

Thursday, April 26th, 2007

*"Always vote for principle, though you may vote alone, and you may cherish the sweetest reflection that your vote is never lost." -- John Quincy Adams*

**Standing Alone:** Following the crowd is not leading, and sometimes, leading can be quite a lonely experience. I did not seek this job in Congress just to have it, and to only take actions and votes that are "safe." I took it to be a force for moving America more towards the principles of personal freedom, less intrusive government, and to help preserve America's role as the greatest source of liberty in the world.

This week, we in Congress voted on a bill called "10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds Science and Math Scholarship Act" (HR 362). This bill is not the tipping point upon which our freedoms rest. But, it is certainly not fiscally responsible. And if we don't start to say "no" to new spending no matter how attractive it may seem, we will never control our deficit and further reduce tax rates.

The vote on this bill, though, ended up being 389-22, which means that the vast majority of both Democrats and Republicans supported it. I was one of the 22 who voted no. The people who supported the bill did so mostly because it attempts to address our nation's acknowledged problem of not graduating enough math and science majors to keep our technological preeminence. Many, I believe, were afraid that a "no" vote would be equated with opposing more math and science learning. Also, there was heavy lobbying in favor.

But, just because a bill has the intention of solving a problem doesn't mean it is good or will actually solve it. That, in my opinion, is the case with this bill. I opposed it for these reasons:

This bill and its companion (HR 363) cost \$2.75 billion over 5 years in entirely new spending and new programs. This will not help balance the budget or reduce taxes.

There is lots of money in here for "recruitment" of and scholarships for math and science college students. But there are no guarantees that they will stay in those majors or work in that field after graduation.

Even if we knew this would generate more graduates and workers, why do we single out these fields for special taxpayer subsidies? There are many graduate degrees in many graduate fields that have important social, medical, and national security benefits to society. I have serious reservations with singling out one particular type of graduate degree for federal benefits, while there are hundreds of others that have equal or greater value to our nation.

Despite, or perhaps because of, increasing government subsidies of education, the cost of educational tuition and fees as measured by the consumer price index has risen 384% since 1984. That is a greater rise than the cost of medical care. It is nearly 4 times the rate of increase in the cost of housing, food energy or transportation. There is no evidence that increasing these subsidies will result in lower fees to the end user

OK, so I wasn't quite alone. 21 of my colleagues voted with me. But, we must begin to limit this government spending with questionable benefits, so that individual Americans have more freedom to do as they choose with their hard earned money

**0.0002%:** As expected, the bill we voted on last week to give residents of the District of Columbia more influence than the rest of us passed by a largely partisan vote of 241-177-1. But the majority had a problem before the bill reached the floor. It carried a cost of \$2.5 million. So, they had to find a way to pay for this under their new "pay-as-you-go" rule. Now, \$2.5 million in the grand scheme of a 3 trillion dollar budget is not a great deal of money. It represents less than 0.0002% of spending. You would think that it would be pretty easy to find that much spending somewhere in our mammoth budget.

But, that is not what the Democratic majority did. Instead, they increased estimated tax payments on some taxpayers as a gimmick to raise the money. Now, if they chose to raise tax payments rather than find a 0.0002% reduction in spending growth now, what confidence is there that they will cut anything rather than raise taxes in the future? None.

**No Fox:** The Congressional Black Caucus has stated that they may remove themselves as a co-organizer of a Democratic presidential candidate debate to be held on Fox News Channel. They may do so because, in the words of Diane Watson (D-CA) "Fox news brings the right-wing side of the news, and there's no sense in participating in that kind of game playing." Under that reasoning, perhaps Republicans should refuse to participate with CBS, NBC, ABC, CNN.....

**Iraq and Afghanistan Wars:** As expected last night, the House passed (218-212-1) the final conference report version of the "defeat with a side of pork" bill. It is now on its way to a certain presidential veto. In all the hours of speeches on this subject, the Democrats who have criticized President Bush for "not having a plan for the peace" in Iraq have themselves articulated no plan for what happens after their proposed withdrawal. If the present government collapses, will we try to prevent genocide? Will Al Qaeda's operations in Iraq be left alone? What if Iran or Syria moved in? Do we just ignore the middle east altogether? What if diplomatic efforts fail, do we re-invade the country? It is insufficient for the party in charge to be against a plan on the table without offering an alternative that address these likely results following a premature withdrawal.

Just in case you thought I never agree with Democrats. Here is an article from Senator Joe

Lieberman (D-Conn.) that is right on. From today's Washington Post

Until next week, I remain respectfully,

Congressman John Campbell