

March 21, 2012

[Jonathan Tobin](#) catches White House minions, this time the documentary film makers, repeating one of Obama's lies. [Pickings of July 21 last](#) year carried a story by Byron York on the first discovery the president had not told the truth about his mother's health insurance.

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At the time the White House chose not to dispute Ms. Scott's findings. But apparently the Obama campaign thinks the public's memory is mighty short. As Glenn Kessler [writes today](#) in the Washington Post's Fact Checker column, the president's much ballyhooed campaign biography film "The Road We've Traveled," narrated by Tom Hanks repeats the same line that Scott debunked. Though the film's script tries to avoid repeating the president's false claims from 2008, as Kessler says, any reasonable person would infer from the movie that the president's mother died because her insurance was denied.

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More on the film from [Peter Wehner](#).

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What's most striking, though, is how little Obama has to show for his efforts. The documentary focuses almost exclusively on inputs, not outputs; on legislation passed, not successes attained; on narrative, not empirical progress.

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Obama's tenure has been, by any reasonable standard, a failure. Not even a Tom Hanks-narrated documentary can change that.

GE's Jeff Immelt has figured out he was used by the administration says [Charles Gasparino](#).

Back when he agreed to advise the Obama administration on economics, General Electric CEO Jeff Immelt told friends that he thought it would be good for GE and good for the country. A life-long Republican, Immelt said he believed he could at the very least moderate the president's distinctly anti-business instincts.

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Friends describe Immelt as privately dismayed that, even after three years on the job, President Obama hasn't moved to the center, but instead further left. The GE CEO, I'm told, is appalled by everything from the president's class-warfare rhetoric to his continued belief that big government is the key to economic salvation. ...

[Andrew Malcolm's](#) story on the Dem fund-raising troubles suggests there are many like Immelt.

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The reasons, interviews of money bundlers determined, are several: the continuing poor economy, unhappiness with some of Obama's actions (or inactions) and over-confidence about

his success against the still-competing Republican field. And the impact of rising gas prices, now showing up in national polls.

As one result, the Obama camp has had to focus more on smaller donors. Their almost daily e-mail appeals now seek a \$3 minimum contribution, instead of the previous \$10-\$50. And as an incentive, they promise a lottery chance to dine with the president. Three dollars is better than none now and any new donors can count on being tagged again and again.

To be sure, Obama is raising more than any of the four remaining Republican competitors. But the key is how fast he's spending it.

Turns out, this Democrat president spends campaign cash like it was taxpayer dollars. In January, even with no big TV buys, the Obama campaign burned through 158% of what it raised (vs 60% for Bush eight years before). That left Obama and the DNC with \$91.7 million in the bank (vs \$122 million in 2008). ...

Interesting article from [American.com](http://www.American.com) on the health care debate.

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Indeed, the fierce battle over reform was based on the perception that Americans did not get good value for their money. Many of the global comparisons that informed this view, however, were flawed, incomplete or misleading. It's time to set the record straight.

"The U.S. health system is far superior to the statistical caricature critics have presented." - Christopher J. Conover

The U.S. spends too much compared to other countries.

This is a pervasive misconception encouraged by reformers who sought to argue that other countries, especially those with single-payer systems such as Canada or Britain, outperform the United States. Thus it was feasible to imagine that the U.S. could dramatically expand access to care without spending more money.

But throughout the world, as income rises, so does willingness to pay for healthcare. In fact, differences in income per capita explain about 85% of the variation in health expenditures per capita across industrialized countries.

Conventional models purportedly show that the U.S. spends 60% more on healthcare than it should given its level of per capita income. These models treat all nations the same so that the United States and its 300 million people is compared with very small countries such as Iceland, population 500,000. But a more precise model that compares apples to apples shows that the U.S. spends only 1.5% more than it should. By contrast, France spends about one-fifth too much, while Canada and Britain spend about one-fifth too little. ...

John Stossel argues for less rules.

"If you have 10,000 regulations," Winston Churchill said, "you destroy all respect for law."

He was right. But Churchill never imagined a government that would add 10,000 year after year. That's what we have in America. We have 160,000 pages of rules from the feds alone. States and localities have probably doubled that. We have so many rules that legal specialists can't keep up. Criminal lawyers call the rules "incomprehensible." They are. They are also "uncountable." Congress has created so many criminal offenses that the American Bar Association says it would be futile to even attempt to estimate the total.

