

The Republican Club of Sun City NEWSLETTER

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CLUB NEWS

Proposed By-Law Revisions Approved. During its May dinner meeting, the club approved a number of proposed by-law revisions. Those revisions are underscored in the by-laws appearing in the 2010 copies of the club Yearbook distributed to club members during the May meeting. Members who have not obtained a copy of the Yearbook may obtain one during one of the coming club meetings.

Membership Update. Membership chairman Brenda Leisey reports that 2010 club membership now stands at 341.

News of Coming Meetings. Club vice president Ed Konetchy reports that the next meeting of the club is scheduled for Thursday, September 9 in the Sun City Ballroom, that the October meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 21 at the Berry Creek Country Club, and that the November meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 11 in the Sun City Ballroom. Details of the meetings will be announced in coming newsletters.

OBAMACARE AND ITS ALL-POWERFUL BUREAUCRACY Republican Form of Government Now in Jeopardy

As Democrats in Congress rushed to pass the ObamaCare bill, they didn't bother working out key details about how the new law would be implemented. Instead, they left many crucial decisions in the hands of one bureaucrat: Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius, a former Governor of Kansas.

The practice of Congress delegating more and more authority to bureaucrats to promulgate rules and regulations *having the force of law* has been going on during the past 100 or so years, but may have reached a pinnacle—as will be illustrated in this report—in the ObamaCare health care bill.

In 2,700 pages of the health care legislation, the word “Secretary” appears over 2,500 times (yes, that's 2,500 times!) in connection with Congressional delegations of authority. Following are illustrations of the phraseology used:

- “the Secretary shall establish”
- “the Secretary shall promulgate regulations”
- “the Secretary shall develop standards”
- “the Secretary shall periodically review”
- “as the Secretary deems are important”
- “the Secretary may develop and impose appropriate penalties”
- “the Secretary may adjust rates”
- “if the Secretary determines necessary”
- “the Secretary has the authority”

Columnist Philip Klein describes the scope of the HHS Secretary as follows: “She can influence what hospitals can participate in certain plans, can set up health insurance exchanges within states against their will, and even regulate McDonald's Happy Meals. She'll run pilot programs that Democrats have set up in an effort to control costs, and be in a position to dole out billions of dollars in grant money.”

And that kind of authority is on top of running the biggest federal agency in Washington, one with about 70,000 employees (full-time equivalents), a budget of about \$860 billion (for 2010), and the largest health-insurance programs in the world, Medicare and Medicaid.

Klein compiled a number of specific delegations of authority given to the Secretary by Congress, only some of which, for illustrative purposes, follow:

- When the federal government gives itself the power to force individuals to purchase insurance coverage, it also has to define what constitutes insurance. The new health care provides the broad outlines of the “essential health benefits” that every insurance policy must have. But as for the details, the law states that “the Secretary shall define the essential health benefits...” *Thus, with the stroke of a pen, Sebelius could coerce every American, under the threat of a tax penalty, into purchasing any health benefit she deems “essential.”*
- While the law allows the states some flexibility in setting up the new health insurance exchanges, it says that if the Secretary determines that a given state will not have a functioning exchange by January 1, 2014, “the Secretary shall (directly or through agreement with a not-for-profit entity) establish and operate such Exchange within the State and the Secretary shall take such actions as are necessary to implement such other requirements.” *In other words, whether citizens in a state like it or not, Sebelius will be setting up a government-run insurance exchange for them.*
- The new initiatives to be spearheaded by the Secretary include: a wellness program in 10 states, programs for bundling payments for health care services, a national payment system for Medicaid, and “individualized wellness plan” for “at-risk populations,” a program to train low-income Americans to work in the health care field, and “national demonstrations projects on culture change and use of information technology in nursing homes.
 - As a result of these pilot programs, as well as other aspects of the law, Sebelius is in a position to dole out billions of taxpayer dollars in the form of grants. *This opens the door for the administration to reward its political allies, such as unions and liberal activist groups, and offer political favors to well-connected private companies.*
- As part of new labeling requirements, she'll also have the power to regulate a wide variety of foods—even Happy Meals. A clause of the law titled “MENU VARIABILITY AND COMBINATION MEALS” reads: “The Secretary shall establish by regulation standards for determining and disclosing the nutrient content for standard menu items that come in different flavors, varieties, or combinations, but which are listed as a single menu item, such as soft drinks, ice cream, pizza, doughnuts, or children's combination meals, through means determined by the Secretary, including ranges, averages, or other methods.

Author Matthew Spalding asserts that America's version of today's bureaucratic state began in the early 20th century when the intent of the progressives was to precipitate a “massive shift of power from institutional government to a labyrinthine network of unelected, unaccountable experts who would rule in the name of the people.” (Does this not describe Obamacare?) But the philosophy of the progressives runs contrary to the philosophy of the Founders who intended “to restrict and structure government to secure the rights articulated in the Declaration of Independence—preventing tyranny while preserving liberty.”

