



“Challenging People to Shape
a Better Future Now”

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Showdown with ‘Teapublicans’

Believe it or not, President Obama’s decision to finally stand up to Teapublicans – a Republican Party hijacked by Right-wing Tea Party zealots – in the latest standoff over the Affordable Care Act and the debt ceiling was the easy part.

Next comes the real fireworks over the budget. And, judging from the past, the Democrats are likely to wave the white flag of surrender, even before the first shot are fired.

Don’t forget that although Obama campaigned on the promise of extending the Bush tax cuts only for individuals earning less than \$200,000 and couples making less than \$250,000, which would cover 98 percent of all taxpayers, he eventually capitulated under Republican pressure, extending the Bush-era rates on incomes below \$450,000 for families and \$400,000 for individuals.

And in his unsuccessful effort to reach a grand bargain with House Speaker John Boehner in 2011, according to leaked confidential documents, Obama expressed a willingness to support cuts to TRI-CARE, the health insurance program for the military and military retirees; Social Security, Medicare, housing, nutritional assistance and other social programs.

Former Labor Secretary Robert Reich explained why he, too, feels Obama will cave in to Republican demands.

“He’s already put on the table a way to reduce future Social Security payments by altering the way cost-of-living adjustments are



THE CURRY REPORT

George E. Curry

made – using the so-called ‘chained’ consumer price index, which assumes that when prices rise people economize by switching to cheaper alternatives. This makes no sense for seniors, who already spend a disproportionate share of their income on prescription drugs, home healthcare, and medical devices – the prices of

another type of Medicaid, a program perceived to be for the poor and therefore vulnerable to budget cuts.

“But why even suggest cutting Medicare at all, when the program isn’t responsible for the large budget deficits projected a decade or more from now? Medicare itself is enormously efficient; its administrative costs are far lower than commercial health insurance.”

Equally troubling are the signals the president is already sending on the budget.

“Keep in mind that the budget that we are going to pass under any deal is going to be the Republican budget. It will have cuts that are much more substantial than Democrats would prefer,” Obama

dered congressional districts. In the last election, House Democrats received more votes than House Republicans. So why does President Obama feel that the nation will be stuck with a “Republican budget”?

The tragedy is that Democrats usually won’t stand firm even when public opinion is on their side. The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press conducted a survey in March asking: What is more important, taking steps to reduce the national debt or keeping Social Security and Medicare benefits as they are?

According to Pew, 55 percent favored keeping Social Security and Medicare benefits as they are 34 percent preferred taking steps to reduce the national debt, and 11 percent said both are equally important.

Yet, Obama is willing to make concessions on Social Security and Medicare.

With no demands on the table, it’s impossible to know what, if anything, is important to the Democratic Party anymore. That’s not the case with the Teapublicans. Love or hate them, they have clearly and forcefully stated they want to privatize Social Security, turn Medicare into a voucher system, and want deep cuts in social programs. They have not only articulated their priorities, they have demonstrated with the shut-down how far they are willing to go to fight for their misguided beliefs.

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which have been rising faster than inflation. Besides, Social Security isn’t responsible for our budget deficits. Quite the opposite: For years its surpluses have been used to fund everything else the government does.

“The President has also suggested ‘means-testing’ Medicare – that is, providing less of it to higher-income seniors. This might be sensible. The danger is it becomes the start of a slippery slope that eventually turns Medicare into

said in an interview with New York’s WABC-TV two days before the government reopened. “The Democrats have not asked for anything to reopen the government. The Democrats haven’t asked for anything for paying our bills on time.”

The last time I checked, the Senate and the executive branch were controlled by Democrats. Republicans control only the House. And the only reason they control the House is because of gerryman-

Is the Black Electorate ‘Stuck on Stupid’?

Why do we keep electing the same people to the same office year after year, putting them in charge of our lives, despite having the absolute proof that they have not, are not, and will not work in our best interests? The debt ceiling Kabuki Theater is yet another in a long line of what we have seen before – just a few months ago – in our so-called “government of, by, and for the people.”

We, the electorate, are just stuck on stupid. We have elected what has literally become an aristocracy to rule over us. They play games with our lives by trying to trump one another with their pompous speeches and protestations. All the while they are becoming millionaires and, to add insult to injury, they are not subject to the rules they make to govern us. As the opening quote suggests, they pay no price and feel no pain from their ridiculous wrangling, debating, and decision-making.

They stroll out every now and then to give us their “insights” on what is going on in the “hallowed” halls of Congress, but then return to do nothing for us. For them, however, they continue to draw their pay checks, play golf, laugh and joke, and live off the public coffers by working for a government many of them say is the problem. What does that scenario say about those of us in the proletariat class?



ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

James Clingman

Thomas Jefferson said, “When government fears the people, there is liberty. When the people fear the government, there is tyranny.”

So what do we have, folks? Fear or tyranny? I know one thing we

ducting political business as usual, which means merely moving from one crisis to the next and asking us to vote for them the next time around. Why should we?

The shenanigans we see on a national level also take place locally. The “Bi-Polar Electorate” continues to put people in office who have demonstrated incompetence, a lack of business acumen, and a total disregard for the people who elected them. They only come around when they want our votes, and many of them have absolutely nothing of substance to show for their previous stint of

voters elect folks who are not only concerned but competent, and candidates who have demonstrated their professional abilities and willingness to tackle and solve tough issues.

The ridiculousness of political engagement must stop, especially among Black people. We must be informed to the degree that no one can simply hand us a flyer with a list of candidates for whom we should blindly vote. We suffer the most from political incompetence and disregard, yet we are so loyal to those who do us wrong; we keep coming back to them the way an abused spouse keeps returning for more abuse. We keep electing folks who make empty promises and lay out nebulous solutions that, in the end, never benefit us. We keep listening to and believing political hacks that are only in the game for their own self-enrichment, as they lead us to the cliff and then step aside to allow us to plummet to the rocks below.

The Black electorate needs the most from politicians but obtains the least; our families are at the highest risk from do-nothing politicians; and we are the ones most affected by cuts, layoffs, pension fund reductions, and all the other negative aspects of political control. Don’t you want local and national politicians who are competent, solution-oriented, and have the “audacity” to buck the status quo to get things done?

The ridiculousness of political engagement must stop, especially among Black people

do have is anger. In some cases we have hopelessness, despair, and desperation as well. People are out of work, children are out of food, and families are out of time, while the men and women on Capitol Hill make decisions affecting our lives but exempting themselves and their children from the consequences of those decisions. Have we come to the point where the inmates are running the asylum? Many U.S. citizens are in fear for their very survival now, and our Washington elites are con-

ruler-ship over us. Yet, we will allow ourselves to be swooned and swayed to vote for them again, for the simplest of reasons, knowing they have failed us in the past.

In Cincinnati, voters passed a law that now allows council members to reign for four years instead of two years. That means voters will have to suffer twice as long under the ineptness, the self-interest and pompous attitudes of individual politicians, and the myriad of financial crises that now plague the city. That is, unless the