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THE FOUNDATION

“Charity is no part of the legislative duty of the government.” --James Madison

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

A \$6 Billion Bribe for the Youth Vote

Leftists are to be judged only by a promised future, never by the present or by what has been delivered. Case in point: student loans. With student loan interest rates set to double in July to their normal, un-subsidized rates -- thanks to legislation passed by Democrats in 2007 -- Barack Obama is pushing to extend the current level of federal subsidy as part of his re-election campaign. For his part, Mitt Romney agrees. And why not? Neither are listening to Tea Party complaints that this is not government’s role. In any case, the U.S. is nearly \$16 trillion in debt, and it can’t afford to subsidize student loans.

Such facts are unpopular with both presidential candidates because -- so the line goes -- they will alienate a host of young voters who could decide the election. Incredibly, both the White House and Senate Democrats want to pay for the \$6 billion, one-year extension with -- wait for it -- yet *another* new tax on small businesses. House Republicans propose to do it by using one of Obama’s slush funds (more on that below).

The “promise” of student loans is that they enable a large segment of society that allegedly could not otherwise attend college for lack of the means to do so. The problem with this guarantee -- as with any leftist utopian promise that makes first contact with reality -- is that it produces exactly the opposite of its pledged result. Government-backed student loans are the overwhelming reason tuition costs have risen almost 450 percent since 1982, notwithstanding the recent claims of Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan.

In fact, student loan debt has surpassed credit card debt in America. The average debt is \$25,000, with overall debt topping \$1 trillion, and college graduates are now suffering the highest unemployment rate in 11 years. Costs for college generally are much higher than they would be were they not inflated by student loan subsidies, and market distortion wrought by these subsidies has at least

in part contributed to an oversupply of certain types of college graduates: ones with unmarketable skill sets.

Sacrificing what was sure to be another important golf outing, Obama deigned to take time from his busy schedule to slander Republicans over the issue. Painting Republicans as student-haters, he asserted, “We cannot just cut our way to prosperity.” In one sense, he’s correct: \$6 billion is a drop in the bucket when compared to the more than \$5 trillion in debt racked up in his first three years. Furthermore, the loan subsidy extension, including all of its exceptions and caveats (it applies only to loans directly borrowed from the federal government; only to the sub-segment of those loans that are the so-called “Stafford” loans; and only to new borrowers, not to those currently enrolled) amounts to *some* borrowers saving roughly \$7 per month. Of course, the real purpose of the extension proposal is to buy votes.

That said, we *must* “cut our way to prosperity.” Both tax and spending cuts will be needed, not merely to put more money in the pockets of Americans, but to starve the ravenous beast that is the central government.

We close by noting that this is the same Obama who, as a senator, was missing in action when the loan subsidy came up for a vote on the Senate floor ... twice. Now, of course, extending the program is a “top priority.” The sad truth is that the president’s student loan subsidy plan is just one small part of a gigantic fiscal iceberg to our Titanic national debt. Spending is killing our nation and it has to stop, or we will quickly find ourselves in the company of Greece, Ireland, Portugal and a host of other European nations.

This Week’s ‘Alpha Jackass’ Award

Barack Obama has taken to misquoting Republican House members on the student loan issue to distort and misrepresent their statements. Predictably, the Leftmedia are largely abetting his effort. Obama told a North Carolina crowd, “One Republican congresswoman ... said she had ‘very little tolerance for people who tell me they graduate with debt because there’s no reason for that.’ I’m just quoting here, I’m just quoting.”

Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC) *actually said*, “I have very

little tolerance for people who tell me that they graduate *with \$200,000 of debt or even \$80,000 of debt* because there's no reason for that" [emphasis added]. Law and medical students might quibble with that, but Obama completely changed her meaning.

In Iowa, Obama railed, "You've got one member of Congress who compared these student loans -- I'm not kidding here -- to a 'stage-three cancer of socialism.'"

Rep. Todd Aiken (R-MO) *actually said*, "America has got the equivalent of stage-three cancer of socialism because the federal government is tampering in all kinds of stuff it has no businesses tampering in."

