

STILL CAMPAIGNING

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SEPT. 3, 2009 -- From time to time I am asked the difference between being Governor and Senator. Senators and Congressmen are constant campaigners. Governors are doers.

Coming to the Congress, Senators have taken a poll; they know the issues, and the first thing a pollster will tell you is don't split or divide the voters. You're trying to get the most votes possible so identify with the issue; make a favorable comment on both sides, and say you are "troubled" or "concerned" over the issue. The game of a Senator is "I introduced," "I sponsored," "I made a talk." Identify early on with the policy or issue, never having any idea about implementing the policy. In short, the pollster will teach you not to lead. Only identify. And survival in the Congress will have you constantly campaigning for money and re-election.

As Governor, the crazy Legislature might give you what you propose, and then what are you going to do? How are you going to implement? How are you going to see it through, make it work? The first order of a Governor or President is to sit down and think it through. Assume the policy or program has passed Congress and now you've got to make it work. You begin to think how you can avoid trouble; smooth over troubling issues; beat the regular opposition; take care of the sore-heads in your own party, and head-count. If you don't have a pretty good chance of enactment, you never propose.

A President's time is limited and he's got no time like a member of Congress identifying or hit-and-run driving important needs. He has to lead for the

real needs of the country. You'll never find the real needs of the country in a poll because the pollster avoids asking questions -- for example, about taxes. When has a pollster asked: "Do you believe that the government ought to pay for the government it provides?" You'll never find a Marshall Plan in a poll. But the people will let you know.

I watched the Obama campaign develop. We in South Carolina had lost textile jobs long before Paulson's stimulus last September. Obama won the primary, but he and the other candidates never mentioned the devastation of "free trade" or jobs lost from imports. In the Presidential forum, questions on trade or jobs were never asked. But by the time the candidates reached Pennsylvania and Ohio, that's all they were asked. Obama even gave out pins with his picture and the slogan "Buy America." The will and the needs of the people had come through.

That's what's coming through now. Most think the upset at town hall meetings is over health care. But it's mostly over jobs and the economy. President Obama is mentioning creating jobs with a stimulus that is spent because we spent the last eight years stimulating the economy or doubling the debt \$5 trillion. He never mentions the loss of jobs in the trade war. Globalization is nothing more than a trade war with production looking for a cheaper country to produce. The textile industry, the furniture industry, the automobile industry, was lost long before Paulson stimulated. Now they talk of an oxymoron -- a jobless recovery.

The voters were up tight last November at Obama's election. They were sick and tired of the hit-and-run "identifiers" from Congress and settled on a smart, capable, hard-working individual whom they thought would listen and lead. Obama finally listened in the campaigns of Ohio and Pennsylvania, but he's gone back to the pollstered handlers of David Axelrod and Rahm Emanuel. They have him out campaigning around the clock.

Axelrod and Emanuel act like re-election is tomorrow; they want to handle the six o'clock news, the day-to-day headline. They have no idea of getting anything done. For example, they had President Obama make his first announcement to close Guantanamo. No idea of getting it done, Guantanamo is now on hold. Responding to an underground move to get at Cheney's abuses, they had Obama rush out to the CIA and assure the agents that they were not going to be made criminals.

Now, Obama's Attorney General is investigating the agents for crime. And, of course, health care. They enlisted Speaker Pelosi because she acts like an executive. With limited time and control in the House of Representatives she can get things done. She got it done. Now all hell's broken loose. We have a mess. I thought I could help with the elimination of the corporate tax and replacing it with a 5 percent VAT. A 3 percent VAT is better than tax-neutral. It actually cuts corporate taxes. It allows business to produce 22 percent cheaper and export 27 percent cheaper. Instead of cutting Medicare and increasing several other taxes, a 1 percent more VAT would pay for health care. An additional 1 percent will allow exemptions for a VAT on essentials and begin paying down the debt. No doubt a winner!

Except for Corporate America. The financial crowd, that got the country in trouble in the first place -- the big banks, Wall Street, and Corporate America have no regard for the economy of the United States. They are interested in continuing to make big profits in China and India and the economies of China and India. Eliminating the corporate tax would make them go to work and worry about unions instead of a guaranteed profit in China. Some on the corporate board may suggest that they start producing again, creating jobs in the United States. But the CEO in charge has got three years to get the stock up, show big profits, and he wants to continue in China for his bonus and golden parachute.

So Corporate America and the financial crowd oppose cutting their taxes. This is the crowd with the money for campaigns. I made this tax cut proposal to pay for health care to friends in Congress. But Axelrod, Emanuel, President Obama and my friends in Congress have got to get the money for the campaign. Jobs and the economy will have to wait.

The CEO of Boeing is reported to favor moving Boeing's production to China. I knew we needed the automobile industry to make the tanks like we did in World War II. But if the airport industry that has succeeded with government research and government subsidies is now moving to China -- veritably moving the economy to China -- we just as well close the Pentagon, rent it out to the lobbyists, and move the government to China, because we can't defend the country.

A few years ago, Barack Obama campaigned for the Illinois Legislature and got elected. Once in the Legislature, he campaigned for Congress and lost. Then he campaigned and got re-elected to the Legislature. Then he campaigned for

the U. S. Senate and got elected. Once in the Senate, he campaigned for the Presidency and got elected. President Obama's principal experience in government is campaigning. But now as President, he's got to govern. The President will have to do a lot of

campaigning his fourth year in office. But for the first three years he should stay in Washington and figure out how to head the country in the right direction. Otherwise, his fourth year he'll be headed in the wrong direction.

Senator Hollings of South Carolina served 38 years in the United States Senate, and for many years was Chairman of the Commerce, Space, Science & Transportation Committee. He is the author of the recently published book, [Making Government Work](#) (University of South Carolina Press, 2008).

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