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THE FOUNDATION

“Would it not be better to simplify the system of taxation rather than to spread it over such a variety of subjects and pass through so many new hands.” --Thomas Jefferson

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Election Year Taxes

As we have documented over the years, the Leftmedia are quite adept at using polls to *drive* public opinion rather than reflect it. The latest such example was a poll on taxes in advance of Income Redistribution Day, but as we shall see, there's more here than meets the eye.

Gallup reports, “As tax filing day looms, Americans fall into two closely matched camps: those who believe the amount they pay in federal income tax is too high (46%) and those who consider it ‘about right’ (47%). Just 3% consider their taxes too low.” It's hardly newsworthy that so few find their taxes to be too low, but for so many to see them as “about right” is interesting. Here's why: Roughly half of Americans *don't pay any income taxes at all*. It's no coincidence, then, that roughly half of Americans think their tax burden is “about right.”

We'll give Gallup one thing: They made clear that Americans had a much more negative view of their taxes prior to the Bush tax cuts. And why wouldn't they? Contrary to media myth, the Bush tax cuts applied to *everyone* -- not just the wealthy. The top rate went from 39.6 percent to 35 percent, the next tier dropped from 36 to 33, followed by 31 to 28, 28 to 25 and the lowest bracket dropped from 15 percent to 10 percent. For those who appreciate math, the bottom bracket had both the greatest nominal drop -- 5 points -- and the greatest percentage drop -- 33 percent -- but you won't hear that on the network news.

Indeed, the Leftmedia have suppressed that inconvenient truth to the point that a CNN poll shows that almost 70 percent of Americans think the tax system favors the wealthy. The fact is, according to CNS News and the Tax Foundation, “Americans making more than \$250,000 had an effective tax rate of 23.4 percent and their total share of the tax burden was 45.7 percent.” That contrasts with Americans earning less than \$50,000, who paid an effective rate of 3.5 percent for a share of 6.7 percent. Yet

with Barack Obama's canard that the rich don't pay their “fair share” being blasted through the sycophantic media bullhorn, it's no wonder the idea sticks.

Perceptions could change on Jan. 1, 2013, when the Bush tax cuts are set to expire. Some were extended by the last Congress, but rates will go up for everyone in January unless an extension passes this year. The aforementioned rates will return to their previous levels, the child tax credit will drop from \$1,000 to \$500, the marriage penalty will return, the death tax will skyrocket to 55 percent, the capital gains tax rate will increase from 15 percent to 20 percent (with another 3.8 percent tacked on for ObamaCare), and the tax on dividends will go from 15 percent to the rate of ordinary wages -- as high as 39.6 percent. The temporary payroll tax cut will also expire. The total tax bomb on the struggling economy will be close to \$500 billion.

Instead of defusing the issue, the Senate took up but failed to pass Obama's beloved Buffett Rule, an election-year tax gimmick that would require millionaires to pay no less than 30 percent in taxes. We call this a gimmick because, as columnist Charles Krauthammer points out, “If we collect the Buffett tax for the next 250 years -- a span longer than the life of this republic -- it would not cover the Obama deficit *for 2011 alone*.”

An extension of the Bush tax cuts, on the other hand, should be a no-brainer during an election year. It should not only be permanent, but there should be fewer and even lower rates, which would lead to economic growth. As Joe Biden might say, “It's not class warfare. It's math.” Of course, he meant that comment to *further* the administration's class warfare against the wealthy and presumptive GOP nominee Mitt Romney in particular. Obama and his minions want you to focus on what Romney does with *his* income, and not what Obama does with *yours*.

