



Schweitzer versus Koch brothers: The tale of the tape

Walter Rucinski

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In a March 22 letter to editor in the Daily Inter Lake, former Gov. Brian Schweitzer criticized the Republicans for not supporting Medicaid expansion in Montana and the Koch brothers for being evil cattle ranchers. Unfortunately, the governor left off some pertinent details.

First a little history. The Charles Koch Foundation was renamed the Cato Institute and is a not-for-profit libertarian think tank that does not accept government support. It is privately funded, and yes, the Kochs provide a hefty contribution. It is important to mention Cato because it advocates a liberal immigration policy and is against "corporate welfare." Corporate welfare costs the treasury about \$100 billion annually, while public welfare over \$1 trillion. (<http://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/PA694.pdf>).

Another reason Gov. Schweitzer dislikes the Kochs is their outreach effort to Hispanics. The LIBRE Initiative, which is funded by the Koch brothers is a grassroots organization now operating in nine states. They have organized four-hour test prep sessions to teach the rules of the road in Spanish. LIBRE plans to expand into more presidential battleground states over the months which has terrified many progressive Democrats.

The governor railed against the evil Koch cattle barons of Montana for accepting government subsidies of about \$110,000 annually. These subsidies are a bi-product of the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 and the Public Rangeland Improvement Act of 1978 (PRIA). Taylor was passed under Democratic President Franklin Roosevelt and the PRIA under a Democrat President (Carter), Senate and House. Those cattle barons are just following a law enacted by Democrats.

I assume you tell your tax accountant to ignore all those deductions allowed under current tax law so as to pay a higher tax? Not likely! President Clinton tried to eliminate this giveaway, however, a mass of Democrat and Republican senators stopped it. President Obama could have when he controlled all, couldn't he? In fair reporting, President Reagan signed Executive Order 17545 to ensure that grazing fees did not expire.

Governor, when you have some spare time from your busy schedule would you kindly tell us how many millions the “Schweitzer Foundation” gives for PBS programming as the Kochs do? Tell us how many thousands of jobs your companies provide like the Koch brothers do!

The “Horrible Care Act” which I use to describe the so-called Affordable Care Act is estimated to cost over \$2.1 trillion and is more than double the original estimates. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that premiums will increase 8 percent plus in 2016 and 2017 due primarily to the insurance exchange subsidies.

The governor’s comment that big pharma and insurance companies will receive massive giveaways is ridiculous. The ACA is a 100 percent “Democrat Law” with not a single Republican vote, thus, it simply reflects why government is terrible at... well, just about everything your party puts forth. Democrats are responsible for this nonsense! The White House has reneged on more Obamacare regulations than it’s actually enforcing.

Regarding Medicaid expansion, I care, but I cost. According to the Legislative Fiscal Division , state taxpayers could face costs of about \$543 million from 2016-2023. (<http://mediatrackers.org/montana/2014/05/29/montana-medicaid-enrollment-increases-renew-cost-concerns>).

Montana receives \$1.47 from the government treasury for every \$1.00 in federal taxes paid. With a public debt over \$18 trillion, record revenues for the first five months, a deficit for this year estimated to be over \$400 billion, a stagnant economy and no hope in hell to correct these fiscal issues, it will result in massive tax increases in the future at both the state and federal level. Increasing debt is unsustainable. Cutting costs? You have to be kidding!

To close: Koch or Schweitzer?

Governor, you are the “hoodwinker”? I choose the Koch brothers without a shadow of doubt as they do more for America than you or progressive politicians will ever do. For those who may have missed the original article, a facsimile can be found by searching the Internet for “schweitzer-opinion-responsible-republicans.”