As you can see, Obama significantly changed the meaning of what Foxx and Aiken said to slander them and score political points. It's disgraceful, it's un-presidential, and, sadly, it's utterly unsurprising.

From the 'Non Compos Mentis' File

"In order to pay for [extending student loan interest subsidies, House Republicans] are going to make an assault on women's health, make another assault on women's health, continue our assault on women's health and pay for this with prevention initiatives that are in effect right now for childhood immunization; for screening for breast cancer, for cervical cancer; and for initiatives to reduce birth defects -- a large part of what the Center for Disease Control does in terms of prevention. ... [I]t may be a slush fund to [them], but it's survival to women." --House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)

An \$8 Billion Bribe for the Senior Vote

Democrats are nothing if not slick. Hidden in the bowels of ObamaCare is a provision to cut funding for Medicare Advantage, which was timed to eliminate coverage for many seniors just before Election Day. Since Obama obviously can't have that, he plans to tap an \$8.3 billion slush fund to extend Advantage for one more year. Then, after he's safely retrenched in office, the program heads back to the chopping block. Even the Government Accountability Office is crying foul on the Obama administration's cynical political maneuvering and is calling on the administration to cancel the effort. After all, it amounts to an \$8.3 billion campaign donation to Obama.

Republicans pushed Medicare Advantage in 1997 as a way to offer private-market options for seniors on Medicare, while (theoretically) saving taxpayer money. The latter didn't always pan out, but the program is popular

with seniors. Obama ran against the program and deliberately targeted it with his health care "reform," cutting funding by \$145 billion over 10 years, or about one-third of ObamaCare cuts to Medicare. Without funding, millions of seniors will be forced off their private plans and back to traditional Medicare. Now it's clear what he really meant by "you can keep your plan."

In related news, the Medicare Trustees released a report this week revealing that the program faces an unfunded liability of \$38.6 trillion over 75 years. Likewise, Social Security's unfunded liability is \$8.6 trillion. See again the above iceberg/Titanic metaphor.

Campaign Trail: Romney All but Wraps It Up

Mitt Romney swept five primaries Tuesday in New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and Delaware, symbolically if unofficially securing the GOP nomination. He celebrated with supporters in Manchester, NH, the site of his first victory in the campaign. Romney's speech was geared to the general election race ahead, and he even borrowed from Ronald Reagan's campaign playbook when he asked the crowd, "Is it easier to make ends meet? Is it easier to sell your home or buy a new one?" In the Gipper's words, "Are you better off than you were four years ago?"

Romney's Tuesday victory gave him a total of 838 delegates, but the numbers don't really mean much now. Newt Gingrich, who placed his meager hopes on a strong showing in Delaware, came up empty. The next day he signaled that he would exit the campaign and endorse Romney. Ron Paul is still campaigning, and, though some may wonder why, they need only take a look at the Minnesota delegate process to find the answer. Minnesota will send 40 delegates to the GOP convention, 24 of whom are based on congressional districts. Paul's organization spent a lot of time going district to district before the final delegates were awarded last weekend, and by making themselves known to the congressional delegates, Paul walked away with 20 of them. His ground game was quiet but effective, and he will be using it in contests that remain. This could provide him with a good measure of support going into the convention. It won't be enough to swing the nomination, but it will be enough to let him be heard. Having his small-government ideas gain the attention of the Republican National Convention will be a good thing.

Meanwhile, Barack Obama announced that he would be holding the "first rallies of the campaign on May 5." Of course, he has been holding re-election rallies -- funded

by taxpayers as “official events” -- since he took office, and most of them just happen to be in swing states. It’s so farcical that even The New York Times called him on it.

Senate Races: You Can Run, but You Can’t Vote

Incumbent Republican Indiana Senator Dick Lugar sold his Hoosier home in 1977, the first year that he took office, and for the last 35 years, he has laid his head to rest in another state, namely Virginia. However, for the first time in several election cycles, Lugar has a viable challenger, and his residency is a major issue.

First, Lugar’s candidacy was questioned since he admittedly no longer lives in Indiana. Lugar’s defense argues that he is still a resident since the Indiana Constitution states, “No person shall be deemed to have lost his residence in the state, by reason of his absence, either on business of this state or of the United States.” Meant to protect Hoosier military personnel stationed out of state, residency requirements were plain for politicians.

