



# *Skoch2010*

## *Issues Update*

January 28, 2010

### **State of the Union**

Barack Obama Wednesday night stood in a joint session of Congress and delivered everything we expected in his address, and less.

Here are some of the themes we picked up on:

### **America Not Destined to Succeed**

Our president couldn't deliver even three sentences without betraying a view of America counter to what we all hold sacred. "America was not always destined to succeed," he said. Or, stated another way, "America is just another country."

President Obama shows again that he does not share our view. America was founded by the Hand of God, and is truly exceptional. America was founded—and destined—to be a beacon of Hope to the world.

Its only risk of not fulfilling that destiny has been in succumbing to liberal agendas that would drag us down to what too many other nations have become.

No, Mr. President, we were destined to succeed. We are America.

## Blame the Last Guy

Equally amazingly, our president seems unable to ever speak without blaming his failures on his predecessor. I counted a full 15 times in his address in which he lamented the sorry state of our nation when he took office. Some of the more noteworthy examples:

- "One year ago, I took office amid two wars, an economy rocked by severe depression, a financial system on the verge of collapse..."
- "...the worst of the storm has passed, [b]ut the devastation remains..."
- "[referring to the past ten years] what some call the 'lost decade'..."
- "...the effects of the recession put a \$3 trillion hole in our budget. All this was before I walked in the door."
- "...we took office amid a crisis..."
- "...we'll still face the massive deficit we had when I took office..."

The translation for each of these? "Don't blame me for what is about to come...The last guy really left me a mess."

A full year into office, it is time for this president to recognize that it is his policies, his practices, his cabinet, his "czars," his lack of leadership, his agenda, and his socialist doctrine that is putting America on a path Americans reject.

## The Budget "Freeze"

Have you noticed how when career politicians talk about things they want to spend money on, they never say "spend," but use the word "invest" instead?

President Obama said "invest" a full 19 times last night, but used the word "spend" only seven times. How about that..

And we couldn't help but chuckle at our president's statement that " Like any cash-strapped family, we will work within a budget to invest in what we need and sacrifice what we don't."

If every aspect of his so-called "spending freeze" is approved by Congress and implemented, it will reduce less than one percent of the deficit! "Starting in 2011, we are prepared to freeze government spending for three years. Spending related to our national security, Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security will not be affected. But all other discretionary government programs will," he said.

Now I don't know about your family, but in our home, if we were in debt to the amount of \$40,000 per person (which we, as a nation, are), and if we were spending nearly twice what we were earning (which we, as a nation, are), we would have to find more than 1% in savings!

And isn't it amazing that the very same departments whose budgets our president is proposing to "freeze" were increased—by his administration—an average of 20% this last year alone! Those increases were far larger than typical year-to-year funding escalations, and reflect a deliberate bump in funding. Kinda clever, huh? Raise the funding far more than normal, and then impose a "freeze," locking in those higher levels!

This is politics at its best: Raise departmental budgets by 20%, and then—in a fit of frugality—freeze those budgets to "save" money.

This is exactly what happens when we have career politicians, instead of people who actually work for a living, leading us and representing us. They do not understand the realities of budgeting. But they surely understand how to spend. And spend. And spend. (Oops, I mean "Invest. And invest. And invest.")

## Earmarks

Our president eloquently called on Congress last night "to continue down the path of earmark reform," and to "publish all earmark requests on a single Web site before there's a vote so that the American people can see how their money is being spent." Nice try, but he misses the point by miles.

Earmarks need to end entirely! They are a cynical way elected officials have of trading our money for the favors, votes, and campaign donations of big money interests. In an ironic twist, career politicians use OUR money to buy OUR votes!

Too many legislators play the earmarks game very well. For example, in just the years 2008 and 2009 alone, our Congressman John Boozman sponsored or co-sponsored 60 earmarks totaling over \$62 million in pork in behalf of special interests. Some no doubt rejoiced when he (or the other members of the Arkansas congressional delegation) announced a special project here, a special project there in our district. But don't we know that same process is replicated in most every one of the 435 congressional districts in our nation?

We are "porking" our way to bankruptcy, and the only real effect is that we keep reelecting the same career politicians because they are buying our votes!

So why did President Obama last night not say instead "And I call on Congress to end earmarks?" Because he knows the career politicians want to keep playing the "pork for campaign dollars" game, and the best they can do is post earmark requests on a web site. We know with surety that posting those requests will do nothing to change the process. We also know that until all pork is eliminated, the insane spending (sorry, I mean "investing") will continue.

Earmarks must end, and that's why one of my first actions in Congress will be to introduce a rules change to do just that: End earmarks entirely.

We don't need pork. We need fiscal responsibility.

## **Jobs**

The current administration (along with most of Congress) does not have a clue where jobs come from.

Twenty-three times in his speech last night, President Obama used the word "jobs," and in all 23 cases, he shows that he does not understand that it is not the government that creates jobs, it is businesses. And more to the point, jobs are created only by businesses that are allowed to grow without being overburdened by government interference and bureaucracy.

The president took credit for 3.5 million jobs having been—or about to be—created by the so-called "stimulus." You may recall that when he was pushing for passage of the Stimulus last year, he said "More than 90 percent of these [stimulus] jobs will be in the private sector." But take a look at what jobs he claimed last night to have been created: Teachers, other education workers, police officers, firefighters, correctional officers, first responders. In fairness, he also cited construction and "clean energy" jobs (whatever they might be...), but do you notice the vast majority of his list is government jobs? He doesn't get it that it is the private sector that drives a free market economy, not the government. Government spending drives the economies of only socialist countries, and that is NOT what America wants to be!

Oh, and about those police officers, firefighters, correctional officers, first responders, and teachers, has he stopped to consider that once the Stimulus spending dries up (as inevitably it must) those jobs will be dependent on increases in local government spending or (shudder) yet another "stimulus" to continue?

Government spending is not the path to prosperity. Only reducing tax and administrative burdens on businesses will bring it about.

## **Healthcare: We Just Don't Understand**

The president again tried to explain his brand of healthcare reform (bigger government, higher real costs, longer waiting times, fewer choices).

But what struck us was the arrogance of his statement: "And the longer it was debated, the more skeptical people became. I take my share of the blame for not explaining it more clearly to the American people."

It apparently doesn't enter his mind that we are rejecting it because we know what it is and we just don't want it. He prefers to think we are rejecting it because we simply don't yet understand it.

We know what your plan is, Mr. President, and we don't want it.

No amount of "explaining it more clearly" will convince us we want to reduce care, increase costs, limit choices, and turn over (another) one sixth of our economy to a bloated government bureaucracy.

## Fact Check

News sources are filled today with all the errors in fact in the president's speech, so we won't repeat them here. But one statement struck us as particularly obscene.

Mr. Obama was proud to announce "We've excluded lobbyists from policy-making jobs..."

The facts:

- William J. Lynn, deputy secretary of defense, was a Raytheon Corporation lobbyist for six years.
- Jocelyn Frye, director of policy and projects in the Office of the First Lady, was a lobbyist for the National Partnership for Women and Families.
- Cecilia Muñoz, director of intergovernmental affairs in the Executive Office of the President, lobbied for National Council of La Raza, a Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization.
- Mark Patterson, the chief of staff to in the Department of the Treasury, was a lobbyist for Goldman Sachs.

Lobbyists and career politicians have weakened America far more than any other groups. It is time for them both to go.

Our president truly does need to eliminate lobbyists from his administration.

And we truly need to eliminate career politicians from our elected ranks.

Only when both are gone can our government return to the people.

Until next time...

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Bernie Skoch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bernie Skoch