

July 18, 2012

\$519 Billion FY 2013 Defense Bill on Floor This Week

This week, the House will consider the FY 2013 Defense Appropriations bill. The legislation provides a non-emergency spending level of \$519.2 billion, \$1.1 billion (or 0.2%) more than last year. The legislation also provides a total of \$88.5 billion for FY 2013 war funding—the same as the request. In FY 2012, \$115 billion was spent for this purpose.

The House Appropriations Committee approved the 302(b) allocations for the twelve spending bills that total \$1.028 trillion—consistent with the 302(a) allocation provided under the FY 2013 House-passed budget resolution. This allocation is a \$19 billion cut compared to the cap under the Budget Control Act, and a \$15 billion cut compared to last year. [The RSC Budget's 302\(a\)](#) would have been \$931 billion (\$97 billion lower).

This is the seventh regular appropriations bill the House has taken up this year. The Senate has passed none.

House to Consider the Sequester Transparency Act

Today, the House is considering H.R. 5872, the Sequester Transparency Act. Within 30 days of enactment, the legislation requires the President to submit to Congress a detailed report on the sequestration cuts (the amounts and percentages) required for fiscal year 2013 under the Budget Control Act of 2011. The legislation requires the heads of agencies, upon the request of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, to provide to the Director information at the program, project, and activity level necessary for the Director to prepare the report required under the bill. The purpose of the legislation is to provide information on how the sequester would be administered.

The House has voted to replace the sequester for FY 2013 with ten year mandatory spending cuts of \$316 billion as part of [H.R. 5652](#).

Quote of the Week: *"To take from one, because it is thought his own industry and that of his fathers has acquired too much, in order to spare to others, who, or whose fathers, have not exercised equal industry and skill, is to violate arbitrarily the first principle of association, the guarantee to everyone the free exercise of his industry and the fruits acquired by it."*

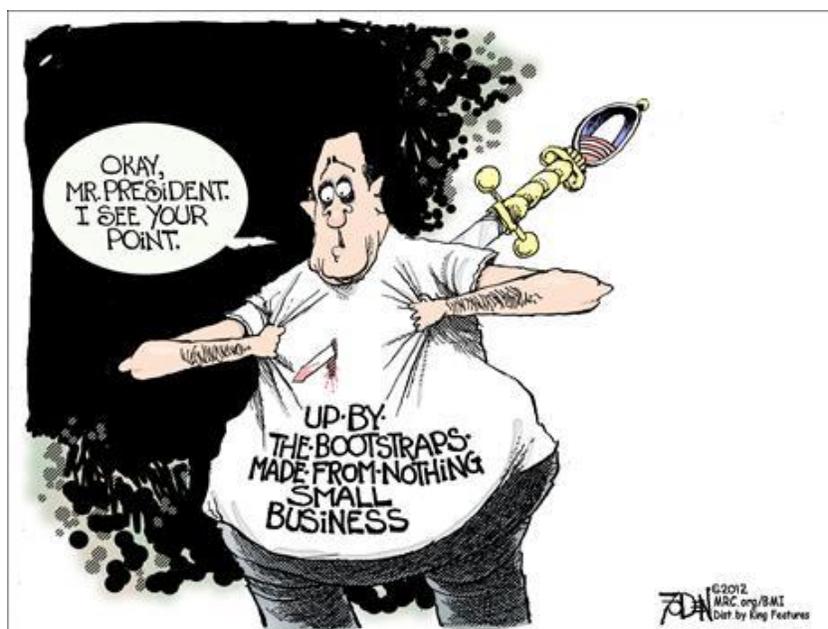
-Thomas Jefferson, 1816

Cost of Government Day Falls on July 15th of This Year

According to the Americans for Tax Reform Foundation, Americans will work 197 days (through July 15th) this year to pay for all levels of government spending and regulations. This year, Americans will work:

- 88 days to pay for federal spending;
- 40 days to pay for state and local spending; and
- 69 days to pay for state and local regulations.

According to the Americans for Tax Reform Foundation, the cost of government is highest in Connecticut (falls on August 9th) and lowest in Tennessee (June 28th).



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NATIONAL REVIEW

Obama against the Self-Made Man

By Rich Lowry

If Bartlett's ever puts together a collection of insultingly deflating quotations, it should include President Barack Obama's take on business success before a crowd in Virginia the other day: "If you've been successful, you didn't get there on your own."

Obama was explaining — as is his wont — why the rich should pay more taxes. They might have had a great teacher. Or they drive on public roads and bridges. "If you've got a business — you didn't build that," the president explained, apparently in the serene confidence that he wasn't speaking to an audience bristling with proud business owners. "Somebody else made that happen."

The Obama theory of entrepreneurship is that behind every successful businessman, there is a successful government. Everyone is helpless without the state, the great protector, builder, and innovator. Everything is ultimately a collective enterprise. Individual initiative is only an ingredient in the more important work when "we do things together."

The Obama riff is a direct steal from Elizabeth Warren, the Democratic Senate candidate in Massachusetts who sent liberal hearts aflutter by throwing the same wet towel on the notion of individual success a few months ago. The Obama/Warren view is a warrant for socialization of the proceeds of success. Behind its faux sophistication is a faculty-lounge disdain for business, and all those who make more than tenured professors by excelling at it. Behind its smiley we're-all-in-it-together façade is a frank demand: You owe us.

For that most American figure of the self-made man, exemplified most famously by Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln, President Obama wants to substitute the figure of the guy who happened to get lucky while not paying his fair share in taxes. What a dreary and pinched view of human endeavor. What a telling insight into his animating philosophy.

In his Virginia remarks, greeted with warm applause, Obama took down a notch anyone who has made it: "I'm always struck by people who think, well, it must be because I was just so smart. There are a lot of smart people out there. It must be because I worked harder than everybody else. Let me tell you something — there are a whole bunch of hardworking people out there."

True enough and we should value the dignity of all work, no matter how humble. But the hallmark of the man of extraordinary accomplishment isn't simply work. Some of us may work as hard as Steve Jobs. Few of us are as single-minded, risk-taking, shrewd, or visionary. Millions of us could work twelve-hour days for years yet never come up with the idea for the iPad, let alone successfully manufacture and market it.

To redefine Steve Jobs as the product of the (necessary and unremarkable) infrastructure and government services around him is to devalue human creativity. The Obama formulation goes something like this: Steve Jobs couldn't get to work every day without roads; he couldn't drive safely on those roads without a well-regulated system of driver's licenses; ergo, the San Jose, Calif., DMV practically built Apple.

And the likes of Steve Jobs had better pay higher taxes to fund the foundations of their greatness. Needless to say, no man is an island. We are a product of our families, schools, and churches. Without the liberty and rule of law that characterize America, entrepreneurship would indeed be impossible. Any successful American who is not a patriot is a rank ingrate. But the president believes that among the highest expressions of patriotism are a 39.6 percent top individual tax rate and a 25 percent capital-gains rate.

There are few phrases that President Obama likes less than "on your own." He considers it a lie when people think they've made it on their own, and he thinks that the most damning thing that can be said about the Republican vision is that it will leave people on their own. For him, "we're in this together," and the inspiring institution embodying that togetherness is none other than the Internal Revenue Service.