So what do the politicians and bureaucrats of the permanent government do? They pass more rules.

That's not good. It paralyzes life.

Politicians sometimes say they understand the problem. They promise to "simplify." But they rarely do. Mostly, they come up with new rules. It's just natural. It's how the public measures politicians. Schoolchildren on Washington tours ask, "What laws did you pass?" If they don't pass new laws, the media whine about the "do-nothing Congress."

This is also not good. ...

Contentions

Obama Still Lying About Mother's Health Insurance Problem

by Jonathan S. Tobin

Last summer, [a brief stir was caused](#) when a book published by *New York Times* Janny Scott uncovered an uncomfortable fact about President Obama: He had been lying about his mother's health insurance problems. During the 2008 campaign and throughout the subsequent debate over his signature health care legislation, the president used his mother's experience as a cancer patient fighting to get coverage to pay for treatment for what her insurer said was a pre-existing condition as an emotional argument to sway skeptics. But as Scott discovered during the course of writing her biography of Anne Dunham, *A Singular Woman: The Untold Story of Barack Obama's Mother*, it turned out that her correspondence showed that "the 1995 dispute concerned a Cigna disability insurance policy and that her actual health insurer had apparently reimbursed most of her medical expenses without argument."

At the time the White House chose not to dispute Ms. Scott's findings. But apparently the Obama campaign thinks the public's memory is mighty short. As Glenn Kessler [writes today](#) in the *Washington Post's* Fact Checker column, the president's much ballyhooed campaign biography film "The Road We've Traveled," narrated by Tom Hanks repeats the same line that Scott debunked. Though the film's script tries to avoid repeating the president's false claims

from 2008, as Kessler says, any reasonable person would infer from the movie that the president's mother died because her insurance was denied.

As Kessler notes, the filmmakers were aware of the fact that the president had been caught in a lie about his mother's insurance but were determined to get this story into the film without exactly repeating his mendacious statement.

We think there are few viewers of this film who would watch this sequence and conclude that Dunham was involved in anything but a fight over health-insurance coverage. ... The filmmakers must have known they had a problem with this story or else they would have recounted it as Obama had done in the 2008 campaign, using phrases such as "pre-existing conditions," "health insurance," and "treatment."

Instead, they arranged the quotes and images to leave a misleading impression of what really happened.

President Obama's willingness to falsify the facts about a personal tragedy in order to make a political point speaks volumes about not only his cynicism but also his character. It's important to remember that this is no misunderstanding but rather a bald-faced lie. Here's what Obama said during one of his debates with Republican opponent John McCain:

For my mother to die of cancer at the age of 53 and have to spend the last months of her life in the hospital room arguing with insurance companies because they're saying that this may be a pre-existing condition and they don't have to pay her treatment, there's something fundamentally wrong about that.

It is true that Ms. Dunham did have a separate dispute about disability insurance but this had nothing to do with pre-existing conditions. Nor did it affect her fight for her life. And given that her son acted as her attorney, there's no doubt he was not ignorant of the truth of the matter.

President Obama never apologized for his original lie. He just assumed, rightly it turns out, that even though this whopper was uncovered by the *New York Times*, neither that paper nor the rest of the liberal mainstream media would pursue the matter further as they almost certainly would (and should have) had his Republican predecessor been found out in a similar matter. Thus encouraged, he has now repeated the falsehood, albeit artfully recast in an attempt to avoid blame.

Having won election and then rammed his ObamaCare bill through Congress in part on the strength of this false argument, he has doubled down on it with the lie now coming from the lips of American's favorite everyman, actor Tom Hanks as well as in edited clips of interviews with the president and his wife. Kessler gives the performance three out of a possible four Pinocchios on his scale of accuracy. This seems a bit generous but the point is that the story proves that Obama is willing to do and/or say anything, even lying about the death of his mother, in order to gain an advantage. That he thinks repeating the lie will help him get re-elected says a lot about what he thinks of the intelligence of the American people and the integrity of the press that failed to vet him the first time around.

Contentions

The Problem With Obama's Documentary

by Peter Wehner

Via HotAir.com, [here](#) is President Obama's 17-minute campaign documentary, "The Road We've Traveled."

