



CONGRESSMAN

# John J. Duncan, Jr.

## Washington Report



Second District—Tennessee

February 2013

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

### ✓ **New Congress**

The new House of Representatives has 233 Republicans and 200 Democrats, with two vacancies. The Senate has 53 Democrats, two Independents who caucus with the Democrats, and 45 Republicans. The new Congress will have the most women ever, with 79 in the House and 20 in the Senate. There will be 44 African-Americans, 29 Hispanics, and nine Asians in the House. The top occupations in the House are Public Service (184), business (187) and law (156). The top religious affiliations in the House are Catholic (136), Baptist (65) and Methodist (35). In the Senate, the top affiliations are Catholic (27), Presbyterians (16), and Jewish (10).

### ✓ **New District**

Since the founding of our Nation, the geographic boundaries of Congressional districts have been determined by state legislatures. The Second District will now consist of Blount, Claiborne, Knox, and Loudon Counties, and about 80% of Jefferson County, and approximately 12% of Campbell County. Each district in Tennessee now has about 710,000 people, but our part of East Tennessee is one of the most popular places to move to in the U.S. and the population is rapidly increasing.

### ✓ **Congressional Representation**

The Founding Fathers thought every state should have at least one member of the House, no matter how small its population.

But they thought it would also be fair to give the high-population states more power in the House and low-population states more power in the Senate. Seven states now have just one member in the House. Tennessee has nine. The states with the most members in the House are California (53), Texas (36), Florida (27), and New York (27). In general, people continue to move out of the high-tax states, primarily in the Northeast, and move into the low-tax states. New York for example had 41 members of the House in 1970. The U.S. now has approximately 314 million people, while Tennessee has a population of about 6.4 million.

### ✓ **Small Towns**

All across the Country, people continue to move out of small towns and rural areas unless they are close to a popular urban area. People say they want land around them, but they mainly want to be near malls, restaurants, movie theatres, hospitals, and water. I read several years ago that you could put every family of four in the State of Texas and give them three acres of land each and leave the rest of the Country empty. It is almost impossible to look at a map of the U.S. on one page of a book and comprehend how big this Country is. But most of the land is in areas where people do not want to live. A Congressman from Arkansas told me about three or four years ago that his District has been de-populating since World War II and that he had to drive 50 miles to the nearest large grocery store

and 100 miles to the nearest multi-screen theatre.

### ✓ **Fiscal Cliff**

I voted against the so-called “fiscal cliff deal” primarily because the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office estimated that it would add almost four trillion dollars to our national debt over the next 10 years. Even before this bill, our debt was projected to go to \$20 trillion over the next four years under optimistic scenarios and possibly as high as \$22 trillion. Now, this legislation will add even more. Our current national debt of \$16.4 trillion, according to the Washington Times, comes out to more than \$52,000 per person, but almost \$146,000 per taxpayer. Our debt was less than three trillion when I first came to Congress, and I voted to reduce spending then because I thought even that was too high. We will not have the strong economy and good jobs that everyone wants or be able to pay Social Security and other pensions with money that will buy very much unless we stop exploding our debt.

### ✓ **Special Breaks**

A sub-headline in the Washington Post said “Special breaks worth \$100 billion were added by Senate.” The largest subsidies went to wind energy companies with breaks totaling approximately \$18 billion. Hollywood movie and TV companies got \$430 million in “special expensing rules” Rum producers in Puerto Rico and

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the Virgin Islands got tax breaks totaling \$222 million, race track owners \$70 million, algae growers \$59 million, and on and on. Liberal columnist Ruth Marcus wrote: "The moment called for a grand bargain. It yielded a pathetic punt."

