

Stop Playing Chicken

Written by Jeffrey L. Boney

Wednesday, 12 September 2012 15:53



Okay, so help me out here. Indulge me please. "It's the economy, stupid," is an often used phrase that derived from campaign strategist James Carville. Carville's original phrase was meant for the internal audience of Bill Clinton's campaign workers in order to keep the campaign on message.

We have been seeing folks on all sides of the political spectrum, bicker and squabble over who is to blame for the current economic crisis here in the United States. The main thing that seems to get lost in the entire conversation, however, is the subject that's most important.....the economy!

This blame game and kick-the-can-down-the-road approach to our economy is not helping us in any way. Republicans blame the Democrats. Democrats blame the Republicans. The people blame Wall Street, the banks, Corporations, whites, blacks, the poor and the rich, in order to find someone to blame for the current fiasco.

While everyone is trying to find the next person or group to place the blame on, our economy continues on a debt-induced coma. Unemployment is still high, especially in the African-American community, and businesses are sitting on as much liquid capital as they can in order to deal with the uncertainty.

The current administration is trying to inject capital into the markets, in order to jumpstart the economy and create jobs, yet many people would say that it's not the job of the government to do that. The federal government has always been a catalyst to drive the U.S. economy; just look

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at the role of government and how it drove the economy during the Great Depression.

Remember “The New Deal?” From 1929 to 1933, manufacturing output decreased by one third. Prices fell by 20%, causing a deflation which made the repayments of debts much harder. Unemployment in the U.S. increased from 4% to 25%. Additionally, one-third of all employed persons were downgraded to working part-time on much smaller paychecks. In the aggregate, almost 50% of the nation’s human work-power was going unused. Sound eerily familiar? If you don’t know your history, then you are destined to repeat it. Well in this case, we have.

“The New Deal” was a series of economic programs enacted in the U.S. between 1933 and 1936. They involved presidential executive orders or laws passed by Congress during the first term of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Did you hear that? There was a collaboration to deal with the issue of the Great Depression by actions from the President and by Congress. A joint effort!!!

The programs were in response to the Great Depression, and focused on what historians call the “3 Rs”: Relief, Recovery, and Reform. That is, RELIEF for the unemployed and poor; RECOVERY of the economy to normal levels; and REFORM of the financial system to prevent a repeat depression.

Before the New Deal, there was no insurance on deposits at banks. When thousands of banks faced bankruptcy, many people lost all their savings. At that time there was no national safety net, no public unemployment insurance, and no Social Security. Relief for the poor was the responsibility of families, private charity, and local governments, but as conditions worsened year by year, their combined resources increasingly fell far short of demand. State governors had closed every bank in the nation and nobody could cash a check or access their savings.

Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr., who was the father of U.S. President John F. Kennedy and was a successful businessman in his own right, remained wealthy during the Depression. Years after the Depression, Kennedy stated that “in those days I felt and said I would be willing to part with half of what I had if I could be sure of keeping, under law and order, the other half.”

He said this because people were pissed, and political and business leaders feared the worst would come through acts of rebellion. The government HAD to do something!

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This brings me to today and the argument that government needs to get out of the way and let the market fix itself.

If government isn't the answer, then (1) why are we blaming President Obama and (2) why are we seeking to have another guy take his place as President in order to fix the economy? I mean, we were on the brink of an utter economic collapse under the Bush administration a little less than 8 years ago and it was because of many of those policies, coupled with the missteps of previous administrations that we are in the situation we are in. The Obama administration took over a huge fiasco and the biggest collapse since the Great Depression. The Obama administration and Congress should stop playing chicken with the lives of the American people and implement a deal that helps the American people right away. I am happy to see the progress that we are making in this country, even with the partisan foolishness that is going on in Washington.

We have had 29 consecutive months of JOB GROWTH and another 96k jobs we've just added and people are calling this dismal and disappointing.

What's actually disappointing? Having elected officials block a sitting President's plan for job creation on both sides of the aisle and everyone turn a blind eye and acting as if they don't see what's happening and what they are doing? Who doesn't want a trillion jobs added? Why can't we celebrate the 96k jobs added as a good thing and thank God for the people who are now gainfully employed and are able to put food on their table and take care of themselves? I can see if the numbers were negative and going in the wrong direction. As a country, I am glad to see the glass half-full and know that while things aren't perfect, we are headed in the right direction. Anything that shows positive progress, unless it is a negative issue, numerically is a good thing right?

It's time out for looking at the glass half-empty and get down to the people's business that sent you there to represent them.

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