

A PATRIOT'S AGENDA

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Patriot News, Nov. 2010*

Since we Patriots are both liberal and conservative, we won't all agree on every policy issue. But there are core issues that devolve from our basic mission statement: "Follow the Constitution, Honor the Truth, Serve the People." We seem to all agree that we need to restore the Constitutional rights of American citizens, enhance our national security through a return to Constitutional foreign and military policies, and rebuild our economy by providing financial security to American families. We also agree that none of these things can be accomplished so long as the giant multinational corporations, the banks and financial service companies, the insurance industry, the fossil fuel conglomerates, the weapons manufacturers, and the billionaires are running the government. Therefore our first priority has to be separating big money and political power. Once we do that, we can then accomplish the rest of our agenda.

So let's define our core agenda as follows:

- (1) End big money control of government.**
- (2) Restore Constitutional rights.**
- (3) Enhance Constitutional National Security.**
- (4) Rebuild Economy & family security.**

Now you may note that there is nothing in there about the size of government or about raising or lowering of taxes. Those are strategies for accomplishing the agenda, and are subject to debate. My personal belief is that we need a government big enough and strong enough and (most importantly) independent enough to protect the American people from the global corporations, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Bilderbergers, the Trilateral Commission, the Federal Reserve, and the for-profit disease treatment industry. Compared to this central task, the job of protecting the American people from foreign invasion is duck soup.

Let's now flesh out the above four core agenda items, for each one listing specific actions needed and recommending concrete pieces of legislation required.

1. END BIG MONEY CONTROL OF GOVERNMENT.

1.1 End corporate "personhood". The absolute first necessary requirement is to reverse the Supreme Court's erroneous decision that says that corporations have a constitutional first amendment free speech right to spend as much money as they want buying up elections, voters, and legislators. To accomplish this, we must amend the Constitution, restoring its original meaning. The required amendment (which I call the "Granny D Amendment" in honor of Doris Haddock, who worked tirelessly against corporate control) reads as follows: "Corporations and other fictitious entities are not 'persons' under this Constitution, and shall have none of the rights and privileges thereof."

1.2 Revise-electoral system to exclude big money and empower the people. The required reforms include (1.2.1) prohibiting private money (including the candidate's own funds) in campaigns, funding them instead with public money and free TV and radio time to qualified candidates. (1.2.2) abolition of burdensome petition requirements for independents and third parties. (1.2.3) adopting preference voting (sometimes called instant runoff voting) so that nobody is forced to choose between the lesser of two evils or risk "throwing away" their vote. (1.2.4) outlawing any method of voting that does not produce a paper ballot that can be counted, recounted, and audited as necessary. Paper ballots should be counted by hand in public. This is the only way to prevent corporate programmers or partisan hackers from stealing elections.

1.3 Reform corporate law so that boards and CEOs are not only responsible to maximize profits to shareholders, but also have responsibilities to their employees, their community, and the environment.

1.4 Mandate open, truthful, and accountable government. (104.1) Pass a federal sunshine law similar to that of the State of Florida, allowing the public an insight into how Congressional and administrative branch decisions are made. (1.4.2) Require identification of all those proposing "earmarks." (1.4.3) Prohibit secret meetings such as those between Vice President Dick Cheney and oil company executives to draft energy policy. (1.4.4) Repeal and prohibit unfunded mandates to state and (1.4.5) Revoke presidential "Fast Track" authority and reclaim the Constitutional right and duty of Congress to regulate trade. (1.4.6) Pass a bill stating that no agreement such as the Strategic Partnership for Prosperity (SPP) or North American Union (NAU) which diminish American sovereignty or give up territory can take effect without the full participation and approval of both houses of Congress, and that no funds may be expended for studies relating to such agreements without the approval of Congress after consultation with the American people. (1.4.7) Establish truly independent investigative commissions to study controversial historical events such as the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the murders of soldiers like Pat Tillman and La Vena Johnson. These commissions should have significant input from those who are critical of the official stories, and should have a co-chair from among their ranks.