Second, the Marion County Election Board ruled that Lugar has no residence and, therefore, is not able to vote. So, for a period Lugar was eligible to run, but ineligible to vote for himself. On the verge of a courtroom confrontation, the Marion County Election Board settled with Lugar, thus allowing him and his wife to use the family farm as an official “residence” -- since the 80-year-old Lugar swears that he intends to move back to Indiana after he retires from the Senate.

Meanwhile, Indiana’s popular, constitutionalist, two-term Treasurer Richard Mourdock is the conservative challenger in the May 8 primary. With a stellar private and political career plus endorsements from conservative pundits and organizations such as Club for Growth PAC, National Rifle Association and Indiana Right to Life, Mourdock has gained traction and momentum. Not that Lugar will head back “home” without a fight.

New & Notable Legislation

The Senate, having not passed a budget in three years, did manage to approve one spending item Wednesday -- a \$34 billion bailout of the U.S. Postal Service. By a 62-37 vote, the Senate opted to save the postal union from the disaster it has wrought without making the necessary reforms. The Postal Service could lose \$12 billion this year, and some estimate that laying off 20 percent of its 530,000 workforce may be required for solvency. Yet the Senate deal still allows “no layoff” clauses for union contracts, eliminates reforms such as cutting Saturday

delivery and makes it more difficult to close and consolidate post offices. Sen. Bob Corker (R-TN) said, “Rather than removing the handcuffs and enabling real reform so the Postal Service can compete in the marketplace and serve communities that depend on it, this bill punts the tough choices to a future Congress and further hamstring the Postal Service with more mandates that will put it in even worse financial shape. It even requires the USPS to provide certain services at a loss.” Fortunately, the House is likely to block it.

Secret Service Investigation Continues

The investigation into the behavior of Secret Service agents in Colombia is now into its second week, and it’s likely to continue. New allegations surfaced that a prostitute was taken to the Cartagena Hilton, the hotel where the president stayed five days later. Sen. Joe Lieberman (I-CT), chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, suggested that the White House launch an internal review of all personnel.

The White House did conduct its own investigation into the 12 Secret Service agents implicated in the prostitution scandal. After 72 dramatic hours and no public details about how the investigation was conducted, the White House -- drumroll, please -- promptly cleared itself of any wrongdoing. That being the case, the Senate may want to continue digging on its own.

Six of the 12 Secret Service agents involved have departed, four voluntarily. Supervisor Greg Stokes was fired outright, and supervisor David Chaney was allowed to retire. Eleven military personnel are implicated, including six from the Army, two Marines, two from the Navy, and one from the Air Force. Their security clearances have been revoked, but no charges have been filed at this time. The scandal also extends beyond Colombia, with incidents alleged in at least four other countries.

Republicans Smarter Politically, More Open Than Democrat

A recent study conducted by the left-leaning Pew Research Center concluded that Republicans are more current on their political knowledge than Democrats. The “Partisan Difference in Knowledge” survey tested 239 Republicans and 334 Democrats on a number of political facts. For example, Republicans outscored Democrats 75-59 percent in identifying the correct party affiliation of Nancy Pelosi, and 73-58 in identifying FDR’s party affiliation. There were large gaps in awareness when it came to identifying which party supported smaller government

and which party is more conservative.

Similarly, a March Pew survey discovered that Democrats are more likely to reject a social networking contact based on political disagreement. A Washington Post poll from the same month also determined that Democrats are more likely to change their opinions based on subjects that are positive toward their party. Democrats were more than twice as likely to blame the White House for high gas prices in 2006 than in 2012. So much for the party of "tolerance."

ECONOMY

EPA 'Crucifies' Oil Companies to 'Make Examples'
CNS News reports, "Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK) took to the Senate floor [Wednesday] to draw attention to a video of a top EPA official saying the EPA's 'philosophy' is to 'crucify' and 'make examples' of oil and gas companies -- just as the Romans crucified random citizens in areas they conquered to ensure obedience." Inhofe released the 2010 video of the EPA speech this week. (We would link to it, but, curiously, it has been removed from YouTube due to a copyright claim. Inhofe wants answers to that one, too.) There's no doubt that random "crucifixions" would foster broad compliance through fear, but the 14th Amendment guarantees equal protection under the law -- hardly a hallmark of EPA practice.

