Korea's Future Leader Comes to the Fore**

The Hermit Kingdom of North Korea appears poised for a transition of power from the ailing Kim Jong Il to one of his sons. According to South Korean and Japanese media, the man seen in official North Korean photos released on Thursday is Kim Jong Un, youngest of Kim Jong Il's sons. Believed to be in his mid- to late-20s, Kim Jong Un was promoted to four-star general and introduced to the world on Thursday. Before the promotion, virtually nothing was known about Kim Jong Un, and a single photo taken over a decade ago was the only one known to exist. Now this enigma appears on the verge of ruling the world's most dangerously unbalanced country, one that has tested nuclear weapons and used them to extort Western concessions, attacked and sunk a South Korean warship, fired ballistic missiles over Japan (and threatened worse) and kept its own people in grinding, abject poverty for almost 60 years.

While it's hard to imagine any replacement failing to be an improvement over Kim Jong Il, the regime's entrenched elites are likely to use every opportunity to influence regime decisions as Kim Jong Un is learning the ropes. Much as Syria's Bashar Assad had to maneuver through the minefield of his father's cronies upon taking power, so will Kim Jong Un have to tread carefully until he can establish his own base of power, bringing some of the old guard into his orbit and marginalizing the rest as best he can. It will not be easy, and while we can't believe we're saying it, this sorry state could become even more unstable and dangerous during the coming year.

## **BUSINESS & ECONOMY**

### **Regulatory Commissars: New Regulations for Oil**

"The Interior Department issued new safety and spill-response regulations for offshore oil and gas drilling on Thursday, but gave no hint of when the moratorium on deepwater operations will be lifted," reports The New York Times. After the BP oil spill in April, the administration implemented a drilling moratorium that has cost thousands of jobs and sent some rigs to other countries, perhaps permanently.

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar had the typically arrogant, bureaucratic pre-emptive word for oil companies: “We’ll hear from industry that the regulations are too onerous, but the fact is, it’s a new day. There is the pre-April 20th framework of regulation and the post-April 20th framework, and the oil and gas industry better get used to it, because that’s the way it’s going to be.” As to when the moratorium would be lifted, Sala-czar said, “We will lift it at our own time and when we’re ready, and not based on political pressure from anyone.” Shut up, he explained.

Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA), for one, doesn’t take the moratorium kindly. “The president’s policies right now are doing much more harm than the spill itself to the economy of the South Coast,” she said. “It’s just gotten to a point where people in Louisiana ask, ‘Do they even understand what is going on down here?’ They have the entire offshore industry virtually shut down.” Until the ban is lifted, Landrieu has placed a hold on Obama’s nomination for Office of Management and Budget director, Jack Lew.

### **Sebelius Expounds on Her Recent Threat to Health Industry**

Shortly after declaring that “there will be zero tolerance” for health insurers spreading “misinformation” about ObamaCare causing rate increases, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius wrote an op-ed claiming that health insurers “ran wild with no accountability” and previously had “free rein” for conducting business -- all while under the regulation of 50 state insurance departments. In a bit of cosmic irony that managed to elude her keen wit, this alleged insurer rampage somehow didn’t occur on her watch as the Kansas Insurance Commissioner, a position that had the power to disapprove proposed health insurance rate increases since 1965.

Not satisfied with her Orwellian mischaracterization of the truth, Sebelius also misdiagnosed an insurer’s recent premium refund in North Carolina. She claimed that the refund was the result of regulatory powers under ObamaCare when, in reality, the insurer had determined that ObamaCare had so badly damaged the state’s individual health market that pulling out of that market was its only option. The refund was simply a return of the unused portions of subscribers’ premiums.

As the Democrats are about to discover, the health “reform” that they designed to transfer health insurance regulatory power from the states to the national government may be a Pyrrhic victory come Election Day. Instead of

being a Democrat electoral lifeline, ObamaCare is actually the anchor around their necks.

### **Postage Increase Denied**

Even with competition outlawed, the U.S. Postal Service still can’t seem to turn a buck. The government monopoly lost \$3.5 billion last quarter and is on track to lose \$238 billion over the next decade. Some might blame the 20 percent drop in mail volume since 2007, but both FedEx and UPS are seeing green despite operating in the same economy. “The difference,” according to The Wall Street Journal, “is that private companies know how to control costs.” Conversely, Postal Service costs climbed by 6 percent in 2009. Despite the fact that labor expenses claim about 80 percent of every USPS dollar, the American Postal Workers Union wants “more.”

