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that is the weakest or sometimes the worst solution. Sometimes people make jokes about President Calvin Coolidge. But all he did was lead the Nation to several years of peace and prosperity. He once said: "I favor the policy of economy, not because I wish to save money, but because I wish to save people. The men and women of this country who toil are the ones who bear the cost of the government. Every dollar that we carelessly waste means that their life will be so much the more meager. Every dollar that we save means that their life will be so much more abundant. Economy is idealism in its most practical terms."

✓ **Some Hope**

I was asked recently on a television interview program what was the biggest change in my years in office. I said without a doubt it was the tremendous concern over the national deficits and debt by almost everyone, when for many years very few seemed to care. But as a *Washington Post* editorial said: "It's time to stop worrying about the deficit—and start panicking about the debt. The fiscal situation was serious before the recession. It is now dire." The *Post*, though, is a very liberal newspaper and has always blasted away at any major attempts to cut federal spending. It is sad that people do have to be so upset about all this debt. But it does give some hope that we can start making progress toward at least a

partial solution since a very great majority of our citizens realize how serious the problem has become.

✓ **More Hope**

Most recessions do not last for a long time because of population growth and pent-up demand for everything. While unemployment has remained stubbornly high, it appears as though bankruptcies and foreclosures have begun to slow, possibly because almost everyone close to either of those situations has already gone through it. Hopefully, the new Congress will give business some optimism by slowing the explosion of regulations and keeping taxes from going up further. Also, this part of East Tennessee remains as one of the most popular places to move to in the entire Country. This means we have been somewhat insulated from the worst problems and will come out of a slowdown sooner than most.

People continue to move from the high tax states to the low tax states, a lesson I hope our Tennessee legislators will keep in mind.

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**UPCOMING CONSTITUENT DAYS****Carter Senior Center**

9040 Asheville Highway, Knoxville, TN  
Monday, December 20 – 9:00 a.m.

**Niota Elementary School**

418 N. Burn Road, Niota, TN  
Tuesday, December 21 – 9:00 a.m.

**Tellico West Conference Center**

117 Grand Vista Drive, Vonore, TN  
Wednesday, December 22 – 9:00 a.m.

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House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Public Document  
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*John J. Duncan, Jr.*  
PRSRT STD M.C.

**RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER**  
Second Congressional District  
Tennessee

**Washington Report**

This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense.



Second District—Tennessee

CONGRESSMAN

# John J. Duncan, Jr.

## Washington Report

December 2010

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**✓ **New Congress**

The new Congress which will be sworn in January 5 will have 242 Republicans to 193 Democrats in the House. In the Senate, the other side will control by a margin of 53 to 47. In this past Congress, the Democrats started with an 81-seat majority in the house and a 20-seat majority in the Senate. The average age in the new Senate will be 62, and the average age in the new House will be 56 (with 27 under 40). The number of women went down from 17 to 15 in the Senate and from 77 to 75 in the House. The top religious affiliations in the new Senate will be Catholic (22), Presbyterian (14), and Jewish (12). In the House, there will be 126 Catholics, 60 Baptists, and 37 Methodists.

✓ **Newsletter Schedule**

Many people have asked me why they have not received a newsletter for several months. Under the rules, no newsletter can be sent out less than 90 days before an election. In past years, there has been a "window" of a few days just after the primary but more than 90 days before the general election. This year, the November election was 89 days after the primary. Thus, I could not send out a newsletter for more than six months.

✓ **Federal Spending**

As the ABC National News reported on November 10, almost everyone says we need to cut federal spending but very few are will-

ing to support the drastic cuts that are necessary. The current administration has run up almost three trillion dollars of deficits in its first two years, adding more debt than we incurred in the first 197 years of this Nation's existence. The new leadership of the next Congress has pledged \$100 billion in cuts, but with national debt of almost \$14 trillion, this is just a tiny fraction of what needs to be done. A bipartisan commission appointed by President Obama has recommended a \$100 billion cut in military spending, primarily by closing one-third of our overseas bases, and decreasing federal employment by 10%, among other things. The votes are not there to support their recommendations. If we cut federal spending by one-third (which we will not do), we would still have the biggest, most powerful, most expensive federal government in the world.