Having been caught, EPA administrator Richard Armendariz, the official in the video, apologized this week, saying, "I apologize to those I have offended and regret my poor choice of words. It was an offensive and inaccurate way to portray our efforts to address potential violations of our nation's environmental laws. I am and have always been committed to fair and vigorous enforcement of those laws." Sen. Inhofe called the apology "meaningless," and asserted that the agency's claims of fairness aren't supported by the facts. Armendariz should either resign or be fired. In fact, the EPA should be disbanded entirely.

In related news, the Virginia Supreme Court dealt another blow to energy companies this week in a ruling that could, in effect, mean those companies can be held liable for damage caused by global warming.

Income Redistribution: Food Stamp Nation

As U.S. GDP growth remains just one notch above stagnant, the number of Americans on food stamps has skyrocketed by 70 percent since 2008. This increase, while certainly an indicator of the Obama administration's abysmal failure, is also part of a much larger picture: the

growth of the Welfare State since the 1960s. In fact, the number of people receiving food stamps grew from 17.2 million in 2000 to an astounding 44.7 million in 2011, and the cost grew from \$20 billion to \$78 billion over that time. Even more disturbing is the fact that the food stamp program is only one of 12 food assistance programs and a mind-boggling 79 federal welfare programs.

Total spending for these programs was \$927 billion in 2011, with a projected cost of \$1.5 trillion by 2022. If Congress merely scaled back this spending to pre-recession levels (with adjustments for inflation), and capped future spending, it would save taxpayers more than \$2.7 trillion in the next 10 years. So far, however, any attempts to reduce spending -- or even freeze it -- have been met with outraged resistance from the Left.

On the other hand, financial concerns have reached the White House, in a manner of speaking. According to Jodi Kantor, New York Times reporter and author of "The Obamas," Barack and Michelle are also worried about how they are going to make ends meet in the coming years. Despite having raked in \$8 million since taking office, Kantor reports that the Obamas have been calculating how long it will be before they will be able to write more books. True to form, Obama has tried to slough the issue off with awkward jokes about his wife's spending habits, but if he's really that worried, perhaps he ought to rethink his own economic policies.

Regulatory Commissars: Handicapping Employers

When enacted in 1991, the Americans with Disabilities Act was supposed to allow disabled people a chance to live their lives as normally as possible via the mandate that employers make "reasonable accommodations" to allow the disabled to perform the same jobs as able-bodied employees. Thousands of disabled workers thrived. However, as with almost all federal mandates, the potential for abuse was wide open. As time went on, more ailments fell under the category of disabilities and a cottage industry of trial lawyers made it their business to harass employers into going overboard to "accommodate" a select few workers who milked their status at the expense of the bottom line.

Now the federal government is considering further tweaking the rules to allow enhanced telecommuting options, make it more difficult for employers to enforce work rule infractions, and extend the 12 weeks allowed under the Family Medical Leave Act to an indefinite period for workers who can claim to be covered under the ADA. Critics of the rules maintain that employers will become

more reluctant to hire those who are protected under the Act, and with an already-tight job market, reasonable accommodations may turn out to be unreasonable demands on beleaguered employers.

Second Amendment:

Bank of America Drops Gun Company

Bank of America, the too-big-to-fail giant bailed out by American taxpayers to the tune of more than \$100 billion, doesn't think much of the Second Amendment. The bank recently dropped a client for transparently political reasons -- namely that McMillan Group International is a gun manufacturer. McMillan had been with Bank of America for 12 years, but a BOA senior vice president scheduled an "account analysis" meeting in which he explained that, because McMillan had come to emphasize its firearms manufacturing over the last five years, Bank of America was dropping them. Kelly McMillan further details the exchange in a Facebook post.

