



Other Comments

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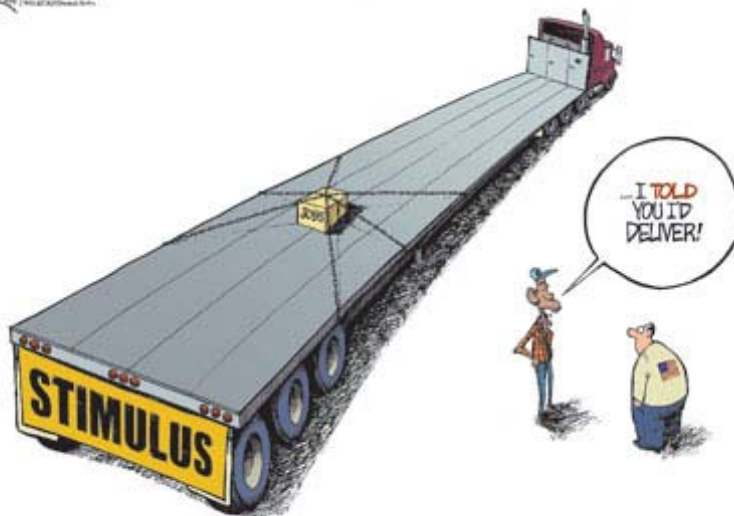
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Budget Baloney

The President's discretionary spending "freeze" proves to be little more than a sleight of hand. A more accurate portrayal than "discretionary spending freeze" was given by Republican staff on the Committee on the Budget, who referred to the "freeze" as a "freeze in non-defense, non-homeland, non-Veterans, non-international affairs, non-Pell Grant, non-emergency discretionary spending." Indeed, the three-year freeze only applies to 13% of the budget and does not go into effect until 2011.

What is needed is an across-the-board roll back of federal spending to pre-binge levels, not locking in increased levels. And there is no reason such a spending cut could not occur immediately rather than in 2011. Leaving "stimulus" and TARP aside, the FY2010 appropriations bills signed by President Obama have increased non-defense, discretionary spending by 12% over last year.

--Sandra Fabry, Americans for Tax Reform



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to a more European desire for cradle-to-grave dependency.

--Chris Edwards, Cato Institute

Washington's Gravy Train

[In January] the federal government added its 2,000th subsidy program for individuals, businesses, or state and local governments. The number of federal subsidy programs soared 21% during the 1990s and 40% during the 2000s. The entire nation is jumping aboard Washington's gravy train. The number of federal subsidy programs has almost doubled since the mid-1980s.

There is a federal subsidy program for every year that has passed since Emperor Augustus held sway in Rome.

State governments are becoming no more than regional subdivisions of the national government, businesses and nonprofit groups are becoming tools of the state, and individualism is giving way

Home Sweet Home

Principled Republicans and Democrats should make a covenant with the country that fits with what the majority cares about. If they won't fix the problems, they should promise to resign, or not run for re-election. If they do fix it, they get re-elected.

As French philosopher Blaise Pascal said, "The only shame is to have none." That could be said for the shameless masses in Washington.

--Cal Thomas, *USA Today*

Blueprint for Haiti

No one wants to see the \$100 million trove in American emergency aid stabilize the country for awhile, only to see Haiti collapse again from another disaster a few years on. In short, we must help Haiti come out of this a better nation.

Cities like San Francisco can survive 7.0 earthquakes, as it did in 1989, but poor countries like Haiti cannot. The difference isn't luck, nor a "curse," as the Rev. Pat Robertson foolishly theorized, nor global warming, as actor Danny Glover ignorantly claimed. It's prosperity.

It's hard to imagine a country like Haiti beating the persistent poverty that has afflicted it through its history -- based not just on vast reparations payments to France for its independence, and an unjustly imposed isolation from world trade in the 19th century, but on tangible plagues too: corruption, illiteracy and lack of rule of law.

As hard as such problems are to fix, it doesn't take magic. With the American presence in Haiti likely to be extended, the U.S. needs a strategy to strengthen the state and expand the free market, the solutions that work every time they're tried.

--*Investor's Business Daily*

Promises, Promises

The same technology that [President] Obama used so effectively to promote his candidacy can also be used to highlight his broken promises. When Democrats opted to hold the final negotiations on the health care bill in secret, critics immediately posted footage of Mr. Obama vowing that such talks would be televised. Ditto his promise never to hire lobbyists, and to post bills online for five days before he signed them. Some voters have concluded that he cannot be trusted.

--*The Economist*

Healthy Track Record?

The U.S. paid more than \$47 billion in questionable Medicare claims last year, nearly three times the amount of fraudulent claims paid out the previous year, a federal watchdog reports. Bogus claims include prescriptions issued in the names of long-dead doctors.

--*The Washington Post in The Week*



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