

# “I’m Tryin’ to Get Some Obama Bucks”

✘ That’s one of the responses from a man standing in line at the welfare office. If your stomach can take it, please watch this video. Our country is spending money faster than we can print it and there’s no doubt in my mind that we’re heading in the same direction as Greece – a big fat entitlement society.

Our national debt is now \$15.6 trillion dollars and we’re spending over a billion dollars a day just on the interest payments. If anyone doesn’t grasp the enormity of the problem, they must have their head in the sand. And these problems continue to trickle down to every state and local government.

That’s why 23 states are tightening their belts and trying to enact stricter laws regarding public aid. I wrote about this when Florida enacted its law to require prospective aid recipients to drug test. To be expected, the ACLU filed a lawsuit arguing that the law scapegoats poor people. For the time being, a federal judge has temporarily blocked the law stating it violated the Constitution’s ban on illegal search and seizure. It’ll now make its way through the court system.

Once people get on government aid/assistance, government is incapable of tracking fraud and I’ve read story after story which proves there is no accountability after the fact. So why not do better screening of potential recipients of government assistance? Sounds reasonable to me.

Last month, USA Today reported some states are making changes to the way they do business. They’re trying to implement asset limits for food-stamp recipients, longer waiting periods for welfare benefits and mandatory substance abuse counseling

for people receiving housing assistance.

At least ten states are considering bills that would require photo identification for food stamps or electronic benefit cards. (If the voter identification brouhaha is any indication, just consider the uproar over these changes!)

Ohio and Tennessee are considering restricting or eliminating eligibility for those convicted of drug felonies. (Haven't the good people in these states already paid enough for the criminals' room and board, cable, air conditioning, utilities, gym memberships, medical and dental, etc. etc., while they were in prison?)

North Carolina and New Jersey are considering requiring people to perform community service to receive government help. (This is a no-brainer for me and sounds perfectly reasonable. Why this was never a quid pro quo for receiving any type of welfare, I'll never know.)

Here's my suggestion. Why not implement a test for recipients? Someone has to take a citizenship test to become a citizen or to drive a car, why not require people to answer simple questions about money?

A couple of years ago, friends of mine told me about one of their customers who worked for minimum wage at MacDonald's. She told them she had just qualified for a home loan. (I didn't believe it either.) Anyway, she said her mortgage was X number of dollars and her salary was only X number of dollars (obviously not enough to pay for the monthly mortgage, food, utilities, etc.) When my friends asked her how she planned to pay for all this out of her salary, she kept saying, "but I qualified." She didn't have a clue about income and expenses. Scary, huh?

How about testing their knowledge of their state government? Why shouldn't someone be required to know the name of their governor? Or their State representatives? Or who the Vice

President is?

Someone asking to benefit from our generosity should, at least, know something about our political system. After all, there is no Constitutional right to public aid and people should have to do/give something in return.

Hell, even that crazy show “Repo Games” requires people to answer three out of five questions before they actually get their car back – free and clear! On the other hand, it is incredibly frightening to realize how dumb some people really are. In answer to “What metropolis is known as the “City of Brotherly Love?” the contestant answered “California.” And asked to name the three states, except for Alaska and Hawaii, bordering on the Pacific Ocean, the contestant said, “North Carolina, South Carolina and Florida.”

And what about all those man-on-the-street interviews I’ve seen of people, old enough to know better, who can’t identify a photo of Jimmy Carter, or thought Dwight Eisenhower was Franklin Roosevelt or said a photo of Ronald was actually George W.H. Bush?

What’s even more frightening is that, in the end, all these people get to vote in November.

I don’t get it, but if you do, God bless you.

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**The Responsibility of the Media to Debunk The Buffett**

# Rule

☒ Very rarely does something on television prompt me to literally stand up and cheer, especially when it comes to a news program. Yet, that's exactly what I found myself doing Tuesday night when watching a panel discussion on FOX News' *Special Report*. The topic was President Obama's continued endorsement of what he calls *The Buffett Rule*. The Buffett Rule is term that was coined by the president last year as a way of defining his desire to increase taxes on *the rich* as an answer to deficit reduction, and promote a sense of *fairness* in our tax system. It got its name from avid Obama supporter and ultra-successful businessman, Warren Buffett who has helped the president promote the concept.