1.5 Re-regulate the media. Return to the pre-Reagan prohibition on ownership of multiple media outlets. Family-owned newspapers and radio and television stations will prevent corporate monopoly media from brainwashing the public and censoring facts which expose government lies.

2. RESTORE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS FOR AMERICANS

2.1 Abolish the Department of Homeland Security. We don't need an agency whose mission is to protect the government from the American people.

2.2 Repeal the misnamed "Patriot Act," the Military Commissions Act, and any other act which attempts to take away rights guaranteed in the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

2.3 End the threat of martial law. The President should revoke Presidential Directives 20 and 51 which give him dictatorial powers, and should close the concentration camps Halliburton has built or refurbished around the country.

2.4 Release political prisoners like Mumia Abu Jamal and Leonard Peltier, and all those being detained without charge. End torture and rendition, and prosecute those who authorized and carried out these illegal and immoral practices. Pardon all those incarcerated for possession or use of marijuana and end the failed "war on drugs." Repeal federal laws against marijuana and hemp.

2.5 Pass a Congressional resolution stating that the separation of Church and State means that no government at any level may interfere with churches in setting requirements for receiving sacraments. Every denomination has the right to decide whether or not to grant the sacrament of matrimony to same-sex couples. At the same time, no governmental body may discriminate on the basis of gender by refusing adult couples wishing to enter into a civil union.

3. REBUILD CONSTITUTIONAL NATIONAL SECURITY

3.1 End the phony war on terror. Pass a resolution stating that terrorist attacks like that on 9/11 are criminal acts and will be investigated and prosecuted as such. The perpetrators do not deserve the exalted status of "warrior."

3.2 End the illegal occupations. (3.2.1) Pass an authorization bill stating that no funds may be used for military activities in Iraq or Afghanistan, except for carrying out an orderly and rapid withdrawal. (3.2.2) Declare that it is US policy to vacate military bases in occupied nations such as Afghanistan and Iraq, and to give up oil and mineral rights and pipeline routes. If corporate entities wish to retain these rights, they must negotiate directly with the sovereign governments involved.

3.3 Return to Constitutional foreign and military policies. (3.3.1) Declare that the Armed Forces of the United States will be used only for the protection of our borders and our people, not the global financial interests of multinational corporations. The only exceptions will be for voluntary participation in UN peacekeeping forces or humanitarian missions such as natural disasters. Declare that any attack on Iran or any other country not specifically authorized by Congress with a Declaration of War is an impeachable offense. (3.3.2) Except for small Marine detachments guarding our embassies, bring home all our troops from around the world, returning all foreign bases to the host countries. (3.3.3) Cancel all contracts with mercenaries such as Blackwater (or Xe as they call themselves now). (3.3.4) Cancel all weapons development and procurement contracts not required for the Constitutional mission of national defense. Tell the contractors there must be no layoffs. If we can pay farmers not to grow crops, we can pay engineers and machinists not to build weapons. (3.3.5) Return all National Guard units to the control of the governors of the states. (3.3.6) Release Reserve units and excess personnel for transfer to alternative duties such as border patrol, disaster relief and cleanup, and rebuilding infrastructure. (There should be no forced separations.) The personnel and the budget to support them can eventually be transferred to other agencies. (3.3.7) Reorganize the Department of Defense and adjust the Defense budget to reflect the new mission. Once the transition is complete, the DoD budget should be around 20% of its current level. (3.3.8) End the embargo of Cuba and begin establishing normalized relations. (3.3.9) Terminate all covert actions and propaganda campaigns attempting to undermine other countries such as Iran and Venezuela. The fact that a country chooses not to cooperate with multinational corporations is no business of our government.

3.4 Abolish the CIA. Presidents Kennedy and Carter learned that it was impossible to get rid of the "dirty tricks" side of the CIA while retaining the intelligence gathering and analysis function. The CIA has continued to foster instability, insurrection, tyranny, torture, terrorism, murder, and war around the world, causing millions of deaths and creating millions of enemies for the United States through fear and hatred. We must drive a stake through its heart. The many good analysts may transfer to the DIA.

