

August 23, 2011

[NY Times' Joe Nocera](#) writes on NLRB v Boeing.

... In April, the National Labor Relations Board filed a complaint against Boeing, accusing it of opening the South Carolina plant to retaliate against the union, which has a history of striking at contract time. The N.L.R.B.'s proposed solution, believe it or not, is to move all the Dreamliner production back to Puget Sound, leaving those 5,000 workers in South Carolina twiddling their thumbs.

Seriously, when has a government agency ever tried to dictate where a company makes its products? I can't ever remember it happening. Neither can Boeing, which is fighting the complaint. J. Michael Luttig, Boeing's general counsel, has described the action as "unprecedented." He has also said that it was a disservice to a country that is "in desperate need of economic growth and the concomitant job creation." He's right.

That's also why I've become mildly obsessed with the Boeing affair. Nothing matters more right now than job creation. Last week, President Obama barnstormed the Midwest, promising a jobs package in September and blaming Republicans for blocking job-creation efforts. Republicans, of course, have blamed the administration, complaining that regulatory overkill is keeping companies from creating jobs.

They're both right. Republicans won't pass anything that might stimulate job growth because they are so ideologically opposed to federal spending. But the Democrats have blind spots, too. No, the Environmental Protection Agency shouldn't be rolling back its rules, as the Republican presidential candidates seem to want. But a fair-minded person would have to acknowledge that the N.L.R.B.'s action is exactly the kind of overreach that should embarrass Democrats who claim to care about job creation. It's paralyzing, is what it is. ...

[Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#) with a good Op-Ed on the foolish policies coming from the administration.

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In fact, that understates the role of small business, since the vast majority of America's medium-sized and large businesses began as small businesses. The Heinz corporation began when 16-year-old Henry Heinz grated piles of horseradish at home, using his mother's recipe, and sold the bottled product door-to-door in Sharpsburg out of a wheelbarrow.

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Bottom line: What's required from Obama is a complete about-face, the shelving of his flawed economic philosophy and a reversal of his counterproductive policy prescriptions.

In spite of Paul Ryan's demurral we have some more background from [Stephen Hayes](#) on the possible Paul Ryan entrance to the 2012 race.

For months the Republican presidential campaign has been a sleepy affair. The biggest news was that one supposedly top candidate had refused to criticize the frontrunner. Riveting.

The last week changed all of that. Michele Bachmann, once regarded as a sideshow candidate, won the Iowa straw poll, narrowly beating Ron Paul, still regarded as a sideshow candidate. Then would-be contender Tim Pawlenty dropped out. And whatever momentum Bachmann might have gained was halted by the announcement of Texas governor Rick Perry, who not only emerged as a first-tier candidate but is leading in at least one national poll.

Images from the campaign suddenly dominated television newscasts. Perry demonstrated his considerable skills in retail politics. Frontrunner Mitt Romney, whose team had anticipated just such a conservative surge, kept his attention on Barack Obama, whose own campaign swing through the all-important Midwest was all politics, despite the laughable claims of the White House to the contrary.

But some of the most interesting developments last week took place away from the cameras in the solitude of the Rocky Mountains, where Wisconsin representative Paul Ryan consulted with friends and family about whether he should join the race. Ryan has been quietly looking at a bid for nearly three months, since Indiana governor Mitch Daniels called him to say he wasn't running. But that consideration took a serious turn over the past two weeks, following a phone call with New Jersey governor Chris Christie in early August.

Ryan and Christie spoke for nearly an hour about the presidential race, according to four sources briefed on the conversation. The two men shared a central concern: The Republican field is not addressing the debt crisis with anything beyond platitudes.

Ryan, on the other hand, is the author of the detailed "Path to Prosperity" budget that passed the House last spring. His plan proposes structural reform to ensure the long-term viability of Medicare and other entitlements. ...

