

[http://www.philly.com/philly/opinion/20131022 Letters to the Editor.html](http://www.philly.com/philly/opinion/20131022_Letters_to_the_Editor.html)

## People, not pillars

If America is going to reduce its government debt, it needs to do so in a carefully planned manner that doesn't harm citizens through overly zealous cutting. The fact that tea-party folks were terribly upset and exercised over the government's cutting off access to cold, lifeless, stone monuments during the shutdown - but apparently couldn't care less about families with children who couldn't get food stamps and the like - shows that tea-party Republicans simply can't be trusted to make good choices for the rest of us.

## Online comments

Posted 8:13 AM, 10/22/2013

Ahhh, Ben and Richmond...what a surprise. By Ben's logic, the years before Reagan were great (Carter) and BO's increases in the size of government have cut the deficits. Does he really believe this stuff or is he selling a pig in a poke? As for Richmond, he just wanted us to know he hates tea party folk.

— **Fro 75**

Posted 12:27 PM, 10/22/2013

I accept the same reality that the Wall Street Journal

<http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2013/10/22/democrats-reach-out-to-business-after-shutdown/> and that Politifact

<http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2012/sep/06/bill-clinton/bill-clinton-says-democratic-presidents-top-republ/> does, that Democrats are better for business than the other party is.

— **rich2506**

- Posted 12:33 PM, 10/22/2013  
How come Ben ask all good questions?

How come Ben will not get any good answers?

— **how\_come**

- Posted 12:41 PM, 10/22/2013  
Sure rich, 2 blogs.

— **Fro 75**

- Posted 12:45 PM, 10/22/2013  
How come some people believe that federal debt does not matter? How Come some people believe that government is inherently good when history teaches just the opposite? How come some people believe 40 years of failed liberal policies in our big cities should be expanded? How Come some people are unable to think critically?

— **Fro 75**

- Posted 1:41 PM, 10/22/2013  
Fro 75 (You forgot to number your questions, so I did that for you) 1. It's not that debt

doesn't matter, it's that we have other, higher priorities. If employment was in good shape and our infrastructure was sound and well-maintained and we didn't have an environmental catastrophe in the making, then paying attention to debt would be a good priority.

2. Government is a tool. Tools can be used for good or for ill. Tools are value-neutral. Everything depends on who controls the tool.

3. If liberals had had complete control over the resources that we have available to carry out policies, then we could say that their policies had failed. They didn't, they were dependent on a Ronald Reagan-designed economy that was skewed toward helping the 1%. Lyndon Johnson's Great Society was working just fine before the Vietnam War used up all the resources that we might have put into it.

4. I don't know why Tea Party people can't think critically.

— **rich2506**

- Posted 7:37 PM, 10/22/2013

@rich2506- How do you feel about the "tools" at the IRS that gave away 132 billion in EITC credits to those that didn't qualify? How will the ACA subsidy handout be any different?

— **Wiseman6**

- Posted 8:24 PM, 10/22/2013

Free tools are great, \$17 billion tools are not. Employment will never be in good shape because the government has strangled the private economy. Government employment is bogus. If you are referring to "global warming", get ready for the next ice age. The Great Society worked fine right up until riots that burned down the cities, drugs took over the culture, and we ran out of real money. I am not a "tea party" person, I just believe that the government is too big, and that power corrupts & absolute power corrupts absolutely. Wiseman - rich believes handouts are good if they result in votes.

— **Fro 75**

- Posted 10:12 PM, 10/22/2013

@Wiseman6, yeah \$11 billion a year or 21-25% of EITC payments is indeed pretty bad. <http://www.treasury.gov/tigta/auditreports/2013reports/201340084fr.pdf>

Fro 75, must say, I never understood this apparently profound distinction between a government job and a private sector job. In both cases, a need is identified and an institution pays individuals to address that need. Government jobs are meant to address needs where doing the job will not result in a profit, for instance, when someone is being a policeman or a park ranger. Obviously, investigations and corrective action like what has taken place in the EITC case (Well, the investigation is complete, the corrective action hasn't taken place yet) are needed.

— **rich2506**

- Posted 6:52 AM, 10/23/2013

@rich2506- So how will the government run ACA subsidy be different? How is the US taxpayer supposed to have confidence in that end of ACA given IRS trouble with EITC and the website rollout? Convince us why anyone should have any confidence in the government to accomplish anything efficiently.

— **Wiseman6**

- Posted 8:29 AM, 10/23/2013  
@rich2506- The difference in public vs private sector jobs is that in the instance of public sector jobs, you have a conflict of interest. If the government has a vested interest in putting more people to work (ie reduce unemployment) while having an unlimited budget, you can see how there would be a temptation for government to make itself look good by hiring marginal (non-essential perhaps??) employees.

Private sector on the other hand due to budgetary and profit motives, only hires when it actually has work for the person to do.

— **Wiseman6**

- Posted 8:58 AM, 10/23/2013  
Money is removed from the economy to fund public sector jobs. Certainly this is necessary in many cases. Certainly in many cases it is not.

— **Fro 75**

- Posted 9:32 PM, 10/23/2013  
@Wiseman6, the statement "government has a vested interest in putting more people to work (ie reduce unemployment) while having an unlimited budget" isn't quite accurate. "The government" includes Republicans, who are determined to starve the public sector of funds, whether the funds are needed or not (See - sequester, which the Republican Congress seems perfectly happy to keep in place).

Yes, in general, during times like these, with lots of unemployed people, there's not only a self-interested reason to get people employed, there are very good public policy reasons to do so anyway. One of the problems I cited when people were discussing stagflation and Keynesian theory was that putting large public expenditures on top of a full-employment economy is a really bad combination. So no, there's no reason to fund the hiring of people for jobs that don't need to be done.

Yes, the public sector lacks the automatic stabilizers that the private sector has, but we as a nation decided in the 1890s (The Progressive Era) that the private sector can't run itself without regulation anyway.