It's slickly produced, as one might expect, but I found it to be on balance ineffective. For one thing, it's probably worth pointing out that Obama's predecessor had a large role in what the Obama campaign claims are its greatest successes, from TARP to the auto bailout to killing Osama bin Laden.

For another, some of the claims in the documentary are (unintentionally) amusing, including that Obama, upon taking office, "would not dwell in blame."

If there is one consistent theme to the Obama presidency, it's that he's sought to blame his failures on others: George W. Bush, earthquakes, tsunamis, Europe, the Arab Spring, ATMs, Wall Street, Republicans, the Tea Party, Fox News, millionaires, billionaires, conservative talk radio, and so forth and so on.

There are also references to Obama's willingness to make "tough decisions" and "face crises that others would avoid" (presumably the producers have in mind Obama's refusal to confront our entitlement crisis, which is fueling our debt crisis, and to fiercely attack those who do). The documentary claims Obama has brought the Iraq war to a "responsible end" (the American withdrawal from Iraq was mishandled and threatens to undo the progress that had been made).

Yet I came away from watching this documentary thinking if this is the best they can do, the president's opponent in the fall should be encouraged.

The main emotion the producers of "The Road We've Traveled" are hoping to tap into is pity. We're told Obama inherited the worst economy since the Great Depression (Ronald Reagan actually inherited a sicker economy than Obama did) and took steps that prevented the ship from hitting the rocks. In fact, though I realize this isn't supposed to be said in polite company, it was George W. Bush who did the heaviest lifting when it came to taking emergency measures that kept the economy from collapsing and credit from freezing.

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NY Post

Bam's angry adviser

by Charles Gasparino

Back when he agreed to advise the Obama administration on economics, General Electric CEO Jeff Immelt told friends that he thought it would be good for GE and good for the country. A life-long Republican, Immelt said he believed he could at the very least moderate the president's distinctly anti-business instincts.

That was three years ago; these days Immelt is telling friends something quite different.

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But Immelt doesn't think he's had anywhere near as much luck moderating the president's fat-cat-bashing, left-leaning economic agenda of taxing businesses and entrepreneurs to pay for government bloat.

Friends describe Immelt as privately dismayed that, even after three years on the job, President Obama hasn't moved to the center, but instead further left. The GE CEO, I'm told, is appalled by everything from the president's class-warfare rhetoric to his continued belief that big government is the key to economic salvation.

Or, as one friend recently put it to me, "Jeff thought he could make a difference, and now realizes he couldn't."

Immelt's conversion from public Obama supporter to a private detractor is important: It shows how even businessmen who feast off his subsidies worry about his overall economic agenda and its long-term impact on the economy.

Don't expect Immelt to say anything *publicly* about the downside of president's economic agenda anytime soon: He's still serving as what is considered the top outside economic adviser to the White House. (A GE spokesman insists that the reports I'm sharing here about Immelt's private criticism of Obama are "ludicrous.")

GE has too much to lose for Immelt to publicly 'fess up to his disdain. The president now routinely talks up his desire to tax businesses that create jobs overseas, and GE overseas expansion is well-documented. Nor does the company want to put all its green subsidies at risk.

And of course the last thing Immelt or his shareholders need is for the president to turn his class-warfare fire on them, as he did to his erstwhile pals in the banking business.

Yet friends report that Immelt's displeasure with the president's economic policies is real and palpable in private settings.

Back in 2008, the GE boss gave both to GOP presidential nominee John McCain and, in the Democratic primaries, to Hillary Clinton; he's said that he voted for McCain. But GE as a whole

was one of candidate Obama's top donors. As noted, Immelt joined the new president's team, first as a member of Obama's Economic Advisory Recovery Board and later as head of his Council on Jobs and Competitiveness.

Yet even as Immelt continues to dispense advice to the president, friends tell me, he's privately rooting for Mitt Romney to win the Republican nomination and defeat Obama in the fall.

A GE spokesman says simply, "Mr. Immelt has not decided to support Gov. Romney." OK — but the GE "community" sure has. In 2008, GE execs (who often take their giving cues from the guy at the top) gave over five times more to Obama than to McCain. This time around, GE executives have raised nearly twice as much for Romney as for Obama, and Romney isn't even the nominee yet.

I'm told a clue to Immelt's disenchantment with the president can be found in GE's annual letter to shareholders, in which the CEO laments, "We live in a tough era in which the public discourse, in general, is negative . . . American companies, particularly big companies, are vilified," when "we need to work together to find a better way."

