

Old Country Lawyer, March 4, 2011

March 4, 1789, was the date originally set for the inauguration of George Washington as the first President of the United States, and March 4 remained Inauguration Day until the Twentieth Amendment moved it up to January 20 in 1937. March 4, 1865, was the date of President Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, "with malice toward none, with charity for all, we will bind up the nation's wounds."

On March 4, 2011, "charity" seems to be in short supply. During 2009 and 2010, President Obama tried "binding up the nation's wounds." Before the deaths of Senator Kennedy and Senator Byrd, the President was able to rescue the American automobile industry and recover most of the bailout that President Bush had handed out to giant financial institutions in the last months of 2008. The President tried "binding wounds" with health insurance reform, even giving in to the demand of the insurance industry that Americans not be offered the opportunity to enroll in government-sponsored health insurance. That wound was kept open by the party that represents the insurance companies, to defeat good and decent members of Congress in the 2010 election with absurd claims that health insurance regulations would reduce care for senior citizens.

So the campaign of the party of the corporations, which promised to stop every new initiative of President Obama and to repeal every program the Democrats successfully adopted, seems to have used up the "charity" inclination of the President. The President released the budget proposal in February, which froze federal expenditures for the upcoming year, reduced some federal employment, and eliminated some federal income tax giveaways to oil companies. The Republican chair of the House Budget Committee, Rep. Ryan of Wisconsin, complained that the President wasn't showing "leadership" because the President did not propose cuts to programs that the Republicans had campaigned on, leaving it to the Republicans to propose those specific cuts. Now they get to take responsibility for cutting programs that their constituents use. I particularly look for the cuts that the first-time Congress members from Ohio want to make to programs that help Ohioans.

President Obama has chosen the course that will make choices clear to Americans, or at least will make it harder for the representatives of the super-rich to conceal those choices. Since the voting public demanded that folks who make over \$250,000 per year get tax cuts, and at the same time demanded that the federal government not increase debt, then John Boehner and Mitch McConnell get to tell the voting public who is going to lose jobs. The TEA Party bloc of newly-elected Congressmen deserted Speaker Boehner and voted with most Democrats to kill three billion dollars of funding for the "alternate" jet engine, being manufactured in Dayton, Ohio, that the Department of Defense has said for eight years is not a military necessity. This reduces the federal deficit and puts some thousands of Ohioans out of work. Next Congress will have to decide if it will provide funds for unemployment compensation for aircraft workers who have been employed in this unnecessary program for years because the program was good for folks who live in Rep. Boehner's district. Well, not ALL the TEA Party bloc deserted Speaker Boehner. Congressmen Renacci, Gibbs, and every Ohio TEA Partistas supported this particular slice of pork for Speaker Boehner.

In Ohio state government, Governor Kasich continues to not release his secret formula for balancing Ohio's budget without increasing taxes, which formula he had campaigned on but refused to disclose throughout that campaign. Gov. Kasich has been in office for two months

and the State budget is due next week, but the secret remains well-kept. Gov. Kasich continues to proclaim that balancing the budget requires making it a crime for a public employee to strike. The public employee bill has been amended, so that public employees would be permitted to negotiate wages "up to the rate of inflation". Apparently the majority in the Ohio Senate believe that it is not dangerous to permit public employee unions to negotiate wage DECREASES, as long as the wages do not keep up with increases in the cost of living.

Gov. Kasich is two years younger than this writer, but should surely remember Blue Flu. Senator Sawyer pointed out that, prior to the current public employee bargaining law in 1983, there were hundreds of public employee strikes across Ohio. In 2010, when many public employee unions negotiated reductions in compensation, there were NO strikes in Ohio. Keep in mind, John, that if you make it a crime for police to strike, who's gonna make the arrests?

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