✓ **Across the Board**

A big majority of the people would support a fair, 10% across-the-board cut in federal spending, leaving out Social Security and all federal pensions under \$50,000 a year. However, the votes are not there for this type of plan, either. Thus the drop-in-the-bucket \$100 billion plan of the new House leadership is probably the best we can do. I am almost never urged to vote for most spending by the supposed beneficiaries of some federal program. The pressure for more spending comes almost entirely

from the contractors, employees, and sometimes retirees of federal departments and agencies. However, almost everyone now realizes that if we do not start very significant cuts right away, we will continue to depreciate our currency (making pensions worth much less each and every year) and doom our children and grandchildren to hardships we cannot even imagine.

✓ **Big Spenders**

Big-spending liberals have now gotten us in a hole so deep we may never get out. I said in a speech on the House Floor that it is awfully easy to run as Santa Claus; it's awfully hard to run against Santa Claus. It is easy to spend other people's money and say yes to everyone. There are very large numbers, both in and out of the government, who make big money off any federal spending bill. They generate critical letters to the editor and negative phone calls to radio programs against anyone who tries to reduce spending. The big question now is will the people allow fiscal conservatives to make the unpopular cuts necessary to save this Nation. Or will we let greed and selfishness destroy this Nation from within.

✓ **The Recession**

According to some economists, the recession ended in June of 2009, approximately a year and a half ago. When asked about this by one of the Knoxville television stations, I said I wondered what world these

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economists were living in. Foreclosures have run at record levels all through 2010. Unemployment has remained close to 10%. Under-employment, by most estimations, may be even higher, with millions of well qualified, well educated people having to work at very low-paying jobs. We have these employment problems because we allowed our government to get too big, and this has forced millions of good jobs to go to other countries. Restaurants have replaced the factories, and an astounding number of college graduates are now working in food service.

✓ **Bank Loans**

Our economy will not fully recover unless and until we get the bank examiners to let the banks start making more loans. I have written the four top banking regulators about the problem four times over the last couple of years. Once I even sent them a cartoon from the *Congress Daily*, a publication every member receives each weekday. The cartoon showed President Obama and his Secretary of the Treasury shouting "Loan, loan, loan!" and the banks loaded with huge bags of money but then showed bank examiners holding back, saying "No, no, no!" First the regulators created the problem by forcing banks to make loans in bad areas and to unqualified people to whom they did not want to lend. Now, they have overreacted and are making banks write down or turn down even good loans to good people. The founder of Home Depot was on Fox Television in early November saying that he and his co-founders could not qualify for a loan to start that same business under today's overly restrictive rules and regulations. Some East Tennessee banks have been forced to decline several million-dollar deposits because they could not loan out the money.

✓ **Job Creation**

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce recently sent a letter to the President, which said: "Uncertainty is the enemy of growth, investment and

job creation. Through their legislative and regulatory proposals—some passed, some pending, and others simply talked about—the congressional majority and the administration have injected tremendous uncertainty into economic decision-making and business planning." U.S. Chamber President Thomas Donohue, in a speech to the Jobs Summit, said: "Taken collectively, the regulatory activity now underway is so overwhelmingly beyond anything we have ever seen that we risk moving this country away from a government of the people to a government of regulators."

