

Do You Believe in Magic?

✘ Senator Rand Paul has an idea on how to deal with the fiscal cliff. And here it is:

“Why don’t we let the Democrats pass whatever they want? If they are the party of higher taxes, all the Republicans vote present and let the Democrats raise taxes as high as they want to raise them, let Democrats in the Senate raise taxes, let the president sign it and then make them own the tax increase. And when the economy stalls, when the economy sputters, when people lose their jobs, they know which party to blame, the party of high taxes.”

It’s a great idea, except for one little thing. He’s wrong. The American people will not blame the party of high taxes. They’ll blame the Republicans, the party of low taxes.

I’m with Senator Paul when he says the GOP should not become the party of “almost as high taxes.” But while there are plenty of smart Republicans – and Senator Paul is certainly among them – they still haven’t been able to grasp two simple facts – one about President Obama, the other about the American people.

First, like it or not, Mr. Obama is magic. He has that *something* that draws people to him. FDR had it. JFK had it. Obama has it. Maybe it’s the smile. Maybe the swagger. Could be the sharp clothes. I don’t know. But I do know that when you have that certain something, you can get away with all sorts of things. But only if ...

You’re dealing with easily-fooled people. Which brings us to the second thing Republicans don’t seem to understand. And that is that millions and millions and millions of Americans are not too smart.

It’s not just the summa-cum-dummies you see when Jay Leno goes

out and interviews them at a mall, the ones who think the American Civil War was fought in 1973 or that Columbus discovered America in 1865, or the geniuses who when asked to identify a picture of Winston Churchill say it's Mick Jagger.

It's also the other Americans who are at home laughing at the dumb answers even though they don't know the right answers either.

I mean it's a safe bet that most Americans – if they've ever even heard the term “fiscal cliff” – think it's a precipice someplace out west, maybe in Colorado. I'll also bet most Americans don't know what the word precipice means and couldn't pinpoint Colorado on a map if their lives depended on it.

You think most Americans understand that the reason the unemployment rate just dropped from 7.9 percent to 7.7 percent – the lowest figure in four years – is primarily because more people gave up looking for work and were no longer counted as unemployed? I don't.

Every poll tells us that a majority of Americans agree with President Obama and also want taxes to go up on the top two percent of wage earners. Another safe bet is that most of those Americans don't understand that if Senator Paul is proven right – if in this slow growth economy the president gets his way and taxes on the “wealthy” go up – they, the regular folks not the top two percent, will be the ones who suffer the most when the economy stalls and sputters, and they will be the ones who lose their jobs.

In a more intelligent America the president would get the blame – as Senator Paul says – for all of this. But it won't happen in *this* America. Senator Paul and the others in his party need to understand that magic trumps reason every time. How else do you think Barack Obama got elected not once, but twice?

