

LOUISIANA'S ECONOMICALLY CHALLENGED POLITICIANS

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Louisiana is not the only state with economically challenged politicians-although that is of little comfort to the working people and taxpayers of this state who are forced to pay for our politicians' foolish mistakes. People in northeast Louisiana are currently paying the price. Recently a large insurance company employing hundreds of people and pumping hundreds of thousand dollars into the local economy moved out of Louisiana. Both Republican Governor Foster and then Democratic Governor Blanco offered tax incentives to keep the company from moving out of state. For their actions, both received high praise from local and state media pundits. But the untold truth is that government taxes and regulations are always a major consideration when entrepreneurs make an investment-or in this case a disinvestment-decision. Years of high taxes cannot be erased by the political promise to lower current taxes. Business people are experienced in the real world-as opposed to the fantasyland that politicians live in-and experienced business people know that when today's politician is forced to offer tax cuts to business there is no guarantee that tomorrow's politician will honor the promise. That concern is especially acute when dealing with a political culture that has a history of Huey Long's neo-socialist, sock-it-to-the-rich, "I'll steal enough for everybody" mentality. And so, working people pay. They pay directly by loss of jobs; they pay indirectly by a diminished local economy that offers less opportunity for them to gain personal economic security; and then their government will eventually force them to pay by increasing their tax load to make up for the loss political income (read tax revenue) due to the loss of yet another industry.

Politicians, unlike entrepreneurs and business people, are very shortsighted. Their political horizon is seldom more than the next election. For example, a politician will vote to increase taxes today to provide funding for a government program benefiting a small section of the population but this small section of the population just happens to be an important segment of the politician's supporters. The need to buy votes in the next election outweighs the risk of making Louisiana unattractive for business investment. We all have heard it expressed in political advertisements when one candidate claims that the opponent has failed to "bring home the bacon" or is not capable of "getting our share of the government pie." What we the people have forgotten is that government can not give to one group without taking it away for another group-government has no resources of its own-it only has the police power of government that allows it to take your property and redistribute it to special interest, those close to the powers-that-be in government, and power blocks that trade their votes for your tax dollars.

In Shreveport, Mayor Hightower is pushing for the construction of city owned hotels. These hotels will compete against private enterprise. Is it fair to use a businessperson's taxes to finance a competitor? Is it fair to tax working people to finance a speculative business venture? Our own Commissioner of Agriculture is proposing an even more risk-laden government created business in South Louisiana-here comes gas-a-hol again! Look around the world and see if government sponsored industry (National Socialism) or government-controlled industry (Marxist Socialism) has had long-term success. As a matter of fact, our politicians need only look to the State of Mississippi for a recent example of the risk of government involvement in industry. Their Ag Commissioner supported a \$90 million beef processing plant that shut down three months after it opened and has defaulted on a \$35 million state-backed loan (read taxpayer must now pay-up)!

The solution is very simple. The solution is as old as the United States itself. The solution is for we the people to limit the role that government plays in our lives, our communities, and our economy. We the people must once again realize that government is force, taxes are theft made legal, and politicians will naturally attempt to maximize short-term political gain regardless of the real impact on the non-represented taxpayer now or especially in the future. Therefore, it is imperative that we the people recognize government as a necessary evil and seek to limit its power to encroach upon our rights and property. Politicians will denounce such suggestions as an insult to "public servants" while their lackeys in economic departments of leading Universities will deplore as socially uncaring the suggestion that we abandon liberal/socialist Keynesian economics, and the liberal media will assure us that there will be people starving to death in the streets if the state does not underwrite the building of a sugar cane to alcohol plant in Bunkie, Louisiana. We the people must be courageous enough to ask our tax-and-spend politicians "Which is more likely, that government will tax us into poverty, or that it will tax us rich?" © James Ronald Kennedy www.kennedytwins.com