This Week's ‘Alpha Jackass’ Award

“In this country, prosperity doesn't trickle down, prosperity grows from the bottom up, and it grows from a strong middle class out. That's why I'm always confused when we keep having the same argument with folks who don't seem to remember how America was built. ... Right now, we have two competing visions of our future, and the

choice could not be clearer. And let me say, those folks on the other side, I am sure they are patriots, I'm sure they're sincere in terms of what they say, but their theory, I believe, is wrong." --Barack Obama, explaining why the government needs even more money from the wealthy than it already takes

News From the Swamp: Budgeting Junk Mail

As the federal debt spirals out of control because of Barack Obama's \$5 trillion deficit spending binge, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) finally decided to tackle ... Post Office reform. He called on the Senate to pass the 21st Century Postal Service Act, S. 1789, which will restructure Postal Service employees' pension plans, and he did so by making an appeal for junk mail. "I'll come home tonight here to my home in Washington and there'll be some mail there," he said. "A lot of it is what some people refer to as junk mail, but for the people who are sending that mail, it's very important." Then he went off the deep end: "[S]eniors love getting junk mail. It's sometimes their only way of communicating or feeling like they're part of the real world." Perhaps he's referring to letters from his constituents.

As for the federal budget, the Senate has neglected to pass one in more than 1,000 days, and it punted again this week. Budget Committee chairman Kent Conrad (D-ND) explained, "This is the wrong time to vote in committee; this is the wrong time to vote on the floor. I don't think we will be prepared to vote before the election." The election is a convenient thing to hide behind, but it's more than six months away. Conrad obviously fears that a budget vote wouldn't help Democrats retain control of the upper chamber. Not that a budget will fix much -- Conrad's still includes a massive deficit.

National Review's Yuval Levin put it this way: "Imagine if Paul Ryan had produced his budget proposal and put it before his committee, but then John Boehner killed it, insisting that the House should not pass a budget of any kind so that his members could be spared a difficult vote in an election year. Surely had any such thing happened it would have been treated as a monumental leadership crisis among House Republicans and a sign of gross dereliction and disorder."

Patriots' Day Campaign Final Update

Thanks to all of the readers who graciously supported our [Patriots' Day campaign](#). We have nearly met our goal of raising \$75,000 to keep *The Patriot Post* coming with its critical analysis each and every week!

From the 'Non Compos Mentis' File

Three Secret Service agents are no longer employed this week and more firings are expected in the wake of a prostitution scandal that unfolded during Barack Obama's recent trip to Colombia. At least 11 agents were sent home from the 33-nation Summit of the Americas after two of them got into a payment dispute with a prostitute who promptly reported the incident to the Colombian police. Among the group were two supervisors and three members of the Counter-Assault Team, which is tasked with using heavy firepower to neutralize attacks on the president. The Pentagon also reported that five service members have been confined to quarters in relation to the incident.

The Secret Service, under the Department of Homeland Security since 2003, maintains that the president was never in any physical danger, but the episode didn't improve the country's reputation among our Latin American neighbors. The agents were in Cartagena for advance preparation when their "undercover" operation was exposed. Their actions could have opened them to blackmail and put delicate information and the president's life in danger. Obama didn't address the scandal while he was in Colombia, opting instead to make a glib comment about scouting Cartagena for a potential future vacation for his wife.

Hope 'n' Change: GSA Goes to Vegas

Remember when Obama said in 2009, "You can't take a trip to Las Vegas ... on the taxpayer's dime"? Such advice was lost on the General Services Administration (GSA). The obscure GSA, tasked with offering management support for the federal government's numerous agencies, is the new poster child for taxpayer abuse, thanks to an \$820,000 Las Vegas conference the organization recently produced for some of its employees. The conference rivaled the opulence of Roman emperors and shameless millennium-era CEOs, dumping thousands of dollars for items such as commemorative coins, a GSA yearbook, 2,000-square-foot luxury suites and bubble baths for regional commissioner Jeffrey Neely.

An investigation into the conference by Brian Miller, the GSA's inspector general, caught the bipartisan attention of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee this week. Miller detailed a long series of embarrassing abuses that included a \$75,000 bicycle-building exercise and a \$58,000 audio-visual bill to play ridiculous music videos produced by GSA employees. GSA official Jeffrey Neely invoked the Fifth Amendment and refused to testify about the agency's scandalous behavior or the years-long culture of corruption. He is reportedly on administrative

leave, but he is still drawing his \$79,000 salary and even received a \$9,000 bonus, which was apparently grandfathered in despite a federal-employee pay freeze.