Every Friday, [Jennifer Rubin](#) asks her readers to respond to her Friday Question. Last week she asked who else they wanted to enter the race. The answers favored Ryan. ... The most frequently named candidate, however, was Ryan. Two commenters gave the best case for his candidacy. Zoltan Newberry writes:

"Somebody has to be the second president elected from the House. Ryan is the perfect Obama foil. He is patient and kind while Obama is brittle and testy. He is utterly genuine while Obama is phony. Ryan is the boy next door, the guy you can count on. People respond warmly to him. Paul Ryan is low-key and likable while the current WH occupant is high-strung, high-maintenance and extremely arrogant. Ryan has great intellectual credentials and has always been an authentic conservative thinker. His relative youth would contrast nicely with our hapless president's tired, old act. I think Ryan could get out there and impress voters as a modern version of Abraham Lincoln, and, God knows, we really need a person like that, somebody who is authentic, somebody who is the real deal."

The StatistQuo adds:

"He is the future. All but four House Republicans are on record in support of Ryan's "Path to Prosperity." No Republican presidential candidate has a pro -growth, tax reform, budget reform,

assertive foreign policy agenda, who though he is a social conservative does not wear his social conservatism on his sleeve. He showed poise and adroitness in the post-“Path to Prosperity” town meetings in Wisconsin.

He has already bested Obama in the impromptu Obamacare debate in Baltimore and would be unfazed sharing a debate stage with Obama. He will be welcome by both Beltway AND Tea Party Republicans. He has the intellectual heft to confidently defend his and his party’s positions. And being young, Ryan defies the stereotype of Republican leaders like Reagan, Dole, McCain, who were a tad long in the tooth when they were nominated. I believe, throwing granny off the cliff notwithstanding, Paul Ryan is Barack Obama’s worst nightmare.” ...

Jeff Jacoby devotes two columns to Perry's pledge to make Washington, DC inconsequential in our lives.

WHEN TEXAS Governor Rick Perry announced his campaign for president last weekend in a speech to the RedState Gathering in Charleston, S.C., he saved his best line for the end. “I’ll promise you this,” he said to exuberant cheers and applause, “I’ll work every day to try to make Washington, DC, as inconsequential in your life as I can.”

To a Democrat steeped in the big-government tradition of the New Deal and the Great Society, there could hardly be a greater heresy.

For liberals, perhaps the only thing more absurd and disagreeable than the prospect of a Washington with radically reduced influence in American life is a presidential candidate pledging to make that reduction a priority. MSNBC’s Chris Matthews, a former Jimmy Carter speechwriter and aide to Tip O’Neill, characterized Perry’s applause line as nothing less than a call for anarchy. The governor is saying “not just that the era of big government is over,” Matthews hyperbolically told his “Hardball” viewers on Monday, “he’s saying the era of government is over. . . . Let’s get rid of the government, basically.”

But to countless libertarians and free-market conservatives, it is exhilarating to hear a candidate talk this way. And why wouldn’t it be? After all, large majorities of Americans consistently say they don’t trust the federal government and have little faith in the ability of Washington’s immense bureaucracy to solve the nation’s problems. In promising to curb Washington’s outsize authority, Perry is responding to an alienation from government that is very much a Main Street phenomenon. ...

Jacoby expands on distrust of DC in the second column.

... it isn’t highways or veterans’ programs or minority voting rights that conservatives find so objectionable about Washington. When Perry speaks of making the nation’s capital “inconsequential,” he isn’t proposing to dismantle the Hoover Dam. Hard as it may be for liberals to accept, the Republican base isn’t motivated by blind loathing of the federal government, or by a nihilistic urge to wipe out the good that Washington has accomplished.

What conservatives believe, rather, is what America’s Founders believed: that government is best which governs least, and that human freedom and dignity are likeliest to thrive not when power is centralized and remote, but when it is diffuse, local, and modest.

“It is not by the consolidation or concentration of powers, but by their distribution, that good government is effected,” wrote Thomas Jefferson in 1821. In part that is because central planners and regulators rarely know enough to be sure of the impact their decisions will have on the innumerable individuals, communities, and enterprises affected by them. “Were we directed from

Washington when to sow and when to reap,” Jefferson dryly remarked, “we should soon want bread.” The Beltway blunders of our own era - from the [subprime mortgage meltdown](#) to [Cash for Clunkers](#) to [minimum wage laws](#) that drive up unemployment - would not have surprised him. ...