— **rich2506**

- Posted 10:36 AM, 10/24/2013  
rich, what happens to all of the people hired in the public sector today when the economy magically returns to "good times"?

— **Fro 75**

- Posted 7:31 AM, 10/26/2013  
Nothing "magical" about returning to good times. The tendency is to improve. The reason we want Keynesian stimulus is that depending on free enterprise to do the recovery job all by itself means waiting too long. We don't want to tell everyone from third-graders to college freshmen "Oh, hey, sorry kids. You'll have to get by without a year of schooling." Not do we want scientific research projects to wait, food inspections to wait, etc. I've heard plenty of complaints that government work is "merely" temporary work and is not a "real" job. What's wrong with a temporary job if it holds someone over until the economy gets back on its feet?

— **rich2506**

Nicholas Odell Oct 22, 2013 1:43 PM

Saw your letter in the Inquirer today. Typical uninformed liberal nonsense.

What were the Republicans asking the Dems and Obama to agree to? Do you know? I'm not talking about the ultra-right fringe, who are largely ignored by the party leadership. I'm speaking about the GOP's reasonable demands in exchange for signing off on yet another Continuing Resolution.

1) Reverse Obama's *illegal* deletion of the original provision in the ACA, that members of Congress, the Executive, and their staffs should be included. If Obamacare is so great, surely government members should be included. As I said, that was part of the original Act. A president - even the imperial Obama - cannot change or delete parts of a law passed by Congress and signed by him;

2) Include ordinary Americans in the one-year waiver Obama (again illegally) gave to big business, unions and other big campaign contributors. Actually, the sole reason he did this was with the 2014 mid-term elections in mind. Had major industries and businesses not been granted a waiver of the mandate, they would have stepped up the current wave of reducing hours, laying people off, and not hiring; and the unions, who originally were all for Obamacare, having finally realized what it meant for their members, wanted out. As it now emerges, the \$640 million Obozo & Co. wasted on a web site using 10-year-old software, itself faulty and requiring rewriting several million lines of code, means that only a tiny fraction of the 7 million sign-ups needed by next March to make the plan viable will have been successful. So - giggle - he's going to be forced to grant everyone a waiver; the IRS can hardly fine people for not getting insurance through the exchanges that they can't access.

Gee, as the Dem halfwits said, that's really "holding a gun to our heads," "blackmail," "extortion," "terrorism," etc.

As for your comment on "cold, lifeless stone monuments;" obviously you never put on uniform or you'd never have spoken so stupidly. Those stone monuments honor people who gave their lives to allow buffoons like you to write such rubbish. And reflect on this; the cost of putting barricades around them, and manning them with guards, exceeded by far the cost of continuing the regular National Park staff at the sites. As a leaked email from a White House staffer said, the intention was "to inflict as much pain as possible." Finally, the cost of 55 minutes' flying time on Air Force One to take Obozo's dog to join them in Martha's Vineyard would have paid for the staffs at all the monuments, plus opening the White House to tours for a year.

I guess "inflicting as much pain as possible" to families of brave servicemen killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, canceling the customary honor by flying them to Dover AFB to greet their returning sons, plus delaying the also traditional \$100,000 grant to the families, was just more "tea party folks terribly upset and exercised."

Keep drinking the KoolAid, Mr. Obamabot.

My response

Oct 22, 2013 6:03 PM

First off, I'm a veteran myself (PN3, USN, 1991-2001), so I fully understand what it is to close down monuments. The fact that Republican Congresspeople suggested the highly selective opening of very narrow, specific departments shows they don't really care about most of what government

does, but hoo-boy! Do they scream and holler when it touches things they care about! BTW, the monuments were closed during the Gingrich shutdown of the 90s, so regardless of whether Obama's people thought there was political advantage in closing selected parts of the government, those parts would most likely have been closed anyway. Not really sure why the President would seek to make the shutdown comfortable for the opposition party in any event.

No, you haven't told me anything I was unaware of. When an opposition party has refused to have anything to do with composing or passing a law, they have absolutely zero business bitching and griping about how the law is implemented. Most of the law was ready to go and methods of signing up other than via the web are working just fine.

I'm distressed and was surprised when the website was so bad, seeing as Obama's reelection software was of really high quality and capability (It was designed to query about 100 million voter records and to get mega-terabytes of data back and forth over the space of just a few hours). The President's team for the ACA software has blamed a procurement system that forced them to use really inappropriate software and sources. As I can't see how Obama could possibly have benefited from a non-working website, I'll take their word for that.

Rich

Ted A Roehrig-Senior  
Oct 22, 2013 3:56 PM

Mr. Gardner:

With all due respect, you must have flunked reading and math, probably in Philly schools. You praise Obama for spending only 30% more than incoming Federal revenue, when 40% more has been his track record. Or was it pressure from the Tea Party and sequester that reduced that spending, not Obama. Your Debt math is also a bit fuzzy. When Obama became President, the Federal Debt was \$7.5 trillion, and after just 4+ years, it has more than doubled to over \$17 trillion. The Debt Ceiling has been raised 7 times during his "leadership", as his administration has added more Debt than all other previous administrations **combined**, including that of "W" (I thought we stopped blaming him for all of Obama's failures?).

Please get your facts straight, and answer one key question: *"If you keep spending 30-40% more than the revenue coming in, what does that lead to other than bankruptcy?"* Further, the debt used to be owed to American citizens, but is now widely held by China, India, Malaysia, and other foreign interests. After all the physical wars Americans have fought and won, we are about to lose the *Financial War*, while you apparently want to keep on spending.

Tax increases are not the answer, as more taxes leaves less in consumer pockets to spend, reducing demand for products, therefor fewer jobs and resulting in more Americans on welfare and food stamps. Tax CUTS have demonstrated just the opposite effect. Oh, and regarding your claim that "food stamps and the like" were curtailed, that is patently untrue. I know first hand as my niece has been on Food Stamps for over 10 years, while sitting on her can not looking for work, all the time complaining she's not getting enough from the government (a.k.a. federal Taxpayers). Wonder where the problem is??

