

A “Thank You” Campaign for the U.S. Taxpayer

☒ Last week, I was watching Vice President Joe Biden on television speaking in Detroit to leaders of the American auto industry. There at the North American International Auto Show, he hailed the success of the bailouts both General Motors and Chrysler received in 2009.

The debate will likely never be settled as to whether or not those companies required a federal bailout in order to survive, even though there's strong evidence to suggest that they didn't. The Ford Motor Company was in a similar predicament at the time, but chose not to seek government bailout funds. They rebounded just as strongly as GM and didn't leave U.S. taxpayers with a \$10.5 billion dollar loss.

Regardless, the Obama administration is very proud of the role they played in helping out the auto industry, having campaigned on its resurgence heavily during the 2012 election, and still to this day as we saw with Biden's speech in Detroit.

The CEOs of those companies seem appreciative too, as would any head of a struggling, mismanaged company that had their debt erased by an outside force. They've publicly thanked the administration, and the administration has publicly thanked the auto workers, but it seems to me that the people who never get thanked are the ones who most deserve to be: The U.S. taxpayer.

I've always found it odd how politicians never feel compelled to thank the U.S. taxpayer for enabling them to carry out their initiatives, especially when it comes to things like the auto bailout that don't actually benefit the general public.

I mean, when you listen to Joe Biden brag that “GM is alive,”

you'd almost think that he had invested his own life-savings in the company, made savvy business decisions, and worked for years to make it a success. When in reality, he and his administration merely took a ton of money that didn't belong to them and threw it at companies that had been recklessly digging themselves into financial holes for many years.

Now, I realize that I could apply this perspective to many forms of government-spending, and not just to our current administration and congress. This isn't a partisan criticism by any means. It's a criticism of the modern-day political culture in this country. I'm talking about a culture that conditions its citizens to accept arbitrary taxation as a legal and even a moral claim by the government to empower itself and do whatever it pleases with the money it receives. Because of that culture, politicians simply don't respect taxpayers, and they see no reason to be gracious for the wealth that taxpayers work hard to create.

The notion that the people work for the government, and not the other way around, has disillusioned many working Americans over the years – to the point that they have little hope that their voice will ever be heard or that they'll ever be respected for their tax contributions to society. We see this discontent in the polls that reflect people's views of Washington.

But imagine if a candidate – let's say a *presidential* candidate – was able to convince taxpayers that he or she respected them. Imagine if that candidate successfully shelved class warfare tactics by embracing the American workforce as a whole, and thanking the direly important role they play in our country.

Imagine if that candidate finished up a stump speech like this:

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“Lastly, I want to take a moment to thank the working citizens of this country from the bottom of my heart. When poor, disadvantaged Americans receive government aid in the form of any one of our various social and entitlement programs, it’s not politicians or even the U.S. government that’s doing that. It’s you. *You’re* doing that.

You’re the ones who are getting up early every morning, driving to your jobs, taking risks, working hard, and creating wealth not just for yourselves and your families, but also for this country to help its citizens who *need* help. The working citizens of this country, whether they’re steel workers or CEOs of a Fortune 500 companies, are the ones paying for the highways we all drive our cars on, the military that bravely defends our nation, and the relief efforts for those who’ve lost everything in natural disasters. You are the driving force behind everything good that government has to offer.

Because of that, this country is indebted to you. And if you put me in office to represent you, I will promise you that I will never forget that. I will value your vitally important contribution to our nation. I will not trivialize it. I will not vilify you for not contributing enough because you *do* contribute enough. Let me repeat that: You *do* contribute enough.

And because of that respect I have for you, I will diligently go after the *bad things* in government. It will be my mission to eliminate waste wherever I see it. It will be my mission to remove government from the areas in your lives where it has no business – and there are *many* of those areas. I will reform the necessary areas of government that don’t work, and I will make them work, make them solvent, and do that because *you* deserve that!

You deserve people in the U.S. government who respect you for what you do, and don’t use the fruits of your hard work to stoke jealousy in others and divide Americans along economic

lines as part of a cheap, disgraceful political strategy. You deserve people in the U.S. government that don't leave your children with a \$20 trillion national debt, and lay the blame for that debt on you, the American taxpayer, for not giving enough of your hard-earned money to the government. *You* didn't cause this problem. *They* caused this problem.

The people currently in charge do not respect you, the U.S. taxpayer. I do. And I will continue to respect you and the things you do for this nation once I'm elected into office. You're not a liability to the disadvantaged and jobless in this country. That's an outright lie. You are an asset – an immense asset. I will never forget that my role as a leader means nothing without the hard working men and women of this country who pay their taxes and deserve not only my respect, but the respect of the entire country.

Again, I thank you.”

