



Other Comments

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Time and Again

Welcome to the world of the temporary tax code. In the late 1990s, there were typically fewer than a dozen tax provisions that had just a limited lease on life and needed to be renewed every year or so. Today there are 141.

--John D. McKinnon, Gary Fields and Laura Saunders, *Wall Street Journal*



GOOD NEWS/BAD NEWS

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A Private Matter

In recent decades governments around the world have sold off state-owned assets to private investors. Airports, railroads, electric utilities, post offices and other assets have been privatized. Privatization generally leads to reduced costs, higher-quality services, and increased innovation in formerly moribund government industries.

There are many federal assets that should be privatized. Consider the nation's air traffic control system, which is run by the Federal Aviation Administration. The FAA has struggled to expand capacity and upgrade its technology, and its modernization efforts have often fallen behind schedule and gone over budget. Major improvements are needed to the air traffic control system,

but there are fears that the FAA is not capable of meeting the rising air travel demand.

The good news is that a number of countries have reformed their air traffic control systems and provide good models for U.S. reforms. Canada privatized its air traffic control system in 1996, setting up a private, nonprofit corporation, Nav Canada. The company is self-supporting from charges on aviation users. The Canadian system has received high marks for sound finances, solid management and investment in new technologies. Aside from those advantages, a privatized system in the United States would save about \$4 billion in annual general fund taxpayer costs.

--Chris Edwards, Cato Institute

Choosing Students

In 10 years, I think we will look back and realize the shift [in education reform] really occurred in 2010. Moreover, I predict we will get to full school choice systems within 10 to 20 years. Blindly assigning students to schools that don't work will soon seem like the most amazingly bad idea, and we will wonder why it lasted as long as it did. But more important, the current economic crisis will finally drive states to fund students versus schools. The current model is just too inefficient.

--Lisa Graham Keegan, founder, *EdBreakThrough.org*, in *School Choice Advocate*

Less Is More

What [President Obama's much-ballyhooed] debt commission did not address, but should have, is one fundamental question: *What is the purpose of government?* Absent a constitutional and historical response to that question, there is no limit to what government can spend, or government will do. You can't read the *Federalist Papers* without knowing the Founders wanted government to be limited. Thomas Paine said: "That government is best that governs least."

Raising taxes now would be like giving a beer to an alcoholic hoping he will get sober. Let's see some government responsibility with the money we have already sent to Washington before we consider sending them more.

--Cal Thomas, *USA Today*

Stop Toying Around

For San Francisco kids, getting a toy with a Happy Meal is about to become an experience as foreign as using a typewriter or a slide rule, thanks to a recent decision by the city's board of supervisors banning the providing of toys with meals that are deemed unhealthy. "We're part of a movement that is moving forward an agenda of food justice," said the ban's sponsor, supervisor Eric Mar, emphasizing the dangers of child obesity and the higher rates of it among low-income children. So what's next on the agenda? Allowing children to collect only "tricks" next Halloween? Banning candy-filled piñatas? The rise in child obesity is unfortunate. But when it comes to doling out so-called food justice, the guardians should be parents, not politicians.

--*National Review*

Wealth Management

In July, Violet and Allen Large of Lower Truro, Nova Scotia, won more than \$11 million in a lottery. They have since spent every last penny--none on themselves. "What you've never had, you never miss," said Violet, 78. The couple donated the money to a list of causes that included the local fire department, hospitals, and organizations that fight cancer, Alzheimer's, and diabetes. Violet has been undergoing cancer treatments, which has underscored for the couple the limits of wealth. "That money that we won was nothing," said Allen, 75. "We have each other."

--*The Week*



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