



“Challenging People to Shape a Better Future Now”

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Conservatives Do a Job on Jobs

The birther issue – the posterous idea that President Obama was not born in the United States – was finally put to rest, but that has not prevented conservative conspiracy buffs from seeing a plot behind the falling unemployment numbers.

Conservatives, led by Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney, have been pounding Obama for maintaining an unemployment rate above 8 percent. They cited federal Bureau of Labor statistics to support their claim. Yet, when that same source placed the August number at 7.8 percent, they are trying to persuade the public that it is all part of a liberal conspiracy to re-elect Obama.

Led by the conservative Fox News network, the conspiracy about the conspiracy began long before the release of the latest numbers.

Fox’s Sean Hannity said on May 12, “the vetting of Obama has begun, his economic record, his debt, his unemployment numbers which they are fudging, I don’t think are honest...”

Two months earlier, Fox’s Eric Bolling said: “Four million people have left the workforce. If you add that 4 million people – under President Obama – if you add those 4 million back in, the same amount of jobs, the same number of jobs divided right now among people in the workforce would show about a 12 percent unemployment rate.

“So, are they playing around with the numbers? Look, it’s the Bureau of Labor Statistics. It’s

Somehow, the body snatchers came last Wednesday and took the fire (as in fired up, ready to go) out of President Obama, leaving a rather listless shell of a man who never truly engaged the audience or his opponent. He looked down at his notes, fidgeted, and let Mitt Romney get away with multiple lies.

The body snatchers didn’t stop there. They also took Mitt Romney, the greedy venture capitalist who likes to fire people, and turned him into a facsimile of a human being. Of course, with Romney’s disrespect for both President Obama (interrupting him several times) and moderator Jim Lehrer (who he simply ignored), the faux human being turned out to be one that was rude, arrogant, overbearing, and clearly rehearsed.

Romney threw out a line that he had five boys, thus he was used to hearing the same thing said over and over as if it were the truth. President Obama could not ask Romney who taught the little liars, but that’s what went through my mind. Before the debate was over, it was clear that Romney behaved in just the way he said his sons did, repeating lies about taxes, Medicare, and employment several times, as if there was any truth to them. He had another line, where he said President Obama was entitled to his own house and his own plane, but not his own

THE CURRY REPORT

George E. Curry



supposed to be non-partisan, but that’s the Department of Labor, Hilda Solis heads the Department

its statutory structure and its employment structure – you understand this simply isn’t how things happen. The BLS is independent of the Department of Labor. If you go to the BLS website, you won’t even find a picture of the Secretary of Labor there. It’s completely firewalled.

“The one exception to this would be the Commissioner of the BLS. The president appoints a BLS commissioner, but for most of this administration it’s been a

is completely implausible to me that they would actively rig the thing to help Obama. The guys are green eye-shaded career bureaucrats who have no particular vested interest one way or another in who wins the presidential election.”

There’s a reason fewer people are seeking jobs under Obama – and it’s not because of a conspiracy.

The Washington Post’s economic blog Wonkblog explained it this way:

“...Since 2000, the labor force rate has been steadily declining as the baby-boom generation has been retiring. Because of this, the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago expects the labor force participation rate to be lower in 2020 than it is today, regardless of how well the economy does.”

But conspiracy buffs don’t let facts get in the way of a good conspiracy theory.

Former General Electric CEO Jack Welch, a Republican, has joined the conspiracy camp. After the latest job report, he tweeted, “Unbelievable jobs numbers...these Chicago guys will do anything...can’t debate so change numbers.” Under attack for his unsubstantiated assertion, Welch tried to defend his comment by saying he should have used a question mark rather than a comma at the end of his sentence, as if that would have made a difference.

‘It is completely implausible to me that they would actively rig the thing to help Obama. The guys are green eye-shaded career bureaucrats who have no particular vested interest one way or another in who wins the presidential election’

—Joe Nocera

of Labor. Hilda Solis works directly for Obama.”

When Bolling was asked, “Are you saying they’re cooking the books?” he replied, “I’m saying, there’s room for error. There’s room. But when you’re talking about four million people, how do you know?”

If there’s room for error, Bolling is in that room.

As economist Justin Wolfers told Salon:

“First, if you know and understand the BLS and its structure –

Republican [my emphasis]. When his term ran out, Congress refused to confirm Obama’s appointee. So the current commissioner is, in fact, a career guy from within BLS, and if you know the institution at all, the BLS is an institution of nerds, by nerds.

“So you could even argue that Republicans have protected the BLS from political influence by refusing to confirm an Obama appointee?”

Joe Nocera, a New York Times business columnist, observed: “It

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A Listless Obama is Still Better than Romney



BENNETT COLLEGE

Julianne Malveaux

facts. I might have said something snarly to the faux human being along the lines of you’ve got your own billions, your own Super-PACs, but you can’t buy your own

facts. While President Obama does not to be as sarcastic as I usually am, he surely could have given Romney a better run for his money.

Still, anybody who can do arithmetic knows that Romney has a penchant for mathematical fiction. How can you cut the taxes on the wealthy (which is done if the Bush tax cuts are not allowed to expire), cut tax rates by 20 percent, and end up with a revenue-neutral solution? He says by

cutting spending, and he cites Public Broadcasting as one of the cuts he would make. Public Broadcasting represents less than one-thousandth of 1 percent of the entire federal budget, so cutting it won’t make much difference to the deficits he is quick to rail against.

President Obama was right to push Romney on specifics to some of the plans he said he had. There were no specifics, just the frequent exhortation that “I have a plan to deal with that.” What plan? Voters can’t judge unless we

over their allotted time, although he decreed time lines.

President Obama really needs to toot his own horn. When Romney says, “You have been president for four years,” our president needs to respond with his list of accomplishments, many of which blunted the effects of the Great Recession inherited from George Bush. The intervention in the auto industry that Romney opposed has made a real difference in states such as Ohio and Michigan. A research paper that was reviewed at the Rainbow/PUSH automotive summit found that for every 2,000 jobs created in automobile manufacturing in an urban area, another 5,200 jobs were created. While there are not enough jobs to go around yet, there are more jobs than there would have been had the economy been allowed to drift.

The question about who won the debates turns out to be a question of policy versus performance. Too many pundits talked about Mitt Romney’s “performance” indicating that he performed well. The United States in not a stage looking for a leading actor, it’s a nation, looking for a leader who can make a difference. We are not looking for a contender who thinks that bluster means leadership. We are looking for a leader to finish the work he started.

Public Broadcasting represents less than one-thousandth of 1 percent of the entire federal budget, so cutting it won’t make much difference to the deficits he is quick to rail against

know, but Romney behaves like a student who hasn’t started on a term paper and fumbles about its contents when asked.

Too often, Romney ignored the president’s questions about specifics, trading bluster for facts and getting away with it. Jim Lehrer totally lost control of the debate, failing to push either participant on specifics. He was not even effective as a timekeeper, letting both debate participants run

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