



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on April 4, 2019

Could Proposed Gas-tax Hike Burn Down Trump's Reelection Chances?

George Washington could be spinning in his grave witnessing what the seat of our government, named in his honor, has become: a money-hungry, tax-levying leviathan that, like the fictional [Blob](#), ever consumes and grows in an infinite loop, though one of loopy and lavish legislative misadventures. The latest example is a proposed increase in the gasoline tax, which — federal and [state](#) combined — already costs most Americans eight to 10 dollars on *one 20-gallon fill-up*.



[McClatchy reports](#) on the current proposal:

The Trump administration and congressional Democrats have found something they agree on — and it could mean higher taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel.

Last week, President Donald Trump's transportation secretary, Elaine Chao, told senators that a gas tax hike was on the table when asked whether the White House would support such a move.

And this week, Democrats are indicating that they too are ready to consider a tax increase — an effort that would fund publicly popular infrastructure improvements but has hit a hard wall of opposition for years from fiscal conservatives and advocates for low-income people alike.

Our infrastructure certainly needs work. "Some 47,052 of America's 616,087 bridges were 'structurally deficient' and in poor condition, [according to a report](#) this week from the American Road & Transportation Builders Association," [McClatchy](#) also informs. "It said the pace of repair slowed to its lowest point in five years."

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Yet it's a sign of unconstitutional times that the federal government is even involved in this. Ninety-eight percent of our roads are state and local. So what "is the federal government doing?" [rhetorically asked](#) Americans for Tax Reform's Grover Norquist earlier today. "Paving the part of the roads between the states?" (video below. Relevant portion begins at 1:59).

Moreover, it's a sign of the (irresponsible) times that we ever need new taxes to tend to important matters because we haven't saved "for a rainy day." Our 2019 federal budget will be somewhere between 4.4 and 4.75 *trillion* dollars and will add nigh on \$1 trillion to our \$22-plus trillion national debt. Why are there no funds for infrastructure?

It certainly would help if Uncle Sam didn't waste money [on things such as](#) "phantom" medical clinics, paying people to play Warcraft, Zoo poetry, a silly Super Bowl commercial; and studying South African men's genital washing, male Vietnamese prostitutes, and [monkeys' social habits](#). But more on our perverse profligacy in a moment.



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Fuel taxes are regressive, hitting the poor as hard as the rich and raising the cost of most everything (since goods are shipped mainly via trucks), a phenomenon known as “tax incidence.” Note that the federal gas and diesel taxes are already, respectively, 18.4 cents and 24.4 cents a gallon. State [gas taxes vary](#) from between a whopping 58.7 cents a gallon in Pennsylvania to a low of 14.7 cents a gallon in Alaska.

Aside from this and that it’s immoral to raise taxes on an already overtaxed population, the current proposal “is political stupidity at the highest and most suicidal level,” Grover Norquist [also opined](#). Whether or not Norquist was alluding to President Trump’s re-election chances, this is an issue here; in fact, some could even suspect that the Democrats are supporting a higher gas levy to set Trump up.

Note that rightly or wrongly, most people hold the president responsible for the economy. Higher gas prices may be particularly devastating to a president’s reputation and popularity because, while most voters have short memories, people generally have to fill up their tank weekly. Thus, higher gas prices could serve as continual, painful anti-Trump reminders.

Apropos to this, a “50-cent increase in gas prices from the previous quarter is associated with a -3.5-point drop in [presidential] approval,” [wrote](#) the *Monkey Cage’s* John Sides in 2012. While there is some perspective-lending nuance to Sides’ analysis as well (you can read it [here](#)), increasing the gas tax does seem like a gift to Democrats.

Oh, and you can bet that the left-wing mainstream media *will* blame any pain at the pump on Trump.

The good news is that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) is a staunch opponent of gas taxes and, according to *McClatchy*, “has not budged” from that position.

The bad news, regarding the larger picture, is that we’re spending ourselves into oblivion for a simple reason, one expressed well in a quotation *attributed* to British lawyer Alexander Fraser Tytler:

A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the majority discovers it can vote itself largess out of the public treasury. After that, the majority always votes for the candidate promising the most benefits with the result the democracy collapses because of the loose fiscal policy ensuing, always to be followed by a dictatorship, then a monarchy.

Of course, there is no *permanent* form of government, as man always toddles along, slipping and falling, and his governments rise and fall correspondingly; in fact, everything of this world is transitory. But democracy *or* republic, as virtue vanishes in the people and temperance and prudence wane, they will spend and spend and spend — and send themselves into poverty and tyranny.



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