The problem with the Tea Party is they don't go far enough and should fight for a Balanced Budget. True, some people legitimately need temporary help to tide them over, but over 50% of our citizens pay absolutely NO Federal Income Tax, while the rest of us, the 49%ers, foot the whole bill. Earlier

in the 20th Century, the "no pay" figure ranged between 15-30%, recognizing kids and Seniors who owe no taxes, along with folks who needed temporary help during bad times. But "The New Deal", "Great Society", and other unfunded and failed social programs have exacerbated the problem as more able-bodied citizens don't pay anything toward the cause. They are truly the fiscal problem, and your liberal solutions have made matters worse. 70 years of socialism, and none of it is working.

The 49%ers can no longer afford your brand of socialism, nor a workforce that is either unemployed or flipping burgers at McDonalds. Corporations are reducing hours to "part-time basis" as they too cannot be competitive with the ObamaCare costs. You can't add 40 million uninsured to the insured rolls and have a fiscally sound system. Those that don't get insurance are supposed to pay a penalty (now that's a nice punitive solution), yet the ACA provides no means to collect that "tax" (fee - whatever you want to call it).

Nothing is going right for our country these days, either foreign or domestic, yet *your* leader gets a free pass in the liberal media. He is dooming us to irrelevance.

My response (I normally take points in the order they're given)  
Oct 22, 2013 5:29 PM

Mr. Roehrig,

To pick and choose and to jump around from one point to another:

No, I never said food stamps had been curtailed. Tea Party Congresspeople suggested selectively opening up just the parts of the government they liked and leaving everything else closed. They never mentioned re-opening or funding programs that people live off of, such as food stamps. Was the program in danger? Not really, they had money to last until mid-November.

Sorry to hear about your lazy niece. I was in the Navy (PN3, USN, 1991-2001) and was absolutely astonished to learn that there actually were people who just wanted to sit around and twiddle their thumbs all day. Never understood people like that, but a rebuttal to a statement by Maine Governor Paul LePage counted up how many Mainers actually fit his definition of "the 47% "who don't want to work.

"Currently, around 65% of Mainers over the age of 15 are [working or are unemployed and actively seeking work](#). Of the remaining 35%, almost all are retired, are caring for children or other family members, are pursuing education or training or have a disability that prevents them from working. Only a tiny fraction aren't working for other reasons. The conservative Heritage Foundation, using U.S. Census data, puts this number at [1.1% nationally](#)."

JFK reduced taxes and that did a lot of economic good. Ronald Reagan reduced them further 20 years later and that did a lot less good (See – diminishing marginal utility), George W. Bush reduced taxes still further 20 years after Reagan and that did no discernible good whatsoever. Tax reductions can do some good IF they're carefully targeted, but just cutting taxes makes the rich richer and doesn't do much else. Right now, the economy has a lot of slack and high unemployment. It's consumers, not investors, who need the cash.

We have a "workforce that is either unemployed or flipping burgers at McDonalds. " Yes, that's because the economy is designed for the 1% and because it disregards the needs of the 99%. Trade agreements like NAFTA and TPP do the 99% vastly more harm than good. The 1% likes those

agreements just fine.

“But 'The New Deal', 'Great Society', and other unfunded and failed social programs have exacerbated the problem...” They're not unfunded and they haven't failed at all. Other countries all over the world also have tax-funded disability, retirement and Single-Payer health programs. They work just fine and prevent people from dying at a much higher rate than they would otherwise. They allow people to retire with some dignity rather than dying off quickly as starving paupers.

For the country to be in debt is not a good thing and during good times (High employment, an infrastructure that's in good shape, etc.) it would be a good priority for us to concentrate on reducing our debt, but unemployed people use up unemployment compensation and food stamps and employed people contribute tax money to the Treasury. To me, it's a no-brainer, get people back to work and the debt picture will improve. In the short run, that requires lots of spending.

Rich Gardner

His response Oct 22, 2013 7:17 PM

We can either battle back and forth, or just agree that we disagree. For just about every difference of opinion, there are good logical explanations to defend both sides. And our opinions are split just about 50-50. As examples, Obama won in 2012 by just 2.2% of the popular vote, so that's pretty close, especially as "he the walks on water" was 90% supported by our liberal news media. Also, since WW II, Republicans have held the White House 55% of the time, and Democrats 45%. But most of that time, the Dems held Congress in tow, but they were not called obstructionists like the House GOP is today. Doesn't seem to work both ways when your up against the news media.

Question: What ever happened to Mitt Romney, and is he happy ??

Thanks for your insight. There have been times I've responded to Inquirer Letter Writers and felt my life was in danger from their tone. I will digest your good points, and reconsider my positions accordingly (assuming I agree - ha ha !!)

And mine Oct 22, 2013 10:50 PM

In order this time, the difference between Romney and Obama was actually just under 4%. Romney got within a close margin (less than half a point) to the magical number of 47%.

The obstructionism of both parties prior to, and that of Republicans during the Presidency of Obama is fundamentally and qualitatively different. During this period, Republicans have pursued a "scorched earth" policy that disregards fundamental (small-d) democratic norms. I talk to my buddies about how the GOP is the new Confederate Party and they smile and know exactly what I mean. If you followed the liberal blogs, you'd see that "false equivalence" was a really big gripe of ours concerning the traditional media. We complain constantly that the big media people are constantly fudging the issues by saying that "both sides are to blame" when the issues are often more one-sided than that.

Mitt's soul? Meh, Hey, Mitt's finished constructing that house he was building during the campaign, the one with the car elevator. No, the souls of politicians of either party don't concern me very much.

Thanks! I try in my conversations to shed more light than heat. I apologize for all of my fellow

liberals who get overly excitable about politics and ideology.

