

Tuesday, April 10, 2007

**The Federal City:** That is what George Washington called the city we now know as Washington, DC. He knew it was to be named after him, but he never called it that himself. The FederalCity was intentionally created by the founders as a jurisdiction that was not a state so that no state could claim the mantle of being the nation's capitol and wield the extra power that would inure thereto. Hence, the FederalCity does not have a voting Member of Congress or two U.S. Senators. Since 1971, however, the FederalCity has had a "delegate" to the House who could vote in committee but not on the floor. The fact that this delegate is not a full House member creates some consternation in DC which is why the license plates on cars in DC read "taxation without representation." President Bush had those words removed from the plates on his presidential limousine.

This year, a bill has been introduced (HR 1433) to make that "delegate" into a full fledged voting member of the House. In order to continue the balance between Republicans and Democrats another seat would be added to the State of Utah. Therefore, this bill would increase the size of the House by two to 437 members.

I vigorously oppose this idea. The FederalCity is largely made up of employees of the Federal government or ancillary businesses that rely on the federal government to exist. They already have a disproportionate influence on the federal government because we in Congress are all arguably more accessible to them than to our own constituents. Also, they are largely running much of the government which is why they live there. To give them a full House member (and maybe later 2 Senators) would make the residents even more disproportionately influential on the affairs of government than they already are.

**Christmas in March:** Last week, I discussed the House emergency war spending bill, which contained a provision setting a firm timetable for defeat in Iraq. To win support for the measure, the Democratic leadership, packed it with over \$20 billion in pork and special handouts.

I am disappointed by all of this. If the Democrat's cannot convince Congress of the merits of their "slow bleed" Iraq policy, then they should work on their salesmanship -- not just start handing out cold-hard cash. This is reckless, irresponsible, and not fair to the taxpayer.

But, there's more. At the close of last week, the Senate threw in their own \$20 billion in un-related spending. Bills like this are often called "Christmas Tree's" here in DC because of the spending added into them are like presents wrapped up under the tree for members to enjoy. But, in one of the great ironies of this entire debate, the Senate's version of the war funding bill literally pays for the Christmas tree too. Among the more than \$20 billion is a provision to provide millions for Christmas tree farm assistance. There is also a provision that deals with the proceeds of holiday ornament sales at the Senate day care center....I guess the only thing they left out was the fruit cake.

Below is a sampling of the pork being handed out:

- \$3 million for a sugar cane cooperative in Hawaii
- \$20 million to combat cricket infestation
- \$1.2 billion for dairy farmers
- \$24 million for sugar beet growers
- \$100 million for the Presidential Nominating Convention's that are over two years away. It is included in a section described as "Katrina recovery, veterans' care and for other purposes."
  
- \$3.5 million for guided tours of the U.S. Capitol Building
- \$12 million for Forest Service money requested by the president in the non-emergency FY2008 budget
- \$22.8 million for geothermal research and development
- \$13 million for a Ewe Lamb Replacement and Retention Programs
- \$32 million for Livestock Indemnity Program
- \$100 million for Small Agricultural Dependent Businesses

Yep, it's Christmas here in Congress. But the only gifts we should be receiving are stockings full of coal.

**Cesar Chavez:** In California, we have a state holiday (March 31st) in recognition of Cesar Chavez. But there is a move afoot amongst California's Democratic Congressional delegation to make this into a national holiday. Since the speaker is also from California, this may get legs.

This is another awful idea. There is first of all the immense cost to taxpayers of giving all federal employees another paid holiday or pay them overtime to work that day. It doesn't make sense

to honor a union organizer with separate holiday. We don't honor a single president, military commander, or signer of the declaration with their own day. So what makes Chavez worthy when all of these aren't?

Until next week, I remain respectfully,

Congressman John Campbell