

As if Washington were not already doing too many things, almost all badly, and in the process doing far more harm than good, Mr. Obama wants to give government a vast array of additional assignments that it is not competent to handle and that taxpayers cannot afford.

FEDERAL MEDDLING

In the current instance of the bailout, even if Washington does finally find some way of re-lubricating the credit markets that its mistakes almost stopped, the systemic problem of inept governmental interference in all aspects of the economy will remain—and indeed will be magnified by the rescue plan itself. The more crisis Washington causes and the more “emergency” powers it assumes, the bigger and more tangled are the webs it spins.

After Congress spends the next year or so “fixing” the problems in the financial industry—and casting blame on everyone but itself—Washington likely will have all capital markets and credit transactions under its thumb. It would then be able to specify throughout the economy who gets financing, what for, when and how much.

Just imagine an Obama-Pelosi-Reid administration (OPRA) allocating credit and investment among companies according to how green they are, who their shareholders are and whether some federal oracle thinks they are just and fair. Never mind quality and efficiency or ability to repay. Similar “let’s pretend” standards for allocating credit are exactly what led to the home mortgage debacle in the first place.

With other made-in-Washington crises already on track to occur—think energy, entitlements, debt and the dollar—soon every aspect of American life may be under strict federal supervision, with a trajectory pointed downward.

The more government interferes in private matters, the more the economy and society as a whole take on the debilitating characteristics of government. Costs go up, efficiency and quality go down, output falls, corruption and waste increase.

Washington is already increasing its participation in the health care industry. That is the reason costs are so high. Inevitably, it will take complete control and, when it does, quality will plummet.

Government has been messing about in the housing industry for decades. Obviously, it has already made a hash of it, but the worst is probably yet to come. Washington’s energy policy has long been to restrict supply and raise prices. Now the government also has a plan to bring all energy consumers under its supervision and control. It is called cap and trade.

Because of destructive federal regulations and taxes on U.S. plant and equipment as well as on exports, America no longer has an economy that primarily makes and sells things. By default, manufacturing is being displaced by a “knowledge” industry—and most Yankee ingenuity is devoted to creating innovative financing techniques such as derivatives and securitized subprime mortgages. Like government, work consists of shuffling paper (electronically, of course).

OUR WAY OF LIFE

Through its power over education and communications, Washington already influences the creation and dissemination of knowledge. Once it takes over the financial industry, nothing will be left standing in the way of the federal government’s dominance. States and localities are mere administrative units and dispersing agents for Washington. Government has won its war against religion, sidelining churches.

In partnership with affiliated labor unions and a few public-private corporations much

bigger and worse than Fannie or Freddie, Washington will more than ever be able to participate in all aspects of the economy in a manner that far more resembles the corporatist (or fascist) regimes of Europe in the early 1930s than American capitalism.

American capitalism is not just an economic theory. It is a way of life where rewards are based on achievement, not identity or class, and is therefore inextricably bound up with individual freedom and American exceptionalism.

The job of the next president and Congress, if it can possibly rise to the occasion, is first stop the destructive advance of government, then reverse it.

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICER

SPEECH OF

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, September 27, 2008

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 2816, a bill that will alter how the Chief Human Capital Officer is appointed at the Department of Homeland Security.

This bill will give the Secretary of Homeland Security authority similar to other Federal agencies where a determination is made to place a careerist or a political appointee in the Chief Human Capital Officer position. This authority is particularly important as DHS makes its first transition to a new administration. Undoubtedly, there will be numerous staffing challenges ahead and the DHS Secretary must have a Chief Human Capital Officer to depend on to meet the Department’s goals.

The job of the Chief Human Capital Officer requires unique qualifications. Not only must this individual develop and maintain a cadre of national security personnel, but he or she must also ensure integration throughout the new Department and its many components.

The men and women of the Department are some of the hardest working, most selfless individuals in the Federal workforce. Their mission contains little room for error. This is why it is so important that the Department provide a positive workplace that puts employees first. Over the past few years this has not always been the case and low employee morale has plagued the Department and limited its effectiveness.

The 2006 Federal Human Capital Survey conducted by the Office of Personnel Management found that DHS was rated “dead last” in job satisfaction among its peers and received very low marks on leadership and management capabilities. And in the recent DHS 2007 Employee Survey, employees cited their dissatisfaction with the Department’s pay, performance and promotion practices. Moreover, there have been numerous documented incidents regarding mismanagement within some of the major DHS components. These factors contribute to a fractured workforce and low morale.

These are problems that must be addressed by the next Chief Human Capital Officer. Addressing employee concerns must be his or her first priority.

One of the major sources of low morale is the MAX-HR system, a so-called “pay-for-performance” system. MAX-HR and its proposed

“follow-on system” have been repeatedly rejected by my Committee in legislation and, many Members of Congress, for the past two years. The damage that DHS’s relentless pursuit of such a system has done to morale is immeasurable.

The next Chief Human Capital Officer has the chance to make some great strides and improvements at the Department. He or she must work to address the employee concerns and dissatisfaction with a commitment to providing proper training, career development and the tools necessary for its employees to do their jobs. Also at the top of the Chief Human Capital Officer’s priority list should be recruiting the best and brightest for DHS, including individuals with diverse backgrounds and a patriotic spirit to fill its ranks.

Given the extensive investment we have made in developing TSA and its workforce, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that the TSA workforce does not have the same rights and protections that are afforded to their colleagues at DHS. As the eyes and ears in our airports, TSA workers need to have whistleblower protections and collective bargaining rights to be able to report security concerns without fear of losing their jobs. Moreover, granting basic employment rights is critical to recruiting our Transportation Security workforce. We know firsthand what low morale can do to the health, recruitment, and retention of the DHS workforce.

It is clear from the Committee’s record of work that more can be done to support human capital efforts at the Department. And I am pleased to say that this bill is one of those needed measures of support. I look forward to working with my colleagues and the Department to continue to build a strong workforce at DHS. And I also take this opportunity to commend the men and women of the Department for their tireless work and dedication to the mission.

HONORING MAUREEN GAVIN FOR THE 2007–08 OUTSTANDING TEACHING OF THE HUMANITIES AWARD

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 3, 2008

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Maureen Gavin of Southlake, Texas, who was awarded the 2007–08 Outstanding Teaching of the Humanities Award on behalf of Humanities Texas. This award honors K–12 humanities teachers in the state of Texas who make exemplary contributions in teaching, curriculum development and extracurricular programming.

Mrs. Gavin, a former sixth grade English teacher at Eubanks Intermediate School in Southlake, currently works with Morningside Elementary School in Fort Worth.

In the words of Mrs. Gavin, “All good thinking begins with good questioning, and as a humanities teacher it is my responsibility to provide provocative questions that allow my students to dig deep within themselves as they learn about our world, past and present, and how they fit into it”. In this spirit, Mrs. Gavin brings to the classroom a passion for literature, language, and the ever-growing continuum of knowledge.