Rich

Oct 22, 2013 11:37 PM

It's a pleasure to talk with a person of intelligence. It's a shame you're not in Washington trying to bring these opposing views into some common perspective. Neither side is all bad, or all good. As I've noted, one group is OK with spending 40% more than we bring in, while the other side fights for "only" 30% more. Neither is good, and a compromise at 35% is worse. We'll still go broke and be owned by foreign countries.

Perhaps one of the first moves should be legislation (don't hold your breath) that if they don't come to a budget and debt solution, neither Congress nor the administration gets paid (and nothing retroactive). Bet they'd decide on something real fast, but I'm afraid they'd settle for something just good for them.

My final response Oct 23, 2013 9:49 AM

Yeah, I saw the piece in the Inky today where Senator Toomey explains that debt is the very worst thing in the world. Yes, I'd very much like to see more people like myself in office.

Rich

From: Douglas Hall

Sent: Oct 22, 2013 10:15 PM

Richmond, you failed to see the irony in your own letter! The TEA Party doesn't want to make decisions for "the rest of us". They want us to make decisions for ourselves and not have some centrally planned government making decisions for people all around the country. Funny, how is it the TEA party shut down the government and threatened your precious food stamp recipients when they passed 18 different measures to try to fund everything but Obamacare? Obama shut down the government by being a baby and saying if I can't get it the way I want it I won't sign anything. If the government was shut down how were there park rangers working in Valley Forge? It was a big f\*\*\*ing show.

You and I both know the extremist Liberal Democrats don't want to cut spending and that is why the Senate didn't even propose a budget for FOUR YEARS!. What happened to the Simpson Boles commission? We have a \$17 TRILLION NATIONAL DEBT! When will it stop??

Regards,

Doug Hall

I responded Oct 22, 2013 11:27 PM

Well Doug, I'm not sure how having the government pay for some of our health care needs results in tyranny, but yeah, that's been a regular complaint of right-wingers since at least President Truman. Most of us want to join the rest of the industrialized world and to delegate health care payments to a single entity as health care is very different from consumer goods. With health care, there isn't much in terms of comparison shopping. When you buy a couch, you have plenty of time to educate yourself on the options and you can chose something within your means. When you have

a heart attack, neither of those conditions apply. The TEA Party isn't "rescuing" us from anything.

Sorry, but I very strongly disagree that Republican Congresspeople/The TEA Party proposed opening up the entire government minus the ACA through those 18 bills. Yes, that was their original proposal, the House sent over a bill funding the whole government minus the ACA/Obamacare. But as you can see in

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2013/10/01/congress-shutdown-plans-politics-republicans-democrats/2904033/>

after the government had been shut down, they proposed opening just some very specific departments, none of which included the feeding of anyone who was dependent on the government, i.e., food stamps, WIC, etc.

The TEA Party refused to accept the will of the American people that was expressed through two elections. During the 2008 and 2012 elections, the ACA was litigated. It was discussed and in both cases, we chose Obama and not the guy who was promising to either not pursue it or to stop doing it. I find your expressed contempt for democracy ("being a baby") to be disturbing.

Yes, debt is a bad thing, but a high unemployment rate and a crumbling infrastructure is far worse. It'd be nice to have everything, but that's not the way the world works. We have to make choices and I choose to have the government fund needed things.

Rich Gardner

**Date:** Oct 26, 2013 12:14 PM

The usual meme of left-wingers is "I want the government to pay for everything and do everything for me". Hate to break it to you Rich, the government can't pay for anything without first taking money from us. So the government isn't really paying for anything, I am paying for your healthcare, not the government. The sad truth is the ACA is not free and even with subsidies people have found out they are going to be paying a-lot more than they thought. All of the plans seem to have high deductibles, (something many people didn't know prior to the failed launch of [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov)) yet their current plans they will be forced out of by the ACA don't have one at lower premiums.

Not sure where you come up with the statement that you can't shop for health care, you obviously have never tried to negotiate with a provider. I have and done so successfully many times. Since I have a high deductible plan I shop for services to find the best option. People live long lives and have many conditions that aren't acute that can be shopped so your "heart attack" example is nonsense. Of course in emergencies you want to get help from the closest provider but 90% of the care people get is non emergent. Millions of people already shop for experts in certain fields like cancer treatment or orthopedic surgery.

If government run health care is so good, why do so many people from those so called "industrialized countries" come to the U.S to get care?? Why do Canadians come across the border for a hip replacement here instead of waiting 12 months for one in Canada? I'm really sick and tired of the "ACA is settled law" argument. If it is so "settled" why has Obama issued so many waivers to unions and other groups? Why did he delay the employer mandate? It is obviously not "settled" since he keeps making changes to it by Executive order. If it is settled then you and the other left-wingers will stop challenging the Citizen's United Ruling right? It was passed by a legitimately elected congress and was confirmed by the Supreme Court- so it is settled, right? No law is settled, all of them are subject to change by amendment and repeal, otherwise we'd still be

living under prohibition.

I'm not sure what you referring to about my contempt for Democracy. The TEA Party is the epitome of how three branch government should work. There needs to be checks and balances otherwise the party who provides the most benefits for the masses will continue do so until we are bankrupt. You obviously have contempt for anyone who doesn't feel he way you do. Our system of government is not a Democracy- it is a Representative Republic. Obama is not a king or our ruler and he is subject to checks from the House of Representatives and Senate. "The will of the people" is not just the will of the Left. Obama only had 51% of the vote in 2012 (less than the 53% in 2008). Hardly a landslide and certainly not enough to say that he represents the will of us all. You may also want to check the polls on Obama Care, a majority of people now disapprove of it and Obama.

The TEA Party elected several members of the House and those people were sent their to represent their district and that is what they are doing. Just because you don't like what the people in those districts believe, doesn't make them anarchists or obstructionist.

