

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.