



Do you want Obama to fail?

By Rolfe McCollister (Contact)

Monday, March 9, 2009

There was a recent controversy over a comment made by national radio host Rush Limbaugh. On his radio show, referring to President Barack Obama's economic plans, he asked, "What is so strange about being honest to say that I want Barack Obama to fail?"

How would you answer that? The instinctive response to someone directing such a remark at a new president, mine included, was to say, "Why can't we all just get along and move things forward." Well, the devil is in the details. As soon as the president finished his inaugural address and the music stopped and the parties were over—the battle began. As the president started rolling out his plans, policies and ideas, people started having differences and drawing lines and taking sides.

As I listened and read what Obama said in his first month, he was painting the picture of an impending disaster and using fear to get his plans approved. He further shook consumer confidence. Over and over bills were passed and policies signed that the Democrats had waited years to approve. Now they have the leverage of a crisis to push their wish list through—and they have. It is scary.

Obama got his massive spending stimulus plan done and then rolled out his 10-year budget plans. The reaction may not have been what Obama expected: The stock markets continued to spiral down and down. Not a vote of confidence.

Moreover, as I look at how government is getting bigger and bigger with its hands in more areas, I get sick to my stomach. While government is essential and has a role, it is not structured to be effective or efficient—and seldom is. There are no incentives as there are for entrepreneurs. Government is slow and sluggish and has rarely had a standard of excellence. So, why more government? Control? Dependency?

As our executive editor, JR Ball, was saying to me, it appears the president is attempting to create a new brand of "populism." But that is what Huey Long and Edwin Edwards used, and look where it got Louisiana. It can definitely keep you in political power, because folks know "you feed them the fish," and without you, they are helpless. The alternative is to teach folks how to fish. But then they can become independent and self-sufficient and won't need their politician anymore. Which would be good, but not if you're a politician. News flash: Louisiana is proof that populism doesn't work. [Huey's dead and Edwin is behind bars.]

The irony is, after so many generations of welfare and dependency, the Republicans and President Bill Clinton reformed welfare. People became more self-sufficient. And now we seem to be reverting back to the days of old. We are going to have more and more people dependent on government, living off the hind teat. Again, that's just the way power-hungry politicians like it. We'll take care of you now, and you take care of us on election day. One magazine even used the word "socialism" on its cover.

So when you read and hear all of this discussion, and your blood pressure rises as you see your American Dream start to fade, and your country weaken, one does begin to wonder, "What is so strange about being honest to say that I want Barack Obama to fail?"

Defeat Free Choice act

It's baaaaaaack! The federal issue of the Employee Free Choice Act, or "card check" legislation, has returned with the Democrats and Obama. As I have written here before, this bill simply tries to save the dying unions in America by stripping workers of their right to vote by secret ballot in union-organizing elections. Workers would be forced to cast their vote by signing a card in front of everyone, enabling the use of intimidation and peer pressure as a tactic. It is un-American and undemocratic.



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This law could make it easier for unions to organize shops and plants and force union dues on all workers. It could drive up the cost of wages and benefits to small businesses now struggling to keep their doors open. If they close, it won't matter if the workers are union or not—they will all be jobless. Why would any elected official support that burden on small business when we are currently trying to stimulate them to grow jobs? Now we are going to risk losing jobs?

Unfortunately, our own Sen. Mary Landrieu has supported this bill. She is putting national party politics ahead of what is right for Louisiana workers and businesses. We don't need Washington telling us what to do when less than 15% of our workers are in unions by choice. All deserve that choice, and also the right to make it by secret ballot. This legislation should be defeated by Congress, and Landrieu could be the key vote. Contact Landrieu by emailing her at senator@landrieu.senate.gov or calling [202] 224-5824 [D.C. office] or [225] 389-0395 [B.R. office].

Let's do it again

The cover story of this month's Atlantic Magazine is "How the Crash Will Reshape America," by Richard Florida, and it poses some interesting questions. You can find it online at www.TheAtlantic.com. Let me share the opening and closing of the article to give you the gist of it. Florida writes, "The crash of 2008 continues to reverberate loudly nationwide—destroying jobs, bankrupting businesses, and displacing homeowners. But already, it has damaged some places much more severely than others. On the other side of the crisis, America's economic landscape will look very different than it does today. What fate will the coming years hold for New York, Charlotte, Detroit, Las Vegas? Will the suburbs be ineffably changed? Which cities and regions can come back strong? And which will never come back at all?"

The final paragraph says, "The Stanford economist Paul Romer famously said, 'A crisis is a terrible thing to waste.' The United States, whatever its flaws, has seldom wasted its crises in the past. On the contrary, it has used them, time and again, to reinvent itself, clearing away the old and making way for the new. Throughout U.S. history, adaptability has been perhaps the best and most quintessential of American attributes. Over the course of the 19th century's Long Depression, the country remade itself from an agricultural power into an industrial one. After the Great Depression, it discovered a new way of living, working and producing, which contributed to an unprecedented period of mass prosperity. At critical moments, Americans have always looked forward, not back, and surprised the world with our resilience. Can we do it again?"

Let me answer that: YES! And it will be individual Americans, not the government, who get it done in the long run.

Do we have a new leader?

As this column went to press, our EBR school board was preparing to interview the final candidate for school superintendent to replace Charlotte Placide. There were three finalists, but one withdrew after being interviewed Monday and the third was being offered a three-year extension and bonus to stay at his current job. If he accepts, we will be left with one candidate. Not much of a choice, then.

I never had much confidence in this process, and potentially ending up with one candidate further erodes it. This is a key leader for our future, and if the board and community get it wrong our EBR system may be history.

Comments

Posted by pmccarron on March 10, 2009 at 12:22 p.m. (Suggest removal)

Doesn't matter who they elect to replace Charlotte Placide. The entire system is flawed. Government can not micro-manage an entire school system.

More Charter Schools, Vouchers Next!

Posted by pmccarron on March 10, 2009 at 1:46 p.m. (Suggest removal)

Okay to hope Iraqi Freedom or Bush fails, but not okay to hope Obama fails?

Seems like a double standard.

Posted by Being_Stupid on March 10, 2009 at 5:04 p.m. (Suggest removal)

If Liberals can support our troops, without supporting the war,

Then, I can support President Obama, without supporting his policies or his presidency.

Posted by LiberatedTiger on March 11, 2009 at 8:52 a.m. (Suggest removal)

We cannot go another 4 years with partisan, or obstructionist politics. The nearly-dead economy will not survive it. Our politicians collectively need to do what they feel is best for the country and if they disagree with Obama then so be it. But please do not consciously undermine our president.

Making yourself, or your political party, look good by making someone else's look bad is a child's game.



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