According to gun blogger Bob Owens, "McMillan is heavily involved with U.S. national security. McMillan rifle stocks are the standard for the Marine Corps' favored M40A3 sniper rifle. McMillan products, from stocks and other accessories to complete rifles, are used by U.S. regular and special forces and by American military allies around the globe. McMillan products are of particular import in Afghanistan and in Iraq." Therefore, Owens concludes, "Per McMillan's statement, a politically partisan bank has severed the lines of credit to a company important to our national security." Bank of "America," indeed.

SECURITY

Immigration Front: Proof You Can Go Home Again

After hearing oral arguments Wednesday, the Supreme Court is expected to rule later this summer on the legality of Arizona's federally based immigration law. Fundamentally, Arizona empowered its law enforcement officials to enforce federal immigration law by, for example, turning over illegal aliens to federal authorities. The Obama administration doesn't want these Democrat voters, er, illegals, to be pestered by certain sheriffs, but their case that Arizona is treading on federal authority doesn't appear to be a strong one. "[I]t's not selling very well," said none other than Justice Sonia Sotomayor, one of Obama's two appointees to the Court. The argument is centered on state and federal power, however, which doesn't preclude a later challenge based on claims of racial discrimination. Expect the law's opponents to try that angle if this one fails.

Regardless of the SCOTUS outcome, however, events may be changing the issue. A study by the Pew Hispanic Center finds that illegal immigration from Mexico may have reached a point thought unfathomable just a few short years ago, and it indicates that the attrition model of "self-deportation" suggested by Mitt Romney is coming to fruition. In the last half of the last decade, the number of immigrants coming here from Mexico fell by enough to match the increasing number of those leaving the United States. The poor economy and tougher immigration enforcement were cited as factors.

Because the Mexican-born American population has declined by 600,000 over the last decade, to around 12 million, the efforts by Democrats to woo the Hispanic vote may not be as successful in re-electing Barack Obama as they hoped. On the other hand, the decline in illegal immigrant numbers has defused the clamor for get-tough policies among the general population -- a Pew poll found the number of Republicans who considered illegal immigration a top issue declined from 69 percent in 2007 to 48 percent in January.

Guns in Mexico

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives released its latest data on U.S. guns trafficked to Mexico. Their new number is 68,161 since 2006. That's 68 percent of the total guns (selectively) reported by Mexico, a far cry from the 90 percent repeatedly claimed by the Obama administration. Obviously, ATF's own Operation Fast and Furious played a significant role in the number of guns walked across the border, so forgive our skepticism about their figures. If Mexico has such a problem, perhaps they might consider securing *their side* of the border.

Warfront With Jihadistan:

Another Decade in Afghanistan

Last Sunday, the U.S. and Afghanistan announced an agreement for the long-term presence of U.S. forces on Afghan soil. While neither Afghan nor American officials gave details, the agreement is believed to commit both sides to a 10-year partnership after the Obama regime's 2014 troop withdrawal deadline. Parts of the agreement, more than 18 months in the making, were read aloud on Monday in the Afghan parliament, but some rather important specifics were left out, such as how much funding the U.S. will provide to support Afghan security forces (or is that bribe Afghan officials?) and how many U.S. troops will stay in Afghanistan. The vast majority of combat troops will depart by the end of 2014, but the

U.S. is expected to maintain a sizable force in Afghanistan long after that, upwards of 20,000 troops, including Special Forces, military trainers and government specialists. A sizable contingent of U.S. Special Forces should continue to wreak considerable havoc on Afghan terrorist networks.

With so few details available, the exact impact of the agreement is difficult to assess. However, given Barack Obama's previous haste to high-tail it out of Afghanistan, it is perhaps encouraging that he now seems to recognize and accept the need for a continuing U.S. presence in order to keep open the Afghan front of the Long War. The agreement should also send a message to the Taliban and other terrorists, as well as to whatever true Afghan allies we have there, that America will stay and fight in support of the fledgling Afghan government and security forces. Finally, this pact formally acknowledges, even for Obama and his minions, that the Long War has been and will continue to be just that, long, in spite of idiotic claims from some Washington officials this week that "the War on Terror is over."

