



Skoch2010

Issues Update

February 17, 2010

Critical Challenge #1

I have released the first of a series of "*Critical Challenge*" papers. This one deals with out of control federal spending, how bad it is, why it's happening, and what we need to do about it.

You can find it on our web site (skoch2010.com) and at our Facebook page, or we'll be happy to send it to you via email or mail.

I would welcome your both spreading it among your friends, far and wide as you can, and your candid feedback.

A National Council

It appears our president is about to announce this week the creation of a "National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform."

You will likely remember that President Obama called on Congress during his *State of the Union* speech to create a bi-partisan commission to recommend spending cuts to curb our government's seemingly insatiable appetite for spending.

The congressional commission he proposed was to include 18 members, half Republicans and half Democrats. Their charge was to meet during this year and, after this November's general election, if 14 of its membership could agree on a deficit reduction plan, make recommendations for the new Congress that will convene in January.

His suggestion was apparently beaten down in the Senate by an equal number of Republicans and Democrats, so he is appointing a non-congressional group.

We already have a "commission" that is charged with making tough spending and deficit reduction recommendations. It has 535 members, and it's called Congress.

It is the job of Congress to appropriate and authorize funds for the federal government, but the fact is, they have been woefully inept at doing that. That's why we are \$12+ trillion in debt. That's why we keep spending more and more. That's why our budgets are full of items of pork (there were 10,000 earmarks in 2009 alone). And that's why we each owe \$40,000 dollars in federal debt.

Any sort of "commission" is a cowardly way for our congress and our president to shirk their responsibilities of making the tough spending choices that are before them. It is their sworn duty to manage our nation's finances, and any delegation of that duty to a panel—no matter how "bipartisan" it might be—is purely a means for our elected officials to disclaim any direct accountability for the recommendations that might be enacted. And that's a shame.

And the politics of this is amazing to me. Neither party seems to have the moral courage to stand up, to represent the American people, and to do the right thing.

But this is what we get for electing career politicians who make their way to Congress by stepping from office to office, with favors traded, and with an eye to a political career. And we need to stop it now.

(And don't ignore the significance of the Senate's rejection of President Obama's proposal for a congressional panel. His party has a majority in both

houses of Congress. It should be a slam dunk for him to get this enacted, but his political capital is fading fast.)

Debt: Dire National Security Implications

You may not have picked up on a critical event this past week.

As you know, for many years we have supported the right of Taiwan to defend itself. We have done that, among other reasons, to keep China in check, and to maintain a friendly presence in that part of the world.

Our relationship with Taiwan has included our selling to them defensive weapons that help them deter aggression by China, and, if necessary, to defend their small island nation if attacked.

As you might guess, China has for many years objected to this, but because we as a nation are strong, they have been unable to impose their view of the world (that Taiwan is a renegade province that belongs to them) on us.

Now this *Issues Update* isn't the place to debate our Taiwan and "Two China" policy, but the point is, we have made it a national strategy to support a democratic Taiwan, China doesn't like it, but because we are a free and strong nation, we have prevailed. But watch out...China is flexing a huge muscle, and we have helped them build that muscle.

This past week, a number of Chinese generals called on their nation to "punish" (their word) the United States for selling defensive weapons to Taiwan. And they called on Chinese leadership to do so by "dumping" (their word) American treasury securities on the open market.

China now holds about a \$1,000,000,000,000 (a trillion dollars) of our debt. And their military and political leadership knows it. And it appears at least some of their leaders are ready to use that debt to impose their view of the world on us.

Were China to follow the advice of those generals and "dump" our securities on the market, the consequences would be dire.

This should concern every American. Politicians have gotten us into this. It will take non-politician leaders to get us out of it.

Welcome to the Race

As you likely saw, we welcomed two long-term politicians to this congressional race just this past week following the departure of the incumbent. And we say welcome to them both.

Our campaign is all about letting the voters of the 3rd Congressional District choose between business as usual (electing worn politicians) and something radically new (electing leaders who are decidedly not politicians).

As you would guess, our team of volunteers is truly excited that the incumbent decided to run elsewhere, and we are convinced the pressure on him built to the point he needed to leave this race.

And now our volunteers are excited that who we see coming into this race is who American voters are rejecting: Politicians who go from office to office along a "career path" from local or state office to a run for Congress.

And we aren't the least surprised that not one of the new candidates entered the race before the incumbent announced he was bailing out.

What does that say? Each of these announcements smacks of political opportunism, shows they didn't see that huge things were in sore need of fixing while the incumbent intended to stay in office, and shows that party politics is again at work in a huge way.

Until next time...

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

Bernie Skoch