



Jan Brewer: America's Worst Republican Governor

By: Jason Pye – January 24, 2013

While I can understand why conservatives have an affinity for her, Gov. Jan Brewer (R-AZ) has been a fiscal nightmare for the Copper State. Sure, she confronted President Barack Obama and pushed through a restrictionist immigration bill that has become popular in several red states.

But when it comes to fiscal policy, Gov. Brewer has been far from a conservative. In 2010, Chris Edwards, writing in the Cato Institute's *Fiscal Policy Report Card on America's Governors*, explained that Brewer not only pushed a sales tax increase, but also vetoed a budget because it cut spending. In 2012, Edwards noted that Brewer has "usually proposed substantial increases in spending" in her budget proposals.

Unfortunately, Brewer's poor fiscal record doesn't end there. While she did reject ObamaCare's state exchange, Brewer decided last week to go along with the expansion of Medicaid provided under the law.

Avik Roy has explained the problem with Brewer's approach in detail, noting that her arguments for expansion — funding her state's Medicaid program with out of state dollars and cost of uncompensated care — are fundamentally flawed. On the last point specifically, Roy writes:

Brewer claims that expanding Medicaid will "help maintain the viability of rural and safety-net hospitals," because the uninsured are allegedly consuming a lot of uncompensated care. But this isn't true. It's actually the Medicaid population that is responsible for much of the inappropriate use of emergency rooms, and Medicaid's underpayment of providers is a far greater economic problem for most hospitals.

Brewer actually believes that expanding Medicaid will create jobs, a comment that one would expect from President Obama or a cheap bureaucrat. That point was completely dismantled by the *National Review*:

[A]s Professor Casey B. Mulligan of the University of Chicago has documented: "If carried out, this expansion is expected to reduce full-time employment among able-bodied adults." Why? "Medicaid is a transfer, so it creates jobs in the sectors where it is spent, but it destroys jobs at the source of financing." Expanding Medicaid may lead to a few new jobs for doctors, nurses, and other health-care professionals, but at the cost of jobs elsewhere in the economy. (And the subset of unemployed persons with licenses to practice medicine is small.) Welfare spending is not a job-creation program. That is basic economics.

Not only is Brewer's reasoning completely off-base, the cost of the expanding the program to Arizona will be upwards of \$956 million in just the first five years. And how does Brewer propose paying for it? Not through spending cuts, but through yet *another* tax hike.

The bad policies pushed by Brewer just keeps adding up.