

# OCPA FaxLine Report

a public policy information service for members of the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs, Inc.

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Dear OCPA Member:

Thursday, January 8, 2009

It's a New Year with great opportunities for free market conservatives. Permit me to explain. Everything seemed to fall apart the last four months of 2008. There was the taxpayer bailout of major financial institutions, a stock market retreat, an election of a liberal populist to the White House, and as the year closed, talk of more bailouts and a so called "stimulus plan" which could top a trillion dollars.

How did this all happen so fast? Well anyone who has been paying attention knows that government has never stopped expanding. Other than Oklahoma's own U.S. Senators, there have been few other reliable stalwarts of genuine fiscal restraint and accountability in Washington, D.C. The pendulum has been swinging toward more and more government "assistance" in every area of our lives. So by the time the nation's 2008 financial crisis occurred citizens had become accustomed to viewing the federal government as one big problem solver. I call it the "Katrina effect." The thinking has become: *every problem is really an impending disaster that demands a federal government solution now!* This belief is so pervasive that noted syndicated columnist Cal Thomas wrote this week that "we may have to change the familiar letter abbreviation for this country from USA to ATM."

Unfortunately, as the momentum of the pendulum apparently swings further left, some conservatives have turned pessimistic as if to say: *we give up -- all is lost!* But hold on a moment, doesn't a pendulum always swing back with as much force and velocity as it swings forward? When it swings back will conservatives be ready to demonstrate that they are capable of grabbing hold of leadership with ideas that offer legitimate solutions to the problems created by profligate government largesse? So you ask: what do we do in the meantime? Well, we roll up our sleeves and work. As columnist Michelle Malkin urges, "We stand up for our principles . . . We stay positive and focused. We keep the faith. We do not apologize for our beliefs. We do not re-brand them, re-form them, or relinquish them. We *defend* them . . . We fight." We fight for the principled governing ideas conservatives always claim to embrace but when elected to office will often surrender when mesmerized by their own power.

In Oklahoma, free market ideas are flourishing largely because we are blessed with a true conservative renaissance, of sorts, driven by organizations like OCPA (forgive the plug) and policy makers who have faith in the free enterprise system to self-correct when needed. As Ronald Reagan once stated, "Are you willing to spend time studying the issues, making yourself aware, and then conveying that information to family and friends? Will you resist the temptation to get a government handout for your community? . . . Recognize that government invasion of public power is eventually an assault upon your own business. If some among you fear taking a stand because you are afraid of reprisals from customers, clients, or even government, recognize that you are just feeding the crocodile hoping he'll eat you last." Yes indeed, the New Year has plenty of great opportunities for conservatives to show some mettle.

Until next time . . . Brett A. Magbee, Vice President for Operations

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