Sure doesn't sound like an Obama booster to me.

Investors.com

[Obama's campaign money woes: He's working harder for less this time](#)

by Andrew Malcolm

Now that the economy (and a few other things) are hitting President Obama's reelection campaign hard, maybe the depth of Americans' money troubles will come home to him.

For every one of the 1,154 days that the Democrat has been president, polls have shown that jobs and the economy were the top issues on his countrymen's minds. Yet he invested more than a year and dozens of town halls getting his coveted Obamacare plan passed; it may be tossed by the Supreme Court this summer, will cost twice what he promised and a majority of Americans already want it repealed.

There was the 'Don't Ask-Don't Tell' struggle, the national credit degrading and national debt fight. With his community fixer hat on, Obama invested months getting financial reforms in place. All while shoveling out the door and into the national debt nearly a trillion dollars, and almost as many promises about new jobs from the alleged stimulus to little measurable effect.

Except for Warren Buffet, Obama has been bashing rich Americans like himself for months now. And guess what? A lot of them are not writing him the big checks they did back in 2007-08 when he raised \$745 million and his unopened promise bag was full of hope and change.

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As one result, the Obama camp has had to focus more on smaller donors. Their almost daily e-mail appeals now seek a \$3 minimum contribution, instead of the previous \$10-\$50. And as an incentive, they promise a lottery chance to dine with the president. Three dollars is better than none now and any new donors can count on being tagged again and again.

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Turns out, this Democrat president spends campaign cash like it was taxpayer dollars. In January, even with no big TV buys, the Obama campaign burned through 158% of what it raised (vs 60% for Bush eight years before). That left Obama and the DNC with \$91.7 million in the bank (vs \$122 million in 2008).

As one result, Obama is now for super PACs after being against them. He OK'd one for his campaign, citing the threat of GOP PACs, but its results so far have been disappointing. Which explains [why it decided to keep controversial Bill Maher's \\$1 million gift](#) despite his long history of misogynistic comments.

The president has now dropped any pretense of working over campaigning for the remaining 232 pre-election days. Friday the Democrat left the Oval Office before noon and flew Air Force One to Chicago for two fundraisers, then down to Atlanta for three more, giving him a total of 108 so far, twice Bush's 2004 rate. He has another in D.C. tonight, as does wife Michelle in New York City.

"He is working a lot harder than he thought he would to raise a lot less than he had hoped," observes campaign veteran Karl Rove.

Michelle Obama is also consistently on the money trail, worrying over and over that [Barack's "wonderful progress" is jeopardized](#) without four more years.

Joe Biden is out beseeching too. At a Beverly Hills breakfast fundraiser in January, Biden sounded a tad defensive about the administration's record, especially on jobs. He ran through the chronic complaint about the bleak economy inherited from you-know-who and the hard, sometimes unpopular decisions Barack bravely made.

"You're backing the right guy," Biden said, adding that Obama "has a backbone like a rail-rod," whatever that is. The vice president, who claimed he spends three hours per day with him, also acknowledged the cold distance or aloofness many sense in Obama. He said it's simply that

Obama is a very private person. Obama himself has written how much he dislikes asking rich people for money.

Then, Biden added a strange comment for someone who so wants to continue as the president's political partner. Perhaps presciently, Biden, who became a senator when the president was but a sixth grader, admitted that Obama has "character traits that don't lend themselves to 2012 national politics."

Looking at these recent fundraising numbers, it seems thousands of one-time eager Obama supporters have sensed the same thing about 2012 and are acting accordingly.

American.com

Health care wasn't broken

by Christopher J. Conover



Dr. Stephen DiMarzo and nurses go over work details in the maternity ward at Scripps Memorial Hospital in La Jolla, California on Jan. 9, 2007.

The epic debate over President Obama's controversial individual health insurance mandate finally reaches the Supreme Court this month. Stripped of legal jargon, the administration's defense of the mandate — and the broader Affordable Care Act — boils down to this: The U.S. healthcare system was badly broken, so we had to fix it.

Indeed, the fierce battle over reform was based on the perception that Americans did not get good value for their money. Many of the global comparisons that informed this view, however, were flawed, incomplete or misleading. It's time to set the record straight.

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The U.S. spends too much compared to other countries.