### ✓ **Higher Taxes**

Higher Taxes – You can never satisfy governments' appetite for money and land. They always want more. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, the fiscal cliff deal included \$620 billion in higher taxes on upper income people over the next 10 years. It also included a payroll tax hike on every worker totaling \$93 billion the first year. I had voted to lower taxes on everyone in 2001, 2003 and again this past Aug. 1. I thought we should have had a bill that cut both taxes and spending. We have temporarily come out of a very lengthy recession primarily due to pent-up demand and because the U.S. is still one of the best places to invest since big government socialism has made most other countries so weak economically. However the "stimulus" passed three years ago proved once again that many more jobs are created by money left in the private sector. This country would boom beyond belief if we could lower most taxes and significantly reduce federal spending.

### ✓ **Government Shutdowns**

The federal government has been shut down 17 times in the last 35 years due to disputes or disagreements about funding. Many of these times most people did not even realize the government was closed. Most were only for one to three days and often occurred over weekends. During fiscal year 1996, the government was shut down twice for a total of 26 days. According to the Congressional Research Service, the government has been shut down for a total of 109 days over these 35 years. Already there is talk about the

possibility of another closure if President Obama will not agree to significant spending cuts in return for Congress allowing an increase in federal borrowing authority (i.e. increasing the national debt).

### ✓ **Sequestration**

No federal department or agency ever wants to cut spending. Thus, they have been screaming to high heaven about the sequestration Congress passed requiring \$109 billion in cuts this fiscal year and roughly the same amount for each of the next nine years. These cuts have been described as "draconian", and they have now been delayed and probably will be reduced. But these cuts, half from defense and half from domestic spending, have been greatly exaggerated. A cut of \$109 billion off of a budget of \$3.8 trillion is a deduction of about 3%. Then the budget is expected to increase each year, so the cuts in the later years would be an even lower percentage. Veronique de Rugy, of George Mason University, wrote in a column that is on my website: "Adjusting for inflation, military spending has grown for an unprecedented 14 consecutive years and is now higher than at any time since World War II. Even excluding war costs, the military base budget has grown by about 50 percent over the past decade."

### ✓ **Multi-Millionaires**

No one in Congress is trying to protect multi-millionaires or billionaires. What the disagreements are about is over whether the money will be spent by the federal government or the private sector. There are just not the same pressures and incentives to spend money wisely or frugally in government as in private business. If a business continually wastes money, it will eventually go out of business. If a federal agency wastes money, it almost always gets more money the next year. I do not enjoy sports as much as I used to because of some of the ridiculous, exorbitant salaries. However, I would

rather the athletes spend and invest their money than to have the federal government spend so much on bureaucratic paperwork or give it to so many millions who are capable of working but unwilling to do so. In 1988, a high tax was placed on luxury yachts because people thought some of the super-rich were not paying their fair share of taxes. All it did was throw over 20,000 boat company workers out of jobs, and the tax was repealed two years later.

### ✓ **Social Security**

The Associated Press reported recently that people retiring in 2012 were the first workers who on average would receive less in Social Security benefits than they had paid in. The report said that this was "an historic shift that will only get worse for future retirees." The average worker retiring in 1960 got back seven times more in benefits than in taxes paid. Because Social Security taxes are progressive, higher-income workers started getting less than they had paid in the 1990's while some very low-income people will still get more for at least a few years. The Urban Institute said a married couple with average incomes who retired last year paid in \$598,000 in Social Security taxes. The study said they will get back 556,000 if the husband lives to 82 and the wife to 85. Some cities have cut their pensions in the last couple of years. The Congress will simply print more and more money to keep from cutting Social Security payments, but the effect will be the same.

### ✓ **Sandy Cost**

Nicole Gelinas of the Manhattan Institute's City Journal has pointed out that the damage from Hurricane Sandy was really far less than Hurricane Katrina. For one example, she said Katrina wiped out 9% of the economy of metropolitan New Orleans, but Sandy destroyed less than 1% of New York's economy. She wrote:

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“Most of the time, New York benefits from being on the coast, even if it carries a risk. New York also benefits from its high population density, but it also pushes up recovery costs. Why shouldn't the state's taxpayers pay to protect these assets?” The federal government should not make taxpayers from all over the Country pay all or even most of these costs.

