

OCPA FaxLine Report

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

Dear OCPA Member:

Thursday, November 6, 2008

Well, the election is over. Conservative, free-market types are no doubt thinking: what do we do now? Here's an idea: be grateful you live in Oklahoma! This state is reliably conservative in nature and it certainly was proven once again in this election. Rather than the dawn of socialism, Oklahoma could soon be experiencing a renaissance of Reaganism. I'm serious -- right here in the Sooner State.

Will the national election impact us? Certainly so, but resurrecting the old tired mantra of higher taxes, greater regulation and more government intervention will get the anti-capitalists nowhere. When they fail, there will be serious questions which they will not be able to avoid. There will be no one else to blame. It may give the national news media an opportunity to rediscover what it means to be "journalists," because the public will be demanding answers. The shoe will be on the other foot.

Meanwhile, free market conservatives must not sit on our hands and complain about the prospects for the upcoming changes on the national public policy scene. Rather we must be about the task of making things better in our state. With some determination and hard work, Oklahoma could well become the oasis of free market ideas within a nation of states which flounder while trying to find a course to follow.

Imagine if you will for a moment: what would happen if our lawmakers in Oklahoma reduced taxes? What would happen if the state adopted OCPA's O-CHIP health reform proposal? What could happen if school choice was implemented? Or genuine lawsuit reform passed? Think of the magnet Oklahoma could become for businesses and industries seeking to relocate in a capitalistic friendly environment.

We should not see this current situation like a glass of water half empty, but as a glass of water half full and then be about the business of filling that glass up with new businesses and entrepreneurs who can enhance our economic development.

No doubt conservatives are recalling the days of President Reagan for solace -- but don't despair. As Jeffrey Lord, former Reagan White House political director and author notes for *The American Spectator*, ". . . conservatism is to the political world what gravity is to the physical world. It is timeless, constantly at work, manifesting itself always in visible realities. . . . Were he here today Reagan would instantly understand the political shell game that is once again in progress. You can just see him listening with that patient smile . . . the slight shaking of his head, the twinkle in his eyes as he hears an instance that if only good and really smart people (like, well, liberals) were in charge, all would be right with the world. Remembering that House Speaker Tip O'Neill used to insist to him that people who made \$50,000 were rich and should have their taxes raised, he would know what's afoot as the 2008 liberals drop the definition of who is rich from \$250,000 to \$200,000 to \$150,000 to \$120,000. Then he would say with a friendly smile: 'Well, there you go again.'

"Ronald Reagan was not just a winning personality whose time has come and gone. He was in fact the living embodiment of a set of timeless principles that are not only the gravity of this political world we live in but its oxygen as well."

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

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