The debt you don't think is that bad has been characterized by some as our number one threat to national security. Obama has been in office for 5 years and the debt has gone from about \$9 Trillion to \$17 Trillion on his watch yet the economy has continued to languish. We are now at record levels of real unemployment (90 million people no longer looking for work) and economic growth is slower than it was in the 1930s after the Great Depression. Now 49% of the population are receiving at least some form of government assistance. All that spending is killing the economy not improving it and the ACA already has and will continue to inflict further damage to economy.

Your right, we have to make choices and you are entitled to your own, but you and the government are not entitled to make mine for me.

Oct 26, 2013 6:07 PM

"I want the government to pay for everything and do everything for me" I believe you're talking about the communists. They ARE still around, but they're a small group and they're all 60 and older. Modern liberals believe in a mixed economy. Capitalism is simply not a cure-all and doesn't handle every problem.

"The sad truth is the ACA is not free..." Uh, who ever said it was? The idea is that people who are healthy and wealthy pay part of the cost for people who aren't either. The reason for that is that the people who need health care the most tend to be well past the age of retirement. As a result, they tend to have limited incomes and the chances of them making more money are very slim. We'll all be there, though. If we help grandma and grandpa, then when it's our turn, our kids will help us.

"... people have found out they are going to be paying a-lot more than they thought" They will probably pay more via high deductible, but the choice was either that or no coverage at all for 48 million people or around 16% of the population. I'd prefer Single-Payer myself, but the ACA is a response to a very real problem, a response that the other party never managed to improve upon.

"Not sure where you come up with the statement that you can't shop for health care..." No, what I said was that health care can't be handled in the same manner that we buy clothes, cars and computers in. Unlike those items, people often have to obtain health care in a hurry because they've

got a condition that just can't wait or they have to obtain it when they don't have any or very little money, which is often because they've long since left the workforce. It's wildly impractical to handle health care in a free-market fashion.

“...why do so many people from those so called "industrialized countries" come to the U.S to get care?” And it's great care, for those who can afford it. It'll still be here long after the ACA has gone into effect.

“If it is so "settled" why has Obama issued so many waivers to unions and other groups?” I can't recall how many times Republicans ran around with massive piles of paper on their shoulders or on their desks in order to demonstrate how big and complex the new law was. What did you THINK would be the consequence of all that complexity?

“If it is settled then you and the other left-wingers will stop challenging the Citizen's United Ruling right?” Apples and oranges. We're not attempting to hold up the government for ransom. We're challenging Citizens United via appropriate (small-d) democratic procedures. Holding up the debt limit increase, relatively, is an act of terrorism and hostage-taking.

“It was passed by a legitimately elected congress and was confirmed by the Supreme Court” I don't remember Congress having anything to do with CU. My memory is that it was strictly the Supreme Court.

“You obviously have contempt for anyone who doesn't feel he way you do.” Had you qualified your argument by saying “I understand that the American people endorsed ACA by voting for Obama twice, but...” and then went on to argue why the ACA should be repealed, I would not have had any problem respecting your views.

“... a majority of people now disapprove of it...” The polls I've been seeing show that people may not think it's the greatest thing since sliced bread, but that they're willing to give it a chance. Problem for Republicans is that their intemperate attacks have made the Act MORE popular, not less.

“...doesn't make them anarchists or obstructionist.” No, I judge them that way because of the ACTIONS that they took. As that guy in the movie said “Stupid is as stupid does.”

“All that spending is killing the economy...” If the spending went towards job creation and not just to hold-over items like unemployment and food stamps, you'd have a point. Obama proposed a big job-creation bill in late 2011 and the Republican Congress whittled it down to near uselessness. Republicans said as they took over in early 2011 that jobs were their first priority, but they have yet to pass a single jobs bill. It's not that Obama won't propose any. He just knows they won't pass any. It's austerity that's killing us, not spending.

“...but you and the government are not entitled to make mine for me.” Uh, again, you're showing your contempt for democracy. Yes, the fact that the Democratic candidate won a majority of the vote means that yes, he IS entitled to make decisions that the rest of us must live by. We Democrats lived with George W. Bush being President, you guys can live with Barack Obama being President.

Rich Gardner

Oct 30, 2013 8:39 PM

"Modern liberals believe in a mixed economy. Capitalism is simply not a cure-all and doesn't handle

every problem." Modern Liberals believe that all corporations are evil and are not entitled to profits. Obama is already villainizing the health insurers, blaming them for canceling policies that don't comply with his 2400 page plus bill. He is the chief of Crony Capitalism giving money to companies who can't survive or offer product that people really want- Solyndra ring a bell to you? Because of government intervention and regulation we haven't had real capitalism in our country for 4 decades or more. Capitalism shouldn't fix all problems anyway.

Communism is alive and well here and hardly limited to 60 and older age group. Ever heard of Van Jones?? He was part of the Obama administration.

You say it's wildly impractical to shop for healthcare?? Sounds like just an opinion with no real facts to back it up. Your lame excuse that the bill has to be altered because it is so large is just backing up my argument that the government cannot handle the job and should not be trying to.

Again, we don't have a Democracy, you are showing your contempt for our Constitution and our Representative Republic. WE DON'T HAVE A DEMOCRACY!

Are you seriously trying to blame the Republicans for the 5 years of non recovery in our economy? Obama had a both houses and instead of passing any meaningful bills his first two years to help the economy he chose to spend all his time passing this monstrosity of a healthcare law. Now the we "get to see what's inside" as Nancy Pelosi infamously said, we see it is 2400 pages of crap. Nice try thought, taxing and spending has never been the answer to growing an economy and it never will.

"Republicans said as they took over in early 2011 that jobs were their first priority, but they have yet to pass a single jobs bill. It's not that Obama won't propose any. He just knows they won't pass any. It's austerity that's killing us, not spending.' What on earth are you talking about. They have passed dozens of bills, all of which Harry Reid has let languish in the Senate. It was Obama who said he would focus on creating jobs from day one and has not done so in five and a half years. Real unemployment is still well over 10% despite what the press tells you. There is a record number of people who have stopped looking for work, 90 Million people, thanks to Obama, The Republicans can pass 1000 bills but the obstructionists, Reid and Obama will never pass them.