✓ **Government Regulators**

When I graduated from UT in 1969, probably the two lowest-paying professions were as educators and journalists. Now, because pay for teachers has gone way up (as it should have), and because so many newspapers have gone out of business, it is very difficult for many with communications or education degrees to get jobs. But 40 years ago people with bachelors degrees could get very good jobs in business. A poor man could start a gas station. Now, it would take huge money to do so. Environmental rules, regulations, and red tape have run all kinds of small and medium-sized business out of existence, or have forced them to go to other countries. Also, government regulators, many of whom have no business experience, have easier jobs and perhaps feel more important when regulating one big business instead of 100 little ones. As government has gotten bigger and bigger, and federal and state regulations have exploded in number, extremely big businesses have been given tremendous advantages and have seen many small and medium-sized businesses forced out.

✓ **Unfair Trade**

The President recently returned from a foreign trade trip during which the Chinese turned down his request to stop manipulating their

currency in a way that is unfair to American workers. The problem is that we negotiate from a position of weakness because so much of our debt is owed to the Chinese. Just before the President's trip, Joe Klein of *Time* magazine completed a four-week trip around America to interview many citizens. He wrote: "Topic A is the growing sense that our best days as a nation are behind us, that our kids won't live as well as we did, that China is in the driver's seat." With slightly less than four percent of the world's population, we buy almost 25% of the world's goods. We should at least discuss renegotiating some of our trade deals. Also, I cosponsored a bill which passed the House on October 1 to allow the Commerce Department to impose monetary duties on Chinese goods if they continue to unfairly value their currency.

✓ **Failed Stimulus**

In an earlier newsletter, I mentioned a CNN poll which found that only seven percent of the people felt the \$862 billion stimulus bill had helped them. Actually, counting interest payments, the final cost will be over one trillion dollars. Unemployment actually went up after the bill was passed. Why did it not work? Well the *Washington Post* described it as a "massive windfall" for federal agencies. That was the problem. Most of the money went to federal agencies and the second largest part went to state governments. Government departments were either already getting more money or were not hurting as much as the private sector in the first place. Private businesses do waste some money, but their waste pales in comparison to the waste that is in government, because government agencies (especially at the federal level) simply do not have the same pressures and incentives to save money as the private sector. One example of what the stimulus was used for was a \$1.45 billion loan guarantee to a Spanish company. The administration stopped the U.S. Export-Import Bank from

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so much over the years that fearing further big offshore oil spills would be like refusing to fly because some prop planes crashed in the 1950s.

✓ **Farm Subsidies**

I voted against the 2008 Farm Bill for several reasons, but the two main ones were that we simply could not afford the \$290 billion price tag and most of the subsidies were going to the wealthiest farmers. We were told that changes in the rules would correct these disparities. However, the latest Agriculture Department records show that 10 percent of farmers received 62% of federal farm payments, roughly the same as in the last two years before this bill took effect. U.S. farmers could be helped more by small tariffs on foreign agriculture products and a phasing out of subsidies. If this subsidy money was placed back in the hands of consumers, they could easily afford the small increases caused by moderate tariffs. Another big factor in increased food costs has been Agriculture Department rules and regulations that have forced many small and medium-sized businesses out of the food industry. For example, this has been seen in East Tennessee over the years with the closure of several small meat packing companies.

✓ **Unemployment Money**

President Franklin Roosevelt, in his 1935 State of the Union, said: "The lessons of history...show conclusively that continued dependence upon relief induces a spiritual and moral disintegration fundamentally destructive to the national fiber. To dole out relief in this way is to administer a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the American spirit." One constituent has written several letters to the editor criticizing me and our two Senators for not voting to extend and expand unemployment compensation. Many people already have been allowed to draw for 99 weeks. We are spending money we do not have.

✓ **Red Light Cameras**

I expressed my objections to red-light cameras a few months ago, and the response was overwhelmingly positive. A national official of AAA described traffic cameras as "old-fashioned, money-making, motorist rip-offs." Florida expects to collect \$200 million by 2014 from red-light cameras. I would not object to tickets for actually running the red-lights if cities would first lengthen the yellow-light time. Some studies have shown an increase in rear-end crashes, especially where cameras are installed and yellow light times are shortened. However, most people get these tickets for turning right on a red light because cities do not make enough money if tickets are issued only for running the red light. Often, a person can turn right on a red light completely safely because no car is in sight. However, if the driver has to wait there for four seconds because of a camera, then cars frequently get closer and the turn becomes much less safe.

