

# The Washington Times

## Moving from ‘We the people’ to ‘We the government’

By Armstrong Williams February 17, 2013

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The president’s State of the Union was — to my pleasant surprise — not partisan vitriol, but — to my unpleasant lack of surprise — a full-on liberal call to action. I noticed that there was comparatively little applause or enthusiasm for this State of the Union — sort of like the lack of enthusiasm for the president around the country, as he was re-elected by just a 51 percent majority.

The president is out of ideas. His speech was typical Obama rhetoric: 1) quoting from an actually good speech delivered by an actually good president; 2) fetishizing the middle class; 3) romanticizing groups or collectives; 4) issuing startling threats of unilateral executive action; and, above all, 5) completely denying the reality of government-benefit spending.

He is rehashing not only his old ideas, but liberal ideas that were old decades ago. He wants to raise the minimum wage, or at least chain it to inflation. I can think of few ideas worse for job creation than this.

According to scholars David Neumark and William Wascher, two-thirds of minimum-wage studies found negative employment effects from minimum-wage laws. According to Mark Wilson of the Cato Institute, the minimum wage increases job turnover, discourages part-time work, discourages fringe benefits, increases inflationary pressure and encourages hiring illegal immigrants.

Liberals need to make peace with business. They can’t have their secularist utopia and still have thriving job creation: it’s one or the other. Businesses create jobs; nothing else does. You either help business or you hurt jobs. And if nobody has jobs, then you can’t afford anything else.

On climate change, there is the same problem. There are two possible liberal solutions to less energy use: 1) tax it, or 2) mandate restrictions. Either way, you're killing business, and thereby killing jobs. When you kill jobs, you kill funding for everything else — green energy, handouts, all the candy liberals give to the plebeians.

The loudest and most emotional part of the night was on gun control. Bringing human props with him, the president said gun violence victims “deserve a vote.” But, of course, this is theatrics. There is no bill “on victims.” The only thing to vote on is unconstitutionally restricting our rights.

Does the president not realize that he was not re-elected on gun control? He was re-elected saying almost nothing about guns. There is no mandate here, and the Democratic Party would be wise to pocket-veto the president's proposals. Just as Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid accidentally tweeted (read: blurted out) his opposition to an assault-weapons ban, so too might many other Democrats find themselves caught between loyalty to the president and common sense.

He wants more spending — 29 programs, in fact — but he says it won't cost a dime. That must mean he wants to raise taxes. So much for the “fiscal cliff” deal. The consensus on the Hill is that they are “done” with taxes, at least until well after the Three Crises — sequestration, continuing resolution and debt ceiling. All tax bills on the House side essentially have been tabled for now. But the president speaks as if he hadn't just raised taxes on the wealthy, and, in the White House's own words, imposed “the most progressive tax code in decades.” Now he wants to chase the rich out of our country some more. There goes investment in the economy, there goes entrepreneurship, there goes charitable donations.

The poor logic is scary enough. Even scarier, the ignorance: “Our government shouldn't make promises we cannot keep — but we must keep the promises we've already made.” Does he not know what promises we have made? We have already promised \$120 trillion that we do not have. The total value of all assets in the United States is around \$90 trillion: We couldn't keep our promises if we sold the whole country on Craigslist.

Politicians who make this argument remind me of King Herod, afraid to renege on his promise to Herodias: If you make a stupid promise, you need to be honest that it was stupid.

Even scarier than the ignorance? The collectivism. The joy with which the president read phrases like “lands and waters that we, the public, own together.” That's a lot more important than any awkward water-slurping by Marco Rubio. That's policy. We the people are now we the government.

Armstrong Williams is on Sirius/XM Power 128, 6 to 7 p.m. and 4 to 5 a.m., Monday through Friday/  
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