"Uh, again, you're showing your contempt for democracy. Yes, the fact that the Democratic candidate won a majority of the vote means that yes, he IS entitled to make decisions that the rest of us must live by. We Democrats lived with George W. Bush being President, you guys can live with Barack Obama being President." Uh, Obama is not a king or our ruler, he does IS NOT entitled to make decisions without going through the legislature. He is the number one abuser of the Executive Order process, issuing more than any other President in history. Again, you show your contempt and ignorance of our Constitution and the Representative Republic and separation of power that our country was founded on.

Oct 31, 2013 6:10 AM

Doug,  
I'll get to the rest of this later, but this assertion jumped out at me:

"What on earth are you talking about. They have passed dozens of bills, all of which Harry Reid has let languish in the Senate."

Please substantiate this assertion with examples of bills that would have the effect of creating jobs.  
Rich

Oct 31, 2013 5:25 PM

“Modern Liberals believe that all corporations are evil...”

Well, yeah. See Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations published in 1776. That belief has a LONG history.

“... and are not entitled to profits.”

Nah, I think maybe some purists in the 1960s may have believed that, but I certainly don't know anybody who's THAT idealistic.

“Obama is already villainizing the health insurers, blaming them for canceling policies that don't comply with his 2400 page plus bill.”

Yes, I've certainly heard that many companies are having to cancel substandard policies, but Obama is being whacked because he didn't make that clear in his presentations. As Eric Boehlert makes clear at

<http://mediamatters.org/blog/2013/10/31/called-on-to-explain-big-story-media-botches-ob/196689>

That criticism also applies to the media, especially to the TV people. They've had three years to learn the facts and have failed the American people miserably.

Solyndra was an example of something that happens in private industry all the time. The market changed, they were caught flat-footed and went under.

Unmitigated, unqualified capitalism? I'd say that died out with the Progressive Era of the 1890s. Good riddance, I'd say. A fellow related how his daughter was in an auto accident (She was a passenger in a car with a few other people). The car she was in was hit head-on. Both cars were complete losses, wrecked beyond repair. Everyone in the accident walked away with nothing more than bruises and scratches. In the 1950s, everyone would have died or been in the hospital for months. Why was the accident so non-fatal? Government regulations, which by the way, the auto industry fought tooth and nail.

Just today, Van Jones gave a speech at a Newark conference

<http://www.brickcitylive.com/andaiye/2013/10/31/van-jones-keynote-newark-policy-conference-saturday-on-rebuilding-the-dream-in-newark/>

Sorry, but I don't see much communist influence in paragraphs like:

“Computer programming is like a global mathematical language. I don't know how to do computer coding, but I want to make sure our children do, because if you're coding literate you can build our own companies. Coding, 3D manufacturing, robotics — that is the future. I'm working with a group teaching robotics in Africa because advanced manufacturing is the future: a robot will either put you out of job, or you can design the robot and have a job.”

“You say it's wildly impractical to shop for healthcare?? Sounds like just an opinion with no real facts to back it up.”

Why do you think single-payer plans are so popular? Why does EVERY industrialized democracy except the US have one? From <http://www.pnhp.org/facts/single-payer-resources> :

“Currently, the U.S. health care system is outrageously expensive, yet inadequate. Despite spending more than twice as much as the rest of the industrialized nations (\$8,160 per capita), the United States performs poorly in comparison on major health indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality and immunization rates. Moreover, the other advanced nations provide comprehensive coverage to their entire populations, while the U.S. leaves 51 million completely uninsured and millions more inadequately covered.”

“Again, we don't have a Democracy...”

Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's a republic, not a democracy. Point to you.

“Are you seriously trying to blame the Republicans for the 5 years of non recovery in our economy? Obama had a both houses and instead of passing any meaningful bills his first two years to help the economy..”

Obviously, you've completely forgotten the stimulus. Yes, Obama had a filibuster-proof majority in the Senate from the time Al Franken became a Senator until the death of Senator Kennedy. Unfortunately, he used that time trying to lobby Republican Senators into supporting the ACA. And yes, the ACA has already helped the economy by causing health costs to level off. Prior to that, they were steeply rising every year. Here's a study that applies just to Washington State [http://www.ofm.wa.gov/economy/ACA/ACA\\_impact.pdf](http://www.ofm.wa.gov/economy/ACA/ACA_impact.pdf) They find that the ACA's net impact will be a positive one.

“Nice try thought, taxing and spending has never been the answer to growing an economy and it never will.”

Obviously, you've never taken an Econ 101 course.

A liberal wrote a short piece claiming that Republicans had passed “zero jobs bills.” Politifact rated that statement as a “Pants on Fire” lie.

<http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2011/oct/25/facebook-posts/blog-post-says-gop-has-sponsored-zero-job-creation/>

But in the paragraph below (The next to last one in the piece), it's clear that they're using their own definition of “jobs bill.”

\*\*\*\*\*

**"Job creation" means different things to different parties.**

Most conservatives today are dead-set against traditional forms of government-based economic stimulus known as Keynesian economics, primarily spending initiatives. So if "job creation" is defined to primarily include Keynesian initiatives, then Republicans aren't going to be sponsoring any "job creation" bills. Instead, Republicans argue that tax cuts and budget cutting will help the economy prosper.

\*\*\*\*\*

So yes, if we ignore what a fact-checker is supposed to do and that a fact-checker is supposed to begin with the subject's definition of what he means to say, then their awarding of “Pants on Fire” to the liberal's claim is legitimate. They admit that yes, the liberal is entirely correct in his own use of the term “jobs creation bills,” but by applying THEIR OWN definition of what the liberal claimed, they came up with their rating.

“Uh, Obama is not a king or our ruler,...”

Never said he was. I said that, as President, he has the authority to make lots of decisions, just as Bush did when he was President. Y'all don't like that? Get a Republican elected to the Presidency in 2016.