✓ **Unintended Consequences**

Very powerful groups all over this nation oppose almost any kind of natural resource production. But there are very serious unintended consequences. When we severely restrict the lumber industry, it not only destroys jobs, but it drives up the cost of everything made from wood (toilet paper, furniture, homes, etc.). When we restrict the mining of coal, it not only destroys jobs, but it drives up utility bills. The offshore drilling moratorium temporarily put on hold 20,000 jobs, and further restrictions will drive up the cost of gas. There are now a few thousand land trusts and nature conservancies. When people donate their land and get glowing articles in the newspapers, it takes more land off the tax rolls, meaning taxes on the remaining private property keep going up and it becomes harder to fund schools and local law enforcement. Also, taking more and more private property makes it harder for young people to

be able to afford homes. All these restrictions on personal and economic freedom very seldom hurt the wealthy, but they sure have a harmful effect on lower and middle income people.

✓ **Name Calling**

People frequently resort to childish sarcasm or scrupulous personal abuse when their case is weak. Those on the far-left are particularly fond of this method, and famous radical Saul Alinsky said sarcasm was most effective in advancing political views. The Necons who conned us into the war in Iraq and who still advocate perpetual war and nation building are others who frequently use name calling to support their agenda. They always resort to the slur of "isolationist" against anyone who does not support the spending of mega billions in other countries by our Defense Department and other federal bureaucracies. But with an almost \$14 trillion dollar debt and additional trillion dollar deficits ahead, we can no longer afford to maintain military bases and federal agencies all over the world. We can and should have trade and tourism, cultural and educational exchanges, good diplomatic relationships, and help out during humanitarian crises. But we can no longer afford to spend trillions or even hundreds of billions in nation building and maintaining an empire.

✓ **For and Against**

To be against government over-regulation is to be for individual freedom and free enterprise. To be against excessive taxation is to be in favor of giving people more disposable income and more control over their own money. To be against exorbitant government waste is to be for more efficient, more productive use of our money. To be against environmental extremism is to be for more and better jobs and lower prices. Every problem cannot be solved by some federal program. In fact, usually

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is a smaller, less expensive, less intrusive, more responsive, more accountable federal government.

#### ✓ **Federal Pay**

The Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis recently completed a study showing that the average federal employee received a salary and benefits totaling \$119,982 while the average private sector employee made a salary and benefits of \$59,909. *The Washington Examiner* newspaper, in a lead editorial, described these federal salaries as "scandalously higher" than private salaries and added: "With the federal deficit and national debt heading into the stratosphere, taxpayers can no longer afford to support such lucrative government compensation."

#### ✓ **Federal Pensions**

In addition to much higher salaries, federal employees have the best pension plans in America. Fewer than 20% of employees in the private sector have any employer-provided pension plan other than Social Security. These high pensions were started many years ago when federal salaries often were lower than in the private sector. Federal employees were allowed to retire at younger ages. Almost everyone feels underpaid when they read about the obscene, ridiculous salaries paid to a few CEOs, athletes and movie stars. But these amount to far fewer than 1% of the American people. What federal employees should look at is how they compare to non-federal employees. I spoke on the floor of the House recently and said that while we cannot change retirement for those already in the system, we can no longer afford to justify allowing some federal employees to retire as early as their late 40s or even their 50s unless they are honestly and severely disabled.