Andrew Malcolm finds an interesting pic of the first couple.

... Sunday morning the Secret Service packed all the Obamas in secure cars and headed for a private ocean beach.

Reuters' sharp-eyed Kevin Lamarque snapped this revealing photo of the first couple in the car tuned out from each other during this quality time family foray.

Of course, Michelle Obama could have her iPod crammed with hubby's recent speeches.

NY Times

How Democrats Hurt Jobs

The Boeing Case Should Embarrass Democrats

by Joe Nocera

The airplane's aft section arrived early Monday morning. That's what they'd been waiting for at the final assembly plant in North Charleston, S.C. They already had the wings, the nose, the tail — all the other major sections of Boeing's new 787 Dreamliner. With the arrival of the aft, the 5,000 nonunion workers in the plant can finally begin to assemble their first aircraft — a plane three years behind schedule and critical to Boeing's future.

The Dreamliner is important to America's future, too. As companies have moved manufacturing offshore, Boeing has remained steadfast in maintaining a large manufacturing presence in America. It is America's biggest exporter of manufactured products. Indeed, despite the delays, Boeing still has 827 Dreamliners on order, worth a staggering \$162 billion.

Boeing's aircraft assembly has long been done by its unionized labor force in Puget Sound, Wash. Most of the new Dreamliners will be built in Puget Sound as well. But with the plane so far behind schedule, Boeing decided to spend \$750 million to open the South Carolina facility. Between the two plants, the company hopes to build 10 Dreamliners a month.

That's the plan, at least. The Obama administration, however, has a different plan. In April, the National Labor Relations Board filed a complaint against Boeing, accusing it of opening the South Carolina plant to retaliate against the union, which has a history of striking at contract time. The N.L.R.B.'s proposed solution, believe it or not, is to move all the Dreamliner production back to Puget Sound, leaving those 5,000 workers in South Carolina twiddling their thumbs.

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They’re both right. Republicans won’t pass anything that might stimulate job growth because they are so ideologically opposed to federal spending. But the Democrats have blind spots, too. No, the Environmental Protection Agency shouldn’t be rolling back its rules, as the Republican presidential candidates seem to want. But a fair-minded person would have to acknowledge that the N.L.R.B.’s action is exactly the kind of overreach that should embarrass Democrats who claim to care about job creation. It’s paralyzing, is what it is.

The law, to be sure, forbids a company from retaliating against a union. But the word “retaliation” suggests direct payback — a company shutting down a factory after a strike, for instance. Boeing did nothing like that. It not only hasn’t laid off a single worker in Washington State, it has added around 3,000 new ones. Seven out of every 10 Dreamliners will be assembled in Puget Sound.

Before expanding to South Carolina, Boeing asked the union for a moratorium on strikes — precisely because it needed to get the airplane into the hands of impatient customers. The union said it would agree only if Boeing promised never to manufacture anywhere but Puget Sound. Boeing refused — as any company would.

It is a mind-boggling stretch to describe Boeing’s strategy as “retaliation.” Companies have often moved to right-to-work states to avoid strikes; it is part of the calculus every big manufacturer makes. The South Carolina facility is a hedge against the possibility that Boeing’s union work force will shut down production of the Dreamliner. And it’s a perfectly legitimate hedge, at least under the rules that the business thought it was operating under.

That is what is so jarring about this case — and not just for Boeing. Without any warning, the rules have changed. Uncertainty has replaced certainty. Other companies have to start wondering what other rules could soon change. It becomes a reason to hold back on hiring.

When he was asked about the Boeing case earlier this summer, President Obama said that the N.L.R.B. is an independent agency and that his hands were tied. That may be true, though it’s worth pointing out that most of its top executives are his appointees. But when he gets back from vacation, he might do well looking at his own administration, instead of simply blaming the lack of jobs on the Republicans.

As for the Republicans, there are plenty of regulations that would actually help create jobs — but which they won’t pass because of their own ideological blinders. I’ll be writing about that after Labor Day.