“His the number one abuser of the Executive Order process...”

Again, see “Republicans – fanatically scorched earth obstructionism.” Obviously, you think that Democrats should just sit around twiddling their thumbs and getting nothing done until Republicans can re-take the White House.

Rich

Richard Breen  
October 23, 2013 5:20:46 PM

Dear Mr Gardner,

I strongly suggest you call one of the families with a relative's name on one of those "cold, lifeless stone monuments" and tell them the "pillars" mean nothing to you. Those pillars carry the names of Americans who fought and died for your(?) country so that people like you have the freedom to write "articles" in the newspaper. May I also emphasize that it was Obozo's decision to close these land marks simply as a political ploy. The Tea-party. and unfortunately not you. have every right to be upset.

Yes, we need to reduce government debt in an all-around manner, but the left needs to understand that Obozo **has zero interest in doing so**. What is it about 17 trillion dollars of debt that is so hard for the left to understand?

Let us not be so simplistic as to assume that the Tea-party folks want to see families with children go without food! Obozo has increased the size of government by over 30% since 2009 but 85% of that increase was classified as non-essential during the shutdown. Why does the left ignore these facts? The massive amount of money it takes to support that 30% increase @ 85% non-essential would buy tons of food for the needy for years to come.

I totally understand that food stamps are needed for the **deserving**. But I also realize that fraud is common in the food stamp system. When I buy food I frequently stand behind customers that pay with food stamps and in most cases they deserve the help. But I often see cases where the food stamps are used, not for long lasting food stuffs for an entire family, but instead for single meal enjoyment and then are put in a late model car with large chrome wheels in the parking lot.

In closing let me say that I have often been thanked by the relatives of the names that appear on a stone memorials, but I have yet to be thanked by a family or person for helping to support the food stamp program!!

Richard Breen

Oct 23, 2013 7:23 PM

Dear Mr. Breen,

“ who fought and died for your(?) country”

Not only am I an American citizen, I served. PN3, USN, 1991-2001. Never saw action, but I know full well what we owe those brave men. My point is that yes, it's important for people to have access to the monuments, but government does many, MANY things beyond maintaining monuments so that people can visit them. I presume you knew that the monuments and parks were closed during the Gingrich shutdown of the 1990s as well? No, it as not simply a political ploy. The Tea Party Republicans wanted to hurt American citizens and didn't care about the damage they caused with their reckless hostage-taking. So hoo boy, did they scream and yell when President Obama closed something THEY liked!

“[The President] has zero interest in doing so”

Uh, actually, the deficit when Obama took over was \$1,417 billion, the projected deficit fro this year is \$977 billion. Quite a drop for someone with no interest is cutting the budget. Matter of fact, economists warn that he's cutting the budget TOO quickly. According to Investor's Business Daily: “Rather than applying additional fiscal restraint now, the government needs to make sure it sets the course for steady restraint once the economy emerges further from the deep employment hole that remains. In fact, a number of so-called deficit hawks are [calling for short-term tax cuts to spur growth](#), rather than immediate austerity.”

<http://news.investors.com/blogs-capital-hill/112012-634082-federal-deficit-falling-fastest-since-world-war-ii.htm#ixzz2iaaIg3Gv>

“[The President] has increased the size of government”

When someone is unemployed, they're using food stamps, unemployment compensation and other services, When they're employed, they're contributing to the Treasury. Seems like a pretty simple problem with a simple answer, right? Not to Republicans. Obama proposed another jobs package in late 2011. Republicans whittled it down to dang near nothing.

Food Stamp fraud

“Earlier this year, Senator John Thune of South Dakota and Rep. Marlin Stutzman of Indiana, both Republicans, [introduced legislation](#) to save \$30 billion over 10 years from SNAP, purportedly by “eliminating loopholes, waste, fraud, and abuse.” Once you dig into [their fact sheet](#), however, none of the savings actually come from fraud, but rather from cutting funding and tightening benefits. That’s probably because fraud levels in SNAP appear to be as low as with the other “pure welfare” programs we just touched on: “Payment error” rates -- money sent in incorrect amounts and/or to the wrong people -- have [declined from near 10 percent a decade ago to 3 to 4 percent today](#), most of it due, again, to government error, not active fraud.”

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/08/just-how-wrong-is-conventional-wisdom-about-government-fraud/278690/>

I'm not terribly surprised people on government assistance don't go around thanking taxpayers. The family of a soldier or sailor who has perished is easily identifiable. Some fellow who has contributed dollars to the general fund and who gripes and complains while doing so (Remember the Tea Party's name - “Taxed Enough Already”) is hardly in the same category.

Rich Gardner

Oct 24, 2013 7:34 PM

Mr. Gardner,

" obama has no interest in doing so"

When obama took office in 2009 the federal deficit was about 10 trillion.

Today we are ticking toward 17 trillion and obama has three years left. That poultry deduction from 1.417 to 977 this year is not obama's doing but simply increased funds now expected due to a slight up-tick in the economy. Or put another way: more green despite obama!!!

You can slice it any way you want but obama will double our deficit in just eight years and his health care wonder(more deficits) has not kicked into gear yet!

" obama has increased the size of government" What does a jobs package have to do with increasing the size of government???????

It is a good thing it was "whittled down" to nothing because this jobs package was just another stimulus package and we all know

the value of his stimulus efforts ie: 800 billion in 2009 that not do a thing except fiance some solar panel start-ups that took billions and then went belly up one by one!

Mr. Gardner, it is obvious that you fully support obama which is your right. I on the other hand think his "presidency" is a total joke and label it on the ladder well below even Jimmy Carter's.

We could debate until the cows come home but we would just continue to pull in opposite directions. I do thank you for answering my e-mail but I wish you had done a better job of defending your viewpoints.

Thank you,

Richard Breen

Oct 24, 2013 10:37 PM

Mr. Breen,

There is the debt and there is the deficit. What is the relationship between them? The Congressional Research Service says: "...debt increases when the government sells debt to the public to finance budget deficits and acquire the financial resources needed to meet its obligations."