#### ✓ **State Pensions**

*The Economist* magazine recently reported on a study which showed

states have currently underfunded their pensions to the tune of \$3.4 trillion, a mind-boggling, incomprehensible figure. Municipalities have a shortfall of \$574 billion. The problem is worst in the high-tax states like California, Illinois, and Ohio, and in big cities. The Mayor of San Jose estimated the average cost to his city of hiring a police officer or firefighter to be \$180,000 a year, because such workers can retire at 50, some with pensions and benefits higher than their salaries. This is like a dam about to break. A big portion of the stimulus and a later local government bailout bill went to provide money to fiscally irresponsible states. It is not fair to make tax-payers in conservative states help pay for excessive, overly-generous pensions and salaries in liberal states and cities. Thirty-two states have borrowed approximately \$45 billion from the federal government to pay their state-share of unemployment compensation, with California borrowing the most (\$10 billion).

#### ✓ **Military Pay**

When I went into basic training in 1970, a beginning private (E-1) was paid \$78.00 a month. A private first class (E-3) was paid \$87.50 a month. Even in 1970 dollars, this was very low pay. President Reagan made it one of his top priorities to raise military pay and benefits, and we have done this every year since the 80s. Everyone wants our military people to be well-paid, and they are. Now, for many young people jobs in the military are the highest paid available to them. *USA Today* reported that many Admirals and Generals are receiving pensions of \$15,000 a month. Those who served when the pay was very low deserve everything they get, and we cannot change the system. However, because military pay has gone up so much, we can no longer afford to let people start drawing retirements in their late 30s or early 40s. Although, if someone is honestly disabled because of their military

service, they should be allowed to receive compensation at any age.

#### ✓ **TVA Salaries**

The TVA Board has now approved a salary that can go as high as \$3.6 million for the agency's top official. He is a very nice man who has done a good job. But no one is worth \$3.6 million a year, which is nine times the salary of the President of the United States. I know that a tiny handful of athletes and CEOs make even more than that. But it is one thing for a private company to pay a ridiculous salary, because people can stop patronizing the company and/or stop buying stock in it if they do not like it. But it is another thing altogether for a public utility to pay excessive salaries to top officials when they have a monopoly power. Most people have no realistic choice in dealing with TVA. The top-paid people at TVA know I cannot do anything about these salaries, because very few members of the Tennessee delegation have ever agreed with me on this since I have been in Congress. But I do wish that the new Board would keep in mind that many people have trouble paying their utility bills already. And, because East Tennessee is one of the most popular places to live in the entire Nation, TVA does not have to pay extremely high salaries to attract outstanding people.

#### ✓ **Cemetery Flags**

I do not know what lazy person came up with the rule that veterans and scout groups could not put flags by the markers at the state and federal cemeteries on Veterans Day, but that person should be ashamed. Apparently, the rule is that this could be done only on Memorial Day because it is too hard a job to pick up the flags two days a year. If the cemetery employees are not willing to do this work, why not at least allow responsible veterans and scout groups to place these flags as long as they are willing to sign an agreement to pick them back up within the week of the hol-

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iday. I have written to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ask that this rule be changed.

#### ✓ **Taxation**

You can never satisfy governments' appetite for money and land. They always want more, at every level, federal, state and local. Every tax that has been passed always starts out very low and then goes up and up and up. Tennessee's first sales tax was just 3%, and people thought that was so bad that Gov. Frank Clement was defeated for the U.S. Senate in large part because of it. Now look at it. If Tennessee ever passes a state income tax, they will first say it will apply only to the wealthy as they recently did in Washington State. When the federal income tax first became law in 1913, it applied to less than one percent of the American people.

#### ✓ **Tax Cuts**

The national media has made the tax cut debate appear to be over the issue of whether or not to protect millionaires. No one wants to "protect" multi-millionaires. They can take care of themselves. The issue is really whether this extra \$700 billion over the next 10 years will be spent by the federal government, where most of it will be wasted or at least spent very inefficiently, or whether it will be spent and invested by private citizens with much less waste. In January of 1990, a very high tax on luxury boats went into effect as a way to get more taxes from the wealthy. Some 20,000 to 30,000 boat company workers lost their jobs so the tax was quickly repealed (1992).