The moment that got me fired up was when regular panelist Steve Hayes voiced his disgust over the media's complacency with the notion that The Buffett Rule is a legitimate solution.

"Don't reporters have a job to do here?" he asked. "Isn't it the job of the media to put this in perspective?" He went on to accurately explain that over one year, The Buffett Rule would raise \$4 billion in increased tax revenue for the federal government. That is roughly the same amount of money that the U.S. government accumulates in debt in a **single day**. He continued by saying, "It's not a plan. There's nothing serious about it."

He's of course right. The Buffett Rule is an absolute joke. It might as well be named after Jimmy Buffett, rather than Warren, because its only purpose is to get the electorate drunk and *wasting away in Margaritaville* so they won't have a clue as to what's going on with the American economy.

For the past seven months, the President of the United States has traveled throughout the country touting a plan for deficit

reduction that would fund the federal government for only ONE DAY each year. That's absolutely pathetic. He has stoked class envy within our culture, created public unrest that became the *Occupy* movement, and vilified *the rich* all under the premise that squeezing more money out of our wealthiest citizens would somehow fix our economic problems. The reality is that it would do no such thing.

Hayes' frustration mirrors that of my own, and it's about time someone made the point as bluntly as he did. I would be willing to bet that not a single national news network, aside from FOX News, will point out the numbers that he did. That's a serious problem. The media has an ethical duty to scrutinize the rhetoric that comes from our president, especially on a topic as important as the debt crisis. Yet, they've been MIA on The Buffett Rule this entire time, concentrating their attention on Buffett's secretary's tax rate instead of how it would affect our country.

By making a conscious decision not to debunk the president's deficit reduction claims, the media has portrayed The Buffett Rule as a legitimate, alternate vision to the bold and sound entitlement reform proposals introduced into legislation by Republicans. Thus, what should be one of the most serious national debates in our history has once again been reduced to a battle of bumper-sticker slogans – the type of battle that President Obama rarely loses. It's that sort of unchallenged power that has made his class warfare message so successful.

It is absolutely dire that the public understands just how important the national debt issue is because it not only affects each and every one of us, but also our children... and *their* children. The media can't make the public care about it if they don't want to, but they have an obligation to treat the issue with the respect it deserves. Otherwise, how is the media any different than glorified press secretaries for the administration?

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# Paul Ryan – A Role Model for Washington Leadership

✘ I have exactly one bumper-sticker on the back of my car, and you're looking at it. I'm talking about the photo to the side of this column – the one featuring an image of Congressman Paul Ryan of Wisconsin. Most of my friends have absolutely no idea what point the sticker is making, which I suppose is understandable. Aside from the fact that we live in Colorado and not Wisconsin, a lot of them aren't nearly as engaged in politics as I am. Thus, they don't recognize his face. When one of them asks me the meaning of the sticker, I explain that it's a parody of the iconic "Hope" image from Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign. I tell them who Ryan is and what he's about. I describe why the "Math" mantra stands for the solving of our country's serious problems with logical, fact-based solutions, rather than with the empty, emotionally-driven slogans that our president has been relying on for four years now. Well, I try to sum all that up in layman's terms anyway. My friends politely nod and grin, but I'm pretty well convinced that they don't think the bumper-sticker is nearly as clever as I do. Oh well.

Needless to say, I'm a big fan of Paul Ryan and his leadership. I have been for some time. If he would have decided to run for the presidency as it was rumored last year, I would have been an enthusiastic volunteer for his campaign.

The reason why is simple: I believe he's quite possibly the only leader in Washington who both understands the dire state of our country's economic future AND has the guts, knowledge, and drive to actually fix it.

Ryan offered proof of this once again this week when he unveiled a GOP annual budget that dared to cut even more from our federal deficit than the one he proposed last year. Like last year, he put forth critical entitlement reform which has long been considered the *third rail* of our national politics. It's also a *must* if we are to have any chance of avoiding economic armageddon in the foreseeable future. After all, the largest problem facing our economy today is our national debt, and our entitlement programs are indisputably the leading drivers of that debt. These programs are collapsing under their own weight. That's a fact. They're bringing in less money than they give out, and they'll all become insolvent within a matter of years.