✓ **Flood Insurance**

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the federal government is insuring \$527 billion worth of homes and property in the nation's coastal flood plains. Total losses paid out for Hurricane Katrina alone exceeded \$16 billion. It is too early to tell what the Sandy-related losses will total, but the affected states are asking for \$60 billion already. A report issued in 2010 by a group called the Institute for Policy Integrity said Congress has set the NFIP premiums too low, effectively subsidizing or encouraging construction in flood-prone areas and that the program benefits the wealthy at the expense of the poor. The federal government should not be in the insurance business, but I have been in a small minority willing to vote against this program.

✓ **Stupid War**

The Washington Post on Jan. 4 carried a column by Zbigniew Brzezinski headlined “The ‘Stupidest’ War?” Dr. Brzezinski was President Carter's main foreign policy advisor, and his son was appointed as U.S. Ambassador to Finland by President Obama. He generally favors very liberal interventionist foreign policies. Dr. Brzezinski wrote that a U.S. war against Iran would cause “ghastly risks of released radiation. Iranian nationalism would be galvanized into prolonged hatred of the United States, to the political benefits of the ruling regime. Iran, in retaliating, could make life more difficult for U.S.

forces in western Afghanistan by activating a new guerilla front. Tehran could also precipitate explosive violence in Iraq which in turn could set the entire region on fire, with conflicts spreading through Syria to Lebanon and even Jordan.” He added that it would disrupt the flow of oil, adversely affecting the economies of Europe and Asia, for which the “United States would be widely blamed.” The National Journal carried an article that said Iran is being “squeezed” by our sanctions and “whenever its leaders feel this cornered, they tend to lash out.”

✓ **Afghanistan**

The latest available figures for Afghanistan report approximately 113,000 U.S. contractors in addition to 66,000 American troops. The Defense Department and other agencies are continuing to enter into contracts that go well beyond when we are supposedly withdrawing at the end of 2014. The Washington Post recently reported that the U.S. will soon award a \$25 million contract to improve a military base there that was built in 2009—in other words, almost new. The National Journal Daily, a non-partisan publication that comes to each member of Congress reported that we are now spending \$30,000 per year each to field and train an Afghan policeman and \$46,000 per year on each Afghan soldier. Afghan forces, counting police and soldiers, that U.S. taxpayers are paying for totaled 352,000 at the end of 2012. This is crazy.

✓ **Afghan Fuel**

The Defense Department has spent \$1.1 billion to supply fuel to the Afghan National Army. Now the Inspector General has reported that there is no proof the fuel is being used for the Army's mission and that it is unknown how much has been lost, stolen, or diverted to the insurgency. The report said the program needs “immediate attention” before being turned over as scheduled to Afghan officers.

✓ **Foreign Aid**

National Public Radio reported on January 8 that Hamid Karzai, the Afghan President who has been very critical of the U.S., wants us to maintain a security presence there long after most of our troops leave. What he really wants is the continued flow of billions of U.S. dollars. Afghanistan without American money is a country with a Gross Domestic Product of a little over \$30 billion and a per capita income of about \$1,000 a year. Some people who and companies which make money off foreign aid will misleadingly say that it is only a little over 1% of the U.S. budget. Direct foreign aid is relatively small. However, what they are not counting when they say that is the hundreds of billions that we spend through almost every federal department and agency helping other countries. Most foreign aid today is done through the Defense Department.

