

RRR

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Down With the Christian Coalition

by Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.

The leadership is rotten, I used to say about the Christian Coalition, but the grass roots are great. That turns out to be an oversimplification. The leadership's penchant for power politics and Republican hackery has a very long reach. For example, take a look at the Coalition's score cards passed out during this primary season.

In the Alabama Senate Republican primary, for example, there were seven candidates. Newspapers profiled them one by one, but it was difficult for most people to keep track. Does anyone have a chart that simplifies the issues for the voters? Ralph Reed to the rescue.

The Coalition score cards arrived by the droves in the mail. They were passed out at every church for two weeks before the election. They were handed out at shopping malls and health clubs, classrooms and civic events. You couldn't escape them.

In Alabama, if you opposed the Christian Coalition, you lost. If you didn't answer, you lost. If you supported them across the board, you were in the running. Great, you may say, but take a close look at the card. It's designed to appeal to voters who don't follow the ins and outs of policy, while flunking principled statesmen.

The card is structured as a grid,

with the candidates at the top and ten issues running down the side. They answers are put in boxes: "Support," "Oppose," "Undecided," or "No Response." You can't amend, qualify, or expand your answers.

Visually, the card is set up to make voters push the button for the guy who gets 100 percent. This may be a smart tactic, but it's incredibly obfuscating, especially given the petty issues the Coalition chose to highlight. To illustrate the difficulty, let's take the test.

1. Balanced Budget Amendment With Tax Limitations. If the Constitution were followed, we'd have a balanced budget. Should fiscal policy otherwise be written into the Constitution? It reminds me of Milton Friedman's desire to have an amendment that specified a certain rate of money growth per year. Who believes that a budget amendment would be followed anyway? Is the entire political class to be jailed?

As for "tax limitations," there's no way to know what a tax is. Are social security premiums a tax? I think so, but the Republicans disagree. What about grazing fees on federal lands? I think they're a tax too, but who's to say? The Republicans recently changed the definition of the CPI, thereby causing tax tables to be indexed to a lesser extent. Is that a tax? Sure, but no leading politician would admit it.

There are additional questions about what the budget is. It doesn't include "off-budget" spending. And are we to define it as appropriations or outlays? Not even the term "deficit" carries a specific meaning anymore. Congress long ago abandoned the annual change in federal debt,

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P.C. Watch

School Days

From a list of prom rules distributed to students at Maclay Middle School in Tallahassee, Florida: "No spoon dancing, no hip grinding against another student, no hands below the waist, no riding on another's back, no throwing someone in the air, no being passed bodily around by a group, no head banging, no slamming another student, and no jumping around on top of others" (*Harper's*, 6-96). On the other hand, "Some high schools in the Chicago area have begun screening the criminal records of students' prom dates who don't attend their school" (*Detroit Free Press*, 5-28-96).

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You Have Nothing To Lose But Your Collars

"Women and animals should unite against their male oppressors and put an end to centuries of shared persecution," a new feminist book of essays argues (London *Daily Telegraph*, 6-7-96). Joan Dunayer denounces metaphors like "bitch, cow, queen-bee, and catty" and notes that the phrase "dumb bunny" relies on the "speciesist assumption that rabbits are stupid." Karen Davis says her outlook was changed by a hen, "the first chicken I ever really knew." Linda Vance describes her first meeting with a frog: "I lay still, belly down and legs splayed out; she did the same. We looked back and forth at each other, the sun warming our backs."

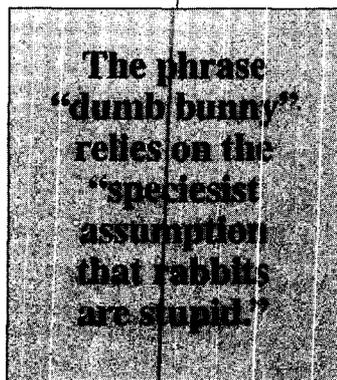
The Unsouthern Olympics

Although foreign visitors to the Atlanta Olympics say they want—aside from sports—to see something of the Old South and the Confederacy, that liberal city has done its best to stamp out all traces. Southern history begins with the civil rights movement and not before, a tourist official told the *New York Times* (5-17-96). So when Margaret Mitchell's old apartment house—in the process of a private \$4.5 million renovation—was burned down for the second time, it caused not even a ripple. A black cab driver told my sister-in-law it was torched twice "out of hatred for white folks," but somehow the police and other city officials couldn't care less.