And what is the philosophy which guided the progressives? A response is provided by President Woodrow Wilson who, asserts Spalding, contended that the Declaration and Constitution were obsolete, that government should not be restricted to secure a few natural rights, and that Darwin's “survival of the fittest” tenet, normally applied in the field of biology, should be applied to government policy.

While the ideology of the progressives appears to be well-entrenched, there are some encouraging signs which can be gleaned from statistics. The *Washington Post* reports: “By 58 percent to 38 percent, Americans prefer smaller government and fewer services to larger government with more services. In the last year and a half, the margin between those favoring smaller over larger government has moved from five points to 20 points.”

In addition to concern over the huge delegation of authority to bureaucrats should be concern about the undemocratic way in which the health care bill was passed: It passed without a single Republican vote in either the House or the Senate, and despite clear indication that the public was strongly opposed to it. Author Joseph Bottum contends, “The Democrats who forced through this incoherent bill are acting as a *faction*, [producing] the situation so feared by our founders.”

The contrast in the handling of the Clinton health-care effort in 1993 with the handling of the recently-passed bill is instructive. In 1993, when the health-care task force was created, nearly 60% of the American people initially supported reform. But in July of 1994, when public support changed to 60% opposed, the bill was declared dead. At that time, Democrats responded to the will of the people. Now they ignore the will of the people, suggesting the nation is now being governed by a form of elected tyranny.

TAXES TO RISE DRAMATICALLY IN 2011

Rush Limbaugh, during a recent broadcast, cited some of the tax increases to take effect in 2011 of which the following is a sampling:

- Personal income tax will rise. The 10% bracket rises to an expanded 15%. The 25% bracket rises to 28%. The 28% bracket rises to 31%. The 33% bracket rises to 36%. The 35% bracket rises to 39.6%. Higher taxes on marriage and family. The “marriage penalty” (narrower tax brackets for married couples) will return from the first dollar of income. The child tax credit will be cut in half from \$1000 to \$500 per crumb cruncher. The standard deduction will no longer be doubled for married couples relative to the single level. The dependent care and adoption tax credits will be cut.
- The Death Tax will resume. This year, there is no death tax. For those dying on or after January 1, 2011, there is a 55% top death tax rate on estates over \$1 million. A person leaving behind two homes and a retirement account could easily pass along a death tax bill to their loved ones. Higher tax rates on savers and investors. The capital gains tax will rise from 15% this year to 20% in six months. The dividends tax will rise from 15% this year to 39.6 percent in six months. These rates will rise another 3.8 percent in 2013. Then the “second wave” of taxes to hit will be those attached to Obamacare...
- Charitable contributions from IRAs are no longer going to be allowed. Under current law, a retired person with an IRA can contribute up to \$100,000 per year directly to a charity from their IRA. They get the deduction, the charity benefits. This contribution counts toward an annual required minimum distribution, but this ability will be canceled. This feature will be canceled January 1 of 2011.

CENSUS SHOWS BIG MINORITY POPULATION SURGE Will Surge Change Rhetoric of Race Relations?

Some National Statistics. According to an Associated Press writer, the Census Bureau reports some significant changes in the nation's minority population:

- The nation's minority population is steadily rising and now makes up 35% of the U. S., having been boosted primarily by a surge in Hispanic births and other Americans who describe themselves as multiracial.
- In 2000, whites comprised 79% of the total population and minorities 21%. Recent estimates are that within the ensuing decade the white population has remained flat with the percentage of whites being reduced to 65% and the minority population surging to 35%.

Some State and Local Statistics. Currently, four states—Texas, Hawaii, New Mexico and California—have minority populations that exceed 50%

There have also been significant changes in regard to local elections. For example, *Middle America News* reports that the *New York Times* announced the results of the December 2009 mayoral election won by Michael Bloomberg with this sensationalized headline: FOR FIRST TIME, MINORITY VOTE WAS A MAJORITY IN THE CITY. The *Times* then continued: “...the election produced a seismic shift that so far has gone largely unnoticed: Black, Hispanic and Asian residents made up a majority of voters in a citywide election for the first time.”

Some County Statistics. Following are some statistics revealing the minority growth in some of the nation's largest counties from 1980 to 2008:

- Between 1980 and 2008, Los Angeles, the largest, grew by 2.5 million to 10 million. The immigrant share went from 22% to 41%.
- Orange County saw its population rise from 1.9 million in 1980 to 3.2 million in 2008, with the immigrant share rising from 13% to 34%.
- Harris County, Texas, the nation's third largest, grew by 1.4 million since 1980. Its immigrant population tripled as a share of total population to 25%
- Dallas County added a million people to hit 2.5 million by 2008, as its immigrants surged from 5% to 27%.
- In Dade County (Miami), the immigrant share of the population has gone in 30 years from 36% to 58%.

Will—or should—changes in the racial makeup of the nation as reported above result in changes in rhetoric when racial matters such as those listed below are discussed?