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Imagine what a message like that would do for a candidate running for office. Imagine how a message like that, spoken boldly and without reservation, would affect the psyche of an American public that largely views the government as a powerful, imperialistic force for which they have little influence over. Americans don't feel empowered anymore because they view government as an employer that never steps outside of a penthouse office, and not as an employee that should be hanging on their every word, eager to please them. 

I believe a “thank you” campaign, like the one I've described, would appeal to a broad number of Americans – not just fiscal conservatives. It would not only appeal to people that are part of the American workforce, but also to those who aren't and might suddenly realize (because of that message) how important taxpayers are to the things they receive from the U.S. government.

For years now, Republican politicians have been trying to figure out a message that strikes a chord with a majority of the electorate. I think that thanking the U.S. taxpayers would be a great start, and it would go a long way toward laying a foundation for instilling conservative principles back among voters.

Whether or not any candidate will actually take such an opportunity to embrace such a narrative, I have no idea. But one can always hold out hope.

Stay Out of My Kitchen!

☒ Let me start out by saying I'm not one of those size 2 gals who won't eat a Hershey's kiss because they're afraid they'll gain an ounce. I'm a normal size 12 woman who has fought against weight gain all my adult life. I try and watch what I eat, not always successfully, but get to the gym regularly, and, for the most part, I have no aches or pains.

I know what I'm supposed to do and what I'm not supposed to do. Unless someone's lived under a rock for the last 50 years, everyone knows that foods high in fat and tobacco products are not good for you. If you sit and watch tv all night with a bag of Fritos and a few cans of beer, you're going to gain weight. If you never do any exercise, you're going to lose all muscle strength and have a whole lot of problems.

But, even with everything we already know, we're still an obese country and, quite simply, people are going to do what they're going to do. No amount of government spending will

make people healthier. You can't legislate good eating habits.

Michelle Obama has tried to influence the citizenry in good eating habits and exercise. I doubt that statistics will show she's had any overall influence on how people live their lives or raise their children.

On top of all of her efforts, I now read that billions of dollars of taxpayer money are being spent on more ridiculous programs aimed at changing the way people think about eating.

Part of Obamacare includes allocation of \$500 million for something called the Prevention and Public Health Fund which has been increased by an additional \$750 million in 2011. All this money is aimed at preventing tobacco use, obesity, heart disease, stroke and cancer, etc., etc. In all, \$15 billion, yes "b" as in billion, will be allocated to this fund over the next decade.

These monies are doled out in what are called "Community Transformation Grants" or "CTGs" to fund "prevention, wellness, and public health activities."

Here's some examples of this wasteful expenditure of the taxpayers' money.

\$4.9 million was given to Florida to assign nutrition and physical activity consultants to child care centers and restaurants to promote healthy behaviors and limit unhealthy food choices.

\$3.7 million in North Carolina to improve access and availability of healthy foods and drinks, improve product placement and attractiveness, and change the relative process of healthy vs. unhealthy items in convenience stores.

\$3.6 million to California for the "Rethink your Drink Campaign" designed to get people to drink healthier

alternatives such as water, milk, or 100 percent fruit juice beverages. (I always thought fruit juices were very high in sugar and bad for your teeth.)

Nearly \$1.2 million to Colorado for programs to increase sodium awareness and reduce consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages.

Sodium awareness? Really? We've known about "too much salt" in our diets as far back as the late 50s. My mother's doctor had her on a low-sodium diet because she used to eat those little tasteless Melba toast crackers. So, after over 50 years, how much more do we need to know about "too much salt?"

Anyone who really wants to know about nutrition need only go to a library or go online and google Dr. Oz. Reading one of his books is all anyone needs to do – and it doesn't cost anything if you get his books at the library or go on his website.

If you don't like to read, why not watch The Biggest Loser on network tv –you don't even have to pay for cable. Doesn't that gal Michaels help everyone lose hundreds of pounds each season with sensible eating habits and exercise? And her advice is free!

When I read about government wasteful spending, and I read about it every day, I have to conclude that it's all about keeping another governmental bureaucracy, with more layers than a delicious Napoleon pastry, alive and well – at our expense.

In April, the House passed H.R. 1217 which eliminated the Prevention and Public Health Fund. In October, the Senate reviewed the merits and necessity of the Fund and has not yet voted on the issue. God only knows why it takes months to accomplish anything in Congress.

As far as I'm concerned, all this wasteful spending is more

over-reaching by the government to try and modify our behavior. After this \$15 billion is spent trying to influence consumer behavior, nothing will change. It's an individual's decision and no amount of government spending is going to have any effect on that decision.

If someone doesn't already know that eating at McDonald's every day is a bad thing, they're hopeless and no amount of taxpayer money aimed at educating this clueless individual will make a difference.

Wishing you a joyous, happy and healthy New Year!