

Can Obama Win Re-Election by Promising Free Stuff

☒ By now we all know that the candidate who four years ago told us he would bring us together has become the president who will run for re-election by trying to drive us apart.

The president can't say two words without saying these two words: "Fair share." The rich, we're told, aren't paying their "fair share" and that's not fair.

The other day, as he explained why his new budget calls for tax increases on the wealthy, the president said, "We don't begrudge success in America. We do expect everybody to do their fair share, so that everybody has opportunity, not just some."

And since everybody on Team Obama got the memo, the president's chief of staff Jack Lew recently said, "In the short term, we need to keep the economy growing. In the long term, we need to get the deficit under control ... and we do it in a way that's consistent with American values so that everyone pays a fair share."

You will hear those two words over and over again between now and Election Day. That's because Mr. Obama, who promised he would change the tone in Washington and usher in a new post-partisan era, has figured out what we all already know: He can't run on his record, so he'll run trying to convince the middle class that the rich are getting away with murder; that the middle class is struggling because the rich are not; that if those *intransigent* Republicans in Congress would only go along with his plan to increase taxes on the rich, then happy days would be here again.

I suspect that even Mr. Obama, an intelligent man, doesn't believe any of this. He's got to know that if he taxed the

rich at 100 percent of their income, it still wouldn't put a dent in the national debt. Besides, if you increase taxes on the wealthy – the people who hire people who aren't rich – we might slip into another recession. But this isn't about economics. It's about politics. Mr. Obama has done the math.

He knows that there are a lot more voters in the middle class than in the top one percent. Turn the 99 percent against the one percent and you can win re-election. Hope and change has become divide and conquer.

But since Mr. Obama is so concerned about fairness, let's ask him if it's fair that the top one percent of wage earners – the people he's always bashing – pay about 40 percent of all federal income taxes while the bottom 50 percent pay about 2.7 percent.

Mr. Obama says he is not waging class warfare against the wealthy in America. He is, of course. His campaign slogan might as well be: "Vote for Me ... I'll Give You Free Stuff." This is enticing. Imagine if you pay no federal income taxes and one of the candidates says, "I'll take money from rich people and give it to you to pay your mortgage – even if you were irresponsible and bought a house you couldn't afford. Vote for me, I'll make sure you get unemployment benefits for almost two full years. And, oh yeah, vote for me and I'll make sure you get birth control pills – free of charge.

The most important, underreported story in America is the one about who we Americans are becoming. As Bill O'Reilly put it: President Obama is "calculating that the American voter has changed into a person who wants free stuff from the government and is willing to sacrifice some freedoms in order to get the free stuff. And you know what? The President might be right."

Unlike a lot of you who think Mr. Obama doesn't stand a chance, I have less faith in the American people than you. A lot less. I'm with H. L. Mencken who supposedly said, "You'll

never go broke underestimating the intelligence of the American public." Not any of YOU, of course. I'm talking about EVERYONE ELSE. The ones who can be bought with cheap promises. As my pal Bill O'Reilly put it: "Free stuff is a powerful lure. No question about it."