



## Is politics all about name-calling?

### **Kingsley Guy: Both parties need to worry about results, not demonizing**

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The liberal left has been clamoring for economic stimulus programs and other policies that it says will create jobs. Obamacare supporters even argued the Affordable Care Act would boost the job numbers.

So how is the left responding to the recent Congressional Budget Office conclusion that ObamaCare subsidies will result in people leaving the work force or reducing their hours, thus causing the loss of the equivalent of 2.5 million jobs? The unanimous conclusion of Obama acolytes: "Fewer jobs is a good thing!" That's an intriguing spin, since the week before they were saying fewer jobs was a bad thing.

White House Press Secretary Jay Carney even declared that with Obamacare, Americans will now be able to decide, "how they will work or if they will work." How does this sound as a campaign slogan for November: "Vote Democratic and you can choose if you will work."

The message undoubtedly would resonate well with the Occupy Wall Street crowd, although it could generate some pique among workers who are forced to subsidize the non-workers with their tax dollars.

Obamacare isn't the only perverse government incentive that can influence people not to work.

The vast expansion of food stamps is another. So is the liberal dispensation of disability and unemployment benefits. Working hard and raising one's income can lead to a reduction or loss of government benefits, so the rational response for many is to not work so hard, or not to work at all. The result is a trap that saps people's motivation to improve their economic condition.

Democrats have been roundly chastising Republicans in Congress for their cruelty in refusing recently to vote for extended unemployment benefits. But an interesting thing happened in North Carolina, which ended its extended benefits last summer. Unemployment in the Tar Heel State dropped a full 2 percentage points, while the national unemployment rate during the same time frame dropped just .6 percentage points.

The lesson is clear: Pay people not work, and the result will be fewer people working. The left apparently failed to read that chapter in the Economics 101 textbook.

With Obamacare on the verge of collapse, the president's approval rating at low ebb, and the Democratic congressional brain trust demonstrating it isn't so smart, liberal apologists find themselves flustered. So they are falling back on the time-honored technique of excusing their own failures by demonizing the opposition. At the top of the left's list of demons are the evil Koch brothers, who are using their vast fortunes to bankroll causes the left finds detestable.

Among other things, the Koch brothers helped fund the campaigns of Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, who took on the public employee unions, thus preventing them from pushing Wisconsin into penury. The Koch brothers also bankroll organizations such as the Cato Institute, which advocates for free-market, largely libertarian economic policies.

Cato's thinking in many respects reflects the libertarian mindset of Thomas Jefferson, to whom the Democratic Party traces its origins. Jefferson might be surprised to hear that the Democratic Party still honors him, since it has all but abandoned the Jeffersonian ideals of individual freedom and responsibility in favor of a collectivist ideology that may have been suited for the industrial 20th century, but certainly not the post-industrial 21st.

It's time for those on both ends of the political spectrum to cease the demonizing and name-calling, and to start talking substance.