

Edward B. Harmon: A Christmas list for conservatives

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Let me be clear, Santa: take care of the children first. However, I would like you to deliver some well-earned political gifts to America starting on Jan. 21.

After we celebrate the inauguration of our president, Donald J. Trump, I request a few gifts for the American people who accorded Trump a huge electoral victory and made sure that Republicans retained control of the Senate and House.

In box No. 1, put in legislation to repeal Obamacare. Replace it with a market-based system allowing patients and doctors to decide the best methods, not the government. Let insurance companies offer competitive policies nationwide. Reform medical malpractice to limit the practice of defense-based medicine. Let Americans tailor insurance to their needs, not mandated "needs." And, as Republicans have stated, protect those with preexisting conditions.

In box No. 2, enclose legislation to reform and simplify federal taxes. The present system is so complex that only wealthy donors and large corporations understand it and can manipulate it - and do so largely legally. Help stimulate jobs and real wage growth by cutting the corporate rate to 15 percent and cutting personal rates similarly.

Eliminate any federal taxes on foreign earnings by U.S. corporations that are already taxed where earned. Eliminate, don't just reduce, the "green" incentives that allow, for example, wealthy Tesla buyers to get tax breaks paid for by the middle and lower classes struggling to feed their kids and drive a 10-year-old Ford.

The elimination of taxes on earnings made abroad will allow American companies to "bring home" billions of dollars to invest here in jobs, plants, machinery and equipment - which is otherwise being invested abroad.

Federal employees made, when combining wages and benefits, an average of \$119,934 while private sector employees made \$67,216 in 2014, according to a study of U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis figures by the Cato Institute. Let that sink in - a difference of 78 percent.

Do not reduce their pay, but place in box No. 3 legislation that would allow management to quickly terminate personnel who are not performing their jobs. Appointing great managers such as Bob McDonald as Veterans Affairs secretary does not matter if he cannot manage his

workforce with same ability to insist on performance as he had at Procter & Gamble. Let's give average taxpayers the kind of lean, performance-centered government that they deserve.

In a skinny envelope, give a gift to American workers and consumers who benefit from cheap energy prices by approving the Dakota and Keystone pipelines. These pipelines are by far the most economic and environmentally safe way to transport oil and gas. Their purely political delay should be an embarrassment to all Americans.

Introduce a broad-based infrastructure program limited to roads, bridges and airports using a blend of private and public capital. Forget the billions devoted to the Solyndras of this country, bike trails and lavishly funded environmental projects.

Condition this on repeal of the Davis-Bacon Act. This legislation requires workers on federal projects be paid no less than the "prevailing wage," which is largely the union wage in that area. The Congressional Budget Office estimated this change would save taxpayers \$13 billion between 2015 and 2023. The law also hammers minorities who have had issues getting into construction unions and minority bidders who could do the job but not by paying union wages.

In box No. 4, submit a comprehensive immigration policy based on first securing the border and then providing a path to remaining here. It would apply to those who arrive after a certain date, register with the government, obey the law, pay taxes and seek no public funds whether by welfare or otherwise. If they want citizenship, they can get to the back of the line and apply for it, based on their skills, language ability and being no burden to our society. Enforce visa limitations, deport illegal immigrant lawbreakers for good and penalize employers who hire illegal immigrants that have not registered with the government

Nearing the end of my list, Santa, please revoke the executive orders that President Obama used to bypass constitutional requirements and the need for congressional support. Introduce legislation to give parents the same freedom in choosing the best schools for their children as do the wealthy or those living in wealthy school districts. That will help both the students and their communities. Education is about the children, not the teachers' unions or the educational industry.

Lastly, nominate a young and truly conservative Supreme Court justice. The Democrats and media will savage anybody you choose, unless it is a politically correct clone of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, so go ahead and make the nomination.