3.5 Honor and care for our Veterans. The fact that current and past wars are Unconstitutional, illegal, and destructive of our national security does not diminish the dedication, bravery, and sacrifices of our veterans who were lied to. They served in the belief that they were protecting our freedoms. We must see that they are cared for. The care of our soldiers wounded in action, suffering from PTSD, and poisoned by Depleted Uranium (DU) is not a discretionary expenditure to be avoided by delay, denial, and bureaucratic red tape. It is a solemn obligation of our government, and it must be met. (3.5.1) Fully fund the VA. (3.5.2) Direct the VA to recognize Gulf War Syndrome as a service-connected disability. (3.5.3) Direct the Department of Defense to root out prejudice against soldiers seeking help for PTSD, and to halt the practice of giving them drugs and returning them to service. (3.5.4) Direct the VA to halt the practice of some examiners who routinely deny benefits for PTSD claims because they "don't believe in it." (3.5.5) Direct the DoD and the V A to strengthen programs to ease the transition from combat to civilian life. There have been too many cases of domestic violence, murder, and Suicide by veterans unable to make the transition. (3.5.6) Order a permanent halt to the use of DU munitions and armor. Destroy all existing supplies and store it as radioactive waste.

4. REBUILD ECONOMY & FAMILY SECURITY

4.1 Expose the trickle-down myth. Both political parties promote the myth that the way to build the economy and jobs is to reduce taxes and regulations on businesses. The Republicans add a related myth that reducing taxes on millionaires will cause them to create jobs. All these myths are false. Neither businesses nor millionaires create jobs. CONSUMERS create jobs! Government can totally eliminate taxes on businesses and the super-wealthy, banks can offer business loans at zero interest. Yet not a single job will be created unless there are consumers willing and able to purchase the products and services offered. Businesses and millionaires will only create new jobs when the DEMAND can't be met without them. At present, the demand isn't there, because workers and the middle class can't afford to buy. Those who still have jobs are afraid to buy because they may either lose their job or have unforeseen medical expenses. Job loss and medical bills are the leading causes of personal bankruptcy and home foreclosure, and most of us are subject to be impoverished by either one ... or both. So we don't spend our meager

savings (if any) unless we have to, and we are afraid to go further in debt. The gap between the rich and the workers has gotten so big that there's precious little left to pump to the top, and whatever goes to the top never trickles down. So the gap gets bigger. In spite of soaring productivity, real wages today are a third of what they were in the 1950s. This is unsustainable.

Henry Ford used to pay his workers well, because he wanted them to be able to buy the cars they built. And both he and his workers thrived. He understood that economics was not trickle-down, but bubble-up. The only way to rescue the economy and guarantee jobs for those who want them is to make every American family financially secure, eliminating the worry that either the paychecks will stop or that medical bills will swamp them. Then people will buy things and businesses will hire more people to meet the demand. Everyone will prosper, including the rich, but only when every family gets an adequate, regular paycheck and health care when they need it.

It is here that those of us who are libertarian in ideology will diverge from those of us who are progressive. We will not agree on how to go about providing every family with paychecks and health. But however we do it, it must be done. My prescription is outlined below in Sections 4.2 and 4.3. Those of us on the left and right come back together again on Banking Reform and Tax Reform, covered in 4.4 and 4.5. These are also vital to our economic development and to financial security.

