

# 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, April 16, 2009

Our nation seems divided between those who see freedom as a blessing and those who see freedom as a curse. Or perhaps those who see the individual as master of his own destiny and those who see their responsibility as mastering the individual.

After visiting a "Tea Party" on the South steps of the Oklahoma State Capitol yesterday, I was struck by the level of sincerity of the participants who gathered there. The one hour program began with various speakers who talked about limited government, support of capitalism, cutting spending and sending a message via the next ballot box that they are unhappy with the direction our country is going.

The peacefully assembled citizens (who the local media estimated at more than 5,000) were both respectful and lawful in their dissent. Meanwhile, those who oppose the many Tea Party rallies being held throughout the nation didn't show up at the Oklahoma Capitol. I guess there was little reason to do so. In the throngs of people gathered there, they would not have been heard, much less noticed.

Afterwards, everyone walked back to their cars to get back to work. Lunch hour was over. These are people who work for a living. Their income is taxed by government and redistributed in various forms to those whom, for whatever reason, our government has determined are "disadvantaged" and therefore deserving of what amounts to a "taxpayer bailout." This is despite the fact that America's economic system still provides the greatest opportunity for the most people to enjoy the highest standard of living in the world.

Noted *New York Times* bestselling author, Dinesh D'Souza, once asked a friend of his from India why he was so determined to immigrate to America. His friend's response was that he wanted to live in the country *where the poor people are fat!*

Many Americans today suffer from a serious lack of gratitude. We live in a country based on individual rights, respect for private property and with the privilege of pursuing happiness. These and many other strong foundational principles enabled us to build the most prosperous, freest nation the world has ever witnessed. Unlike other nations, we've always had peaceful transitions of power from one administration to the next. But in spite of this marvelous example of liberty, the very genius of this form of government is often maligned by those who want a socialist system which has never succeeded in the history of the world. The Tea Party movement has emerged because many citizens no longer believe that our elected leaders uphold the basic principles of our form of government or even respect our cherished Constitution.

After the Constitutional Convention finished its work in 1787, a woman asked Benjamin Franklin what kind of government had been formed. He replied: "A republic, if you can keep it." The Tea Party people seem to understand that Franklin was telling this woman that it is *the citizens themselves* who are responsible for this task.

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

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