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review
[Circling back to the iceberg](#)
by Ralph R. Reiland

Only 26 percent of the public approve of President Barack Obama's handling of the economy in the latest Gallup poll, conducted Aug. 11-14, while a whopping 71 percent disapprove.

That's down from Obama's previous low point of 35 percent approval on this top issue.

The public's growing dissatisfaction shouldn't be surprising. Going back to 1890, reports the National Bureau of Economic Research, the only U.S. president with a worse record than Obama in job creation in his first two-and-a-half years in office, measured in terms of percentage change, was Herbert Hoover, presiding over the emergence of the Great Depression.

"Official unemployment is 9.1 percent," stated a New York Times editorial on Aug. 15, decrying the nation's jobs picture, "but it would be 16.1 percent, or 25.1 million people, if it included those who can only find part-time jobs and those who have given up looking for work."

"Keeping the economy going and making sure jobs are available is the first thing I think about when I wake up in the morning," Obama said back in March. "It's the last thing I think about when I go to bed each night."

Now, nearly six months later, the White House reports that Obama is working on a new strategy for job creation that will be unveiled after he returns from vacation.

The task of coming up with a jobs plan that works shouldn't be all that terribly difficult. All Mr. Obama has to do is reverse what he's done and change what he thinks.

First, by the government's own numbers, small businesses have created 64 percent of the net new jobs in the U.S. economy over the past 15 years.

In fact, that understates the role of small business, since the vast majority of America's medium-sized and large businesses began as small businesses. The Heinz corporation began when 16-year-old Henry Heinz grated piles of horseradish at home, using his mother's recipe, and sold the bottled product door-to-door in Sharpsburg out of a wheelbarrow.

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Second, 39 percent of small-business owners said in a Chamber of Commerce survey in July that ObamaCare was either their greatest or second-greatest obstacle to new hiring.

The president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, Dennis Lockhart, concurs, stating that "prominent" among the obstacles to hiring is the "lack of clarity about the cost implications" of ObamaCare.

"We've frequently heard strong comments," reported Lockhart, "to the effect of, 'My company won't hire a single additional worker until we know what health insurance costs are going to be.'"

Additionally, 84 percent of small business owners in the survey said the economy is on the wrong track, 79 percent view the current regulatory environment as unreasonable, and 79 percent believe Washington should get out of the way of small business, rather than offering a helping hand (14 percent).

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Bottom line: What's required from Obama is a complete about-face, the shelving of his flawed economic philosophy and a reversal of his counterproductive policy prescriptions.

Weekly Standard

To Run or Not to Run

That is Paul Ryan's question.

by Stephen F. Hayes

For months the Republican presidential campaign has been a sleepy affair. The biggest news was that one supposedly top candidate had refused to criticize the frontrunner. Riveting.

The last week changed all of that. Michele Bachmann, once regarded as a sideshow candidate, won the Iowa straw poll, narrowly beating Ron Paul, still regarded as a sideshow candidate. Then would-be contender Tim Pawlenty dropped out. And whatever momentum Bachmann might have gained was halted by the announcement of Texas governor Rick Perry, who not only emerged as a first-tier candidate but is leading in at least one national poll.

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But some of the most interesting developments last week took place away from the cameras in the solitude of the Rocky Mountains, where Wisconsin representative Paul Ryan consulted with friends and family about whether he should join the race. Ryan has been quietly looking at a bid for nearly three months, since Indiana governor Mitch Daniels called him to say he wasn't running. But that consideration took a serious turn over the past two weeks, following a phone call with New Jersey governor Chris Christie in early August.

Ryan and Christie spoke for nearly an hour about the presidential race, according to four sources briefed on the conversation. The two men shared a central concern: The Republican field is not addressing the debt crisis with anything beyond platitudes.

Ryan, on the other hand, is the author of the detailed "Path to Prosperity" budget that passed the House last spring. His plan proposes structural reform to ensure the long-term viability of Medicare and other entitlements.

