



Governing Well Isn't That Hard (See Ryan Plan)

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Republicans, Tea Partyers, Independents, traditional Democrats and all others seeking to rescue America from the destructive consequences of bad governance should join hands and sing along with Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters (circa 1944):

Ac-Cent-Chu-Ate the Positive,
Eee-Liminate the Negative,
Laa-Tch on to the Affirmative,
Don't Mess with Mr. In-Between.

A 21st century reformation is abroad in the land. It demands competence and integrity in both private and public affairs. People are fed up with failure and foofaraw. They want new ideas and positive solutions that work. Like everything else, government must be cost effective and capable - and it must latch on to the affirmative.

President Obama and the Democrats in Congress had the first chance - but they responded only with negative orthodoxies out of Washington's past: a lethal mixture of taxes, spending, debt, red tape, political payola and presidential pap. Too bad.

Now it's time to move on. Failure is neither acceptable nor excusable. After all, good government in a highly developed civic-minded country like America is not rocket science. All it takes is a modicum of smarts and a healthy respect for the superior intelligence and ability of the American people.

Government is supposed to facilitate (not dictate) - and to do so quietly and unobtrusively. A good example of the "accentuate-the-positive" school of governance is found in Rep. Paul Ryan's "Roadmap for America's Future 2.0". It's full of principled common sense ideas for transforming government into a respected servant of the people.

Taking a minimalist approach and adhering to free market principles, Ryan has fixed the infamously "unfixable" tax code, provided affordable health care solutions and made the tottering Social Security system secure. His proposals

are "enactment ready" (including all the statutory details) and could go to work tomorrow. His numbers - the cost and revenue estimates - are authenticated by the Congressional Budget Office.

Ryan eliminates tax impediments to economic growth, paving the way for higher pretax and after-tax incomes for everyone. He also makes the tax code simpler, saving billions of man-hours now wasted on shuffling paper.

Individuals will have the choice of forgoing some deductions and paying taxes at low rates ranging from 10% to 25%. Ryan also eliminates the longstanding double tax on personal saving and investing.

He reduces to 8.5% the existing 35% double tax on business income. The additional double taxes that are now levied on the export of American-made products (and on the business capital equipment used to make them) are eliminated.

Under the Ryan reforms, U.S. companies (and workers) are allowed to compete and win in foreign markets. Foreign companies that compete in our markets will - unlike now - pay their share of U.S. tax.

Ryan's reforms in health care, Medicare and Social Security are simple, efficient and designed to achieve a high degree of Pareto optimality - making many people better off while harming none. Not a bad day's work.

The present tax subsidy for employer-purchased health insurance is converted into an optional refundable tax credit for individuals that allows them to shop for the insurance best suited to their needs.

Medicare is continued for all present recipients and for everyone who becomes eligible in the next 10 years or so. For others, traditional Medicare will in the future gradually be replaced by a subsidized voucher system that allows "free choice" shopping for the best insurance deal. Everyone can also have a Health Savings Account.

Ryan effectively preserves Social Security while allowing younger people (age 55 or younger) the option of investing over one-third of their Social Security tax in a personal account. They will have the potential for upside investment gains but are protected from loss of principal.

Ryan's reforms are the product of intelligent design. Most legislation isn't. Laws typically evolve out of a bargaining process. In the Congress, the positive is nearly always downgraded and blended with the negative to produce a "Mr. In-Between" who benefits some to the great detriment of others.

Often the product of congressional chaos is totally negative; all people are harmed. ObamaCare is a recent example, so disgraceful that voters are sending the members of Congress a stern message.

In the future, successful public servants will take the path that Paul Ryan and many others are helping to blaze: make positive improvements, eliminate negatives and don't create any new ones. So what's so hard about that? Most Americans do it every day. It's known as doing your job.

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