

THE HILLSDALE COLLEGIAN

Anybody but Mitt

BY CELIA BIGELOW ON MARCH 1, 2012

Young Americans cannot afford four more years of out-of-control deficit spending brought about by the Bush and Obama administrations. That is why we cannot elect Mitt Romney.

Youth unemployment is the highest among any demographic, hovering at around 17.4 percent. The policies of the Obama administration have left young people with massive student loan debt — averaging around \$26,000 per head — and no job prospects to pay this off.

Then there is the national debt. To pay it off, every man, woman, and child would have to pay around \$47,000. Interest payments are currently budgeted, but at the rate Washington keeps spending, interest rates will consume the entire budget in the future.

Mitt Romney has proven that he can operate a business successfully, but our future demands a president who understands free market economics philosophically as well. He continues to run his campaign on the same capitalist rhetoric we have been hearing for the past few months, but Romney's political career thus far shows that he has neither the knowledge nor respect for the protection of capitalism as a political leader.

Does being a successful businessman automatically provide the knowledge for a proper free-market policy? No.

Take Warren Buffett for instance. Buffett has an incredibly successful business career that made him as one of the wealthiest people in the world. But his support of higher taxes for the "rich" to change wealth distribution prove that Buffett has a lack of knowledge regarding the correct policies that have paved the way to his success in the free market.

Romney's time as governor of Massachusetts proves that he is also out of touch with free market philosophy.

Exhibit A: RomneyCare. Romney ushered in this legislation in 2005, individual mandate included, on the basis that it would provide cheaper health insurance while eliminating the free-rider problem. It's 2012 and Massachusetts has yet to see "cheaper" healthcare. In fact, RomneyCare has caused the cost of medicine and premiums to skyrocket. 60 percent of this burden fell on individuals and businesses.

What was the predictable result? Price controls. Due to the large spike in healthcare costs, RomneyCare has led to government-imposed caps on HMO rates. According to the Beacon Hill Institute, "These are, in effect, price controls that will dampen the incentive to provide services and lead to longer wait times and rationing of healthcare."

Anyone with a free market philosophy knows that price controls bring about excess in demand for the product supplied — in this case healthcare. Excess demand brings about one of two things: a forced hike in prices or a shortage of the product. Either way, the consumer takes the beating.

RomneyCare also brought about a net increase in government spending. An increase in government spending can only mean one thing: an increase in the tax burden for individuals.

According to the Cato Institute: "Half of RomneyCare's new spending was financed by the federal government through the Medicaid program ... which is financed through federal taxes, which fall on taxpayers in all 50 states. That means that when Romney financed half of RomneyCare's new spending by pulling down more federal Medicaid dollars, he increased taxes on residents of all 50 states."

For those who understand even basic economics, taxes are the adversary to productivity. When money is taken out of the hands of individuals, there is less saving and investment. Businesses have less money to work with, decreasing productivity and job creation.

The fact that Romney still defends both of these laws proves he is out of touch with free market policy. It is one thing to make mistakes, but Romney's continual justification for such policies earn him a failing grade in free-market economics.

Exhibit B: raising the minimum wage. It comes to no surprise that after the implementation of price controls in RomneyCare that Mitt Romney would be in favor of raising the minimum wage each consecutive year of his presidency.

Just how bad do consumers have it when price controls are placed on the wage rate? Thomas Sowell, an economist and senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, said, “There is no excuse for not being aware of what a major social disaster the minimum-wage law has been for the young, the poor, and especially for young and poor blacks.”

Again, the economics is simple: when you create an excess demand for labor by raising the minimum wage, people don’t get hired — especially young people like ourselves. Essentially, the government is raising the wage higher than young, inexperienced labor is worth. In the end, we — the consumers of labor — pay the price of a higher unemployment rate, considering that unemployment is not ideal for paying off college debts.

Those who are in support of Romney may believe that, over time, he has solidified a more conservative political view. However, this coming election is crucial and we need someone who can articulate the conservative message efficiently, not just pay it lip service. Charles Krauthammer puts it plainly: “The idea that somehow we consign the poor to the safety net and we patch it, and dependency, is a liberal idea. It is not our [a conservative] idea. And Romney is a guy who came late to his new ideology and he still can’t speak it very well.”

Romney is new to conservatism, but is known as the “most electable” candidate among his supporters. So, you may be asking, if not Romney, then who?

As political leaders, all three of the remaining candidates have proven through their actions to have solid conservative principles — tangible legislation that proves strong conservative leadership.

As Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich fought a strong democratic force in both the House and presidency. Through The Contract with America, he implemented legislation such as welfare reform and continuously balancing the budget.

Rick Santorum has been a strong advocate of social conservatism, fighting for a precious child’s equal rights under the law and fighting to save the foundation of a strong family, the marriage covenant between a man and a woman.

Ron Paul has the strongest budget plan of any candidate. He is the strongest advocate for the Constitution and returning America to the gold standard.

These three candidates are not perfect, but they earn my respect by having the humility to admit when they have strayed away from conservative principles. Can that honestly be said about Mitt Romney as well? No.

When questioned on the colorful array of positions he has taken on the most precious issues facing our country, he only tries to justify them. When truly pressed on these issues, he struggles to answer why he has flip-flopped so many times. In a “Special Report” interview on November 29 with Fox News’s Bret Baier, he was asked to explain his flip-flops on amnesty for illegal immigrants. He appeared extremely flustered. After the cameras were turned off, he complained. The moment was telling.

This election will be won on solid principles — liberal or conservative. I would rather have a flawed man with a political history who has repented from past mistakes and shows regard for conservative principles. Mitt Romney has only proven himself to be a political chameleon, conforming to the party that will get him elected — he is not our conservative candidate.