

Offshore Asset Protection BLOG - Bob Bauman

That's The Way It Looks From Here

February 12, 2010

Snow Job: No Federal Government for Four Whole Days!

The two heavy snowstorms in one week that buried much of the U.S. Mid-Atlantic area shut down the Nation's Capital and the federal government for nearly a week -- as unrelenting cable news talking heads wallowed in the white stuff 24/7.

I recall another heavy snow fall over a February weekend during the eight years I served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Maryland's First (Chesapeake Bay) District.



I commuted to Capitol Hill each day from my home in Easton 85 miles away. On that snowy Monday all roads were blocked. I had a near 99% attendance record during eight years in Congress -- but I also often demanded and got roll call votes on legislation which I, as a conservative, opposed.

Bell Ringer

Apparently too many roll calls for the liking of my colleague, the late **Rep. Alfonso Bell** of California, (below) who missed some of those roll calls I had demanded over the years.



On that snowy Monday when Rep. Bell discovered I was absent, using my own parliamentary tactics, he asked for and got about 15 roll calls, knocking down my attendance by about one percentage point.

Unfortunately, the snow had closed Washington National Airport and more than 100 other congressmen were also absent that day. There was barely even a quorum of 219 members. I wasn't the only one upset with the revengeful Al Bell.

Home of the Snow Job

Washington is expert at "snow jobs" in general, but unprepared to handle real blizzard weather conditions.

So this week the federal government halted all Washington operations for four days. Some 230,000 D.C. area employees stayed home, allegedly costing taxpayers an estimated \$450 million "in lost productivity per day," according to federal officials.



Even **President Obama** told the White House staff to stay home. Leaving U.S. presidents alone without staff to supervise them can lead to serious constitutional questions. Remember President **Bill Clinton** alone with intern **Monica Lewinski** when she delivered that historic pizza to the Oval Office?

So What?

But four days *without* government -- need I ask the obvious question: "So what?"

My old friend at the **Cato Institute**, (located in the heart of those D.C. snow drifts), Senior Fellow **Doug Bandow**, said it best:



"About two million people, excluding the postal service and armed forces, work for the federal government. Most are engaged in counterproductive activity. Using the term 'productivity' in the same sentence as 'federal government' is a dubious exercise. No doubt, in the sense of performing a task efficiently, the Feds can be productive....But government efficiency doesn't mean productivity in a larger sense. That is, does government activity yield a better life for Americans? On net, the answer is no.



"...If you believe the official estimates, the three day federal shut-down cost Americans nearly a billion dollars. But don't worry. Although Snowmageddon has been awful for those of us who live in the region, it likely has saved the American people billions of dollars by slowing down the waste of tax dollars and limiting the harm of regulations.

"Now if we could only shut down Washington permanently."

Bob Bauman

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