4.2 Guarantee paychecks for all. (Don't worry. I'll discuss how to pay for all this in Section 4.5.) (4.2.1) The simplest solution would be to send every American family, rich or poor, a paycheck every month. Call it "Social Security for all." Start with \$800 for each adult and \$200 for each child, with the amount indexed for inflation, just like Social Security. Like Social Security, it would be taxable after your other income rose above a certain level. (4.2.2) A more modest (perhaps interim) proposal is to extend unemployment benefits indefinitely - no maximum number of weeks, no expiration date. (4.2.3) The most satisfying way to provide paychecks, of course, is through jobs. I am convinced that if you provide the regular paychecks first, the jobs will follow (because paychecks will create demand). But there are other steps we should take as well. Until the demand creates sufficient private sector jobs, the government should offer jobs to anyone wanting one. Let the WP A live again. (4.2.4) In order to reinvigorate our manufacturing capability, the government should end subsidies to companies moving jobs out of the country and should use tariffs to level the playing field. Suspend NAFTA and all other "free trade" agreements (they are really free investment agreements) until our trade partners extend the same benefits, union rights, protections for health, safety, and the environment, and wages as we require of businesses here. It should be no cheaper to build widgets in Mexico or China and import them than to build them in Scranton or Detroit or Oshkosh. (4.2.5) Make it just as expensive for companies to hire undocumented workers as American citizens. Use a non-forgeable ID card with Social security number and status. Require non-citizen workers be given minimum wage and other protections accorded citizens. Offending employers would be jailed. (4.2.6) Index the Minimum Wage for inflation and gradually raise it to what it would have been had it been indexed for inflation when it was created at a dollar an hour. (That would currently be about \$16 an hour.)

4.3 Health Care for all. (4.3.1) As a conservative, I believe that the only fiscally responsible way to provide health care is to eliminate the profit, the overhead, the red tape, the interference between doctor and patient, and the interference in our political system of the insurance companies by kicking them out of health care altogether. We must finally join the rest of the civilized world and adopt a single-payer national health system. (4.3.2) A modest proposal to achieve such a single-payer system is Medicare For All. We can start with a bill expanding Medicare to cover pregnant women, infants up to age six, and seniors starting at age sixty. Include pre-natal care, well baby care, and preventive care with no copay. The bill should state that it is our policy to gradually expand and improve Medicare until it covers all Americans for medical, dental, vision, hearing, mental health, home health, and long-term care, with deductibles and co-pays limited to what is affordable to families on minimum wage. (4.3.3) Medicare Part D should be repealed, and prescription drugs should be covered as a standard part of Medicare Part B, just like x-rays or doctor visits.

4.4 Banking Reform. The banks take high risk gambles with our money and lose. Then they go to the federal government for a bail-out. The government goes to the Federal Reserve (which is about as federal as Federal Express) to borrow the money. The Fed then creates the money out of thin air and loans it to the government (at interest which we taxpayers have to pay). The government then gives it to the banks, who are supposed to loan it to us (again at interest, so we're paying double interest on the same money). The banks then use the money to buy up other banks (including foreign banks) and to pay themselves huge bonuses. The stockholders of the Federal Reserve make hundreds of billions of dollars on money which was never theirs in the first place. They never have a penny of their own at risk! Some sweet deal, isn't it? But not for us. In this system, all money is created as debt. But where does the money come from to pay the interest? More loans. They can never be paid off. It is a huge pump, pumping money from workers to the ultra-wealthy who own the banks. Both conservatives and liberals agree that this must end. (4.4.1) Pass legislation abolishing the Federal Reserve and eliminating our debt to it. (4.4.2) Pass legislation ending the debt-based monetary system and returning to Congress its Constitutional responsibility for creating money ... without debt. The government should print greenbacks and use it for government purposes - including building roads and bridges, caring for disabled veterans, and providing universal health care. (4.4.3) Audit the big banks and financial service companies and nationalize those who are insolvent. They can then be run as non-profit government banks, providing low-interest loans to individuals and small businesses.

4.5 Tax Reform. We have proposed significant government expenditures for guaranteed paychecks and health care for Americans. It is fair to ask where the money is going to come from. For centuries, governments have been using taxes to control behavior. They tax what they want to discourage (like smoking, for example). So why do we tax employers for providing jobs? Payroll taxes are counter-productive. They are especially burdensome on small businesses. The minute you hire one person, you have to hire another to figure out income tax withholding, FICA taxes, unemployment insurance taxes, workers comp taxes, ad infinitum. It's no wonder most new businesses fail before they ever make a profit. Businesses should only be taxed on profits.

