



Today in Liberty: Obamacare disapproval hits an all-time high, Eric Cantor will leave Congress on August 18

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“Nobody spends somebody else’s money as carefully as he spends his own. Nobody uses somebody else’s resources as carefully as he uses his own. So if you want efficiency and effectiveness, if you want knowledge to be properly utilized, you have to do it through the means of private property.” — Milton Friedman

— **Economy adds 209,000 jobs in July, unemployment rate rises slightly:** The economy added 209,000 jobs in July, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the unemployment rate increased from 6.1 percent to 6.2 percent. Economists had projected 233,000 jobs and that the unemployment rate would hold steady at 6.1 percent. Although the report didn’t meet expectations, this is the sixth consecutive month of 200,000-plus job growth. The labor participation rate — the percentage of Americans working or looking for work — increased marginally from 62.8 percent in June, a 35-year low, to 62.9 percent in July.

— **Obamacare disapproval hits an all-time high:** The Kaiser Family Foundation has released a new poll finding that unfavorable views of Obamacare have jumped to an all-time high since they began tracking opinions of the law in April 2010. The July tracking poll shows that 53 percent of Americans have an unfavorable opinion of Obamacare, while 37 percent view the law favorably. Sixty percent want Congress to “work to improve” Obamacare, while 35 want to repeal and replace it. The poll also finds that Americans are evenly divided on the Supreme Court’s *Hobby Lobby* decision.

— **“No man’s life, liberty, or property are safe while the legislature is in session”:** And the House of Representatives will be in session a little longer. Republican leaders are planning to keep members in session, cutting into the beginning of the August recess, until they vote on the House’s \$659 million version of the border bill. “All 234 [Republican] members want to get a border resolution,” Rep. Darrell Issa said, according to the *Washington Examiner*. “So we are going to stay in till we get it done. I’m comfortable it will be before we leave and I’m sure we’ll be leaving [on Friday].” The White House has threatened to veto the bill.

— **CIA admits to spying on Senate committee’s computers:** The Central Intelligence Agency has owned up to spying on computers used by the Senate Intelligence Committee while staffers were probing the Agency’s rendition program. “Findings of the investigation by the CIA

Inspector General's Office 'include a judgment that some CIA employees acted in a manner inconsistent with the common understanding reached between SSCI (Senate Select Committee on Intelligence) and the CIA in 2009,' CIA spokesman Dean Boyd said in a statement," McClatchy News reports. "The statement represented an admission to charges by the panel's chairwoman, Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., that the CIA intruded into the computers her staff used to compile the soon-to-be released report on the agency's use of harsh interrogation methods on suspected terrorists in secret overseas prisons during the Bush administration." Feinstein broke news of the then-alleged spying in a more than 40-minute speech on the Senate floor in March. While this certain a serious issue with constitutional ramifications — an executive branch office spying on a legislative committee — Feinstein's complaints, however, are stunningly hypocritical. After all, she's one of the most vocal apologists of the National Security Agency's domestic spying programs.

— **Governments really want your Twitter account information:** Twitter says that government requests for users' data have jumped. "More than half of the requests came from the United States, as has been the case since Twitter began issuing its 'transparency report' in 2012. Typically, the requests are part of criminal investigations. To obtain non-public information about users — such as email addresses — law enforcement agencies have to get a subpoena or court order," the Associated Press reports. "Requests for the contents of communications — such as direct messages or non-public tweets — require a search warrant." The report, which can be found here, covers the first six months of the year. Of the 2,058 requests, 1,257 came from the United States, up from 833 in the last six months of 2013. Twitter complied with 72 percent of those requests. You can see where the U.S.-based requests are coming from here.

— **Rand Paul on the untended consequences of Obama's Libya intervention:** In an editorial over at *National Review*, Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) takes President Obama to task for dragging the United States into the 2011 NATO intervention in Libya's civil war. Setting the discussion around the evacuation of personnel from the U.S. embassy, Paul explains that, without any authorization from Congress, the White House got involved in an internal conflict that only worsened tensions in the region. "Few, if any, Americans would call President Obama's intervention in Libya a success," Paul writes. "A year after Obama's unconstitutional 2011 intervention in Libya, Americans in Benghazi would face imminent danger from extremists. Ambassador Christopher Stevens requested that the Obama administration give them the proper tools and military manpower to protect them from any threats," adding that the State Department, then-run by Hillary Clinton, and the administration ignored the overtures. We all know what happened next. "Last weekend, 70 members of our State Department and 80 Marines were forced to flee from our embassy to Tunisia to avoid the fighting between rival groups in Tripoli. They had to leave because it was not our fight," Paul explains. "Mr. President, next time follow the Constitution."

