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Today's Tabloid

PERSONAL NEWS FOR craig.kirchoff+fisccon@gmail.com

FISCALLY CONSERVATIVE BLOG FEEDS

Raise Taxes or Raise Taxes? Washington's Solution to \$2.8 Billion Budget Deficit [Americans for Tax Reform]

FEB 26, 2010 02:27P.M.

The state of Washington finds itself in a financial mess \$2.8 billion in the making. This comes as the result of over-paid state employees, high cost pension plans, burdensome social programs, and was... 


FISCALLY CONSERVATIVE BLOG FEEDS

This Week in Government Failure [Cato at Liberty]

FEB 26, 2010 02:05P.M.

By Tad DeHaven


Over at Downsizing Government, we focused on the following issues this week:

- The two most recent *first quarter* deficits have been about \$100 billion higher than the average *annual* deficits run from 2002 to 2008.
 - Utah legislators call for fiscal federalism.
 - Small businesses are citing government as the problem, but the media ignores the story.
 - Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac should be put in the budget, and then privatized.
 - The Economic Development Administration, National Association of Development Organizations, and the Appropriations Committees aren't exactly taxpayer-friendly. 
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FISCALLY CONSERVATIVE BLOG FEEDS

Andy Stern Appointed to Debt Panel While Under Criminal Review for Lobbying Activities [Americans for Tax Reform]

FEB 26, 2010 12:10P.M.

[PDF of Press Release] In response to President Obama's appointment of Andy Stern to the bi-partisan debt panel, the Alliance for Worker Freedom sent out the following release: President ... 

FISCALLY CONSERVATIVE BLOG FEEDS

Do We Really Want to Mimic Western Europe's Stagnant Welfare States? [Cato at Liberty]

FEB 26, 2010 11:51A.M.

By Daniel J. Mitchell


Since many of the politicians in Washington want America to be more like Europe (including complete government-run health care instead of the partially government-run health care system we have now), it's worth contemplating what that would mean for the economy.

America today is richer than Western Europe. Indeed, per-capita living standards are about 30 percent higher in the United States — and that's according to the stats at the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (see page 6 of this report). And we have been growing faster, which presumably should not be the case according to convergence theory (see Annex Table No. 1 of this OECD database).

It also seems that Europe's economy is more likely to endure a double-dip recession. Bloomberg reports:

Europe's economy may be coming unstuck from the global recovery as governments to the south of the region struggle to reverse budget deficits and consumers in the north pull back spending. After the 16-nation euro

economy almost stagnated in the fourth quarter, data this week showed the weakness reaching into 2010. ...“Europe is where we see the biggest risk of a double dip at the global level,” said Julian Callow, chief European economist at Barclays Capital in London. “Europe has been lagging and we’ve continued to see better numbers in Asia and now the U.S.” ...“There are tentative signs that the U.S. economy may be pulling ahead from Europe,” [UBS strategist Nick] Nelson said in a Feb. 23 report... “The sovereign debt crisis in Europe’s periphery reinforces drags on euro-area growth,” said Michael Saunders, an economist at Citigroup in London.

Left-wing populists genuinely seem to believe that the economy is a fixed pie, so even though they are fundamentally wrong, their fixation on redistribution is understandable. After all, given their inaccurate view of the world, robbing Peter is the only way to lift Paul. What is more mystifying is why the (presumably) thoughtful left wants America to be more like Western Europe, where living standards lag America and the gap grows wider with each passing year. The only logical conclusion is that they are so fixated on differences in income (or, less charitably, are so resentful of success) that they are willing to make poor people worse off if they can impose even greater damage on rich people. As Winston Churchill noted, “The inherent vice of capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings; the inherent virtue of socialism is the equal sharing of miseries.” 

FISCALLY CONSERVATIVE BLOG FEEDS

Give a Hoot, Don’t Pollute . . .the Economy with Taxes or Unnecessary Spending [Americans for Tax Reform]

FEB 26, 2010 11:28A.M.

Arizona’s budget battle has squeezed the Arizona State Parks Board, closing two-thirds of state parks. Politicians will sometimes use the “Washington Monument Syndrome” tactic, clo... 

FISCALLY CONSERVATIVE BLOG FEEDS

Weekend Links — Health Care Edition [Cato at Liberty— Health Care Edition]

FEB 26, 2010 11:20A.M.