Suffering Suffragette

Carrie Chapman Catt, founder

of the League of Women Voters and a leading crusader for women's suffrage, was to be honored by her alma mater Iowa State University. But the plan to have a building named after her went awry when it turned out she had campaigned for the 19th amendment on the grounds that giving women the vote would strengthen "white supremacy" (*New York Times*, 5-5-96).



Dress Discrimination

Too many fashion models today have a "troubling blondness," according to the *Washington Post* (6-5-96). Their "reed-thin frames, pale complexions, and light hair" indicate "implicit racism." The "fashion industry is nothing more than a sponge, soaking up ideas, opinions, and deeply held beliefs from society at large. Affirmative action is under scrutiny; rallying cries can be heard for English as the national language; immigration laws are being debated; racial rifts are increasingly profound. And dark skin is out of vogue." And *Vogue*. Fashion "got whitewashed." As the "reign of gangly blondes began, the era of diversity on the runway" came "to an end." ■

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the actual definition, as the measure.

Through accounting gimmickry, the political class can make the deficit appear to be higher, lower, or disappear altogether. Some economists say the deficit should be adjusted by inflation, in which case we are in surplus right now. These economists will have an inordinate amount of influence if this amendment passes.

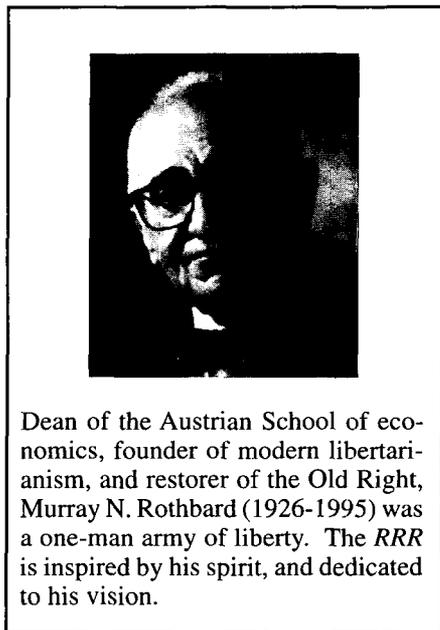
Anyway, a balanced budget law with no actual tax increases

wouldn't be so hot either. It would create a firewall against any and all future tax reductions. In this, and only this, respect would the amendment be enforced: government revenue would never be allowed to fall.

In sum, do we want a phony amendment to the U.S. Constitution that is unenforceable, that opens up a can of legal and fiscal worms, that might actually lead to disguised tax increases, and would prevent any future Congress from lowering taxes? The *RRR* says: Oppose.

2. Flat Rate Federal Income Tax. There is nothing here about what the rate should be. Would it be higher or lower? The only virtue to the flat tax is a lower tax, say at less than 10 percent. There is no advantage for taxpayers in having the current system scrapped and replaced by a system that extracts the same amount of wealth from the private sector.

This flat-tax stuff is part of the gimmickry popular in Washington right now. Everyone calls for tax "reform," but this turns out to be merely another word for tax shifting. The same amount or more in total revenue is collected, and the government does the same level of damage to the private sector.



Dean of the Austrian School of economics, founder of modern libertarianism, and restorer of the Old Right, Murray N. Rothbard (1926-1995) was a one-man army of liberty. The *RRR* is inspired by his spirit, and dedicated to his vision.

When this Congress says it is going to “lower” taxes, it can’t be trusted either, since it raises them elsewhere to “pay” for the tax reduction. The fine print of every tax bill, even the one to temporarily repeal the gas tax hike, includes offsetting tax increases.