✓ **Costly Wars**

Joseph Stiglitz, a Nobel Prize-winning economist calculated the costs, direct and indirect, of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2008 as between three and five trillion dollars. In 2011, he wrote that the costs would be much higher with almost 50% of the troops who served there receiving some type of disability payments and more than 600,000 treated in VA facilities. He estimated future medical costs at up to \$900 billion. These costs have continued to mount. American military spending, even after the draw-downs in Iraq and Afghanistan still nearly equal defense spending in the rest of the world combined. We can no longer afford to go to war unless there is no other reasonable alternative and then only as a very last resort. The United States is still the greatest and most powerful nation in the world, but there are some limits to American power.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE continued from page 3✓ **War Costs**

Unfortunately, most presidents and prime ministers around the world are at the height of their power and popularity when leading a war. The same is true for their top advisors, cabinet officials, and military officers. In addition, many large companies make their biggest money during wartime, and they fund think tanks and columnists who support interventionist, militaristic foreign policies. Lawyer-Historian John V. Denson edited a few years ago a book that is still timely entitled *The Costs of War*. This book has many outstanding articles. President Eisenhower was accurate in describing the special interests that make up the military-industrial complex. Mr. Denson wrote: "these special interests, along with certain power-seeking politicians and sycophantic intellectuals all working together, often outside the public view, have been the principal impetus for involving America in needless and disastrous wars."

✓ **Brass Creep**

I read several years ago that President Eisenhower said we had too many officers per enlisted men when we had a ratio of one officer for each nine enlisted men. Today, we have one officer for each five enlisted men in the army and Navy and one officer for each four enlisted in the Air Force. This is very expensive. Also, there are now more than three times as many generals and admirals per each 10,000 enlisted personnel than at the end of World War II and twice as many than at the end of the Korean War. Because of the very early retirement for those in the military, retirement pay, especially for high-ranking officers, is spiraling to levels no one ever imagined.

✓ **Free Trade**

The first month of our new free trade agreement with the South Koreans, our trade deficit with them nearly tripled. Our government keeps putting on more

rules, regulations, and red tape on our businesses, making it harder on small and medium-size businesses to survive, but making it easier for extremely big business by wiping out competition. We need trade that is free but also fair. It is very hard for companies in a very highly-regulated country such as ours to compete with companies operating in highly-deregulated countries. Alan Tonelson, of the U.S. Business and Industry Council, called the Korean free trade agreement a "major flop," and wrote that unless a new approach is taken "bigger deficits, greater U.S. debts, less growth and more job loss will remain bipartisanship's main legacy in trade policy." I voted against this agreement. We should be friends with South Korea and trade with it, but not in a way that disadvantages American workers.

✓ **Terror Risk**

For many years companies and agencies that make money off terrorism have greatly exaggerated the threats. Now the University of Maryland has issued a Global Terrorism Index which ranks the U.S. 41st in the world as a target for terrorists and describes our risk as "relatively low." We should spend some money on security, but there are many better, more important things we need to spend our limited funds on. We need to use common sense on this and not simply keep giving in to security company lobbyists. Shortly after 9/11, when the Wall Street Journal noticed that almost every federal department and agency was asking for more money for security, the Paper wrote that from now on, a wise public policy would be to give four times the security and twice the wait to any such request and not just automatically approve any request because it was supposedly for security.

✓ **Fearmongering**

Author James Bamford wrote in the Politico, a Capitol Hill newspaper, about the astounding

growth of the National Security Agency. He reported that the NSA is now bypassing the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court and obtaining phone records of American citizens without warrants. Adrienne Kinne, a former NSA voice interpreter, said the Agency was now listening in on personal, even intimate conversations. Mr. Bamford quoted former Sen. Frank Church (D-ID), who was on Meet The Press in August of 1975: "That capability at any time could be turned around on the American people and no American would have any privacy left, such is the capability to monitor everything.... If this government ever became a tyrant, if a dictator ever took charge in this country, the technological capacity that the intelligence community has given the government could enable it to impose total tyranny, and there would be no way to fight back...." As is almost always the case with the federal government, much of this growth has been for money. Mr. Bamford concluded: "What Sen. Church likely never anticipated was the rise of the security-industrial complex, a revolving door between those generating the fears and those profiting from them."