Christie has echoed Ryan's concerns. In February, he gave a tough speech at the American Enterprise Institute, chastising Republicans for their timidity on entitlement reform and spending. "Let me suggest to you that my children's future and your children's future is more important than some political strategy. . . . We need to say these things and we need to say them out loud. When we

say we're cutting spending, when we say everything is on the table, when we say we mean entitlement programs, we should be specific," Christie lectured. "Here is the truth that no one is talking about: You're going to have to raise the retirement age for Social Security. . . . We have to reform Medicare because it costs too much and it is going to bankrupt us. . . . And we have to fix Medicaid because it's not only bankrupting the federal government, it's bankrupting every state government. There you go. If we're not honest about these things, on the state level about pensions and benefits and on the federal level about Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, we are on the path to ruin."

Although the two men have not been especially close personally, their conversation about the campaign was blunt, and they agreed on a central point: If these issues are to get the kind of attention they deserve, one of the two men will have to run. One source called it a de facto pact, but another described it as a more informal understanding. Christie told Ryan what he has (usually) told others: He does not want to run.

The conversation focused Ryan's thinking—making clear to him that if the big issues were to be raised in the presidential race, he would need to raise them himself. Ryan shared his thinking in an August 12 interview with Milwaukee talk radio host Charlie Sykes, the day after the GOP debate in Iowa.

"Looking at the Republican field right now," said Sykes, "are you confident that the candidates there are able to articulate the issues of the debt and the deficit and the need to reform entitlements in the way that you want to see done?"

Ryan laughed. "Why did you ask me that?"

"You know exactly why I asked you that question."

"I know. We'll see. I didn't see it last night. I haven't seen it to date. We'll see. People's campaigns evolve—they get better. So we'll see."

Ryan then broadened his comments. "Look, the way I see 2012—we owe it to the country to let them choose the path they want our country to take. And I just have yet to see a strong and principled articulation of the kind of limited government, opportunity society path that we would provide as an alternative to the Obama cradle-to-grave welfare state."

Sykes pressed him: "Do you think that it is absolutely essential that there be a Republican candidate who is able to articulate—"

Ryan cut him off: "I do. Because this is how we get our country back. We do it through a referendum letting the country pick the path, not by having a committee of 12 people pick the path or not by having just the inertia of just letting the status quo just stumble through by winning a campaign based on dividing people."

Such things were on Ryan's mind when he met later that day in his hometown of Janesville, Wisconsin, with Republican pollster Frank Luntz, who stopped by to see Ryan before heading to Ames for the straw poll. According to several sources with knowledge of the meeting, Luntz had included in his polling of the Republican presidential race questions about some prominent Republicans not yet running. When Luntz volunteered to share the results, Ryan, who hadn't done any polling of his own, agreed to see him. Luntz had tested voters' responses to Jeb Bush, Chris Christie, Marco Rubio, and Ryan, among prominent noncandidates. The results, according to a Republican with knowledge of the discussion, were "very positive" for Ryan.

Luntz is not the only campaign veteran who's been talking to Ryan. He has been speaking regularly with a number of Republican strategists. Among them are Karl Rove, the longtime adviser to George W. Bush. As Ryan has thought through his decision he's had as a sounding board the only GOP strategist to win a presidential election in the last two decades.

Other prominent Republicans last week publicly urged Ryan to join the race. "If there were a Paul Ryan fan club, I'd be a national officer," Mitch Daniels said in a phone interview last week. Daniels has been in touch with Ryan about his decision. "I don't think it's a secret that he was strongly encouraging me to try. I've been strongly encouraging him to run as well. He has all the qualities our party needs to be emphasizing in these elections. He can explain—and is willing to explain—in plain English why today's policies are a disaster for the middle class, and he has the smarts to go toe-to-toe with the people who are saying misleading things about the proposals that he's put out there."

Former Florida governor Jeb Bush agreed. "Paul Ryan would be a formidable candidate. I admire his substance and energy. Win or lose, he would force the race to be about sustained, job-creating economic growth and the real policies that can achieve it."

And Wisconsin's Scott Walker, among the most popular governors in the country with Republicans after winning his battle with the state's unions, offered the strongest encouragement yet. "Paul Ryan is one of the most courageous people I know," Walker said. "We need leaders who care more about the next generation than they do about the next election. That's Paul."