Besides, there is no inherent virtue to the flatness of a tax (who loves FICA?). There’s nothing wrong with deductions for charitable giving, mortgage interest, or any other loophole. Plus, who would mind progressive taxes if the rates went from 1 to 3 percent, as Murray Rothbard used to say?

If the Coalition had asked whether we favor lower taxes, the answer would be easy. Instead, they ask about a complex Washington trick, which can do more harm than good. Do we want to risk higher taxes in the name of flatter rates? The *RRR* says: Oppose.

3. Parental Choice in Education (Vouchers). This is an easy one. Do we want the federal government spending tax dollars to give people a free ride to private schools, meanwhile nationalizing these private schools under federal educational standards and stripping the schools of the power to determine their own curriculums, disciplinary policies, admissions standards, and promotion and graduation requirements? Vouchers are a liberal-neocon racket, and one of the most dangerous ideas on the political horizon, for they would mean the destruction of private schools. The *RRR* says: Oppose.

4. Federal Tuition Tax Credits for Parents. This may sound less dangerous than vouchers. But to get the tax credit, you will have to file a form that asks which school your children are attending. And will this school have to pass federal muster? You bet. You can also bet that homeschoolers will not be eligible.

Let’s say this tax credit passes along with vouchers. Homeschooling parents would continue to pay taxes to public schools, they will

also pay a new tax for these rotten vouchers, and to top it off they would not get any tax break for the hours of hard labor they spend every day trying to give their kids a good education.

Moreover, how can the Coalition square the idea of tuition tax credits with the flat tax, which is not supposed to have any exemptions? It is logically impossible to favor both of these. Far better to have actual tax cuts. That way parents can spend their own money on education, and the federal government doesn’t tell us which schools it approves of for the purposes of tax enforcement. The *RRR* says: Oppose.

5. Prohibit Abortion (Except in Limited Cases). Let see what this does not say. It does not call for a reversal of the unconstitutional *Roe v. Wade* decision, which took abortion out of that hands of the states. It does not allow a federalist solution, in which states individually prohibit abortion.

Instead, the Coalition would put the federal Secretary of Health and Human Services in charge of babies and birthing. There is a potential for great evil here. Will the government provide free birth control, which many Christians oppose as a matter of conscience? Will there be licenses for birth? Will there be a federally enforced pregnancy diet? Will pregnant women who smoke be arrested? Once the feds get their nose in this area, the possibilities are limitless.

Far better is the federalist solution. Repeal *Roe v. Wade*—which Congress can do by simple majority vote—and let Christian activists and voters at the state level restrict and outlaw abortion. We don’t and shouldn’t have a federal law against murder or theft (the biggest viola-

tors would be executive agencies anyway), and we should not have one against abortion. The *RRR* says: Oppose.

6. Stop Federal Funding of Planned Parenthood. Finally, a decent question. The *RRR* says: Support.

7. Eliminate Affirmative Action Programs. This is vague. If it means repealing federal laws that impose affirmative action on private companies and schools, great. If it means only within the federal government itself, I’m ambivalent. Are we going to allow the IRS to hire the most qualified people but force private accounting firms to hire morons with degrees?

Under another possible interpretation, this plank would mean that federal law remain the same, but states and localities couldn’t have affirmative action. That way D.C. gets to tell Detroit what kinds of laws it can have.

One thing we can know: this does not mean the repeal of anti-discrimination laws, the actual sources of our problems. The government could repeal all affirmative action, define its quota programs as something else, and enforce forced integration under existing law. The *RRR* says: Undecided.

8. Abolish the Legal Service Corporation. Fine, although free services for the so-called poor might be transferred to the Justice Department. The *RRR* says: Support.

9. Term Limits for Congress. This is a leftover from the anti-Congress mania of the 1980s, which left the 2-million strong federal bureaucracy and court system untouched. Bureaucrats and judges can serve a lifetime, while a good legislator like Ron Paul has to be out in two terms.

The Coalition would put the federal Secretary of Health and Human Services in charge of babies and birthing.