CULTURE

Climate Change This Week: Alarmist Changes His Tune

James Lovelock, the 92-year-old climate scientist who came up with the "Gaia" theory of the earth being a single living system, long sounded the alarm over carbon dioxide emissions and their supposedly disastrous effects on the climate. As recently as 2006, he claimed, "[B]efore this century is over billions of us will die and the few breeding pairs of people that survive will be in the Arctic where the climate remains tolerable." At some point since then, however, Lovelock has had a change of heart. He confesses now that not only were his warnings too "alarmist" but, "We don't know what the climate is doing."

He hasn't completely recanted, insisting that climate change is still happening, if not as quickly as he previously warned. "The world has not warmed up very much since the millennium," he said. Still, the global temperature "has stayed almost constant, whereas it should have been rising -- carbon dioxide is rising, no question about that." In fact, global temperatures haven't changed much in two decades. Lovelock was quick to add, "I'm not a denier." Sounds like denial to us.

Even those in the nation's greenest city, San Francisco, seem no longer to be "true believers" in saving the planet.

After an Earth Day gathering Sunday, Gaia's children left a large pile of garbage for others to clean up.

Accolades for Al Gore, Internet Inventor

While we disagree that he deserved an Academy Award or a Nobel Peace prize, we can say that Al Gore and his famous claim that "I took the initiative in inventing the Internet" deserves some sort of recognition. So it is that Gore will be among the first class of inductees into the Internet Hall of Fame. According to the Internet Society, the group putting together this newly created accolade for pioneers of the World Wide Web and other influential individuals, Gore is qualified because he was a "key proponent of sponsoring legislation that funded the expansion of and greater public access to the Internet." That's a little more modest than his claim of being the inventor of the medium, but it also overstates the importance of his contributions a bit.

Then again, overstatement has been a hallmark of Gore's political career, so the Internet Hall of Fame seems a perfect fit. We suppose, however, it would be an inconvenient truth that a simple Google search adds between one and 10 grams of carbon to the atmosphere.

Village Academic Curriculum: Vanderbilt and Occupy

As Vanderbilt University clings defiantly to its policy that campus religious organizations (specifically, Christian groups) must allow non-Christian leaders, the Tennessee State Legislature has stepped into the fray. More than 20 legislators recently signed a letter to Vanderbilt, warning the university that, while it has the right to set policy, the state "has a right not to subsidize any part of the operations of those organizations, like Vanderbilt University, that engage in unequal treatment of individuals and organizations, the effect of which is religious discrimination." Though private, Vanderbilt receives significant public funding.

In response, the university issued a veiled threat, reminding the state that the medical center at Vanderbilt provides services for TennCare, Tennessee's Medicaid managed care program and saying the threat of withdrawing public funds "puts ... those services potentially at risk." What's really at risk, though, is the notion that Vanderbilt can blatantly discriminate against Christian groups and face no consequences. In terms of fallout, it's the university and not the state that should be concerned.

Meanwhile, further solidifying the reputation of higher

education as a bastion of radical leftist thought, three (nominally) American professors recently gathered in Iran to discuss the Occupy Wall Street movement. Providing interviews on the movement and, in one case, noting that Occupy will be “pressuring politicians to start addressing issues of social inequality,” professors from Brooklyn College, Fordham University and City University of New York made themselves willing pawns of the Iranian government’s propaganda-press. Nothing like offering anti-American talking points to an anti-American government.

And Last...

The Associated Press reports, “About 9,000 U.S. Marines stationed on the Japanese island of Okinawa will be moved to the U.S. territory of Guam and other locations in the Asia-Pacific, including Hawaii, under a U.S.-Japan agreement announced Thursday.” U.S.-Japanese relations have reportedly been strained due to, as the AP puts it, “what many [reporters?] view as a burdensome U.S.

military presence.” Some 10,000 Marines will remain on Okinawa, where the U.S. has kept a sizable presence since World War II. Rep. Hank Johnson (D-GA) has not yet weighed in on the plan, though he expressed fear in 2010 that a “very small island” such as Guam could “become so overly populated that it will tip over and capsize.” We want to assure him, as Adm. Robert Willard, head of the U.S. Pacific fleet, did so patiently at the time, “We don’t anticipate that.”

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