✓ **SWAT Teams**

Brian Walsh of the Heritage Foundation wrote in a Washington newspaper about 13 agents from the U.S. Education Department who raided a home in California at gunpoint at 6:00 in the morning. They took Kenneth Wright outside in his boxer shorts, threw him to the ground, handcuffed him, and held him for six hours, terrifying his three children, ages 3, 9, and 11. All this was done to investigate his estranged wife's use of federal student aid, but she did not even live in that house. Mr. Walsh said the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center trains agents for over 80 federal agencies "including dozens with no business training and fielding

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armed officers.” The CATO Institute estimates there are now 40,000 SWAT team raids a year. Many are necessary. But Mr. Walsh added that “Paramilitary raids by out-of-control federal agencies against ordinary citizens, who may not have violated any law, are a growing threat to our safety... Giving the federal government too many laws, too many regulations and too many armed agents is a formula for disaster for our individual rights and freedom.”

✓ **Farm Bill**

Very little of what we now call the Farm Bill goes to small farmers. Christine Harbin, a policy analyst at Americans for Prosperity, wrote recently: “Policymakers talk about the Farm Bill like it’s about farms. But it’s not. The Farm Bill is a giant welfare bill. Eighty percent goes toward food stamp and nutrition programs, and the rest is corporate welfare for the agribusiness industry.” She pointed out that in the 1970’s only one in 50 Americans received food stamps, while today it is one in seven. Eligibility requirements have been eased, and those who run the program have no incentive to keep people off. They will get bigger offices, staffs and funding if even more people get food stamps. And, actually people are not given stamps anymore but something similar to a credit card.

✓ **Costly Mandate**

Many years ago environmentalists joined with the giant Agribusiness lobby to get Congress to mandate that our gasoline contained ethanol made from corn. In 2012, this mandate required 13.2 billion gallons of corn alcohol to be blended into petroleum-based fuels. In 2008 Time Magazine had a cover story about what it called the “Clean Energy Scam.” This is because people now realize that total carbon-dioxide emissions from growing, harvesting, processing, and burn-

ing corn as fuel are greater than those from oil and gas use. What this has done is to drive up food prices all over the world. It hurts poor people worst because they have to spend a higher percentage of their income on food. I hope the Congress will vote to end this mandate and let the free market work so corn and meat costs will go down. The Washington Times said “lawmakers should cure Uncle Sam of playing god by ending his rule over King Corn and banning the ethanol mandate.”

✓ **Food Labeling**

Several years ago, I voted against the U.S. becoming a member of the World Trade Organization. This was mainly done for the convenience and profits of giant multinational companies. We could have carried on trade with every nation without being a member of the WTO. Now, that organization has ruled that we cannot have Country of Origin labeling laws telling consumers where the food they are buying was raised or grown. The U.S. was given 15 months to amend its Country of Origin laws to conform to WTO rules. The WTO has ruled against the U.S. position on several other cases as well. Thus, we have lost a very important part of our sovereignty as a Nation on trade matters.

✓ **Hopeful Signs**

The most hopeful sign for the U.S. economy may be in oil production. Daniel Yergin, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his book on the history of the oil industry, gave an interview to the Wall Street Journal this past September 17. He said as recently as 2008 people thought we were going to run out of oil: “Since then, U.S. oil production has grown about 25%. As has happened in the past, technology has opened doors people didn’t know were there or didn’t think could be opened. We expect to see tight-oil production (oil extracted from dense rock formations) grow dramatically over the rest of this decade. If you take what’s happening in the U.S.

and what’s happening in Brazil and Canada, we’re going to see a rebalancing of global oil flows.” He said by the end of this decade we could be importing very little oil. Environmentalists and our Secretary of Energy want gas prices to go way up so people will drive less. But it would lower the price of almost everything if the price of oil could significantly decrease.