Such a law will strengthen the totalitarians and the secret government, while weakening the one part of government the people can influence: the House of Representatives.

The term limits movement has a populist feel to it, but in fact it's a well-heeled campaign to distract us from the real problems, which are the executive and judicial branches. That was one great aspect of the Buchanan campaign: Pat called for term

limits on federal judges, including the Supreme Court. As for the Coalition's trick, in the long run, it would mean bigger government and more tyranny. The *RRR* says: Oppose.

10. Abolish the Congressional Pension System. Yes, although we should target all federal employee pensions. The *RRR* says: Support.

How did we score? 3 Support, 6 Oppose, 1 Undecided. If the *RRR* is the most right-wing candidate in the race, and we have no doubt of that!, we just lost the election. Voters saw us as opposing the conservative agenda, and thus assume we're liberal.

There are real life casualties to this racket. One candidate for the U.S. Senate in Alabama, Jimmy Blake of Birmingham, is a prominent physician and a hard-core Old Right type, with solid finances and good endorsements. He should have come in second and been in the run off.

Blake got the questionnaire in the mail. Frustrated by it, he eventually chose not to answer. Thus there is a tiny note at the bottom of the card handed out to every voter that says: "Jimmy Blake Refused to Respond." He got seven percent of the Republican vote.

Down with the Coalition, I say. They are helping wreck the chances for a real legislative revolution, led by people with larger brains and

more ambitious programs than Ralph Reed.

By the way, just so I'm not seen as a negative guy, here's a list of moderate, coherent, fair, and revealing issues for Republican candidates. Possible answers: Support, Oppose, Undecided, and No Response.

1. Lower Any and All Federal Taxes.
2. Cut Federal Spending Anywhere and Everywhere.

3. Abolish the Department of Education.

4. Cut Foreign Aid.

5. No Troops in Bosnia.

6. Overturn Roe v. Wade.

7. Limit Terms of Federal Judges.

8. End Wetlands Takings.

9. Repeal Federal Laws That Encourage Hiring Quotas.

10. Curb Federal Gun Controls. ■

Here's a list of moderate, coherent, fair, and revealing issues.

Down With the Orange County Register

by Phyllis Spivey

If there's anything to the idea that voting populations tend to reflect the editorial views of local newspapers, the famed conservatism of Orange County, California, may soon be extinguished.

For some fifty years, the county's family-owned daily gave its readers honest news and independent commentary, for most of that period under the direction of R.C. Hoiles. His editorials advanced the

beliefs of an Old Right libertarian who, revering the Ten Commandments and the Constitution, understood the nature of man and government, and the proper relationship of one to the other.

Today, *The Orange County Register* is a sleek, politically correct publication. Except for a small box that on Sundays features old quotations, Hoiles's imprint is gone. The *Register's* opinion pages have been taken over by left-libertarians who regularly descend into statism.

In January 1993, for example, an editorial confounded conservative readers by claiming that Martin Luther King, Jr., would take a "dim view" of affirmative action quotas. When Lew Rockwell handily discredited the claim in a published letter, the editor opined that if King had lived longer he "probably would have repudiated" Marxism and affirmative action.

This was followed by a eulogy for lifelong leftist Thurgood Marshall, whom the opinionist called "probably as close to a great man as we have seen recently in our public life."

"Will Alger Hiss be next?" demanded an angry reader. For, although one would expect to find libertarian comment skeptical of statists, editorial director Ken Grubbs has often taken a contrary approach.

Following a 1990 trip to Mexico, where Grubbs met Mexican dictator Carlos Salinas de Gortari and was entertained by the ruling PRI party, Grubbs gushed about Salinas's "Reaganesque" programs that had reversed socialism and unleashed a market-driven economy.

Four years later, as Mexican voters used Salinas's newly imposed national identity cards to "elect" his PRI-picked replacement, another editorial described Salinas's accomplishments as "stunning": the "next Mexican president, if he acts wisely, could be the new Thomas Jefferson to Mr. Salinas's George Washington."