

It's too hot and it's getting even hotter here in DC!

Written by Matthew A. Hill

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MATTHEW A. HILL, JUL 30 2011

On C-Span I am listening to a Texan Congressman, Ron Paul, on the radio talking about the current failure of Democrats in both Houses to listen to the voices of the American people because they did not vote for the bill in either House. He included various points pulled together with as much coherency as a paper I once wrote the night before it was due to be handed in, whilst high on red bull, coke-cola and pro-plus. He suggested that the US should increase 'tariffs on goods from outside' because it would help the US economy, it would ensure a 'booming economy', whilst also decrying that in order to deal with corporations and rich people from not paying all the tax they should legally have to pay by making everyone, rich and poor pay the same 12-13% income tax. Apparently one of President Reagan's economic advisers, that 'got America out of a recession', supported this tax position and even suggested that it would reap the same income to the Federal budget as now, but in the same sentence, same breath, it had gotten even better, in fact, according to the Congressman, it would provide 'more revenue than ever'. He said that it would create jobs as well.

I am sitting in the apartment I am staying at for the next 3 weeks. It is hot. Last week, when I left London it was 60°F when I arrived in DC it was 116°F! And it's not just the heat.

Is it right that a solution to not paying ones dues is for the legislator to lower the bar because then you will pay them? It doesn't seem right to me. I'd need, also, to see the figures for how many people would have their tax lowered, how many would have them raised, would the two added together be similar to the revenue gained today, and what social impacts would there be to people who had their Federal tax raised?

Earlier in the address he mentioned that the 'good people' who voted for him would want him to stand up and say this about Harry Reid's proposed Federal budget bill. He concluded by saying, and I paraphrase, 'It's hard to believe that God will be smiling down on people that will not accept a balanced budget amendment'. Do you own the right to claim God is on your side? Is that not arrogant? So perhaps this is just a load of old gas to fulfil the requirements of a Republican Senate driven filibuster. Perhaps I can be as confident with saying that I believe God would not be smiling down on the Republican Party because of the filibuster. But I will not use that as a line of argument or a stick to beat someone with as it's inherently unproductive and unfair.

And this is where it gets difficult for me to admit. In my ignorant understanding of economics, the idea of a balanced budget does not seem like a bad idea. You make sure you can pay for what you use. The questions I want answers to are what are the benefits and what are the costs associated with a balanced budget? A niggly problem I have about this proposal is that the House Tea Party Republicans are proposing the bill. It scares me because it seems to be driven fundamentally by an ideology. And I am always worried when a firm commitment to an ideology drives a political argument as it negates other voices, the need to compromise and it ignores that governing a country requires more than an idea of how the world should be but an acceptance that the world will never be as you dream it, for your dream is only one voice among many.

And, it seems the heat has gotten to me too!

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About the author:

Matthew A. Hill is a senior lecturer in International Relations at Anglia Ruskin University. The aim of this blog is to examine US politics and pick an idea not fully-formed and run with it to see where it goes. Sometimes it will wither away but other times it will inspire to think about the idea further. Your input is encouraged and welcomed.