#### ✓ **Body Scanners**

We have enough security at airports without adding naked-body scanners. Many people have voiced radiation concerns and sometimes even more concern about the embarrassing, intrusive pat-downs. If we spent the entire federal budget on security, we could not make the Nation 100% safe. We need a little more balance and common sense

in this area. Most of this is being motivated by money rather than by legitimate security concerns. The federal government has installed 497 scanners and will install 503 more during the coming year. Estimates are that 1,800 scanners will eventually be purchased at a cost of approximately \$300 million. A University of Pennsylvania professor wrote: "For a multitude of politicians, interest groups, professional associations, corporations, media organizations, universities, local and state governments, and federal agency officials, the War on Terror is now a major profit center, a funding bonanza, and a set of slo-gans and grant contact proposals. For the country as a whole, however, it has become a maelstrom of waste...." Unfortunately, about half the people will apparently support almost anything that has the word "security" attached to it no matter how unnecessary or intrusive it might be.

#### ✓ **Social Insecurity**

Allan Sloan, senior editor for *Fortune* magazine and columnist for the *Washington Post*, wrote recently about this year's \$41 billion shortfall in Social Security. He quoted from the introduction of the 2009 Social Security Trustees Report: "Neither the redemption of trust fund bonds, nor interest paid on those bonds, provides any new net income to the Treasury, which must finance redemptions and interest payments through some combination of increased taxation, reductions in other government spending, or additional borrowing from the public." This statement was left out of the 2010 report, but Mr. Sloan said what it means is that "the trust fund is of no economic value." It has been filled with government IOUs. He said the trust fund is "funny" money, but the deficits will soon be more than \$100 billion a year and "it sure won't be funny."

#### ✓ **Interest**

The yearly interest on our national

debt is now \$201 billion. According to figures from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, by the year 2020 interest will be \$723 billion. This past May, the CBO estimated that the healthcare bill would add \$115 billion more to federal health care spending over the next 10 years than if we had just stayed with the laws we already had. And government healthcare spending estimates have always been many billions too low.

#### ✓ **Misplaced Faith**

The problems of this Nation have grown much bigger as we have placed more faith in men and laws and less faith in God. President Reagan frequently said government was the problem, not the solution. Two ways in which we have seen this most clearly is in medical care and college tuition. Costs of both used to go up slowly, sometimes at less than the rate of inflation. As the federal government got more and more involved, these costs have exploded. Anytime the federal government subsidizes anything, costs simply go way up. Dennis Prager, a Jewish talk show host and columnist, wrote recently that "the ever-expanding state is inevitably accompanied with the ever-shrinking God and religion. This is largely what the current culture war- actually a non-violent war- is about. The left seeks an ever-expanding state with, by definition, ever-expanding powers. And a fundamental aspect of that program is the removal of God and religion from as much of American life as possible." Laws will never be adequate, and men will always disappoint.

#### ✓ **Needless Paperwork**

Supporters tried to come up with every fiscal gimmick possible to keep the cost estimate of the healthcare program under one trillion dollars. Even this was a very best case, low ball estimate. One trick was to greatly over estimate the money that would come in from requiring every business,

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from the largest to the smallest, to file 1099 reports starting in 2012 on any and every expenditure over \$600. This will cost our economy more than it will produce in needless paperwork and time lost in filing what would be hundreds of millions of forms. A *Wall Street Journal* story said: "The new rules drastically expand current reporting requirements, and they apply to all businesses. But critics say the compliance burden will fall squarely on the shoulders of sole proprietors and other small businesses, plus small non-profits and local governments." I hope we can at least repeal this part of the new healthcare law, and I hope the provision requiring people to purchase health insurance is ruled unconstitutional.

