

Time To Stop The Bleeding

Until Glenn Beck set me straight, I naturally assumed that people who worked in the private sector earned more money than those who worked for the government. It only seemed logical that those who settled for security rather than pursue careers in the riskier, more competitive, real world, earned less. So once again, logic gets worked over like a conservative trying to get past SEIU and Black Panther goons in order to vote.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the poor schlimiel working in the private sector earns on average \$19.45-an-hour in wages and \$8.08 in benefits, whereas a comparable government employee pulls down \$26.24-an-hour and \$13.60 in benefits.

Okay, I'm not Ben Bernanke. I'm not even Timothy Geithner, for which I give thanks on a daily basis, but one hardly needs a Ph.D in economics to know that civil servants are paid way too much. For one thing, you can't fire these people, no matter how rude, lazy or incompetent, they are. Instead, they receive the kind of pensions and health plans that congressmen and senators provide for themselves, but at least the poor beleaguered taxpayer can occasionally vote those louts out of their cushy jobs. Have you ever tried to fire a school teacher for, say, ineptitude or even inappropriate sexual behavior with a student? You might as well try to cut down an oak tree using a butter knife.

When you combine the job security along with the salaries and the pensions, it's a wonder that there is anybody left in the private sector who's willing to work to support those folks. By the way, whoever it was who dubbed them civil servants must have had a very droll sense of humor. After all, they are, by and large, neither civil nor servants. But of course if Obama and the Democrats have their way, there will be fewer and fewer of us paying the freight. Right now, there are roughly

15 million unemployed people in America, but, as you may have guessed, those are people who were working in the private sector. In just the past few years, while every other segment of the population has gone through a financial nightmare, government employment has jumped by 10%. And don't be surprised when later this year, billions of those still unspent stimulus dollars are used to hire even more government employees just in time for the November elections. The more people that draw government checks, as any child knows, the more likely they are to vote for liberals. It's straight out of the FDR playbook.

If I had my way, there would be an end to pensions for civil service employees. I might even raise the pay scale for those, such as firemen and cops, who are actually serving a purpose, but no more lifetime checks for people who quit at 50 and then start new careers. What kind of a nutty system pays people a salary for 20 or 25 years and then sends them a check every month for the next 30 or 40 years for not working?

Speaking of nutty, consider Social Security. It is the biggest Ponzi scheme in the history of the world. When FDR and the liberals concocted it in the 1930s, most Americans, according to the actuarial tables, were supposed to be dead and buried long before they were 65 and ready to collect. These days, people in their 60s are taking up bullfighting and buying bonds that don't mature for 30 years, for God's sake. Of course Social Security funds were supposed to go into a locked box. But, unfortunately, like Harry Houdini who used to amaze the rubes by getting out of handcuffs, Uncle Sam held on to the key.

The problem with simply shutting down Social Security is that people have been paying into it for over 70 years, and the IRS takes enough of our money without the feds simply stealing what little is left. So my suggestion is that when people reach whatever age they decide on, they are permitted to accept a one-time buy-out, sort of the way that large

companies handle downsizing when circumstances force them to lay off employees. Furthermore, the recipients wouldn't pay income taxes on the money they received at the time or from any money that might accrue as the result of investing it. It's bad enough that the feds tax the employer for making the money in the first place, tax the employee for receiving a portion of it in salary, tax them both when they spend what they're left with, and then, for good measure, tax them one last time when they die.

I won't pretend to know how much money each person would receive, but it would obviously depend on how much he or she had paid in over the years and at what age they were cashing out. But, then, I also don't claim to know how to steer an ocean liner or how long it takes to change its course, but I do know that the time to make plans to avoid colliding with an iceberg is before and not after you hit it.

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