

New York, New York?

Cue the band! And a one, and a two...



I'm spreading the news,

Your taxings grow worse.
Still want to be a part of it?
New York, New York?

Those vagabond shoes,
Can't choose but to stay.
You walk around so blind to it
New York, New York?

I want to wake up the big city
That is asleep,
To show your king on the hill
Heaps upon you!

These are your town's blues,
That are here to stay.
Unless you stop and hit restart
In the "new" York...
If you won't make the choice,
You won't have any more.
It's up you.
New York, New York.

Hey New York, New York!

You need to wake up—you big city,
Yes, you're asleep!
Don't find you're king of the hill,
Top on the list,
A-Number-One,

King of Taxes...

Yours will be town blues...

That won't go away.

This is your brand new start of life...

In the "new" York.

And...if you don't make the choice...

It'll happen...everywhere...

Come on, come through...

New York...New York!

Hot Air Is Taxing

✘ Those of you paying attention—the more perspicacious in the audience—picked up on the recent charades by your local governments to levy taxes on soda pop in efforts to raise revenue...all in the name of health.

Peeved from the realization of what this brand of problem solving yields, many raised concerns over where this all was headed; your questions converging on "If Soda Pop Now, What's Next Then?"

Well here's a glimpse...

In the past month, the State Of Illinois took a bold step to trim its bloated budget by approving measures to reduce Medicaid, a move surely to impact many. And although I feel compelled to question the real motives behind their choosing of this particular target, I instead want to focus on a familiar tone which continues to resonate from within their discourse.

For what really caught my attention was hearing that this type

of cutting is “only part of the equation to fix Medicaid.” The hidden meaning being that the solution to the costs from healthcare MUST include taxation.

Seriously, where in that statement, or in the philosophy behind it, is the true desire to get to the root of the problem and fix it?

I mean, isn't getting a budget under control actually about reducing costs and limiting spending? But you wouldn't know that talking with many of these people. As one Republican lawmaker put it, this “continued approach of more revenue, more revenue ...” is really more about “trying to look for revenue in every way possible, rather than looking for other ways to contract the budget or in this case, maybe reallocate from other places in the budget to get some money.”

But guess what? It didn't take long before their modus operandi was exposed. Just one day after passing those deep health care cuts, another piece of legislation made its way through the Illinois General Assembly.

What did they do? Once again, the Governor and his Democrat allies reached into their old bag of tricks and pulled out their magic wand. Yet this time they took aim at a familiar scapegoat—cigarette smokers.

What are their intentions? The feature of their proposal is a \$1-a-pack Cigarette Tax (something the Governor has desired since day one). It also included increased taxes on other tobacco products, such as cigars and loose tobacco.

What is their rationale for doing so? They feel that this tax, along with other measures of course, will help fill an overall \$2.7 billion gap in Medicaid funding. According to the Senate sponsor of the bill, a Democrat, it would “bring in about \$700 million, including federal Medicaid matching funds...” among other things.

Man, that's a lot of smokes!

To bolster their defense of this bill, the Senate President, another Democrat, said he would vote for this tax even "if it didn't bring in a penny." His thinking is based on the idea that tens of thousands of adults and children either won't start smoking, will quit, or will be saved from premature death because he pushed the proverbial "green button."

I am sure he means well. However, even if his wildest dreams somehow came true, none of what he is hoping to accomplish would happen overnight. Furthermore, his figures don't even address the eventual impact from the hundreds of thousands of smokers in Illinois whose health already has been affected by their decades-long habits. But more importantly, isn't the purpose of their grand idea to raise revenue in order to cover costs and fill a gaping budget hole?!

Honestly, what irks me about the thought processes involved in "creative taxation" is that, aside from any genuine creativity, there really doesn't appear to be much thought involved at all. More likely, it seems as though a few good ol' boys sit around a room spitballing seemingly endless ways to procure revenue rather than truly delving into real matters that would ma

A Tax On Soda?

✘ In the last month, I have read a number of articles about the Obesity Epidemic , including one titled "City Set To Hear Testimony On Soda taxes", another on "Chicago Soda Tax Hike: Aldermen Consider New Sugary Drink Tax In Hearing" and one more begging to ask "Should We Tax Soda To Discourage Obesity?"

Ever since then I have been bugged by the prospects of such thinking. Come to think of it, we all should be!

Why?

Chicago doesn't get it.

The Alderman doesn't get it.

The City Health Commissioner, a doctor, doesn't get it.

Here is what to get: The tax being proposed, which works out to somewhere between 15 and 35 cents per sugary drink, isn't at all about dealing with the obesity epidemic. This tax is about raising revenue—for the city of Chicago—plain and simple. In fact, they're not afraid to say it...literally!