— **Eric Cantor leaves Majority Leader post, plans to resign from Congress:** Rep. Eric Cantor (R-VA) has decided to resign, effective August 18, rather than spend the rest of his term in the league of backbenchers in the House. "I want to make sure that the constituents in the 7th District will have a voice in what will be a very consequential lame-duck session," Cantor told the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. The Virginia Republican, who was defeated in June by Dave Brat in a primary race, officially stepped down from Majority Leader post on Thursday. "Walking

into this building and walking onto this floor is something that excited me every day since I was first elected to Congress. As it should,” said Cantor from the House floor. “Not one of us should ever take for granted the awesome honor and responsibility we have to serve our fellow Americans.” Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) took over the post yesterday. According to the *Times-Dispatch*, Cantor asked Gov. Terry McAuliffe (D-VA) to hold a special election on November 4, the day of the general election, so the winner can join the House immediately. Brat has already announced plans to run in the special election. Sorry, but this move by Cantor doesn’t make any sense. He says he wants the district to have representation, so he’s going to resign and leave them without representation for two and a half months.

— **Maggie Gyllenhaal has a sad:** *The Dark Knight* and *White House Down* actress is really unhappy with how Obama’s presidency has turned out. “I really believed in him,” Gyllenhaal told *Time*, “and I’m not sure what he believes in anymore.” Gyllenhaal contributed to his 2008 and 2012 campaigns. Give her some credit, though, she did speak out against the NSA’s domestic spying programs last year.

— **Here’s what a couple Cato legal scholars think about the House lawsuit:** In separate posts over at the Cato Institute’s blog, Ilya Shapiro and Roger Pilon discussed the merits of the House’s lawsuit against President Obama. “When Congress passes a law, it is the president’s duty to enforce it. The president has discretion in how to enforce it, to be sure, but he can’t suspend, waive, ignore, or change it,” Shapiro says. “The House of Representatives is thus well-placed to sue over the institutional injury that the executive branch has foisted on the legislative branch.” Pilon argues, however, that the suit faces legal hurdles and, even if House Republicans get around them, the legal action may be politically unwise. “Congress [may get] over the standing hurdle. But again, if it doesn’t, and even if it does, attention will still be focused on the suit, not on Obama’s record,” Pilon explains. “Frustration over this lawless president is palpable, as the polls show. But at the end of the day, the remedy is likely to be political, not legal. Put plainly, there is a constitutional remedy for these constitutional wrongs: it’s in the voting booth.”

— **VA “reform” bill is really light on actual reforms:** Jonathan Bydlak of the Coalition to Reduce Spending says that Congress is just throwing money at the systematic problems in the Veterans Administration. “Reforming the VA and caring for our veterans are crucial goals. But the VA is hardly cash-strapped: its budget has risen nearly 68% since 2009 alone. The recent scandal involved misspent money, not lack of it,” Bydlak explained in an email blast. “But even if the VA *had* needed more funding, it’s Congress’s responsibility to find that money responsibly. It failed to do so.” Bydlak goes on to explain that the deal House and Senate negotiators reached earlier this week offsets “a small portion [\$7 billion] of the [\$17 billion in new] funding.” He also blasted three House members — Reps. Doug Collins (R-GA), Paul Broun (R-GA), and Steve Chabot (R-OH) — “Reject the Debt” pledge signers who voted for the bill and applauded Rep. Mark Sanford (R-SC) and others who voted against it. The Senate passed the measure on Thursday evening in a 91 to 3 vote and sent it the White House for President Obama’s signature.

— **Thomas Massie chats with Cato:** Rep. Thomas Massie (R-KY) joined Caleb Brown of the Cato Institute to discuss hemp legalization, leaving marijuana regulation to the states, criminal justice reform, the push inside Congress to end the NSA’s domestic spying programs, and the

Internet sales tax. They also discussed Massie's efforts to stop the District of Columbia from denying residents their Second Amendment rights and the recent *Palmer* decision. You can listen to the audio of the interview [here](#) or the video [here](#).

— **Coalition of public interest groups back the USA FREEDOM Act:** More than 30 civil liberties and public interest organizations have come together to urge congressional leaders from both parties to support the new and improved version of the USA FREEDOM Act (S.2685). “On June 18, many of the undersigned groups sent a letter to Senate leadership raising serious concerns about the version of the USA FREEDOM Act (H.R. 3661) that passed the House of Representatives in May, and recommending six specific areas for improvement in the Senate bill,” says the letter to congressional leaders. “The version of the USA FREEDOM Act introduced Tuesday is a substantial improvement upon the House-passed bill, and addresses many of our most significant concerns. While this bill does not include all of the necessary reforms to the government’s surveillance authorities, it is a good first step.” Signers to the letter include the American Civil Liberties Union, the Competitive Enterprise Institute, Electronic Frontier Foundation, Generation Opportunity, and the R Street Institute.