



No Chiding Charlie Reese

Journalist Charlie Reese recently opined on the Salem-News.com that “545 human beings out of 300 million are directly, legally, morally, and individually responsible for the domestic problems that plague this country.” According to him, those responsible are our senators, congressmen, president, and Supreme Court justices. He goes on to say that since they are exercising the power of the federal government over us, “It must follow that what exists is what they want to exist. If the tax code is unfair, it’s because they want it unfair. If the budget is in the red, it’s because they want it in the red.” He advocates making Congress accountable by voting all incumbents out of office in November.



I like the way he thinks, though I would add the caveat that anyone who upheld his oath of office to abide by the Constitution should be kept. Who could disagree? No one, and most everybody. No one disagrees with the basic premise, but most everybody disagrees with the solution. Republicans tend to think that all would be better if only the Democrats were kicked out of office, and the Democrats think that only the Republicans need to be kicked out.

What do I say about people who espouse such beliefs? That’s easy; they are wrong!

Republicans controlled both the Senate and the House after the 1994 Republican Revolution, which hinged on a vaunted “Contract With America” that promised “the end of government that is too big, too intrusive, and too easy with the public’s money.” Instead of fulfilling that promise, the size and scope of the federal government burgeoned. Congressman John Shadegg (R-Ariz.), one of the freshmen congressmen in 1994, said in 2006, “Republicans promised the American people two things in 1994. First, we promised to rein in the size and scope of federal government. Second, we promised to clean up Washington. In recent years, we have fallen short on both counts. Total federal spending has grown by 33% since 1995.” And it has continued to grow since that statement was made.

Lest anyone think the Democrats are any better, “Democratic-controlled congresses have increased spending at a rate more than twice the rate that Republican Congresses have,” as shown by R.W. Bradford in “The Politics of Presidential Spending.”

What do I say about any people who might counter that the key question should not be, “Which group is the most profligate spender?” but instead should be, “Who is spending money on the best, most socially just, federal programs?” That’s easy too; they’re wrong!

The social-welfare programs, besides being blatantly unconstitutional (in other words, against the law; not legal; criminal), never work like they are supposed to; they are rife with deception and corruption; and they always lead to bleeding dry the poor and middle class. Take, for instance, federal involvement in schools. The federal government taxes us to provide education monies. The Department of Education



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then “administers” the money. Some money gets apportioned based on federal mandates, such as No Child Left Behind, eating up money in administration costs. Some of the money is disbursed when school staff write grants to beg for money. Time and money are wasted both by those writing the grants and by those reading the grants. Some of the federal money goes to state departments of education — if they follow intrusive federal guidelines or write “good” grants. Then the state “administers” the money in much the same way as the federal government. All of these activities waste time and money; none improve student performance.

Take also Social Security. Because our country is living on credit (which will undoubtedly continue under the next president because both major candidates’ economic plans call for cutting tax receipts while increasing spending), the poor and middle class get economically scalped — even Social Security recipients. As each extra dollar gets added to the money supply, the buying power of each dollar already in existence is reduced. The more there is of something, the less value it has. Our politicians are spending money they don’t have — for things like the bailout, wind-energy subsidies, ethanol subsidies, school spending, world defense, etc. — causing money or credit to be created. This causes the price of all goods — especially food and energy — to rise. As these prices rise, Social Security payments to seniors by the government, though ostensibly tied to inflation, do not keep up with *real* rises in prices. This is because various presidents since Nixon, both Republican and Democrat, manipulated how “price inflation” is measured to help “bolster Social Security for the future” by lowering payments to seniors. It is estimated that without the changes that have been made in measuring the rise of inflation, Social Security recipients would be receiving 70 percent more than they currently receive. Seniors and the poor suffer. So like Charlie said, let’s send the incumbents packing — and replace them with congressmen who will “help us” less.



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