Heads may roll over this affair, but in the end a Democrat Congress may be to blame for the GSA's behavior. The Budget and Impoundment Control Act passed in 1974 in the wake of Watergate took away the president's long-standing power to impound funds for agencies allocated by Congress. Prior to the act, presidents could hold money to balance budgets and defend against profligate spending on luxury trips. The federal deficit rose \$47 billion the year after the act was passed, and it hasn't stopped rising since.

Amending the First Amendment

Democrats have long decried the Supreme Court's 2010 decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, which overturned campaign finance restrictions on corporations. Now, they're aiming to amend the First Amendment to take away the right of free speech for the people who make up corporations. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) explained, "I think one of the presenters [at a Democratic forum on amending the Constitution] said that the Supreme Court had unleashed a predator that was oozing slime into the political system, and that, indeed, is not an exaggeration." By all means, stop the predator's oozing slime.

"Our Founders had an idea," she continued. "It was called democracy. It said elections are determined by the people, the voice and the vote of the people, not by the bankrolls of the privileged few. This Supreme Court decision flies in the face of our Founders' vision and we want to reverse it." Actually, our Founders warned against democracy, and they wrote the First Amendment precisely to protect the kind of political speech that Pelosi and Co. are trying to silence. We just have one question for the former speaker: Are you serious?

ECONOMY

Regulatory Commissars: Obama's Oil Crisis

Barack Obama's latest scheme to make it appear that he's doing something -- anything -- about the spike in gasoline prices is actually more of a re-election crisis-control effort. He plans to spend \$52 million to further regulate a tightly controlled market and punish "speculators" whom he blames for running up the price at the pump. Naturally, oil futures prices jumped at the news.

Those new regulations on the oil market come while Obama is tightening the screws in other ways as well.

Witness the Friday document dump of an Executive Order that creates a task force to coordinate federal oversight of natural gas development. That task force is charged with "setting sensible, cost-effective public health and environmental standards" for "unconventional" natural gas development. In other words, he wants to undermine the innovative and effective practice of hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," thereby hampering our domestic energy production capabilities just as he has with offshore drilling.

While Obama claims that we are "producing more oil than at any time in the last eight years," his entrenched opposition to completing the vital portion of the Keystone XL pipeline to Canada puts him at odds with House Republicans, who placed the approval of that project into the just-passed highway bill. Obama threatened a veto over the Keystone provision, and the Canadians are growing weary of his stubbornness. Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper warned at a recent "Three Amigos" summit involving the United States, Canada and Mexico that Americans will soon have to pay "market prices" for Canadian tar sands oil based on Obama's foot-dragging over Keystone. Canada also stands ready to sell its oil to China.

Not content to just sit by and do nothing, TransCanada, the company developing the Keystone XL pipeline, has proposed another route to avoid an area environmentalists were intent on keeping off limits.

Dodd-Frank: A Study in Wasted Time

While former Sen. Chris Dodd is already out of Congress and Rep. Barney Frank soon will be, the damage they wrought to the economy and business climate will continue long after both have departed Capitol Hill. The House Financial Services Committee released a study this week noting just 46 percent completion of required rule-making under the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, and that volume already exceeds 5,300 pages of new regulations. A spreadsheet published by the Committee, cheekily dubbed the "burden tracker," estimates that the rules already in place will consume more than 24 million man hours -- or that of 12,000 full-time workers -- per year. By comparison, the Panama Canal was built in 20 million man-hours.

Meanwhile, data compiled by the Financial Times claims credit availability will decrease by \$1.2 trillion under Dodd-Frank. Tighter money drives up interest rates, and higher interest rates make borrowing more expensive for consumers who wish to purchase big-ticket items such as houses and cars as well as for businesses looking to

expand. Given that we have likely already adopted the simpler rules Dodd-Frank requires, leaving the more complex regulations to be enacted near the end of full implementation, it's probable that the cumulative effect will be far more than double the 5,300 pages of rules and 24 million man-hours. We just had to pass it to see what was in it, didn't we?

