

Preserving the Republic

At the close of the Constitution Convention of 1787, when the Founding Fathers drafted the U.S. Constitution, Benjamin Franklin was asked by a lady, "Well, Doctor, what have we got—a Republic or a Monarchy?" Dr. Franklin replied: "A Republic, if you can keep it."

About 225 years later, President Obama's losing it. I have marveled at how many of the Founders' core concepts seem utterly foreign to the current occupant of the White House. But with the beginning of Obama's re-election campaign, we seem to have entered a cynical, almost Orwellian, phase of Obama's Presidency.

Let me say at the outset that I believe in the resiliency and exceptionalism of America. From Ben Franklin and the Founders through more than two centuries of real hope and change, we have been blessed with great leaders who were, foremost, stewards of America. Our liberty and prosperity were their foremost concerns. And not just Presidents. We have been blessed as a nation with shopkeeper statesmen, gentleman (and gentlelady) farmers and merchants who have led by example as much as by any elected office.

My left-leaning friends will chafe at what may sound like partisanship from a conservative Republican. But it goes deeper than partisanship. Obama is simply out of sync—and out of his

league—with those forbears who have safeguarded our Republic until now. He is negligently wasting our window to save the Republic.

Watching the President tack strongly left in response to our fiscal crisis—effectively arguing, with his sadly characteristic self-righteousness, that his answer to overspending is more spending—I do not merely disagree with Obama's liberal philosophy. I am offended by his dereliction in even trying to address the big issue of our time.

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Of course, it could be that he simply does not understand the problem. Nothing this Administration has done thus far has evidenced any understanding of economics. Not Harvard Law School economic theory, but the actual capitalist economy that is fueled by all the "millionaires and billionaires" who (under Obama's definition) make \$250,000 or more per year. Stimulus: worked wonders, and cost only a trillion to boot. Higher taxes: nothing could be better to create growth, except almost any other option. Obamacare: synonym for disaster; see also, bankruptcy.

Whether from a lack of understanding or not, Obama's demagoguery on fiscal policy shows the price we are paying for electing an empty suit on even emptier slogans. The "unacceptable" cuts (which Obama was just forced to accept) as part of the 2011 budget deal trim just the borrowed part of the budget from \$1,600 billion to \$1,562 billion. Obama spent the entire spring wailing and gnashing over Republicans' insistence that we reduce our unsustainably bloated spending by one penny out of every dollar. Seriously,

Obama is even less serious in

response to Representative Paul Ryan's Plan for Prosperity, the "radical" Republican plan to balance the budget over some twenty years. The Ryan Plan is based on reducing government spending as a percentage of the economy. It would simplify the tax code and lower tax rates. It would also restructure entitlement programs that, without changes, will simply implode, taking our country with them. The Ryan plan is at least a plan, a blueprint that has the feel of something developed by adults.

In contrast, the President is like a fit-throwing teenager, or worse, a cynical politician. Obama accuses Republicans of "ending America as we know it," throwing seniors and kids with Downs Syndrome out in the cold. Over twenty years? Really? In denying the problem, Obama has displayed a lack of leadership remarkable even for him. Of course, "hope and change" probably won't reelect a guy with his fiscal record, so partisan fear-mongering may be all he has.

Truth is, the Constitutional-Lecturer-in-Chief takes the Constitution's "promote the general Welfare" language to mean "preserving the Welfare State at all costs." Offering up the same tax and spend drivel that Carter and Mondale raised to an art, Obama's "solution" is a crass appeal to class envy that won't begin to work.

To save Franklin's Republic, Obama would do better to grasp what one of his predecessors said about how to do it: "Until we can re-establish a condition under which the earnings of the people can be kept by the people, we are bound to suffer a very severe and distinct curtailment of our liberty." Calvin Coolidge, in the first talking film of a President, shot in 1924, was uncharacteristically talkative. And he did not even use a teleprompter.

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