Postmaster General John Potter has made some cuts in labor and operations, but they’re hardly enough. So the postal service requested permission to hike the price of a first-class stamp from 44 to 46 cents next year. The classic postage-stamp solution was denied Thursday by the Postal Regulatory Commission, which oversees the Postal Service. With private sector delivery services, competition has a consistent track record of improving service, lowering costs and generating profits. The boast of all-weather service notwithstanding, however, it seems a competitive climate is one the USPS remains unwilling to brave.

### **Citi Shares Proving a Tough Sell for Government**

Remember the government’s “emergency” bailout of Citigroup last year? Well, it seems despite Washington’s promise to fully divest itself of all Citigroup shares by the end of 2010, extracting itself from private business is proving a tough sell -- literally. “The U.S. government is in danger of missing its [year-end] deadline ... after a fall in stock market trading volumes prompted authorities to slow down sales in July and August,” reports the UK Financial Times. “By the end of August, less than half of the government’s 7.7 [billion] shares in Citi had been sold, with the average number of shares sold per day falling sharply, the latest official data show.”

If you missed this story, you’re not alone. NewsBusters contributing editor Tom Blumer notes that virtually all U.S. media skipped covering it. “It would appear,” Blumer writes, “that the establishment press might be interested in keeping a lid on stories indicating that once the state gets in the business ownership door, it’s very hard for it to get out -- assuming it even really wants to.”

## Bank Failures Continue

The past two years have seen the largest number of bank failures in nearly two decades -- some 279 since September 2008. These failures have eliminated jobs, tightened lending and concentrated power in the survivors. This does not bode well for the economy. With big banks growing bigger, either by mergers and acquisitions, by acquiring customers from failed banks or a combination thereof, wealth and power is concentrating in fewer and fewer hands. Economists say banking industry consolidation is a long-term threat to capital, lending and the economy.

“When we step back and look at this financial disaster 10 years from now,” says Howard Headlee, president of the Utah Bankers Association, “the destruction of capital in our economy as a result of what we’ve endured will be the single greatest lasting impact on recovery and how the economy performs in the future.”

The triggering event was the bursting of the sub-prime mortgage bubble, with 94 percent of bank failures since 2008 having either residential or commercial real estate as their largest category of delinquent loans. The Obama administration and Federal Reserve then increased regulatory requirements that, at least on paper, caused otherwise sound banks to “fail.” It cascaded from there, and we should look for more to come, too.

## CULTURE & POLICY

### Family: Marriage Rates Decline

Marriage is on the downturn. According to the Census’s annual American Community Survey, nuptials among those in the “prime marriage years” of 18 to 34 are the lowest in over a century. In fact, this is the first time since the U.S. began recording marriage rates in 1880 that the number of never-married young adults (46.3 percent) is higher than those who have tied the knot (44.9 percent).

Some are attributing this phenomenon to the recession. With 9.6 percent unemployment, many young adults are opting to live with family or friends instead of paying for a wedding and beginning married life in debt. But the economy may not be the only reason for the decline. The decision to delay marriage is an outgrowth of changes in relationship dynamics which began decades ago. In 1960, 72 percent of adults over 18 were married. Today, in several big U.S. cities, more than 75 percent of young adults have never wed. Many, however, are still opting to live together, either as a precursor to marriage or as a substitute altogether. How much of this can be blamed

on the recession may only be determined as the economy improves.

### Faith: Non-Believers Know More About Religion

A recent study by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life concluded that, while the U.S. remains the most religious of developed nations, many Americans are ignorant of religious beliefs and customs. In fact, those with little to no faith are among the most knowledgeable about it.

Out of the 32 questions asked about different religions, atheists and agnostics answered an average of 20 correctly, well above the national average of 16. The reason for this could be the obvious one -- that they feel a need to be conversant in religion in order to justify their rejection of it. Another interesting tidbit: Nine out of 10 Americans know that the Supreme Court has ruled against prayer in public schools; however, most respondents were unaware that it is perfectly acceptable for teachers to include the Bible in their classrooms as a work of literature. This “selectiveness” in religious knowledge can properly be tied to disinformation and confusion sown by the media. No one ever said they don’t have influence.

