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Jan. 29, 2010

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Arena Ref: [Fred Barbash](#)

Besides opposing Obama, what should Congressional Republicans be doing to improve their own not-so-hot standing with the public?

Duking it out in Baltimore

See [Mike Allen's interview](#) with Eric Cantor in POLITICO

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Roger Pilon

Vice President for Legal Affairs, Cato Institute :

On the Baltimore meeting:

It's all well and good that President Obama wants to meet with Republicans -- giving the appearance of reaching out -- but when it's mainly to "chastise" them for opposing his programs, as the AP is reporting after his session at the House Republicans' retreat in Baltimore today, it's little but a continuation of the lecture he gave to Congress, the Supreme Court, and even the American people on Wednesday evening. "I am not an ideologue," he's reported to have said. Yet it appears that he rejected the Republicans' proposals for a different approach to health care, a line-item veto for spending bills, and across-the-board tax cuts.

But why should that surprise? Ideologues aren't open to new or different ideas, because they have the truth. Yet the deeper truth that's been apparent all along is that we have here a

president who, along with so many on his staff, has little grasp of economic reality, because he has no experience in the business world -- indeed, appears often to be hostile to that world. Just today, for example, the White House unveiled its plan for a new tax break to spur job creation. As reported by **CNN**, Obama "wants to give businesses a \$5,000 tax credit for each net new employee they hire this year." The CNN headline captures it all: "Here's \$5,000. Go hire someone." That's not the way the world works. Temporary tax gimmicks like that, which the White House estimates will cost \$33 billion, are hardly what's needed. If businesses are to start hiring on a regular basis, they need assurance of a regular climate that will enable them to plan rationally. This administration has given them anything but that kind of assurance. And today's meeting in Baltimore, like Wednesday night's lecture, hasn't helped.

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