



## **Governor Scott, It's Really You, Not Me**

By: Henry Kelley - February 27, 2013

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I had intended to write about the President Obama's staggering hypocrisy and flip-flopping on sequestration -- or his hypocrisy on the use of drones. Either would have been acceptable for this week's column.

This past Nov. 21 I had actually agreed with him. Republicans had agreed to a reduction in the growth of future spending (not a real cut, but still, progress on the debt). And the president stated then, "Already some in Congress are trying to undo these automatic spending cuts. My message to them is simple: No, I will veto any effort to get rid of those automatic spending cuts to domestic and defense spending." [To see source, [click here](#)]

Only now, a few months later, panic set in at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, with the realization that the American public might not miss a larger government, and he quickly began blaming Republicans -- for supporting his idea.

My intent was to compare the president's "Bizarro World" hypocrisy to Gov. Rick Scott's abrupt about-face on the Florida budget, and to note the interesting position in which I find myself: I agree with Florida's Democrats. They suddenly found their inner fiscal conservative and asked, "Who is this guy?" and "Where is the money coming from?"

With a 6 percent increase in the state budget, including an inexplicable \$2,500 bribe to teachers, I had intended to point out what a fiscal conservative might have done instead. Of course, I'm not one of the highly overpaid "smartest guys in the room reading the polls," but rather someone who works outside the Tallahassee bubble.

A small government governor would have whacked away at the enormous educational bureaucracy infesting the Turlington Building in Tallahassee and shifted power back to the counties where it belongs. You could have taken that savings, gotten the bureaucrats off the teachers' backs, and then given them a raise while reducing their pain. That approach could have worked for tea party conservatives and could have actually demonstrated a commitment to improving the life of teachers. Politically, good policy could have potentially led to votes.

Instead, I'm trying to determine how the Medicaid expansion under the federal Affordable Care Act is going to pay for the surgery to remove the knife planted in my back by Gov. Scott's sudden announcement to belly up to the federal trough for "free" tax dollars.

Remember when Gov. Scott killed high-speed rail? We do. The governor's reason? Once Florida ran out of "free federal" money, the state would be on the hook for potentially unlimited amounts of money to support the rail. Did that fiscally sound argument change in the last few years?

Does Gov. Scott not get one of our biggest complaints of the Bush and Obama administrations – the use of executive fiat to trump the legislative process?

We've been attending the Senate and House Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act Committee meetings. Both Republicans and Democrats on those committees have shown a commitment to thoughtful analysis and asking genuinely good questions, with little overt partisanship.

Dr. Jonathan Gruber, one of the authors of both "Romneycare" and "Obamacare," admitted to the Florida Senate that neither program was designed to save money or change the cost curve. Yes, the Cato Institute did a splendid job of explaining the problems here, but when the author of the bill says it will not change the cost curve, maybe we should listen to that guy.

I've sat in the committee rooms and thought, "This is what government should look like": ideas being debated with facts in the full light of day, with the State of Florida's taxpayers the better for it. Instead, Gov. Scott rides in and announces his sudden belief in Medicaid expansion.

Now, we find ourselves agreeing with Democratic state Sen. Chris Smith, who tweeted on Feb. 21, "Medicaid expansion, Obamacare, teacher bonuses, who is this guy?"

Just like the national Democrats trying to explain Obama's sudden flip on sequestration and drones, Florida conservatives are scratching their heads over their governor. The only difference is most of us on the right aren't trying to defend the indefensible. I hope our next governor in 2014 remembers that when confronted with hard policy choices.

A personal note to Gov. Scott: Sorry to send you the breakup note in writing, but you're hard to get a hold of lately. I still believe in the same things when we first met, and, well, it really is you, not me.