✓ **Medical Cost**

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the official estimates for the cost of Obamacare, since it was passed in 2010, have doubled, and the bill is not even fully implemented yet. Cost estimates for government medical programs have always been grossly under-estimated on the front end. Taxes and fees on almost all companies are going up because of this legislation and these costs will be passed on to the consumer in the form of higher prices. In addition, CBO estimates that 30 million Americans will pay penalties of at least \$55 billion and companies will pay \$117 billion in penalties by 2022. CBO has predicted that Obamacare will cost \$1.68 trillion over the next 10 years. I sure hope it will not be more, but it probably will be much more. The estimated hike in insurance premiums will be \$400 per family. The Washington Examiner editorialized that “Obamacare will provide less at greater cost” and that this “mandate-regulate-tax-spend approach to health care... was never right for America.”

✓ **Lost Jobs**

As one of many ways to gain revenue to pay for Obamacare, a new 2.3% tax on gross revenue of companies that make medical devices will begin this year. This tax translates to approximately 15% of profits on top of the 35% corporate tax and state and local taxes. Because of this Cook Medical, Boston Scientific, Stryker Corp., Medtronic, Covidien, and Zimmer Companies have all cited this tax as

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the reason for building plants in China, Mexico, Ireland, and Costa Rica, and for laying off hundreds of U.S. workers (1,000 in the case of Stryker). Several of these companies – possibly all – have already planned charges against earnings ranging from \$50 million to \$175 million.

### ✓ **Healthcare Taxes**

In addition to the increased taxes in the fiscal cliff bill, there are several new taxes for Obamacare. A few examples, provided by the group Americans For Tax Reform, include the medical device tax (\$20 billion), Investment Income Surtax (\$123 billion), Special Needs Kid Tax (\$13 billion), Reducing Itemized Medical Deductions (\$15 billion) and Medicare Payroll Tax Hike (\$86 billion). The CBO projects a \$642 billion increase on federal spending for Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program. And states will have to increase their own Medicaid (TennCare) spending by many billions due to federal requirements to cover more people.

### ✓ **MF Global**

One of the largest financial collapses of a single firm in U.S. history was that of MF Global, headed by former Senator Jon Corzine (D-NJ). At least \$1.6 billion and some reports say almost \$2 billion of customer money was lost, with no one able to explain what happened to it. Sixty-five members of Congress wrote a letter to Attorney General Holder asking that a special outside prosecutor be appointed to investigate this matter since Mr. Holder's former law firm represented MF Global and because Mr. Corzine raised \$500,000 for President Obama. Peter Schweizer, of Stanford University and President of the Government Accountability Institute, wrote that unless a special prosecutor was appointed "citizens on both ends of the ideological spectrum will be left to wonder whether

cronyism-not objectivity-has blinded lady justice."

### ✓ **Green Energy**

The Washington Post reported that former Vice President Gore had accumulated a fortune of \$100 million (before the sale of his TV network) partly by investing in alternative energy firms subsidized by the Obama Administration. Post columnist Charles Lane wrote: "Green energy is not cost-competitive with traditional energy and won't be for years. So it can't work without either taxpayer subsidies, much of which accrue to 'entrepreneurs' such as Gore, or higher prices for fossil energy – the brunt of which is borne by the people of modest means."

### ✓ **Energy Subsidies**

There is much publicity given to what some people call subsidies for big oil. Actually, most of these are just standard tax write-offs given to any business, large or small. And, if we raise taxes on oil companies, they will simply raise the price at the pump. The energy companies that have received by far the most subsidies and tax breaks percentage wise are wind and solar firms. Despite massive, mega-billion dollar true subsidies and tax breaks, over the last 30 years to the wind and solar industries, only 1.5% of our energy is produced by wind, and a miniscule .1% by solar companies. I am all for wind and solar energy as long as those companies can stand on their own with the same tax write-offs as ordinary businesses. I do not think the federal government should subsidize any business.