Anyone with half a brain in Washington already knows this, but it hasn't stopped the Democrats from already decrying Ryan's plan with the same tired song of blatant misrepresentations and shameless fear-mongering that they performed last year.

Sadly, most politicians view their job as a profession and not a public service. Their primary goal is not to deal with problems, but to stay in power. So, if it's politically detrimental for them to deal with a problem, they'll have no qualms in running away from it... even if that means passing the problem on to future generations that include their children and grandchildren. They won't only hide from the problem but they'll attack whoever steps forward to try and solve it. Demagoguery is their weapon of choice and they'll use it relentlessly to scare enough votes out of the electorate to win more seats for their party.

Paul Ryan knows this all too well. He's pointed out such slander across both sides of the aisle, and he's been burned by it himself time after time.

Last year, President Obama challenged congress to come up with serious solutions for fixing our country's entitlement programs. He even pledged a truce on partisan sniping over the

issue, saying, "We're not going to be able to do anything about any of these entitlements if what we do is characterize whatever proposals are put out there as, 'Well, you know, that's – the other party's being irresponsible. The other party is trying to hurt our senior citizens. That the other party is doing X, Y, Z'".

Paul Ryan, who has become the Republicans point man on economic issues over the past couple of years, answered the challenge with his presentation of the GOP budget that included substantive reform to Medicare and a reduction of \$4 trillion from the deficit. Ryan was frank in his belief that critics would distort his proposal for their own political gain. He just didn't realize how far up the defamation would go.

To address Ryan's budget and the economy as a whole, President Obama invited the congressman to a speech he planned to deliver at George Washington University. He even reserved a seat for the Ryan directly in front of the podium. The congressman was reportedly hopeful that the president was going to take his budget seriously and perhaps offer additional ideas of his own. Instead, Obama proclaimed to the world that Ryan's budget would essentially lead to the destruction of America, including letting bridges collapse and forcing autistic and disabled kids to fend for themselves. It was truly a double-cross and one of the more shameful examples of demagoguery ever put on display by a president. A complete failure of leadership on the most important issue of our time.

It didn't end there. The Democratic party followed suit with a well-financed attack campaign on the GOP budget. The message coming out of the DNC was that the plan would end Medicare for the millions of senior citizens that depend on it – a completely false charge that the non-partisan, fact-checking organization, *PolitiFact* later labeled the "Biggest Lie of the Year." Despite the lies, the campaign was effective. Though the bill passed the House, it died in the Senate and the

Democratic party even won some special-election seats by running on the issue.

If that wasn't bad enough, Ryan's own party threw him under the bus. Recognizing the political conundrum, the Republicans in the U.S. Senate shied away from the budget and GOP presidential candidate Newt Gingrich went as far as claiming that it was "right wing social engineering."

One wouldn't have blamed the House Republicans if they stayed silent on entitlement reform this year, in hopes of waiting until after the 2012 election before removing their tails from between their legs. I'm sure the temptation was there. Thankfully, the GOP has at least one persistent leader who recognizes the urgency of the problem and did not let that happen. I'm not talking about any of the presidential candidates. Romney, Santorum, and Gingrich are still speaking in broad terms when it comes to entitlement reform because they're afraid of being put on the defensive the same way the Republicans in congress were last year. I'm talking about who I consider the de facto leader within the GOP, Paul Ryan.

With this year's budget, it seems the Republican party is firmly behind him. I hope the support sticks. If it doesn't, I'm convinced that the congressman won't be detoured. He'll continue to spit out as many bold bills as it takes to get this nation's fiscal house in order, whether it be through their passage or through forcing media attention to the severity of the problems we face. I'm convinced that he'll continue to reach across the aisle to people like Senator Ron Wyden and even former president Bill Clinton in hopes of building a consensus. I'm convinced that he'll remain a strong, articulate defender of the types of policies that will save this country from falling off a cliff, without worrying about how it will hurt him politically.

By now, it probably sounds like I've got a man-crush on the guy, but I think it's important to give credit where credit is

due... especially when there's very little done in Washington that deserves credit. Paul Ryan's a genuine leader, and fiscal conservatives like myself couldn't ask for a better advocate than him. Now... If we could somehow figure out a way of getting him on the presidential ballot.

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