Others joined the chorus. Jim Jordan, a leading House conservative and author of the Cut, Cap, and Balance Plan that passed the House during the debt ceiling fight, said Ryan would be an asset to the race. Congressman Devin Nunes was pushing a Draft Ryan plan before it was cool. Texas senator John Cornyn and Wisconsin senator Ron Johnson also encouraged Ryan to run. Other lawmakers have gone to Ryan privately and urged him to get in. And for several months, in a procession that began well before Daniels declined to run, Ryan has been hearing from prominent GOP fundraisers and donors with promises to help him raise money if he joins the race.

Ryan spent several hours last week hiking in the Rocky Mountains with Bill Bennett, who has been a friend and mentor for nearly 20 years. They have been doing mountain hikes for several years, but in an interview before the outing Bennett acknowledged that the significance of this year's trek was the decision on the other side of it. "I expect to have some good long talks." Bennett declined to share details of those conversations.

Several people who have been talking to Ryan expect that he will return to Washington near the end of August having made his decision. Most everyone who has been in touch with him believes that he is still genuinely torn between the daunting challenge of a presidential campaign he never expected to wage this year and the obligation of stepping forward to serve his country in a time of crisis.

Right Turn

Friday question answered

by Jennifer Rubin

On Friday I asked readers if they wanted to see others enter the Republican presidential primary race. Do conservatives want to see New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, Wisconsin Rep. Paul Ryan, former Alaska governor Sarah Palin or someone else in the race?

A number of commenters wanted to see all three mix it up. Eddiehaskell spoke for those who'd like to see a full assortment of candidates:

"I would like to see all three run. Gov. Christie has a certain frankness that Americans can understand. He speaks his mind and is unafraid. He says what needs to be said and is a deficit hawk, which is what is needed now. He is electable and can beat Obama. Paul Ryan is the best candidate. He has total command of the budget and understands the financial problems of Medicare and Medicaid. He is smart and has a look that people will have confidence in. .□.□. Ryan would have a landslide victory over Obama especially if Marco Rubio runs as VP. I would like to see Sarah Palin run because she has guts and the left-wing media hate her so much it would drive them crazy. It would be quite a show. She would have a tough time beating the inept Obama."

As would be expected, a number of fervent Palin fans responded. Stevendufresne touts her personal qualities and experience: "She is unconventional, groundbreaking, self-made, genuine and devoted. .□.□. She cut budgets when she had surpluses, increased energy production, created jobs, improved the credit rating of her state, forward funded education and pensions, reformed a tax system, took on corruption and waste in government, and governed with a strong bipartisan coalition." However, Palin also drew the most negative remarks. (NYJA: " Sarah Palin has no chance of winning. She should save herself and the rest of us the trouble and stay out of the election." Stvcar: "The one I would least like to see run is Palin. Although I am sympathetic to her for the way she has been treated, and a small part of which she has brought on herself, she is not qualified to be presidential.")

The most frequently named candidate, however, was Ryan. Two commenters gave the best case for his candidacy. Zoltan Newberry writes:

"Somebody has to be the second president elected from the House. Ryan is the perfect Obama foil. He is patient and kind while Obama is brittle and testy. He is utterly genuine while Obama is phony. Ryan is the boy next door, the guy you can count on. People respond warmly to him. Paul Ryan is low-key and likable while the current WH occupant is high-strung, high-maintenance and extremely arrogant. Ryan has great intellectual credentials and has always been an authentic conservative thinker. His relative youth would contrast nicely with our hapless president's tired, old act. I think Ryan could get out there and impress voters as a modern version of Abraham Lincoln, and, God knows, we really need a person like that, somebody who is authentic, somebody who is the real deal."

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We'll find out soon enough which, if any candidates, jump in late. If nothing else, one or all of these candidates would add excitement to the race, making the rest of the field look a little stale.

Boston Globe

Making Washington inconsequential

by Jeff Jacoby



Rick Perry campaigns at the Iowa State Fair.