### ✓ **Lower Taxes**

A smaller government with lower taxes would better for almost everyone, especially lower income people. A very high percentage of the wealthy have gained their wealth from government contracts, favorable regulatory rulings, special tax breaks, or government jobs that later lead to

big money. This is why seven of the 10 wealthiest counties in the U.S. are in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. President Andrew Jackson wrote in 1832: "It is to be regretted that the rich and powerful too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes. When the laws undertake to... grant titles, gratuities, and exclusive privileges, to make the rich richer and the potent more powerful, the humble members of society – the farmers, mechanics, and laborers – who have neither the time nor the means of securing like favors to themselves have a right to complain of the injustice...". Lower taxes lead to more jobs and help keep prices steady since businesses pass their taxes on to the consumer. The bigger government grows, the bigger the gap grows between the rich and the poor.

### ✓ **Bureaucratic Mumbo-Jumbo**

A relatively new federal agency called the Consumer Financial Protection Board has now come up with a proposal that runs over 1,000 pages to "simplify" mortgages. In other words, the federal government has produced something that is more detailed, complicated, and bureaucratic than ever to make things more simple. Only our upside-down, Orwellian federal government could come up with something like this. Then, on top of this, the Dodd-Frank law that created the CFPB in the first place has itself produced thousands of pages of rules and regulations.

### ✓ **Crime Problem**

I was told on the first day that I was a Criminal Court Judge, in 1981, that 98% of the defendants in felony cases came from broken homes. This was not totally accurate, but it was close. I handled well over 10,000 cases because almost all defendants in criminal court plead guilty and apply for probation. Almost every day for 7 ½ years, I would read things like "Defendant's fa-

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ther left home when Defendant was two and never returned” or “Defendant’s father left home to get a pack of cigarettes and never came back”. It was not 98%, but it was probably over 90% of the defendants who came from father-absent households. Millions of good people come from these homes, too. But I do know that young boys really need a good male role model in their lives. And I heard a psychologist say that almost all the mass and school shooters at least since the 1980’s have been young men with deep-seated anger who have been on strong psychotic medication and/or have come from what is politely referred to as dysfunctional families. Also, many people believe, and I agree, that too much time spent watching extremely violent video games and movies, and too much time spent on the internet rather than in human interaction has been very harmful to many young men.

### ✓ **Progressives ?**

Because big-government liberalism has become so unpopular, most liberals have started calling themselves “progressives.” However, too much government leads to less progress, not more. The most progressive system is true free market capitalism. We are moving further away from that each year with our big government, big business duopoly. All over the world, countries like Russia, Cuba, most African nations, and others which have had too much of their GDP go to their federal or central government have ended up with terrible economies and very low standards of living.

### ✓ **Growing Government**

William Lind, writing last year in the American Conservative Magazine, gave the best explanation I have read about why government just grows and grows and grows. He wrote that it is a powerful and normal human emotion to want to get along with the people you work

with: “If, as a political appointee, you become your department’s advocate, everyone likes you. You can count on smiles all around, especially if you succeed in increasing the budget. If, on the contrary, you do your duty, you are regarded as a traitor... Should you succeed in actually cutting spending, you will be the object of an effort to replace you. Your closest associates will scheme with allies in industry and on Capitol Hill to undermine you at the White House.” But, if you become your department’s advocate and get it more money “when you leave government service the interests who benefited from the funds you acquired will remember you” with jobs, directors or consulting fees and/or lobbying contracts.

### ✓ **Logging Case**

In December the Supreme Court heard the case of Georgia Pacific West v. Northwest Environmental Defense Center. This case is an appeal from a ruling by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that every drainage ditch and culvert on a logging road should be regulated under the Clean Water Act. Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) said this decision, if not reversed, “would shut down forestry on private, state, and federal lands.” Judge Milan Smith of the 9th Circuit, who was not on this case, wrote: “No legislature or regulatory agency would enact sweeping rules that create such economic chaos.” Almost everyone believes the 9th Circuit decision is a very radical one that goes far beyond what Congress intended when it passed the Clean Water Act in 1972. It would greatly increase the cost of every type of paper product and everything made from wood, destroy thousands of jobs, and it corrects a problem that does not exist. John Gordon, former Dean of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, has written that the present system has produced “vast improvements in all aspects of forest engineering... as well as research

on fish and wildlife habitat and protection of riverbanks and the areas around them.”