Similarly, we discourage those on welfare from taking a job, because we tax them so highly. If you find a job that pays the same as welfare, and you take the job and the welfare is stopped, you have in essence been taxed 100% on your new job. Even if your new job pays twice what you got on welfare, the effective tax on it is 50% - and that's before you pay any income tax. Then there's the FICA (Social Security) tax, the most regressive tax of all. A minimum wage earner pays about 8%. The owner of a Morn & Pop business pays 16%. But a basketball player or CEO making \$40 million a year only pays 0.02%. We're supposed to have a graduated income tax. Yet because of the tax break on unearned income (like dividends and capital gains), the wealthy pay a much smaller percentage of their income than low-wage workers. Someone once challenged corporate executives to find one who paid a higher income tax rate than their secretary. None were found.

All this suggests several ways to reform the tax system. (4.5.1) Remove the cap on earnings subject to Social Security tax. This would make it a flat tax, and would keep Social Security solvent forever. Better yet, do away with the FICA tax (and all payroll taxes) completely, compensating by increasing income tax rates or with new taxes (like the tariffs and Tobin tax discussed below). (4.5.2) Restructure the income tax to incorporate a negative income tax (similar to the guaranteed paychecks discussed in 4.2.1) and slowly rising tax rates, with a top rate (probably around 70%) sufficient to make the whole thing revenue neutral. No one with an income of less than \$500,000 per year would have a tax increase. (4.5.3) Remove the favored treatment of unearned income, but index the cost basis of property subject to capital gains for inflation, so that only real gains are taxed. (4.5.4) The cost of universal health care will be much less than the current cost, since the roughly 30% skimmed off by the insurance companies will be eliminated. There will be considerable savings because conflicting and overlapping coverages (like Medicaid and V A) will be eliminated. Individuals will be relieved of the expense of private insurance policies and supplements. Businesses of all sizes will be relieved of the burden of supplying health coverage for their employees and (most importantly for companies like General Motors) for their retirees. Yet the cost to the government will rise, and must be offset by taxes. An increased tax rate on corporate profit is reasonable, especially since they will benefit so much. (4.5.5) Introduce the Tobin tax on financial transactions. There is so much gambling going on in the currency markets and stock markets that the total amount of trades is truly staggering. A tax

of even a tenth of one percent would bring in enough money to pay for the new programs we have proposed and (quite possibly) make the income tax unnecessary. Such a tiny tax would not deter legitimate investment, but might put a brake on some of the lightning computer trading which goes on today. So the actual revenue created will not be known until it is implemented. (4.5.6) Go back to using tariffs (one of the few types of tax authorized in the Constitution) to level the playing field with trading partners who welcome our investments, but put up barriers to the sale of our goods in their country. Tariffs can halt the flight of jobs from our country, as discussed in 4.2.4. (4.5.7) Pass legislation limiting the corporate income tax deduction for executive compensation to twenty times the salary of their lowest paid worker (legal or illegal). The ratio between CEO pay and worker pay used to be 20 to 1. It is now over 600 to 1. This is a free country. Corporations can pay their executives whatever they wish. But we don't have to give them a tax deduction for it.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

There are countless important issues we haven't dealt with in this Patriots' Agenda (like education, the environment, etc.). You can see my position on every conceivable issue on the web site <www.thepatriots.us>. What we have done here is to identify four core agenda items that are absolutely critical to our future as a nation. We'd love to see them taken up in the lame duck session this month. But I'm not holding my breath. My hope is that millions of Americans across the political spectrum (and perhaps a few Patriots in a future Congress) will take up an agenda like this and, one of these days, force our government to honestly deal with it. Until then, hang in there, keep the faith, and may God help us all.

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