

Is it the State budget, or us?

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I have been loosely following the *posturing* going on, surrounding the State budget. As expected we are the target of *punishment*. We are going to lose significant amounts of police protection, public education, fire protection, road maintenance, support services (welfare), transportation and a lot of other things. When we voted this last time, we knew this punishment would be coming, it always does when we say NO to government.

The voters are beginning to realize that this is a hole that can not be filled. There is no amount of money the American public can throw into this hole that will fill it. Every time they try, the management of the State (or Federal) government finds ways to offset the additional contributions. Vote for the lottery to fund education, and the funds that previously funded education are diverted elsewhere, and nothing really improves. A hole that can not be filled.

And of course, when our elected leadership demonstrates that they can not properly manage the funds we provide, they want more funds to mismanage, *or our children will suffer*. Well, they're suffering now because of the lost opportunities that could have been provided by the enormous amount of financial resources we are providing to our government leadership. Let's take a look at our obligation.

At the federal level, the 2009 budget is roughly 3,100 billion dollars. Let us remember that it takes 114 years to spend one billion dollars at \$1,000 an hour, 24-hours a day, 7-days a week, 365.25-days a year. One hundred fourteen years to spend a billion at a thousand an hour and our 2009 federal budget is three-thousand-one-hundred-billion dollars (\$3,100,000,000 or 3.1 trillion dollars). Our federal leadership has saddled us with only an annual \$8,857.14 financial obligation for every man woman and child in the United States, or a \$35,428.57 annual financial obligation for a family of four. It only takes 114,077 years to spend one-trillion-dollars at one-thousand-dollars per hour, nothing we should be concerned about.

At the State level and using our budget figure for 2007 of 145.5 billion, this created an additional financial responsibility for every California citizen of \$3,958.47. Add this number to the \$8,857.14 federal obligation above, and every California citizen has a \$12,815.61 financial obligation created for them by their combined elected leadership. For a family of four that is an annual financial obligation of \$51,262.44. Yes, I can see that we are not paying enough for *their* medical care, wages, retirement benefits, cars, free transportation, travel expenses, flights, junkets, parties, extravagant homes, servants, security, swimming pool, green fees, etc., we need to pay more and if we don't then we need to be punished.

We American's typically look at the problems that face us, and then we look at the policies that our elected officials have set in place to deal with these problems, and we say, "Why are they doing that? That's not going to solve anything!" We are right of course. But our perspective or reference point is wrong. We are looking at the problem from the perspective that *we want to solve it*. **THAT IS NOT WHAT POLITICS IS ABOUT !**

“Politics is a process of engineering problems, to get more money, to not solve them” - Michael Keehn original. As long as we look at problems from the perspective that we are trying to solve the problem, the policies of government will never make any sense. But when we begin to look at the problem from the perspective of managing the problem, or exploiting the problem to get more money and control, then every policy we see will make sense. Government engineers the problem, then bills itself as our only salvation when it is anything but salvation. Our salvation comes from relying on ourselves and on our fellow man, not politicians or government officials.

Therefore, when we see a policy come down the pike, like the no child left behind policy, we may remember that the goal is to manage & exploit the problem in order to get more money to not solve it. What this policy does, is to saddle the teacher with the full responsibility for the performance of the student, while removing all responsibility that should be shouldered by the student and parent. Thus our government leadership tells us that they are making policy to help the children, and who can argue with that? Well, I can. It’s a recipe for disaster.

In this policy our government leadership is pretending to be concerned and caring of our children and in reality, they are cheating our children out of an education that costs us a mountain of money. Are the teachers in general impressed with this policy? I doubt it. Talk with them privately and find out, I have. But they can’t speak openly about it. To speak openly is to notice that the emperor has no clothes.

We may remember the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale "The Emperor's New Clothes" in which the emperor unwittingly hires two swindlers to create a new suit of clothes for him. The swindlers tell the emperor that the cloth is invisible to anyone who was either stupid or unfit for his position. The Emperor himself cannot see the (non-existent) cloth, but pretends that he can for fear of appearing stupid, and his ministers (teachers in our case) do the same.

For a teacher to notice that the emperor has no clothes will put them at considerable risk. They will most likely come into the cross-hairs of termination under some phony-boloney accusation or another. If the teacher loses his (or her) job, then their family suffers. If we the people don’t care, why should we expect the teacher care? If we the people are unwilling to put ourselves at risk, then why should we expect that the teacher place himself (herself) at risk? And it’s the same in virtually every single situation that we whine about.

Well people, it’s all up to us. Are we going to cry and whine about the loss of government services, get out our wallet and pay for more mismanagement while at the same time getting out our bottle of Vaseline, or are we going to stand up together, begin talking and pulling together, learn to depend on each other, and stand tall, proud and independent? What will our legacy be?