



O'Malley wants to sing you a song

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Have you heard the latest? Former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, who is campaigning for the presidency of the United States, has come up with a new method of fundraising. For a nominal contribution, say \$25 or so, he will sing you a "thank you" song.

O'Malley obviously has some musical talent, and since he trails far behind Hillary Clinton (\$47 million) and Bernie Sanders (\$15 million) in raising campaign funds, he is searching for ways to add to his \$2 million political coffers.

Thought you might be looking for a troubadour.

As most voters, I have a responsibility to review each candidate's record before offering my support, so I thought I might do a little research before I ask him to sing me a song.

In April, Chris Edwards of the Cato Institute wrote an opinion piece for The Daily Caller with the headline "Martin O'Malley's terrible fiscal record" and suggested that O'Malley is further to the left than Hillary Clinton.

As you might recall, O'Malley was mayor of Baltimore for two terms from 1999-2007. He was governor of Maryland from 2007-15.

According to Edwards, when you examine O'Malley's actual spending from 2007-15, general fund spending increased by 13 percent while all spending rose by 33 percent.

Edwards cites O'Malley as having done the following:

- Raised the top personal income tax rate from 4.75 percent to 5.75 percent; with local taxes on top, Maryland's top rate is 8.95 percent.
- Raised the corporate tax rate from 7 percent to 8.25 percent.
- Raised the sales tax rate from 5 percent to 6 percent and expanded the sales tax base.
- Raised the sales tax rate on beer, wine and spirits by 50 percent.
- Raised the gas tax by 20 cents over four years, almost doubling the rate from 23.5 cents.

- Doubled the cigarette tax from \$1 per pack to \$2 per pack.
- Imposed higher taxes on vehicle registration.

Of particular interest to state employee retirees, I highlighted in Edwards' article that Maryland also has a large unfunded pension debt for its government workers. Edwards continues with his pension alert, stating, "Standard and Poor's found that Maryland's pension funding ratio is just 64 percent, below the 50-state average of 71 percent, and much less than the full-funding ratio of 100 percent."

You can almost wager that because of this lack of fiscal integrity with the pension system that future consequences in regard to additional tax increases are likely.

In his campaign literature for president, O'Malley cautions that "We must save our country now." His road map contains some 15 areas of political pledges.

Although I am always hopeful about a political candidate's promises when I vote, I also have to consider the political candidate's past. Besides, politicians often suffer from amnesia.

Although O'Malley touts his successes in Baltimore City with regard to his achievements in crime reduction and improvements in education, one has to wonder how really effective his programs were.

When you look at the folly of the Baltimore City Detention Center under the watchful eye of O'Malley and his failure even to fix the basics of a state-run correctional facility gone amok, one really has to wonder how successful President O'Malley would be at fixing much larger problems.

Now, don't get me wrong on this, I normally would like an Irish Catholic politician who can sing and offer me a little something (a song) for my campaign pledge. However, if O'Malley succeeds in becoming our next president of the United States, I'm afraid I might end up singing a song myself, and it might go something like this:

"Gloom, despair and agony on me;

Deep dark depression, excessive misery;

If it weren't for bad luck, I'd have no luck at all;

Gloom, despair and agony on me."

No thank you, Martin. I think I'll keep my money and play the Maryland lottery instead.

Good luck with entertaining your fans.