



Democrats Admit their Top Goal Is Luring GOP into a Tax-Hike Trap, so Why Are some Republicans Stupidly Helping to Make that Happen?

By Daniel J. Mitchell
6/18/2012

I am sometimes at a loss for words to describe the [stupidity of the Republican Party](#).

Let's use an analogy to explain what I mean. Imagine you were playing a game of chess and your opponent openly stated that he wanted you to move your rook to a certain point on the board.

If your IQ was above room temperature, you would probably be suspicious that he wasn't trying to help you win the game.

Well, the same thing happens in fiscal policy. [I quoted the Hill newspaper last year](#) when some Democrats admitted that their top political goal was to seduce the GOP into a tax increase.

Now [we have more evidence](#).

The Democrats' counter-strategy is a bit more subtle, but has essentially been to find ways to make it very uncomfortable for Republicans to maintain such a rigid anti-tax orthodoxy — to ultimately force Republicans to break their anti-tax pledges and badly splinter their party. That's what the Buffett Rule is about; that why Dems insist they won't dismantle the so-called "sequester" — big cuts to defense and even to Medicare — unless Republicans agree to tackle deficits in a balanced way, i.e. by supporting significant new tax revenues. The results have been mixed. They've won a small number of GOP votes here and there, and vulnerable members are nowadays more likely to trash or dismiss Grover Norquist in the press than they were last year. But at a very high level within the Democratic Party, there's a recognition that breaking the GOP on taxes is an absolutely crucial strategic imperative for defending safety net programs over the long term.

That's a pretty clear statement. We have folks on the left who say they want higher taxes both to prop up [big government](#) and to cause internal damage to the GOP.

So we're now left with a rather strange puzzle. Why would any Republicans ([most recently Sen. Lindsey Graham and Jeb Bush](#)) want to help the Democrats achieve those goals?!?

Unless, of course, they're motivated by a belief in bigger government (high likely) or a suicidal desire to harm their own electoral prospects (highly unlikely since even I don't think GOPers are that stupid).

[Government Cost-Overruns, the English Version](#)

Many of us know that Obamacare will be very expensive and that supporters, [aided and abetted by the Congressional Budget Office, deliberately low-balled the cost estimates](#).

I've also [cited my Cato colleague Chris Edwards](#), who has made a more comprehensive (and well-documented) claim that government officials systematically lie about the cost of new projects.

Now we have a [rather remarkable example](#) of this fiscal prevarication from across the ocean.

In 2002, the British government estimated the cost of hosting the Olympic Games at \$2.8 billion. Ten years later, the price has passed \$15 billion and is still rising. When everything is added up — lost business, as many as 13,500 British soldiers patrolling the streets of London (more than are in Afghanistan) — the expenses may come to \$38 billion.

Wow, cost overruns of somewhere between 500 percent and 1300 percent. That's bad, even by government standards.

Though I imagine that moronic advocates of [Keynesian economics](#) will argue that the \$15 billion-\$38 billion is a form of stimulus that will percolate through the economy — conveniently forgetting that the money had to be taxed and borrowed from the private economy in the first place.

P.S. The [top cartoon in this post](#) is a good description of how government officials come up with their fiscal estimates.

Daniel J. Mitchell

Daniel J. Mitchell is a top expert on tax reform and supply-side tax policy at the [Cato Institute](#).