Income Redistribution: Even More Too Big to Fail

If anyone thought the biggest five banks were behemoths before their bailout, numbers released by the Federal Reserve show that JPMorgan & Chase, Bank of America, Citigroup, Wells Fargo and Goldman Sachs now hold \$8.5 trillion in assets, or about 56 percent of U.S. annual economic output. That's compared to only 43 percent five years ago, prior to the 2008 bailout.

It doesn't appear the lessons of the bailout have been learned either. In fact, Kevin Warsh, a former member of the Fed's Board of Governors, thinks financial markets "have come to believe that what the government did in 2008 and 2009 isn't a one-time deal [and] that the government will somehow come to the rescue of these big financial firms." On the other hand, more small banks are disappearing due to forced consolidation or acquisition by the largest five, as the 6,291 commercial banks operating today are fewer than half of the number present in 1984. Moreover, these banking giants are expanding their international assets as they take advantage of government austerity measures that affect European lenders. With each fire sale acquisition overseas, the global financial house of cards grows taller.

It's nearly a foregone conclusion that "too big to fail" is still in effect, with the only question becoming how much more taxpayer money will be thrown into the fire. After spending \$245 billion to bail out the financial system in 2008, it's hard telling how many more billions another TARP-style bailout would cost and when the bill will come due.

SECURITY

Immigration Front: Election Pandering

With Election Day less than seven months away, Barack Obama apparently thinks it's time to start re-courting the voters he ditched after his 2008 victory. Hence, his recent sit-down interview with Univision in which he promised to take on immigration reform in the first year of his second term. Talk about a recycled stump speech. Swap "second" for "first" and the president's promise could easily be a replay of what then-candidate Obama said in

2008 when he also pledged to make immigration reform a priority in his first year in office. Lest anyone berate him for his failure, however, he provides the usual explanation: It's Republicans' fault. "The challenge we've got on immigration reform is very simple," Obama said. "I've got a majority of Democrats who are prepared to vote for it, and I've got no Republicans who are prepared to vote for it. ... So what we need is a change either of Congress or we need Republicans to change their mind[s]." Or a change in the White House.

Obama's excuse might have a fighting chance if one ignores for a minute that Democrats enjoyed bullet-proof majorities in both houses of Congress during Obama's first two years in office. The truth is that even with this advantage the president proved himself entirely incapable of passing immigration reform. Now, with his re-election on the line, he's suddenly revived his interest in the issue and is undoubtedly hoping his blame act will buy a second term -- where we predict immigration reform will once again languish in the realm of forgotten campaign promises. To avoid losing the Hispanic vote for a generation, Mitt Romney and Republicans must get out in front on this issue, providing serious reform proposals to deal with border security, the overly cumbersome and restrictive immigration process, and the millions of illegals already here.

Warfront With Jihadistan: Taliban Resurgence

A recent series of coordinated attacks by Taliban insurgents in Kabul and nearby provinces has highlighted the Obama administration's lack of concern over Afghanistan, a war he once cynically called "the right war" while undermining our efforts in Iraq. Last weekend's attacks targeted government buildings in the capital and U.S. and Afghan security installations in the eastern region of the country. Taliban fighters were successfully beaten back by Afghan and NATO security forces, and no U.S. casualties were reported. The security situation in Afghanistan has actually improved markedly, but that is despite Obama's leadership, not because of it. He has made few public pronouncements about America's military involvement there except to note the continued withdrawal of U.S. forces.

National Security Adviser Tom Donilon recently suggested that as many as 60,000 troops might come home by mid-2013, apparently ignoring General John Allen's call for more firepower next year to hold our current security gains. No one in the administration has spoken of achieving victory over the Taliban, and the State Department is even angling for a peace agreement. The administration's lack of support for the U.S. military commitment

in Afghanistan is demoralizing our troops in the field and signals to our enemies that Obama lacks the stomach to follow through on our commitments.