Their ploy? To get us dimwitted drones to overlook what they said.

Their guise? To provide the appearance that they—our representative leaders—truly are looking out for us and our well-being.

Their reasoning? That raising costs will lead to less consumption, which in turn will lead to less obesity.

My conclusion? HOGWASH!

OK, maybe, just maybe, the smallest percentage of people might be affected enough by not being able to afford soda pop. And maybe this could result in some weight to be lost. But in the end, the numbers won't justify the tax. Yet this is exactly what they're trying to make us believe it will do! More importantly, it most likely will have little impact on obesity in this city, let alone across the state, or throughout the country.

The only thing that approving this proposal will serve to do is to provide for more like-minded ideas to raise revenue...and

at all levels of government.

So we all need to ask ourselves: “What’s next then?” and “Where is this going to lead?”, or “When, if ever, will this type of thinking end?”

Honestly, this is just another smokescreen, another ploy for them to put their hands in our pockets, and (to borrow a commonly used phrase these days) one more way to “kick the can down the road.”

Seriously, is this the kind of taxation WITH representation that we really want?

And just a reminder, or for those of you who read the article and inadvertently overlooked what was actually said, it bears repeating: None of the money to be raised—not one red cent—is to go toward fighting obesity.

This is not the type of cure to what is ailing us as a community, let alone as a country. But if this is the direction we allow ourselves to travel, then we should fear that we’re already lost.

For the weight we really should be concerning ourselves with is the “poundage” put on by this kind of gluttonous governmental gorging.

Context: Exceptionalism...

☒ For the last four to six years, if not longer, many people have accused now President Barack Obama of not believing in America’s exceptionalism. From Rush Limbaugh to Sean Hannity, the list goes on. Likewise, so does the list of those who defend him and his stance.

If you search through the internet netherworld on the subject, you will find all sorts of results ranging from radio interviews, video clips, speech transcripts, pod-casts, and so forth on the subject.

Particularly, when selecting an audio clip from what may have been a campaign speech where Obama is responding to what was evidently his opponent's claim that he didn't believe America was exceptional, you can hear Barack exclaiming (although don't quote me on its exactness): I believe in American exceptionalism...as the British believe in British exceptionalism, and just as the Greeks believe in...and so on. Then, in the background, a thunderous roar could be heard from the cast of thousands in attendance.

Now, for those applauding and cheering in adulated agreement with his words, all I can say is "Moo... ..Mooooooo."

But those who can read between the lines, it's as clear as night and day. To say what he said, no matter which way you look at it, is to unequivocally profess that he doesn't believe in America's exceptionalism.

Sure, Barack's defenders have come to his aid stating that his words are being taken out of context. But that truly isn't the case.

What they'd like you to believe, and addressing this confusion at face value, is that what he is saying is he believes that everyone, no matter where you exist in this world, is exceptional. When thinking of the person—the individual—this is true. We all are exceptional. And this exceptionality was bestowed upon us by none other than God.

What they have succeeded in doing instead is generating confusion about this issue. And quite possibly, or more probably, this was purposefully perpetrated in order to placate his masses. When speaking of the group of individuals as a whole—the country—this is different and false. A

country's exceptionalism lies in the collective belief for which it stands.

And responding directly to it, our country's exceptionalism is exactly and indisputably where the context of this issue exists.

To say what Obama has said is to say that what exists here in America (and what America stands for) is no better than anywhere else on this planet. And it also says that every other country in the world, and every other form of government, stands equal to that of America.

His context is a stark contrast to the truth and the reality behind the sayings, actions, and written words of The Founding Fathers!

For nowhere else on this planet, other than right here at home in these United States Of America, can it be found or said that *"We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness"*.

So, when specifically addressing an issue as one's belief in his country's exceptionalism, one does not mince words. His words mean exactly what they mean.

And we must all take issue with this!

Yet still there will be some who might argue that he meant something else. But ask yourself this: "Why then didn't this most prolifically unrivaled of orators simply just say something else?"

I mean, he (supposedly) has a grasp on the language. He is or was a lawyer. So he knows how well and succinct the spoken and written word needs to be.

Maybe he was avoiding the subject? Or maybe he was resorting

to political correctness? Or maybe he doesn't have a clue what exceptional means and what it means to be so?

It is true that everyone has a right to what they believe. But nowhere else does this mean more, and nowhere else has this moral truth been self-evident, than in America. It started here. It exists here. It is stronger here. And it is projected outward from here.

So when it comes to your country's exceptionalism... ..you stand up for it!

Unless of course you don't believe in it.