#### ✓ **Free Enterprise**

One major problem with this Nation is that far too many in government have never been in private business (especially small business) or in the private practice of a profession. They have no real understanding of what it takes and how difficult it is to meet a payroll. Far too often, career bureaucrats are appointed to the highest positions in government because their resumes make them appear to be qualified. Term limits for elected officials are very popular. But elected officials already serve limited terms, and in addition, they are the only people in government over whom the electorate has real power and influence. What is perhaps even more important would be term limits on unelected career bureaucrats. What is more important than seeing "qualified" people, if that simply means experience in government, would be to seek capable people who have real business experience. We need more government officials who will let the free enterprise system work to create jobs, and hold down prices instead of officials who play "gotcha" and throw up every possible road block.

#### ✓ **Rich and Poor**

As big government, at federal and state levels, has given most of its contracts, tax breaks, free land, and especially favorable regulatory rulings to big business, the gap between the rich and the poor has grown tremendously. The most profitable companies in this nation today are federal contractors. Something done for the federal government will often cost two or three times as much as if the exact same thing was done by one private business for another. Yet gigantic bureaucracies are so wasteful and inefficient that many things have to be contracted out and, frequently, former government employees work out extremely profitable deals for the big businesses they go to work for after leaving government employment. I have referred to this as the big businesses- big government duopoly, and this is why almost all industries become dominated by a few big giants.

#### ✓ **Founding Fathers**

Our Founding Fathers thought most problems could best be solved by free people working within a free enterprise, free market system. By their words and actions, it is clear they thought the things that only government could do were best done by local governments, over which the people had the most say-so and control. They felt state governments should be next in line with the federal government as a government of last resort with few and very limited powers. We have gotten in trouble because we have turned the federal government into a government of first resort, and one which dictates and hands down all sorts of mandates and requirements to state and local governments and private businesses.

#### ✓ **Ridiculous Decisions**

Most people who work for the government are good people, but unfortunately some go overboard in trying to show their power and authority. I have seen many ridiculous decisions over the years, but

one that really takes the cake was when a government official in Oregon told seven-year-old Julie Murphy that she had to shut down her lemonade stand or face a \$500 fine if she did not pay a \$120 temporary restaurant license fee. Almost as unbelievable, the official's supervisors supported his demand. Ina Hughs, of the *Knoxville News Sentinel*, wrote: "Only the Grinch would shut such a thing down, and only Ebenezer Scrooge would demand a tax on it." We have given far too much power to unelected bureaucrats over whom the people have almost no control. An elected official got this matter straightened out. Too often people use the word "politics" in a bad or negative way. But "politics" simply means the people have some say-so or control over their own government. We need to elect more people, or our government will just become more bureaucratic and unresponsive than it already is.

#### ✓ **Environmental Chic**

Charles Krauthammer may be the smartest columnist-commentator on the national scene today. Shortly after the Gulf oil spill, he asked why we were drilling in 5,000 feet of water in the first place. He wrote: "Many reasons, but this one goes unmentioned: Environmental chic has driven us out there... because environmentalists have succeeded in rendering the Pacific and nearly all the Atlantic Coast off limits to oil production. And of course, in the safest of all places, on land, we've had a 30-year ban on drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge." He is especially critical of the Arctic ban, asking "why have we pushed the drilling from the barren to the populated..." ANWR is 19.8 million acres, roughly 35 times the size of the Great Smokies. Proposals to allow drilling on a miniscule 3,000 acres there have been repeatedly defeated by wealthy environmental radicals. Steven Hayward of the American Enterprise Institute said drilling technology has improved

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backing a \$600 million sale of coal mining equipment by a Wisconsin company due to the environmental impact in India. Thus, our government helped a foreign business but hurt an American company.