WHEN TEXAS Governor Rick Perry announced his campaign for president last weekend in [a speech](#) to the RedState Gathering in Charleston, S.C., he saved his best line for the end. "I'll promise you this," [he said to exuberant cheers and applause](#), "I'll work every day to try to make Washington, DC, as inconsequential in your life as I can."

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For liberals, perhaps the only thing more absurd and disagreeable than the prospect of a Washington with radically reduced influence in American life is a presidential candidate pledging to make that reduction a priority. MSNBC's Chris Matthews, [a former Jimmy Carter speechwriter and aide to Tip O'Neill](#), characterized Perry's applause line as nothing less than a call for anarchy. The governor is saying "not just that the era of *big* government is over," Matthews hyperbolically told his "Hardball" viewers on Monday, "he's saying the era of *government* is over. . . . Let's get rid of the government, basically."

But to countless libertarians and free-market conservatives, it is exhilarating to hear a candidate talk this way. And why wouldn't it be? After all, large majorities of Americans consistently say [they don't trust the federal government](#) and [have little faith in the ability of Washington's immense bureaucracy](#) to solve the nation's problems. In promising to curb Washington's outside authority, Perry is responding to an alienation from government that is very much a Main Street phenomenon.

It is also a relatively recent phenomenon, one that has grown in proportion with the federal establishment's self-aggrandizement. As Charles Murray has written, the more Washington has tried

to do, [the less it has done well](#) - including the relatively few functions it used to perform competently. It is only natural that there should be such widespread frustration with the intrusive, expensive federal behemoth - all the more so when efficient and attractive private alternatives (such as e-mail instead of snail mail) make clear just how apathetic and ungainly big government tends to be.

Over the past half-century, Washington has insinuated itself into a thousand-and-one decisions that individuals or local governments are more than capable of making for themselves. Which medicines can you buy? How efficient should your light bulbs be? Can your children's school day begin with a prayer? Who qualifies for a mortgage? When do unemployment benefits run out? Can you pay an employee \$5 an hour if that's what his labor is worth? Should abortions be restricted? Is health insurance optional? Do artists or farmers or broadcasters require subsidies? Are you in charge of your retirement income?

In [Federalist No. 45](#), James Madison emphasized that, under the Constitution, the powers of the federal government "are few and defined," while those left to state and local communities "are numerous and indefinite." For the first 150 years or so of US history that was largely the case. But New Deal and Great Society liberalism has turned the framers' careful arrangement inside out. Today, there is almost nothing in American life that Washington does not consider itself fit to regulate, control, ban, tax, or mandate.

Former US Senator James Buckley, now a senior judge on the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit, [points](#) to the massive enlargement of Title 42 of the United States Code, which comprises laws dealing with health and public welfare. Between 1960 and 2010, Title 42 metastasized from 403 pages of statutory language to more than 6,300. [Title 42](#), bear in mind, is just one of [50 titles](#) in the US Code.

Has the staggering growth of the federal establishment made America a better, more humane, more optimistic place to live? Obviously it is possible to single out this or that law or regulation or expenditure and show that it has been beneficial. Not even the most ardent libertarian disputes the need for federal governance of inherently national matters - and the Constitution itself makes clear that Washington has a role to play in guaranteeing civic equality and political liberty.

Yet in crucial ways, the flow of power upward to the federal government has impoverished American culture and weakened civic society. A presidential candidate who was serious about making Washington less consequential in the lives of Americans would render his nation a great service. Whether Perry is really that candidate remains to be seen.

Boston Globe

[When 'inconsequential' means 'better'](#)

by Jeff Jacoby

TO MANY liberals, Rick Perry's audacious pledge to make Washington as "inconsequential in your life as I can" is tantamount to a pledge to bring back the Dark Ages.

[Commenting on Twitter](#) as the Texas governor announced his presidential candidacy, longtime Washington journalist Howard Kurtz wondered: "Perry wants to make DC 'inconsequential in your life.' Does that include Medicare, Soc Sec, vets' programs, air safety, FDA?" Former Bobby Kennedy aide Jeff Greenfield [ran through a litany](#) of Washington's contributions to American life - from railroads, interstate highways, and the Hoover Dam to land-grant colleges, civil rights, and subsidized mortgages - and marveled at the depth of the right's "disdain for all things Washington."