By Chris Moody

- Republicans and Democrats are both missing the point of true health care reform: “Health care reform cannot just be about giving more stuff to more people. It should be about actually ‘reforming’ the system. That means scrapping the current bills, and crafting the type of reform that makes consumers responsible for their health care decisions.”
- Alan Reynolds: If people looking for individual health insurance policies were allowed to shop in *any* state, the number of uninsured could drop by 11.1 million ... or more.
- And the winner for the worst idea for health care reform goes to...
- Something you might want to brush up on: The Reconciliation Rulebook.
- In case you missed it, Cato health policy experts live-blogged part of Thursday’s health care summit.

<http://bit.ly/ah1bNN> 

FISCALLY CONSERVATIVE BLOG FEEDS

Shane Harris’ The Watchers at Cato March 10th [Cato at Liberty]

FEB 26, 2010 11:16A.M.

By Jim Harper

Here’s a great conversation at Slate.com about Shane Harris’ new book *The Watchers*.

We’ll be having the author here at Cato on March 10th for a similar discussion of his book and the growth of the surveillance state.

Register here. 

FISCALLY CONSERVATIVE BLOG FEEDS

Does Duncan Have Any Clue What a Free Market Is? [Cato at Liberty]


FEB 26, 2010 10:35A.M.

By Neal McCluskey

On the heels of exploiting the name of perhaps the world's all-time greatest free-marketeer, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has decided to cut right to the chase and abuse the term "free market" itself. Writing in the *Washington Post* as part of his ongoing effort to demonize banks and push the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act over the finish line, Duncan offers the following:

The president's plan actually creates jobs and draws on free-market principles by selecting private companies through a competitive process to service student loans issued directly by the Education Department. These private companies, including Sallie Mae, compete for our business and are evaluated on the quality of their customer service and their default rates.

Got it? When the federal government decides which companies get to service loans that it *completely controls*, those are "free-market principles" at work.

Right. And the legislation Duncan is trying to sell us really is fiscally "responsible." 

FISCALLY CONSERVATIVE BLOG FEEDS

Should the U.S. Withdraw from NAFTA? [Cato at Liberty]

FEB 26, 2010 10:31A.M.

By Daniel Griswold

Rep. Gene Taylor, D-MS, thinks so. According to CongressDaily, Taylor is about to introduce a two-page bill that would withdraw the United States from the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Taylor blames the agreement with Canada and Mexico for the loss of 5 million manufacturing jobs since it was enacted in 1994. This is a popular but false charge. Manufacturing jobs have declined in the past 15 years for one big reason: soaring productivity.

Overall output at U.S. factories was actually 37 percent higher in 2009 compared to 1993, the year before NAFTA took effect, according to Table

B-51 in the latest *Economic Report of the President*. We are producing a higher volume of stuff with fewer workers because individual workers are so much more productive than they were in the early 1990s.

As I've argued before, NAFTA has spurred more trade and deeper integration among the three partner countries. It has created new opportunities for American companies and their workers to raise their competitiveness in global markets. It has strengthened ties to our two closest neighbors.

The U.S. government would be foolish to withdraw from an agreement that continues to pay huge dividends. 

FISCALLY CONSERVATIVE BLOG FEEDS


When Bipartisanship Is Good News [Cato at Liberty]

FEB 26, 2010 09:24A.M.

By Sallie James

Usually when I hear that a policy proposal has bipartisan support, I instinctively check for my wallet. But I greeted with pleasure the news on Wednesday that two lawmakers — Rep. Scott Garrett (R, NJ) and Rep. Patrick Murphy (D, PA) — had introduced a bill to shut down the USDA's Market Access Program, which the congressmen rightly paint as "corporate welfare to big business."


I yield to no one in my abhorrence of trade barriers, here and abroad. But this program is less about addressing market access *per se*, and more about taxpayer funding of marketing campaigns, trade shows and other promotions, which surely are the responsibility of the firms/industries concerned.

Incidentally, the Market Access Program is a line item in one of many agricultural programs identified by our Tax and Budget team as being ripe for the chopping block. 

FISCALLY CONSERVATIVE BLOG FEEDS

New CNN Poll: Federal Gov't Poses an IMMEDIATE Threat [The Club for Growth]

FEB 26, 2010 09:13A.M.

Big government liberals aren't become so large and powerful that it poses an immediate threat to the rights and freedoms of ordinary citizens. Forty-four percent of those polled disagree. The survey indicates a partisan divide on the question: only 37 percent of Democrats, 63 percent of Independents and nearly 7 in 10 Republicans say the federal government poses a threat to the rights of Americans. 

FISCALLY CONSERVATIVE BLOG FEEDS

Senator Bunning: "I Object" [The Club for Growth]

FEB 26, 2010 08:44A.M.

One of my favorite RedState editors, hogan, had a must-read blog post up right now about Senator Jim Bunning. It's worth it. 