



# ROSSMOOR NEWS

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## Republican Perspective

*By John Littig*

### Sequestration's Silver Lining

In his campaign to blame the Republicans for sequestration, President Obama has inadvertently encouraged us to think about the size, scope and reach of the federal government. Strangely, he and his sequestration may have actually done us a favor. More on this later.

Sequestration is causing controversy and angst. There are various issues.

First, there's the paternity controversy. During the debates, President Obama claimed sequestration was the offspring of Congress. But investigative journalist Bob Woodward says that Obama has forgotten that he himself was the sire.

Then there's the issue of how much damage is being caused by the spending "cuts." (Well, not cuts, exactly, but actually reductions in the rate of growth.) Whatever the impact, it's clear the administration wants us to feel the pain. For example, publicly releasing some 2,000 incarcerated criminal illegal aliens certainly got the nation's attention. As did grounding the Blue Angels and cancelling White House tours. So far, there's been no word on cancelling the First Lady's next multi-million dollar vacation.

And finally, there's the finger-pointing exercise. Obama claims Republicans are at fault because they will not agree to a "balanced" approach involving tax hikes. Speaker John Boehner says the president got his tax increases in January, and now it's time for spending reductions.

Beyond this swirl of claims and counter-claims, there's an underlying issue laid bare by the sequestration and the president's statements predicting the dire consequences. Let's look at some of the governmental services he has told us will be adversely affected.

In his address to the White House press corps on Feb. 19, Obama outlined consequences of the sequestration. Military readiness would be jeopardized; FBI agents would be furloughed and federal prosecutors would have to release criminals; air traffic controllers and airport security would see cutbacks resulting in airport delays; border patrol activities would be reduced; and so on. Whether they would be affected or not, those are certainly legitimate and worthy federal government responsibilities.

But Obama also cited other federal governmental services that would be hurt. For example, “teachers and educators will be laid off—parents will have to scramble to find childcare for their kids—thousands of Americans will lose access to primary care like flu vaccines and cancer screenings.” And of course, “emergency responders like the ones who are here today”—referring to Obama's backdrop of blue-suited first-responders, who would presumably be sidelined by the slowed rate of growth in federal spending.

Now all of this brings us (well, at least us Constitutionlists) to a very important question. And here's where the president's sequestration plan and his oratory have actually done us a favor. He has inadvertently opened the door to this question: Why is the federal government involved in these activities at all? Aren't education, fire-fighting, ambulance services, childcare and so-on the responsibility of local communities or of individual Americans themselves?

In response to the oil embargo and resulting gasoline crisis of the early 1970s, the federal government required a nationwide speed limit of 55 mph. But it did not have jurisdiction to enforce this, and some states balked. So the federal government threatened to withhold highway funds from the reluctant states if they did not comply. The lesson here is that federal money makes local governments and citizens dependent and thereby gives the federal government more power.

But wait a minute. Where does the federal government get its money? Some it borrows (that's another problem), but most it gets from taxation. So it takes our money and then enforces its will through the redistribution of what was ours in the first place.

So the sequestration provides an opportunity for us and our representatives to take a look at what the federal government is involved in and ask: Is this really something the federal government should be doing, or should it be up to states, local governments, and individuals? It's likely the answer, in many cases, would be that the federal government has no need or right to be involved.

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