A Rationale for a Double Standard. The reader will probably have noted for several years a double standard in regard to racial matters: Whites can be deemed guilty of making certain racist statements but not blacks—even when the same or similar statements are involved.

On college campuses, for example, such practices as establishing separate dormitories, separate graduations and separatist organizations by minorities are tolerated without a charge of racism which would exist if the situation were reversed. Even in politics, the existence of the Congressional Black Caucus is accepted without a question of racism.

How can this be? The answer, to a great extent, lies in a rationale Jesse Jackson and others of similar political persuasion have expounded with success. That rationale, as explained (but not advocated) by liberal black columnist Leonard Pitts is simply this:

Yes, blacks can be prejudiced or bigoted, but not “racist” because racism involves systemic oppression—the wielding of power. As blacks neither wield power nor control the system, the reason goes, it’s beyond their ability to be a racist.

Affirmative Action. A report appearing in a 2003 issue of *National Review* is instructive in that it reveals a questioning of the very premise of Affirmative Action, even by potential beneficiaries of that program:

...fire-department officials in Omaha, Neb., offered five of seven captain’s jobs to white men who had scored at the top of their class on an advancement test. Under affirmative-action rules, however, the next promotion was then offered to first a white woman (ranked 24th), then a black man (36th), and then another white woman (37th)—all of whom turned it down, saying they preferred to wait to be promoted by merit. “You have people in a fire station trying to work together, live together,” one fireman explained to reporters.

College Admission Practices. *New York Times* columnist Ross Douthat reports that two Princeton sociologists published a study of admissions and affirmative action practices at eight highly selective colleges and found that “the admission process seemed to favor black and Hispanic applicants, while white and Asians needed higher grades to get in,” and that the whites most disadvantaged by the process were the “downscale, the rural and the working-class.” These sociologists report that “the most under-represented group on elite campuses often aren’t racial minorities; they’re working-class white (and white Christians in particular) from conservative states and regions.”

While this study is of limited scope, does it not suggest the need of a much broader study about the effects of affirmative action in view of changed and changing demographics?

Leftists’ Talk About “White” Tea Parties. Columnist Dennis Praeger contends that the Left’s practice of attempting to invalidate the Tea Party movement on grounds that it is predominately white tells us more about the Left than it does about the tea partiers: In the world of the Left, “people are taught not to assess ideas but to identify the race, class and gender of those who espouse those ideas.”

Praeger also suggests that the absence of minorities in the Tea Party movement could lead to the conclusion that “it does not reflect well on the *political* outlook of blacks and Hispanics that they so overwhelmingly identify with ever-larger government. Leftist big-government policies have been disastrous for black America just as they were in the countries that most Hispanics emigrated from.”

NOTES ON THE PASSING SCENE

(Some random observations on this crazy world in which we live)

Early Voting Begins Soon. Early voting for the November General Election begins on Monday, October 18 and concludes on Friday, October 29. The coming election is one of the most crucial—perhaps *the* most crucial—one in our lifetimes, and it begins in only about 13 weeks!

An Important Exemption in the Health Care Bill. So much attention has been given to the negatives of the Health Care law that one plus in the legislation has gone largely unnoticed: Congress allows members of certain ministries or religious organizations who have shared their medical expenses for a required number of years to be exempt from the law’s mandatory health insurance requirement which goes into effect in 2014.

According to *World*: “The legislation defines [those organizations] as tax exempt, 501(c)(3) organizations whose members share a common set of ethical or religious beliefs and share in medical expenses without regard to residence or employment. It also requires them to have been in continuous existence since Dec. 31, 1999...”

Texas Pledge Under Attack. The reader will recall that, during the 90s, the Texas Legislature added the

phrase “under God” to the Texas Pledge of Allegiance. But, according to the Liberty Institute, that addition has been the subject of a lawsuit brought forward to federal court by certain parties who want it removed. The lawsuit has received very little, if any, notice in the press, and has already been brought before the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

“House Tea Party Caucus” Formed. Largely through the efforts of Rep. Michele Bachmann, R.-Minn., a newly formed “House Tea Party Caucus” has come into existence with a membership of 28 Republicans, including our own Congressman John Carter and at least 6 other Republicans from the 32-member Texas Congressional delegation.

Rep. Bachmann said she organized the group because she thinks Congress is ignoring the concerns of tea party members. Congressman Carter is quoted as saying, “The left is doing everything in their power to demonize and marginalize the tea party movement because they are so terrified of it.”

Rush Limbaugh, however, contends there is resistance in Washington to the Tea Party movement not only by the Left, but also by what he terms “the ruling class,” (sometimes also referred to as “the establishment” and “the elite”) of both parties. In support of his contention, he reveals the attitude of former Republican Majority Leader, now Washington, D. C. lobbyist, Trent Lott toward the Tea Party movement when he said, “We don't need a lot of Jim DeMint disciples. As soon as they get here, we need to co-opt them.” Lott's attitude may be typical of other members of the “ruling class.”