#### ✓ **Successful Stimulus**

The Congress would not have done this, but a stimulus that would have worked would have been one that cut federal spending by \$862 billion so that all that money would have gone into the private sector. This would have been successful for two very important reasons: 1) None of it would have been borrowed, whereas the failed stimulus was roughly 42% borrowed from the Chinese and others; and 2) The least economical, least efficient way to spend any money is to turn it over to the federal and state governments. Every dollar that can be kept in the private sector will do more to create jobs and hold down prices. All over the world it has been proven that big government helps government contractors and employees and elitists at the top. Small government is more accountable, less intrusive and arrogant, and most importantly, it slowly but surely leads to a stronger economy by leaving more money in the private sector.

#### ✓ **Big Savings**

I have said for years every chance that I have had, in Washington and in Tennessee, that the first thing we need to do is stop spending hundreds of billions on unnecessary foreign wars. There are probably several hundred federal programs that should be cut or even eliminated. One expert told me that the real work of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives is being done by state and local law enforcement agencies. In fact, almost all federal law enforcement agencies are hugely overstaffed unless we want a federal police state. The Federal Air Marshal program is probably the most needless, useless waste of money I have ever seen. As I mentioned in an earlier newsletter, *USA Today* reported

last year that federal air marshals had made only four minor arrests in the previous year, at a cost of more than \$200 million per arrest. The Market Promotion Program is another billion-dollar program that gives big companies money to advertise their products overseas. There are too many examples to list here, but you probably stand a better chance of surviving a fall from the Empire State Building than eliminating a federal program. Even to cut one takes a minor miracle.

#### ✓ **War Costs**

I and several other members signed a letter to the President dated Nov. 16 written mainly by Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC). The letter pointed out that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, by themselves, have accounted for about one-fourth of our deficits over the last several years and that it is now estimated the total costs, counting interest and future care for wounded soldiers, will be at least four trillion dollars. We wrote: "Mr. President, these costs are unsustainable and unacceptable. Spending on the war in Afghanistan represents a significant drag on our economy, slowing our recovery, undermining our ability to invest and create new jobs, and diverting our resources that would be better used here at home." We should do like we did at the end of World War II and not drag out our withdrawal from either Iraq or Afghanistan. Over a column by Tony Blakely in *The Washington Times*, advocating a rapid withdrawal, the headline read "Afghan War Becoming A Bloody Farce."

#### ✓ **Big Government Wars**

More and more people have finally realized that there has not been anything conservative about our actions in Iraq and Afghanistan. In fact these wars have gone against almost everything for which traditional conservatism has stood. They have meant huge foreign aid and massive deficit spending to support a world government ap-

proach with the U.S. providing almost all the government for two other countries. One example (out of very many): the \$12 billion infrastructure program for Afghan police and troops. There is nothing in our Constitution which gives us the authority to run another country, which is what we have been doing, nor should the Department of Defense be the Department of Foreign Aid. Alfred Regnery, publisher of the *American Spectator* magazine, wrote in its October issue: "Afghanistan has little strategic value and the war is one of choice rather than necessity" and added that it has been a "wasteful and frustrating decade." The worst thing about Iraq and Afghanistan is all the young people who have been killed, but it is also very sad that we have spent hundreds of billions to drag out two unnecessary wars.

#### ✓ **Lighter Presence**

In a November 13 interview with the *Washington Post*, Afghan President Hamid Karzai called on the U.S. to "lighten the military presence" in that Country. He said that he wanted a long term and "substantial" (meaning our money) U.S. presence there, but he said our night raids of Afghan homes were alienating his citizens and would prolong the war and strengthen the Taliban.

#### ✓ **Descriptive Words**

A poll was released several weeks ago by *USA Today* and the Gallup Organization in which Americans were asked to describe the federal government in one word or phrase. The most frequent word responses were "too big," "wasteful," "out of control," "incompetent," "a mess," "bloated," "dysfunctional," "poor," "disappointing," "broken," "corrupt," and "pathetic." The survey found that 72% of the responses were negative, only 10% positive, and 18% undecided or neutral. We don't need more laws, rules, and regulations. We have so many now that no human being can realistically know even a tiny fraction of what is on the books. What we need