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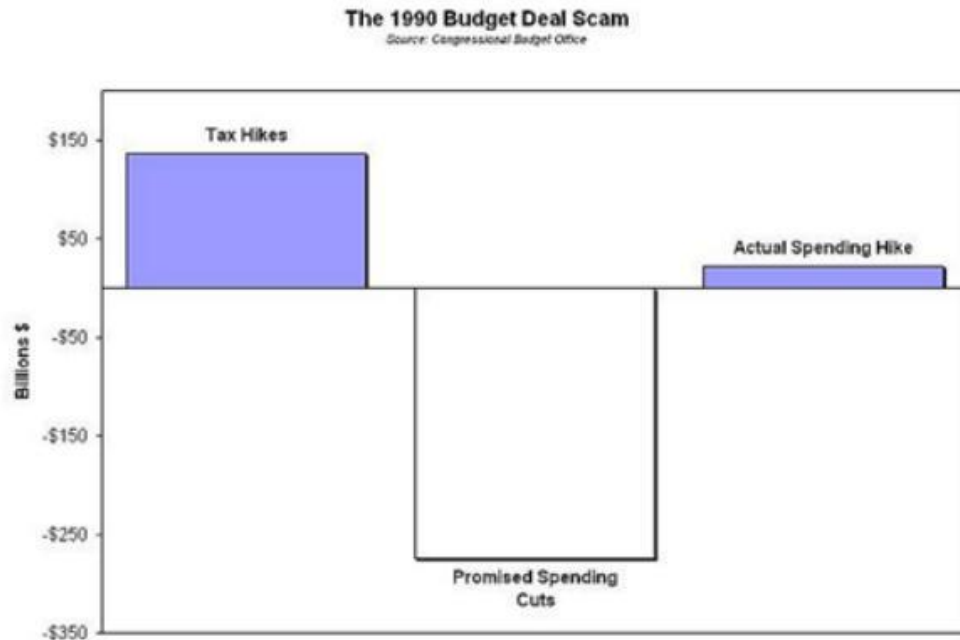
Poppa Bush Got His Profile in Courage Award for an Act of Cowardice

By Deroy Murdock
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This past Sunday, former president George Herbert Walker Bush received the Profile in Courage Award from the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation. What intrepid achievement merited this emolument? Believe it or not, breaking his word to the American people and hiking taxes by \$137 billion in 1990.

Poppa Bush was duped by Democrats in a “compromise” that was to see \$2 in spending reductions for every \$1 increase in taxes.

“Not only did the Democrats break their promise to cut spending below the CBO baseline by \$274 billion,” Americans for Tax Reform [recalled](#), “they actually spent \$23 billion above CBO’s pre-budget deal spending baseline.”



This award is the final insult for Americans who suffered due to Poppa Bush’s insidious tax increase.

Bush's tax hike was a political betrayal for Republicans and other voters who believed him when he [pledged](#) to the 1988 GOP National Convention: "Read my lips: No new taxes." This promise built on the major tax cuts of Bush's predecessor, Ronald Wilson Reagan. The Gipper macheted the top personal income tax rate from 70 percent to 28. After eight years as second fiddle to the greatest supply-side president America ever has known, voters assumed that Bush learned from Reagan and would govern accordingly.

Wrong!

Bush not only learned little. Even worse, he and his fellow establishment liberals insisted on showing Reagan's supposedly dimwitted conservatives not gratitude for placing them in high positions of authority, but contempt. So, "to show the simpletons how it is done," Bush violated his promise and hiked the top tax rate from 28 percent to 31. Bush also imposed a luxury tax on yachts and other items. This led to a plunge in domestic boat sales and huge job losses among carpenters, painters, and others in the yacht-manufacturing industry.

Those job losses were just a precursor to the recession and further unemployment that followed, after the tax hikes slammed the economy. Soon, Bush was back in Kennebunkport, living the life of an ex-president.

Yup, the Bushies sure showed the Reaganites how it's done.

The Kennedy prize has stoked rage among tax fighters.

"Bush's tax hike repealed the real spending restraint of Gramm-Rudman and imposed a big tax hike that facilitated a larger burden of government spending," says Cato Institute scholar Dan Mitchell. "No wonder the statists . . . are applauding."

"This award goes to Republicans who raise taxes," observes Steve Moore, chief economist of the Heritage Foundation. "One year, former Senator Lowell Weicker [R., Conn.] won."

"Of course the Left wants to celebrate Bush's broken tax promise," Moore says. "It is what cost Republicans the White House and elected Bill Clinton . . . Also, why not give Bush the award for his incredibly brave service in World War II, especially since JFK served honorably, too, in The Big One?"

Bush's harshest critics in the conservative movement unanimously would have cheered for him were this award for his valiant efforts to defeat Imperial Japan. No such luck, alas.

"This is the beautiful (and government subsidized) people making fun of the rubes," says Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. "This is an award for stupidly throwing away the presidency to the Democrats. Talk about rubbing salt in the wound. This is like giving Cleopatra a 'courage' award for her thing with the asp, or a 'courage' award for Napoleon invading Russia." Norquist further laments: "You never see a Democrat get a 'courage' award for saying 'No' to the spending-interest lobby."

“If JFK were alive today, he probably would scold the award committee for not reading his lips on tax policy,” says Pete Sepp of the National Taxpayers Union. “Kennedy himself proposed one of the most aggressive across-the-board income tax reductions because, in his words, ‘The paradoxical truth is that the tax rates are too high today and tax revenues are too low, and the soundest way to raise revenues in the long run is to cut rates now.’”

G. H. W. Bush’s award for his most notorious act is yet another reminder of why *the entire Bush family* should take one final bow for their public service, step quietly off the stage, and go away.