Yes, you were referring to debt. What I demonstrated by citing budget deficit figures was that yes indeed, Obama has been expending enormous effort to reduce the deficit, and therefore indirectly the debt.

What will ultimately reduce the deficit in the longer term? Getting people back to work.

What will getting people back to work require? More Federal spending.

We need to spend now to reduce the deficit and the debt later.

Why is unemployment still stubbornly above 7%? Obama has been prevented from any further Federal spending since he got the stimulus passed in early 2009. He proposed to spend more in late 2011, but Republicans In Congress opposed that.

Why is that? I'm torn between thinking they just don't understand economics and between thinking that they just hate the American people and want to see us all on a catfood diet.

“...the value of his stimulus efforts ie: 800 billion in 2009 that not do a thing...”

Incorrect. Two non-Keynesians economists\* from Dartmouth did a study that showed that the stimulus did precisely what it was designed to do.

<http://thedartmouth.com/2011/02/14/news/stimulus>

\*There are plenty of studies from Keynesians that say the same thing.

Yeah, I think we're just going to have to agree to disagree.  
Thanks for the replies.

Rich Gardner

Oct 25, 2013 7:06 PM

Mr. Gardner,

It would be interesting to hear you support obama on this subject. Please refrain from using other liberal sources-just give me your **own** original thoughts

Richard Breen

ps: one thing is for sure, you can not blame Bush for this circus.

Democrats 'wholly own' Obamacare catastrophe

## **Lawmaker: Failed effort to defund is now 'victory'**

WASHINGTON — The congressman from Texas has just the analogy for the GOP's failed attempt to shutdown the government.

The Alamo.

“In every loss, there can be a victory,” Rep. Steve Stockman, R-Texas, told WND.

The congressman explained, just as the loss at the Alamo led to the creation of Texas, the losing battle to stop Obamacare has become a victory, because now the Democrats have to explain why their health care law has become such a disaster.

Stockman saw an irony, noting, “We wanted to delay, for one year, the individual mandate. And he (President Obama) shut the whole government down. He said, ‘I will not negotiate.’ Now, the Democrats are coming back and asking for the very thing that they refused to do when the Republicans were asking.”

In his exclusive interview with WND, the congressman made a number of observations concerning the unfolding Obamacare disaster and what it means for Washington, the country and ordinary Americans, including:

- Obamacare will cause millions to lose their health insurance, the exact opposite of what the president promised.
- The Democrats' refusal to delay Obamacare when Republicans made the offer could boomerang on them at the ballot box.
- No one can blame Obamacare on the GOP, though the media will still try.
- The Democrats will use the catastrophic roll-out of Obamacare to try to push for a single-payer system.
- Washington needs to get rid of Obamacare and start over from the beginning.

## **Obamacare is 'wholly owned by the president'**

With tongue in cheek, WND asked: With the Obamacare launch going down in flames, does Ted Cruz look more like a psychic or a genius?

Stockman smiled and replied, "I always thought Cruz's ploy, which was ridiculed by many of the party members, was brilliant," adding, "People now know he's a man of principle. So, I think it was smart.

"One of my colleagues said, 'You Texans would fight the Alamo all over again.' I thought about it and said, 'Yeah! We'll fight the Alamo all over again because it created a great state.'"

The Texan observed, "In every loss, there can be a victory. And, I think people now know that Republicans are not connected with Obamacare. No way. Our fingerprints are not on this. This is wholly owned by the president."

### **Make Democrats take responsibility for Obamacare**

[There was more, the full piece is [here](#), but I think their point was clear by now]

Oct 25, 2013 8:49 PM

Mr. Breen,

Yeah, that's cool. The statement that really jumped out at me (In a generally overheated screed) was "No one can blame Obamacare on the GOP, though the media will still try." Uh, no. not even close. Minority Leader Mitch McConnell led a united caucus in fighting a bitter, no holds barred, scorched-earth battle to defeat the Affordable Care Act/Obamacare "at all costs" (Military term meaning "no matter how many casualties it costs you, don't give up an inch!").

From the liberal perspective, there are conservatives, moderates and liberals and then there's the press. We call the press "The Village" because they're not really ideological at all. They like to tell certain kinds of stories, regardless of the real-world impact of their doing so. MSNBC has a mix of "Villagers," "Reporters," "liberals" and "conservatives."

Will anybody try to shift "blame for the ACA" onto Republicans? Nah, I just can't see it. Democrats own it, no two ways about it.

Is there anything there for Democrats to be defensive about? Yeah, the website's a mess, but WND's prediction that the ACA "will cause millions to lose their health insurance" is just screaming, hysterical, over-the-top bullshit.

Why is the website a mess? The Obama re-election campaign did an awesome, bang-up job with their re-election software. This was a set of programs where election stations around the country kept track of over 100 million Democrats getting to the polls and voting, then as the day wore on, election officials queried the system to see who hadn't voted yet and called those people "Hey Joe,

we see you haven't voted yet. Need any help getting to the polls?" That system worked fine (Romney's competing software was meant to do the same thing, but was a complete disaster), so the Obama people clearly are no slouches when it comes to software.

The problem is not one of public vs. private, it has more to do with mercenaries/contractors vs. part-of-the-team software developers. The Obama re-election effort hired individuals, not companies. HHS hired a group of separate companies. The procurement system, instead of just hiring people and having them sit in on system development meetings, depends on writing volumes of descriptions as to what the software is expected to do.

All that being said (I run a few small blogs and websites, so I've been following the story with some interest), websites aren't that hard to fix (And no, the website didn't cost \$1 billion, but about a third of that) and there are no other major problems with the ACA at the moment. That doesn't mean there won't be and that everything else is ducky, but no, I didn't and still don't think that the proposed year-long delay was at all necessary. The problems with the software showed up upon implementation, so a year's delay just would have meant a year would have gone by with no one being aware of the problem.

Rich