But it isn't highways or veterans' programs or minority voting rights that conservatives find so objectionable about Washington. When Perry speaks of making the nation's capital "inconsequential," he isn't proposing to dismantle the Hoover Dam. Hard as it may be for liberals to accept, the Republican base isn't motivated by blind loathing of the federal government, or by a nihilistic urge to wipe out the good that Washington has accomplished.

What conservatives believe, rather, is what America's Founders believed: that government is best which governs least, and that human freedom and dignity are likeliest to thrive not when power is centralized and remote, but when it is diffuse, local, and modest.

"It is not by the consolidation or concentration of powers, but by their distribution, that good government is effected," [wrote Thomas Jefferson in 1821](#). In part that is because central planners and regulators rarely know enough to be sure of the impact their decisions will have on the innumerable individuals, communities, and enterprises affected by them. "Were we directed from Washington when to sow and when to reap," Jefferson dryly remarked, "we should soon want bread." The Beltway blunders of our own era - from the [subprime mortgage meltdown](#) to [Cash for Clunkers](#) to [minimum wage laws](#) that drive up unemployment - would not have surprised him.

But that isn't the only reason that shrinking Washington and decentralizing power promotes better government. While curbing the federal behemoth is important in its own right, it is indispensable to the moral health of a nation rooted in the conviction that men and women can govern themselves. Our social arrangements tend to work best when they are organized at the lowest possible level, closest to concrete, day-to-day experience. Only as a last resort should we seek to transfer power upward, from individuals and families to city hall, or from city hall to the state house, or from the state house to Washington. This is the principle of subsidiarity that historically [underpinned American federalism](#).

Once, it was commonly understood by Americans that the best way to get things done was to do them privately.

"Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all dispositions, constantly form associations," an impressed [Alexis de Tocqueville](#) wrote in 1835. "They have not only commercial and manufacturing companies . . . but associations of a thousand other kinds - religious, moral, serious, futile, extensive or restricted, enormous or diminutive. The Americans make associations to give entertainments, to found establishments for education, to build inns, to construct churches, to diffuse books, to send missionaries to the antipodes; and in this manner they found hospitals, prisons, and schools."

But as government grows larger and more powerful, it crowds out private action. It replaces local, familiar, and organic institutions with remote bureaucratic ones. As state and federal governments swell, taking over functions that used to be left to individuals and voluntary organizations, communities are weakened. Increasingly citizens are taught to rely on government, rather than on themselves or their neighbors. They develop a sense of entitlement, and entitlement in turn fuels selfishness. Other people's needs come to be seen as the government's responsibility. Government gets [bigger and bigger](#) - and citizens get smaller and smaller.

Of course some functions can only be performed at [the national level](#). But Washington does far more than it should, in so many ways treating Americans like children who cannot be trusted to run their own lives. The effect of that infantilization has been an erosion of [the virtues without which no free society can thrive](#): Work, honesty, discipline, gratitude, moderation, thrift, initiative.

The way to undo that erosion? We can start by making Washington more inconsequential.

LA Times

[Michelle Obama comes prepared for a beach day with Barack](#)

by Andrew Malcolm



Ah, family vacation time in an American August, a chance for members to rediscover the joys and pleasures of being together, whether they like it or not.

As soon as President Obama escaped his new million-dollar bus in the Midwest and the latest disappointing economic numbers came out, the Democrat flew off to tony Martha's Vineyard to join his family, extended family and staff doing expensive things in a different place.

Some people thought such a venture revealed a political tone deafness for the elected elite to be seen enjoying off-shore luxury while two-thirds of American voters tell pollsters the country is on the wrong track with the Real Good Talker in charge. But, hey, Yes, We Can. So, Yes, He Did.

Sunday morning the Secret Service packed all the Obamas in secure cars and headed for a private ocean beach.

Reuters' sharp-eyed Kevin Lamarque snapped this revealing photo of the first couple in the car tuned out from each other during this quality time family foray.

Of course, Michelle Obama could have her iPod crammed with hubby's recent speeches.

THE OBAMA BUS TOUR



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