



A look at what others are saying

September 13, 2015

According to the Cato Institute's Doug Bandow, more than 1,100 professions in the United States demand licensure. In 1950, he writes, 5 percent of Americans "needed official permission to work."

Today, "nearly a quarter require some form of government approval."

Bandow cites examples — like 150 hours of classes to become a "shampoo specialist" — to support an obvious conclusion — "Licensing is an extraordinary scam."

An obvious downside to this is, as a study by the Obama administration found, is that "licensing increases prices" on consumers "on average, as much as 16 percent."

Worse (since we just observed Labor Day), "Government restrictions on employment are particularly counterproductive at a time of high unemployment," Bandow writes. "By one estimate licensure destroys nearly three million jobs. Overall, licensing has been estimated to cost \$100 billion to \$200 billion a year."

The idea behind licensing, of course, is to protect the public. But the Obama report (for a whole host of reasons) found "most research does not find that licensing improves quality or public health and safety."

Bandow argues, and we agree, that the right idea is to "end most regulation, instead relying on market mechanisms for consumer protection."

As he puts it, "In the 'land of the free' people shouldn't have to get anyone else's permission to work."

– The Caledonian (Vermont) Record

Procrastination is a common human trait but it is never a successful strategy because whatever needs doing must be done. This is a lesson Congress never learns.

This fall, a returning Congress must deal with its procrastination of spring, as the issues kicked down the road through the summer are right where members of Congress left them. Congress doesn't want to deal with the nation's decaying transportation infrastructure because doing so costs money and requires decision-making, but there eventually will be a limit to temporary highway bills. Temporary budget bills for government agencies are only putting off the need to determine what departments need additional funding, such as those related to social services, and what departments need cutting, such as the Pentagon, with its bloated budget.

“It’s going to take a sense of give and take,” assesses Representative Tom Cole, an Oklahoma Republican. That is true and always has been, but the tea party wing of the Republican Party is all about taking and regards compromise as treason even though compromise is the essence of successful government.

A feisty President Obama, riding a wave of recent successes and looking forward to moving on to the next chapter of his life, appears to believe he has given enough over his nearly seven years in office. There is no indication he is willing to give much more to appease the unappeasable — or the “crazies” as he undiplomatically referred to them during the course of his summer vacation off the Massachusetts coast.

The Republican Party establishment has made it clear it has no stomach for a government shutdown or even the threat of one, as that always hurts the GOP with American voters and a national election is looming large. Tea partiers, however, who are all about ideology, have no such reservations, and with the government budget running out on Sept. 30 they are willing to force a shutdown if federal funding for Planned Parenthood is not ended.

Canceling federal funding for an organization that provides health care for women to make a political statement on abortion is not what a party already dancing to the tune of Donald Trump needs with an election a little over a year off. Rather than a war on women, the GOP desperately needs to find “a sense of give and take,” as does America if it wants to move forward rather than stagnate.

– The Berkshire Eagle