Defense Secretary Under Fire for Expensive Trips Home

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta is on the hot seat after it was discovered that he charged taxpayers more than \$800,000 for weekend flights to his California home. Panetta, who previously served as a congressman from California, said the regular trips to his Monterey ranch relieved stress and helped him keep his “mind straight.” He said, “Normally, I’ve flown home commercially. In this job [as defense secretary], I’m obligated to be in touch with communications and have to fly on a secure plane.” That’s true, but each trip costs \$32,000, of which Panetta is required to reimburse only the equivalent of a commercial round-trip ticket. He has reimbursed just \$17,000 of the total.

Last November, Barack Obama called for his Cabinet members to cut back on expenses, specifically mentioning travel costs: “At a time when families have had to cut back ... we thought that it was entirely appropriate for ... our agencies to try to root out waste, large and small, in a systematic way.” Now caught, Panetta is looking for alternatives.

Meanwhile, the government intends to double or triple (or more, depending on rank) the cost of health care fees for military retirees.

Iran Imitates the Peanuts

In January 2011, we described how Iran’s most common practice has been to talk -- endlessly -- with a rotating cast of antagonists, never agreeing on anything except the need to hold more talks. A headline at the time captured it perfectly: “Two Days of Talks Between Iran and World Powers Ended in Agreement to Meet Again.” Fifteen months later, nothing has changed.

Recently, Iran’s Foreign Minister absurdly urged the UN to lift sanctions on Iran as a “trust-building measure” so that the latest nuclear talks could proceed. As we have said many, *many* times before, Iran’s strategy for handling the nuclear dispute is straight out of the Miscreant’s Handbook: 1. Misbehave again and again and again until you feel the ire of the international community; 2. Offer to stop misbehaving in return for concessions; 3. Rake in as many concessions as possible before returning to Step 1. The Iranians have mastered this approach and used it to ward off harm for over *nine years*.

Right on cue, the usual leftist suspects assured that *this* time Lucy wasn’t going to yank the football. CNN’s Fareed Zakaria wrote about the possibility of a sweeping deal, before predictably warning that it might be torpedoed not by Russia, China or Iran, but by Republicans. The New York Times cited “western diplomats” who think sanctions’ bite may be prodding Iran toward a deal, clearly ignorant of the Iranians’ famous retort: “We didn’t launch a Revolution in order to sell pistachios.” Russia and China appear more than willing to continue serving as Iran’s protectors at the UN Security Council. In short, no one should expect any deals from the latest talks -- unless it’s the UN playing the role of Charlie Brown and rewarding Iran’s intransigence.

Profiles of Valor: U.S. Army Spc. Leslie Sabo Jr.

After nearly 42 years, U.S. Army Spc. Leslie Sabo Jr. has been cleared to receive a posthumous Medal of Honor. Sabo was killed on May 10, 1970, while serving in Cambodia. When his platoon was ambushed, the 22-year-old Sabo charged the enemy position, killing several enemy soldiers while drawing fire away from his fellow soldiers. As he was resupplying, an enemy grenade landed near him -- he tossed it away and used his own body to shield a wounded soldier. He then crawled toward the enemy’s position and threw a grenade into their bunker, killing several enemy soldiers, but also costing Sabo his life.

The citation for his actions was filed shortly thereafter but fell through the cracks until 1999. Finally, after more years of delay, Sabo’s widow, Rose Sabo-Brown, and his brother George will attend a ceremony at the White House to receive the Medal on his behalf. “This brave soldier clearly distinguished himself through his courageous actions,” Army Secretary John McHugh said. “The Army and our nation are forever grateful for his heroic service.”

CULTURE

Climate Change This Week: Earth Day 2012

This Sunday is Earth Day, a.k.a. Vladimir Lenin’s birthday. As if on cue, a study published in the April issue of *Nature Geoscience* shows that some of the glaciers in the Himalayas, contrary to the warnings of global warmists, are actually *growing*. According to Fox News, “Using computer models to compare the ice volume in satellite photos from 1999 and 2008, the study showed that some glaciers are holding steady and even gaining ice mass.” Study researcher Julie Gardelle insists, “The rest of the glaciers in the Himalayas are mostly melting, in that they have negative mass balance; here we found that glaciers aren’t. This is an anomalous behavior.”