### ✓ **Isolationism**

People who are not eager to go to war and who do not support spending billions on other countries are sometimes called isolationists. Usually this name-calling is done by those who stand to gain money or power by following interventionist policies and who want to avoid a discussion on the merits. It is not isolationist to believe wars should be entered only as a last resort when there is no other reasonable alternative. It is not isolationist to believe in trade and tourism and cultural and educational exchanges with other countries and aid to a limited extent during humanitarian crises. It is not isolationist to believe that we should take care of our own people and country first. It is very foolish to try to run the world when we are many trillions in debt, and it also creates much resentment in other countries.

### ✓ **Land Trusts**

There are now at least 1723 land trusts and conservancies in the U.S. acquiring land at a rapid rate. Total acres under the control of local, state, and national land trusts grew to 47 million at the end of 2010, doubling since 2000. Donations of land to these trusts is always ballyhooed in the newspapers as being a good thing. Yet it is being done to get big tax write-offs, and the end result is that much of this land ends up in government ownership. We keep taking more and more land off the tax rolls at the same time police and teachers and others say they need more money. It also results in much less developable land, making it much harder and more expensive for young families to buy homes, forcing more people into townhouses, apartments, or homes on postage-stamp size lots. I remember seeing a headline a few years ago in Washington that said “Judge Saves Land from Development.” It could

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have also said “Judge Preserves Land for Wealthy” or “Judge Keeps Young People from Being Able to Afford Homes”. Generally, the wealthy people who donate this land and get their tax write-offs reserve life estates for themselves and/or their families. Often, this is beautiful waterfront property. They take care of themselves but prevent others from having similar opportunities in the future.

### ✓ **Citizenship**

The ABC national newscast a few months ago featured Denise Rich, one of almost 1800 people who renounced their U.S. citizenship to avoid future American taxes. Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY) described the action as “despicable.” Ms. Rich gave up her citizenship under her maiden name, Denise Eisenberg. She is the ex-wife of Marc Rich, who had fled the country to avoid paying \$40 million to the IRS after being indicted on charges of tax evasion, fraud, racketeering, and illegally trading oil with Iran. Reuters News Service reported in the story on Ms. Eisenberg’s citizenship: “Marc Rich received a presidential pardon in 2001 on President Bill Clinton’s last day in office. Federal prosecutors and Congress investigated the pardon and in 2002 a House of Representatives Committee concluded Denise Rich had swayed the action through donations to the Clinton library and campaign.”

### ✓ **Greedy Charities**

A few weeks ago, I heard on a national newscast that the California Attorney General was investigating a charity for hospitalized soldiers. Several years ago one of my Congressional committees investigated some charities that were paying exorbitant salaries and expenses for their top officials. Some people have created charities supposedly for wounded soldiers, handicapped or underprivileged children, or to fight some life-threatening disease. Actually, many of these national charities are spending most of their money on salaries, benefits, and very expensive television ads or direct mail attacks. Just as the most efficient, least wasteful government is at the local level, where more people can keep an eye on it, the best charities are local organization and churches.

### ✓ **Next Generation**

We frequently hear people say it is wrong to place such a huge burden on our children and grandchildren, but little is ever done about it. Warren Dean, a Washington lawyer and Georgetown law professor, quoted Lawrence Summers, a former advisor to President Obama, as saying “the great economic questions for the next generation” will be how to pay for the exploding costs of government. Mr. Dean wrote in the Washington Times: “Yet there is no assurance that the next generation will be able to come up with answers to these ques-

tions... In eight short years, the President will have burdened the country with about the same amount of debt it accumulated in its entire history. In fact, his policies will leave the country about \$25 trillion in debt in the next 10 years. Then it will cost more to service the debt than it costs to pay for a wartime Defense Department. Where does that leave the next generation?”

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