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Lily Tomlin said, "You try to be satirical, but sometimes you just can't keep up." In hopes of staying ahead of the Disbursement Of Taxpayer Assets in Gigantic Expenditures ("DOTAGE") concepts which have manifested in many levels of government, these suggestions are made:

The Bush Administration convinced Congress to authorize \$700 billion of prospective future taxpayer funds to give to financial institutions, without inconvenient inquiry into the use to be made of those funds. This program was designated "TARP", a description of the degree of transparency which needs no elaboration. This was perhaps the apex achievement of Boomer generation politics, President Eisenhower's parting caution as to the influence of the "military industrial complex" fulfilled.

The campaign mechanisms that won elections in 2008 suggest that we will quickly move beyond TARP to Direct Participatory Auxiliary Income Distribution. Where TARP was the payoff to the moneyed interests who financed the various political activities favored by the Boomer Establishment, Direct-PAID will reward the participants in the broad-based grass-roots fundraising system pioneered by the successful next-generation campaigns.

Some economists propose that an appropriate response to the current economic depression is to stimulate consumer spending, on the apparent theory that more demand will lead to more production which will lead to more employment which will lead to more demand, and up we go. Since not much other than food and shelter is actually produced in the United States at present, any "more production" is likely to occur in other countries. Nonetheless, increased consumer demand might at least conserve the level of employment in the retail, distribution, and food-service sectors.

One reason consumer demand is presently at a three-generation low, is that consumer demand has been stimulated over the past two decades to far outpace the consumers' ability to pay, not only the historic (perhaps pre-historic) ability to pay with current cash but the ability to pay with credit borrowed against either accumulated assets or against hoped-for future earnings. Lots of folks would be ecstatic to resume their pre-2008 roles as stimulated consumers, but the Bankruptcy Court has not yet discharged their accrued credit card balances and apparently some financial institutions are now looking for an identifiable means to repay before issuing new credit.

This necessitates a Federal infusion of Participatory Auxiliary Income, applying 21st-Century electronic financial technology to the concept under the TARP. The TARP gave money to rich folks who gave money to organizations that worked to elect public officials who gave money to rich folks. Direct-PAID will facilitate efficiency by electronically cutting out the middle-persons.

Rather than Congress debating mechanisms for distributing taxpayer funds in a way that will "stimulate demand" while placating the best-organized special-interest groups, Congress sends the money directly to the voters regardless of the individual voter's level of participation in organized lobbying activity. And Congress sends the money in a medium that reduces the likelihood that individuals will use the money to pay down debt or put it under the mattress, but will rather spend the money immediately in a burst of stimulated demand as intended by Congress.

The Treasury of the United States will issue a refillable debit card to every registered voter in the United States. This has additional benefits of avoiding a discussion of immigrant non-citizen participation and may offer extra economic stimulus to certain large metropolitan areas in most need of extra economic activity. This "Consumer Bailout from the U. S. Treasury" card ("Consumer-BUST" or "C-BUST" card) can then be filled by Congress at the appropriate intervals when Congress believes the economy is in particular need of stimulus.

Electronically re-filling the debit cards can be done near-instantly so as to permit Congress to apply economic stimulus quickly rather than through the cumbersome many-month procedure used for the original "stimulus" program attached to the 2007 Federal income tax redistribution, or through the years-long process of awarding construction contracts for building bridges in individual Congressional Districts. For instance, Congress might authorize a Consumer Bailout for back-to-school expenses in mid August, ten weeks before a November election. Or even a Halloween trick-or-treat stimulus, the week before a November election. Perhaps the October 31st distribution might better be characterized as an "energy-conservation weatherization" stimulus so as to avoid Church-State issues.

The Direct-PAID program using the refillable Consumer-BUST card may restore some public confidence in the political process, as highly-paid lobbyists are marginalized. If Congress can put money directly into the hands of the voters the week before the election, members of Congress need not have such concern for raising campaign funds from lobbyists to get their message out to those voters. The concept is democratization of the distribution of the economic future of the country. The money IS the message. "If you are eligible to vote, you are eligible to get a bailout."

Some thoughts on how Governor Strickland and the General Assembly might apply these concepts in Ohio will be included in a future column.

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