

National Regrets and Paying for Reagan-Bush Policies

Written by Jesse Richard
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Our current list of national economic difficulties and governmental failures is a direct result of nearly 30 years of failed Republican policies. We are paying the price in many ways for our national love affair with slick, emotionally appealing Republican political rhetoric and candidates. We ignore the harsh reality behind the deceitful words.

We have all experienced bad relationships and failed romances. Long after the romances are over, we are still dealing with the negative consequences both emotional and financial. We keep paying the unhappy costs.

The legacy of distrust, dealing with debts accumulated based on lies, self-doubts for believing the nice sounding lies and living with an awareness that we all are subject to the weakness of emotional reasoning remain long after the relationships have collapsed. There is always the possibility that the burden of dealing with the problems is so great that we go into denial and repeat the same mistakes by buying into slightly repackaged versions. It plays hell on emotional, physical and financial well-being. We all have been there.

It is long past time for the American public to end our soured love affair with deceitful Reagan-Bush Republicanism and start cleaning up the mess left behind. It will be emotionally upsetting but has to be done. The damage is great. It will require a real change in both our behavior and thinking to undo the damage and avoid repeating the same mistakes. It can be done!

In 2008, we are finally be forced to start paying the price for the falsely named set of economic policies once labeled “economic deregulation” that became the national political creed with the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980. We shifted the tax burden to those least able to bear the strain by raising taxes on both the poor and the middle class. We cut dramatically the tax burden of the wealthy and even more so for the Super Wealthy. We encouraged paper financial profits over real economic growth. We exported our industrial base weakening our nation because it temporarily profited our economic elite.

We ended usury laws, weakened government regulation of our financial institutions, permitted government “no-bid” contracts to go to political powerful corporations and ignored anti-monopoly traditions. Consumer protections were weakened. Our federal courts were packed with Republican Right-Wing Radicals willing to overlook any kind of corruption by government officials, corporations or Republican politicians as long as the results favored the wealthiest of the wealthy and the politically powerful.

Our dollar is in the toilet because we exported debt in exchange for cheap imported goods. Wal-Mart raked in a fortune by lowering wage rates in community after community, fighting all efforts at unionizing their workers, and undermining our manufacturing base by encouraging American factories to relocate to China. A government truly serving our national interest would have adopted trade and tax policies that would have stopped Wal-Mart from pursuing these policies. However, the Reagan-Bush Republicans did the opposite.

Even during the brief periods of Democratic Presidential rule under Clinton, Republican policies were often still pursued. The NAFTA and WTO deals received White House support although

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the majority of Congressional Democrats often opposed these falsely-named “free trade” deals. They were passed largely with Congressional Republican votes. Media consolidation resulted as a direct result of some Democrats buying into the Republican “economic deregulation” arguments. Media consolidation reduced competition instead of promoting it. It hurt small business advertisers and media consumers. Both policies have been severe failures for the American nation. They have undermined the health of both the American economy and American Democracy.

The Republican Presidential candidate John McCain promises to deliver more of the same failed policies. Although McCain has an impressive past military record, his services in the political arena are not impressive. His record on economics or finding a quick exit from the Iraq quagmire inspire little hope or confidence. McCain is simply not prepared to deal with the modern challenges facing the nation in the 21st Century.

For most Americans, a McCain victory will mean a lower standard of living and even less real influence on government policy. McCain is certainly no friend of American workers or consumers. McCain will do nothing to restore America’s industrial base or basic economic health. The “100 Year War Man” has no answers for the real fundamental problems facing our nation today! He is a real threat to our long-term national security.

Both leading Democrats are likely to be a big improvement over McCain. However, we still will need to elect Senators and House members willing to support more populist economic reforms that actually reverse some of the damage done over the past 30 years. We need to elect the right kind of Democrats and to keep pressuring them to restore economically responsible policies. We need to demand more open government, more civil liberties protections and democratically responsive governance.

I urge strongly that voters educate themselves before voting in November. Two excellent books that we all should read by then are Free Lunch by David Cay Johnston and Bad Samaritans by Ha-Joon Chang. A daily visit to Buzzflash.com or Mid-Atlantic Labor.com would certainly help you become a more informed voter. Listening to talk radio shows like The Rick Smith Show, Thom Hartmann, Andy Johnson, Ed Shultz, Guy James, Democratic Talk Radio or Air America programs would help with the brain rot resulting from listening to Rush Limbaugh, Michael Savage, Sean Hannity and the like.

You can count on the Republicans feeding you, as voters, lots of crazy emotionally charged slogans and arguments. The Corporate media will go after reform minded Democrats like resigned New York Governor Spitzer with zeal and venom while largely ignoring similar or worse behavior by currently serving Republican Senators like Louisiana’s Vitter or Idaho’s Craig. Vitter and Craig are reliable votes supporting the failed Reagan-Bush Republican policies while Spitzer actually prosecuted some of the worst Corporate abusers.

Only by educating yourself about policies can you avoid making the same mistakes over and over again. For your own sake and that of your children, this year break the cycle and vote based on substantive issues like healthcare, trade policies, re-industrializing America, shifting some of the tax burden back to those most able to pay higher taxes,

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resumption of usury laws, jobs, consumer protection, balancing the budget, ending an unaffordable war and a return to anti-monopoly law enforcement.

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