

RAHN: Job and liberty destroyers

Obama's team has wreckers at every position

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Illustration: Barney Frank by Alexander Hunter for The Washington Times

Which two have done more to improve your life - Thomas Edison and Steve Jobs, or Barack Obama and Nancy Pelosi? Some people, in their pursuit of profit, benefit their fellow humans by creating new or better goods and services, and then by employing others. We call such people entrepreneurs and productive workers. Others are parasites who suck the blood and energy away from the productive. Such people are most often found in government.

Perhaps the most vivid description of what happens to a society where the parasites become so numerous and powerful that they destroy their productive hosts is Ayn Rand's classic novel "Atlas Shrugged." The just-released movie version is an entertaining, tension-filled struggle between the productive and the parasites who ally themselves with the envious and evil. Go see it.

When wages are rising faster than inflation (i.e., real wages), and the number of adults as a percentage of the population at work is rising, times are good; but when real wages fall, misery results. For the past several months, real wages have been falling, and despite the

small improvement in the unemployment rate, the adult population/worker ratio continues to fall. Declines in prosperity most often are a result of bad policies rather than natural forces, with the rare exception of an event like the Japanese earthquake and tsunami.

Bad policies come about from the actions of specific people - individuals in Congress and government agencies - not the Congress or the administration as a whole. Washington is filled with people who are more destructive than constructive. It is useful to name some of the most destructive people in the hope that they will either reform or leave.

One of Washington's most aggressive destroyers of jobs has been Rep. Barney Frank, the Massachusetts Democrat who is a former head of the House Financial Services Committee and principal author of the now-notorious Dodd-Frank Act. He was one of main protectors and enablers of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac as they went on their ruinous, subprime mortgage buying binge. Peter Wallison, former general counsel of the U.S. Treasury and member of the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission, has produced a lengthy report showing how the actions of Fannie and Freddie were the most important causes of the financial crisis. If Mr. Frank and his Senate counterpart, disgraced former Sen. Christopher J. Dodd, Connecticut Democrat, had acted responsibly, millions of Americans might not have lost their jobs and homes over the past few years.

Interior Secretary Kenneth L. Salazar, a former senator, has done more to destroy and curtail American oil, gas and coal production than any other single human. Soon after taking office, he prohibited oil and gas production in huge areas of the American West. He has held up the permitting of both offshore and onshore oil production well beyond what was necessary to ensure safety. He has ignored sound science and the rule of law. His actions, even according to Democrat senators and others, have cost hundreds of thousands of American jobs.

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius was caught in a half-trillion-dollar lie last month, when, before a House Committee, she was finally forced to admit that the administration had been double-counting Medicare savings as critics had been claiming. If Ms. Sebelius and others in the administration had told the truth, Obamacare would never have passed. The costs associated with this piece of legislation, not even considering the costs of all of the legal challenges, will result in millions of job losses and a loss of personal and economic freedom - unless the Supreme Court upholds the legal challenges. President Obama claimed last week in his budget speech that hundreds of billions of dollars can be saved in the Medicare program by eliminating waste, fraud and abuse. If that is true, why has he tolerated Ms. Sebelius' mismanagement?

Sen. Carl Levin, Michigan Democrat, has done much to drive foreign investment and jobs out of America. He has done this by leading a headline-grabbing, but economically illiterate, crusade against legal tax avoiders, tax evaders and low-tax jurisdictions. His destructive "solution" has been to put costly and punitive restrictions on domestic and foreign financial institutions. These restrictions have caused some foreign financial institutions to cease investing in the United States and to refuse opening accounts for

Americans. It has been explained to Mr. Levin that his previous and newly proposed legislation is driving upwards of \$1 trillion of foreign investment out of the country, which will cause Treasury to lose, in the real world, many times the tax revenue Mr. Levin and his gang of know-nothings claim. But Mr. Levin carries on, leaving America with far less foreign investment and the jobs it would create - all in a selfish attempt to curry favor with the witless media.

Finally, we have the job-destroyer-in-chief, Mr. Obama. Even though the empirical evidence shows that both job creation and liberty increase with reductions in the size of government and tax rates, the president has done just the opposite. Last week, without offering an alternative budget plan of his own, the president had the unmitigated gall to attack House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan, who has a serious plan to deal with the budget crisis. However, Mr. Obama did call for a big tax increase on those who create jobs. If that happens, prepare for double-digit unemployment.

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