

Still Reeling from the Tea Party's Party

My barber shook his head as I sat down in his chair. He was deeply disturbed by the Tea Party shut-down of the government. Despite the fact that it was over, he was still unsettled. He told me about two tenants of a house that he owns who both work for the federal government. They could not pay their rent. He said to me: "Mr. Fletcher, yes, they are now supposed to get the money that they lost...but what about the next time?"

What about the next time, indeed.

The Tea Party Republicans attempted to fly their planes into the "battleship" of government, making the assumption that the "battleship" would change course. That did not happen and the Tea Party Republicans lost badly. But their loss was political. For thousands of federal workers and contractors, the loss was very material.



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Many more than you might think live paycheck to paycheck, and they were being squeezed more than they have in quite some time. Some of the local chapters of my own union – the American Federation of Government Employees – were providing food and gas-cards for workers so that they could simply report to work (if they had been declared "essential employees") and survive. And during all of this, the Tea Party Republicans in Congress continued to collect their own paychecks.

The kamikaze run by the Tea

Party Republicans seems to have backfired. People are furious with them. Whether that anger will last, and most importantly, whether it will last into the 2014 midterm elections, remains an open question. But for now many of them are serving as a doormat on which countless citizens are wiping their feet.

The Tea Party Republicans felt nothing about destroying the lives

have lost his house.

In the context of this travesty there will be many people who will throw their hands into the air in complete and total disgust. Such a response is quite understandable, but it is equally unacceptable. It is not enough to get disgusted. The brand of politics represented by the Tea Party crowd needs to be removed from the scene. This means that we can-

who speak on behalf of the common person. They not only must be dramatically different from the Tea Party, but such candidates must understand the plight of the bottom 90 percent of this country and the urgency to act in the interest of positive change.

If we have learned anything from the government shutdown it should be that governing is much too important to leave to the slicksters, demagogues, and those representing the rich and powerful.

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The kamikaze run by the Tea Party Republicans seems to have backfired

of hundreds of thousands of people. They thought nothing of the ripple effect that a government shutdown would have, as in the case of my barber. Think about it. His tenants could not pay him. Well, if the shutdown had continued, he would not have been able to pay his mortgage and could

not walk away from elections, but we need, instead, to walk to the polls and cast our votes thoughtfully and carefully. It is not a matter of 'anyone but the Tea Party,' as comforting as that may sound and feel. Rather, as we think about 2014 and beyond, we need to really develop candidates

Postal

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postal, non-union Matheson corporation in Portland," the group says in a press release before the arrests. "At the same time, Portland postal truckers are being put on standby while the low-wage, non-postal, non-union, Dill Star/LAPO trucking company takes their work."

In September 2012 the US Postal Service reported a \$15.9 billion loss. That triggered a string of cuts and changes that have closed

mail processing centers and post offices across the United States.

The causes of these troubling losses include a sharp decline in the number of letters written and mailed. The post office has not so far gained enough of the market share for packages to compensate for these losses.

But the postal workers advocates say politically motivated legislation is a key reason behind the problems.

Advocates for the postal workers say this requirement has created an artificial crisis. And they point out that elderly and isolated people depend on the mail service for medications, disability checks and other vital mail.

Other Republican proposals to stanch the losses include, ending Saturday delivery and replacing delivery to individual houses with deliveries to neighborhood boxes.

Conservative think tanks also have advocated for ending delivery to rural areas of the country where revenues don't cover costs.

Yet Congressional Republicans have been unwilling to get rid of a 1909 temperance movement inspired law that forbids USPS from shipping alcohol, a potentially lucrative market area.

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