This is a pervasive misconception encouraged by reformers who sought to argue that other countries, especially those with single-payer systems such as Canada or Britain, outperform the United States. Thus it was feasible to imagine that the U.S. could dramatically expand access to care without spending more money.

But throughout the world, as income rises, so does willingness to pay for healthcare. In fact, differences in income per capita explain about 85% of the variation in health expenditures per capita across industrialized countries.

Conventional models purportedly show that the U.S. spends 60% more on healthcare than it should given its level of per capita income. These models treat all nations the same so that the United States and its 300 million people is compared with very small countries such as Iceland, population 500,000. But a more precise model that compares apples to apples shows that the U.S. spends only 1.5% more than it should. By contrast, France spends about one-fifth too much, while Canada and Britain spend about one-fifth too little.

Other countries are doing better at controlling health spending growth.

Since 1960, the U.S. has been about in the middle of its economic peers in terms of the rate of growth in real (inflated-adjusted) health spending per person. But surely the single-payer countries have done best in controlling costs? Not so. Since 1990, growth in the rates of per capita spending in Canada and Britain have exceeded the U.S. rate.

What really matters is how much the average person has to spend on everything else once healthcare has been purchased. And on this score, Americans have a huge advantage. In real dollar terms, the U.S. margin of advantage in nonhealth spending increased between 1960 and 2007 compared with every country in the then-G7 except Japan. The U.S. spends more on healthcare in large part because it can afford to do so.

The U.S. has abysmal infant mortality rates.

This is a half-truth. The U.S. ranks 43rd internationally in infant mortality, according to United Nations figures for the years 2005 to 2010. Unfortunately, there is no consistent standard for reporting infant deaths across countries. The U.S. scores lower because doctors here count as failures extreme cases in which the odds of survival were so low that foreign doctors don't count them at all.

Specifically, many nations also do not report any live births at less than 23 weeks, even when vital signs are present, according to a study published in 2000 in the American Journal of Public Health. That same study found that when all deaths to infants delivered in Philadelphia at 22 weeks' gestation were excluded, the city's measured infant mortality rate declined by 40%.

If we categorize births by length of gestation, the U.S. ranks second, third or fourth among major European countries in achieving the lowest infant mortality rates for every category examined prior to full term.

The U.S. has abysmal average life expectancy.

Life expectancy does not suffer from the same measurement problems that distort infant mortality comparisons. Even so, the U.S. ranking of 39th in life expectancy (according to U.N. figures) also is thoroughly misleading. When life expectancy figures are adjusted to account for deaths due to violence, the United States ranks No. 1 among nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. U.S. deaths due to violence include all gunshot-related deaths as well as deaths due to automobile accidents or other injuries. Such deaths, obviously, say nothing about the quality of U.S. medical care.

The U.S. has worse health outcomes.

Critics have argued that the U.S. has the worst healthcare in the developed world. Most who believe this use the infant mortality and life expectancy indicators debunked above. The U.S. does perform worse on so-called avoidable deaths amenable to medical treatment. This measure likewise has many flaws, not the least of which is that such deaths constitute only a fraction of overall deaths. A more relevant comparison might be cancer, which is the second-leading cause of death in the United States. Cancer patients live longer in the U.S. than in any other country.

There are many problems with the U.S. health system. But figuring out how to fix them requires a clear understanding of where we fall short. Too often, Americans appear to think that other countries, such as Canada, Britain or France, offer a "magic bullet" healthcare system that would cure our ills.

A fairer comparison reveals that the performance of the U.S. health system is far superior to the statistical caricature critics have presented.

Christopher J. Conover is a research scholar at Duke University's Center for Health Policy and Inequalities Research, an adjunct scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and a Mercatus affiliated senior scholar. He is the author of the just-published "American Health Economy Illustrated."

Reason

Complex Societies Need Simple Laws

We need to end the orgy of rule-making at once and embrace the simple rules that true liberals like America's founders envisioned.

by John Stossel

"If you have 10,000 regulations," Winston Churchill said, "you destroy all respect for law."

He was right. But Churchill never imagined a government that would add 10,000 year after year. That's what we have in America. We have 160,000 pages of rules from the feds alone. States and localities have probably doubled that. We have so many rules that legal specialists can't

keep up. Criminal lawyers call the rules “incomprehensible.” They are. They are also “uncountable.” Congress has created so many criminal offenses that the American Bar Association says it would be futile to even attempt to estimate the total.

