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A Congress of Children

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Elected officials showcase their immaturity during recent votes

Those officeholders who most often act like children appear to be the most endangered in the upcoming election - good. Children often do not think through the consequences of their actions, nor do they take a long-term view. Children tend to be excessively self-centered, thinking little of the needs of others. Children sometimes confuse fantasy with reality. In short, children are often irresponsible, which is why they need adult supervision.

If Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and their fellow members of Congress were children, what might they have done? They might have failed to do their most basic task and not have passed a budget for the United States as the Budget Act says they are required to do. They might not have passed necessary tax legislation that would prevent every person and business in America from getting hit with a massive tax increase this January. A Congress of children would have added trillions of dollars in debt during a financial crisis, which was caused by too much debt. Is this not a precise description of the current Congress?

Children like to spend other people's money on themselves and their friends without thinking about how it was earned and the hard work that went into earning it. A childlike mind might believe in the fantasy that you can take money from the pocket of someone who worked hard to earn it, give it to someone who didn't earn it and that, magically, everyone will be better off. A fully developed, mature brain would understand that voting to enact laws without having read or understood them was irresponsible and likely would lead to bad consequences.

Democracy is a very frail form of government. It depends on the majority of voters having the wisdom and maturity to elect people more knowledgeable and, perhaps, even more responsible than themselves. Being a responsible member of Congress is a large

and difficult job. One needs to have some basic expertise in many different disciplines - law, history, economics, the hard sciences, etc. - and then be able to evaluate the arguments, both pro and con, of those with more specific knowledge.

It takes no skill or wisdom to merely be an echo chamber for the passions of the moment. Members of Congress who support trade restrictions in a counterproductive effort to "protect" American jobs reveal themselves to be ignorant of both economics and history. They will claim that many Americans are in favor of trade restrictions, but as Bertrand Russell once noted, "The fact that an opinion is widely held is no evidence whatever that it is not utterly absurd; indeed in view of the silliness of the majority of mankind, a widespread belief is more likely to be foolish than sensible."

Those who want higher tax rates on the so-called rich are ignorant of both the empirical evidence and the theory as to why high tax rates are lethal to job creation and economic growth. Those who vote for more government spending are either unaware of the evidence that government is already well above the size to maximize growth and the general welfare, or are like immature children who couldn't care less. The big-government crowd argues it is following John Maynard Keynes' economic theory as laid out in his "general theory." But as the esteemed Henry Hazlitt noted: "In spite of the incredible reputation of the general theory, I could not find in it a single important doctrine that was both true and original. What is original in the book is not true, and what is true is not original. In fact, even most of the major errors in the book are not original, but can be found in a score of previous writers."

Keynesianism simply does not work. The evidence of the past 100 years attests that expanding government has always made us worse off, not better off.

Too many members of Congress have little regard for liberty. They reveal it not only when they vote for high tax rates and needless regulations but when they vote for measures to stop hate speech and political ads. Words that offend no one are not what need to be protected. For us to really have the right of free speech, all political speech and words that are merely vile need to be protected.

Too many members of Congress view themselves as better than the rest of us and expect us to not question their decisions as they rape our pocketbooks and despoil our liberties. Democratic California Sen. Barbara Boxer comes to mind as exhibit A with her childish

rant against a general who addressed her as "ma'am" rather than as "senator," while she, in fact, deserves no respect because of her destructive spending, taxing and regulating policies.

Free-market democracy cannot succeed if those who hold elective office act and vote like children. We can do better.

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