### On Cross-Examination

“The strength or weakness of a society depends more on the level of its spiritual life than on its level of industrialization. Neither a market economy nor even general abundance constitutes the crowning achievement of human life. If a nation’s spiritual energies have been exhausted, it will not be saved from collapse by the most perfect government structure or by any industrial development. A tree with a rotten core cannot stand.” --Russian writer and Soviet dissident Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008), who spent eight years in a Soviet gulag and the rest of his life writing about the evils of godless communism

### Obama Defends His Faith

Answering a no-doubt-planted question from a supporter this week, Barack Obama gave a scripted answer about his faith, which has come under fire again recently. “I’m a Christian by choice,” he said. “My mother was one of the most spiritual people I knew, but she didn’t raise me in the church. So I came to my Christian faith later in life and it was because the precepts of Jesus Christ spoke to me in terms of the kind of life that I would want to lead -- being my brothers’ and sisters’ keeper, treating others as they would treat me.”

The Golden Rule is certainly worth taking to heart, but Obama still managed to misinterpret its message quite

subtly. The “brother’s keeper” passage long predates the life of Jesus. The rest of Obama’s answer is hard to quibble with, but it’s worth noting that at this date there exists such a question in the first place. His having spent 20 years sitting in the pews of Jeremiah Wright’s “church” of hate certainly doesn’t reinforce his assertions that he’s a genuine Christian.

### Media Chiefs Put to Pasture

Two media bigwigs were canned this week in the wake of plummeting ratings and their own questionable decisions. Ailing news giant CNN has confirmed that its president, Jonathan Klein, was given the axe. Klein’s most recent blunders included giving a prime-time slot to Client No. 9 (a.k.a. former New York governor Eliot Spitzer), and to fill outgoing Larry King’s coveted role with Piers Morgan. Morgan is the former editor of *The Mirror*, a British paper. Under Morgan, *The Mirror* was the center of a scandal that involved publishing false pictures of British troops abusing Iraqis. Americans know him primarily as a judge on “America’s Got Talent.” The wisdom of Klein’s choices remains to be seen, but one thing’s for sure: He will no longer be at the helm when the verdict comes in. Klein has been under contract with CNN since 2004, with a four-year extension signed in 2007. Apparently CNN didn’t want to wait.

The other casualty is NBC Universal head Jeff Zucker. The 45-year-old Zucker was booted by Comcast, which is set to purchase NBC from General Electric this fall. Like Klein, Zucker was also supposedly protected by a contract. Zucker has been with NBC since graduating college in 1986, gradually rising through the ranks to become CEO in 2007. Generally his tenure there is considered a successful one, although his more recent decisions, including the ill-fated attempt to move late-night funny man Jay Leno to the 10 p.m. slot, have been criticized by both others at NBC as well as Comcast. Zucker’s replacement has not yet been announced.

### Village Academic Curriculum: Good Enough for Thee, But Not for Me

As did Bill Clinton before him, Barack Obama sends his children to the exclusive private school Sidwell Friends in Washington, DC. So it wasn’t all that surprising that his recent assessment of the District’s public schools in an interview done for the “Today” show was to charitably call them, “struggling” despite “important strides ... in the direction of reform.”

Yet “struggling” is a more apt description of most of our capital’s sports teams. The DC public school system is a

disaster, despite the best efforts of DC Schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee to improve them through firing incompetent teachers and closing underperforming schools. Now Rhee is rumored to be leaving. Her boss, Mayor Adrian Fenty, lost in the Democrat primary election to District Council Chairman Vincent Gray, who was heavily bankrolled by the Teachers’ Unions, and Obama hasn’t helped matters by terminating a voucher program that enabled those in the city’s poorer quarters at least to have a chance (via lottery) of sending their children to a school similar to that of his daughters.

Obviously the Obamas are exercising their own parental choice in the matter, but in a nation that thrives in no small part due to healthy competition, all children should have the opportunity to excel -- not just those whose parents are well-connected.

Meanwhile, the president has toured American universities at a rate of one every 12 days. His visit to the University of Wisconsin this week marked his 47th such trip. Maybe universities are the last places in America that he can rally a crowd still dumbed down enough to support him.

### And Last...

If you’ve ever wondered what 1988 Democrat presidential nominee Michael Dukakis is up to these days, well, wonder no more. He’s advising Democrats -- on how to *win* elections. Dukakis recently “popped in” at the White House, offering free advice to staffers on how Democrats should campaign this fall. According to him, the winning message is that Republicans “want to go back and do exactly what got us in this mess in the first place.” Hmm, that sounds vaguely familiar. Maybe it’s because Barack Obama has been reading that same tripe off the teleprompter for years already. No matter, Dukakis says, “We’ve got to pound that message as hard as [we] can from now until November.” Coming from the man who carried all of 10 states in the 1988 election, this is priceless -- but at least it wasn’t advice coming from George McGovern or Walter Mondale.

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.)