So what do the politicians and bureaucrats of the permanent government do? They pass more rules.

That’s not good. It paralyzes life.

Politicians sometimes say they understand the problem. They promise to “simplify.” But they rarely do. Mostly, they come up with new rules. It’s just natural. It’s how the public measures politicians. Schoolchildren on Washington tours ask, “What laws did you pass?” If they don’t pass new laws, the media whine about the “do-nothing Congress.”

This is also not good.

When so much is illegal, common sense dies. Out of fear of breaking rules, people stop innovating, trying, helping.

Think I exaggerate? Consider what happened in Britain, a country even more rule-bound than America. A man had an epileptic seizure and fell into a shallow pond. Rescue workers might have saved him, but they wouldn’t enter the 3-foot-deep pond. Why? Because “safety” rules passed after rescuers drowned in a river now prohibited “emergency workers” from entering water above their ankles. Only 30 minutes later, when rescue workers with “stage 2 training” arrived, did they enter the water, discover that the man was dead and carry him to the approved inflatable medical tent. Twenty other cops, firemen and “rescuers” stood next to the pond and watched.

The ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu, sometimes called the first libertarian thinker, said, “The more artificial taboos and restrictions there are in the world, the more the people are impoverished....The more that laws and regulations are given prominence, the more thieves and robbers there will be.” He complained that there were “laws and regulations more numerous than the hairs of an ox.” What would he have thought of our world?

Big-government advocates will say that as society grows more complex, laws must multiply to keep up. The opposite is true. It is precisely because society is unfathomably complex that laws must be kept simple. No legislature can possibly prescribe rules for the complex network of uncountable transactions and acts of cooperation that take place every day. Not only is the knowledge that would be required to make such a regulatory regime work unavailable to the planners, it doesn’t actually exist, because people don’t know what they will want or do until they confront alternatives in the real world. Any attempt to manage a modern society is more like a bull in a darkened china shop than a finely tuned machine. No wonder the schemes of politicians go awry.

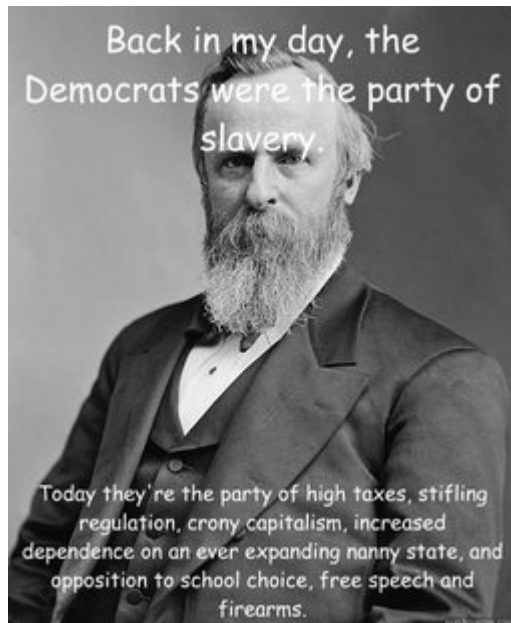
F.A. Hayek wisely said, “The curious task of economics is to demonstrate to men how little they really know about what they imagine they can design.” Another Nobel laureate, James M. Buchanan, put it this way: “Economics is the art of putting parameters on our utopias.”

Barack Obama and his ilk in both parties don't want parameters on their utopias. They think the world is subject to their manipulation. That idea was debunked years ago.

"With good men and strong governments everything was considered feasible," the great Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises wrote. But with the advent of economics, "it was learned that ... there is something operative which power and force are unable to alter and to which they must adjust themselves if they hope to achieve success, in precisely the same way as they must taken into account the laws of nature."

I wish our politicians knew that. I wish they'd stop their presumptuous schemes.

We need to end the orgy of rule-making at once and embrace the simple rules that true liberals like America's founders envisioned.



I HAD A TELEPHONE

**BUT I DID NOT USE IT FOR
FUNDRAISING EVERY DAY**

**HAYES SAID: "MY TASK WAS TO WIPE OUT
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**BARACK OBAMA CALLED HIS
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**I USUALLY DON'T THINK
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**...BUT THEN I FOUND OUT THAT
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