In 2007, the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned that Himalayan glaciers would melt completely in 25 years due to man-caused climate change. The IPCC head eventually issued a statement of regret for a poorly vetted claim. Given this recent finding, we think the matter is at least up for debate.

Speaking of Earth Day, the Media Research Center has compiled the Top 25 Worst Environmental Quotes over the years for your viewing pleasure.

Second Amendment: Videos of the Week

From the NRA Annual Meetings in St. Louis:

[Mitt Romney](#)

[Glenn Beck](#)

Alleged Killer Faces Trial, Short Sentence in Norway

Anders Behring Breivik is now facing trial for killing 77 people in Norway last July, the worst massacre in the country's history. Yet if he is convicted (and found sane), he faces just 21 years in prison -- roughly 100 days in jail per murder -- though it could be longer if he proves to be a threat at the end of that time. In 1905, Norway abolished the death penalty in peacetime and, in 1979, followed suit for war crimes. That influenced Breivik's decision, he said: "If I had feared death I would not have dared to carry out this operation," adding, "I would have done it again." While he claims "self-defense on behalf of my people, my city, my country," even he admitted, "There are only two outcomes in this case that I had respected, that is the death penalty or acquittal." A short prison term, he said, would be "pathetic." When a judge suggested that the death penalty would be fitting, however, he was dismissed from the case.

Meanwhile, the Leftmedia keep insisting that Breivik is a "far-right militant" or a "right-wing fanatic." However, as we noted at the time, this is little more than a sick and politically motivated smear. He may claim to be a militant "Christian" and to be fighting Islam and multiculturalism, but Breivik plagiarized heavily from "Unabomber" Ted Kaczynski's "manifesto," liberally exchanging the words "multiculturalism" or "cultural Marxism" for "leftism" -- hardly the hallmark of a committed ideologue, Christian or otherwise. Furthermore, nothing he did represents Christians or conservatism.

Around the World: Europeans Revise History

Just when we thought we had seen it all, Donal Blaney

of the UK Daily Mail reports, "Today we learn that the European Union ... is opening a £44m museum that will be a House of European History. This vanity project in and of itself is an offensive waste of money as governments and peoples tighten belts across Europe. But what I found most offensive of all is that World War II is to be described as 'the European Civil War.'"

That would be news to the U.S., Canadian, Australian and other soldiers who fought and died both in Europe and particularly in the Pacific Theater. And as Mark Steyn quipped, "If this were truly a 'European Civil War,' it would have been over in nothing flat, because on the Continent of Europe every nation was either neutral, conquered, or on the wrong side. It's hard to have a civil war with only one team." Blaney is right -- those responsible for the renaming have shown themselves to be "insular, arrogant and inward-looking."

And Last...

Thanks to Newt Gingrich, Barack Obama's campaign has made something of an issue of a Romney family vacation in 1983, in which the family, faced with a packed station wagon, put their beloved dog in a travel kennel, complete with windshield, on the roof. Apparently, the incident is focus-group-tested to damage Romney's approval. There's even a "Dogs Against Romney" group opposing the presumptive GOP nominee. Surely, they have better bones to pick.

This week, however, the Daily Caller's Jim Treacher noticed a passage from Barack Obama's first autobiography in which he described the childhood experience of eating dog meat while living with his stepfather in Indonesia. To illustrate the absurdity of such "issues," Treacher then launched into a pun-filled joke fest that caught on quickly. "Obama would never put a dog on top of a car," wrote Treacher. "Dries out the meat." From there, it expanded to a Twitter hashtag meme -- #ObamaDogRecipes -- including howlers such as Yorkshire terrier pudding, chicken poodle soup, pugs in a blanket, mutt chop, Great Danishes, beagle with cream cheese, pure bread, and so on and so on. Others mocked, "If I had a dog, it would look like the one Obama ate." Leftists are completely missing the joke, of course, but just think -- the puns are this delicious, and we haven't even reached the dog days of summer.

Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus et Fidelis! Nate Jackson for *The Patriot Post* Editorial Team. Read online at <http://patriotpost.us>