



## **For freedom fighters, a crisis is a terrible thing to waste**

By Jim Waters

Unfortunately, some among us see the current economic crisis as an opportunity to expand the intrusion of government into every facet of American life.

In Washington, D.C., we have government out of control. Congress faces a \$3.6-trillion budget, which more than doubles our debt and adds more to the national debt than all previous presidential spending plans combined.

This budget follows an economic-stimulus package costing nearly \$1 trillion, which — as Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., once said — is more spending than if government “started the day Jesus Christ was born and spent \$1 million every day since then.”

But the spending in biblical proportions is not a partisan issue. Both political parties get the blame.

McConnell preaches a good sermon, but Kentucky’s senior senator fell from the pulpit when he supported a \$700-billion bailout during Republican President George W. Bush’s administration. Some kind of economic epiphany now finds McConnell preaching that government spends too much — now that a Democrat occupies the White House. He rose from the dead, but remains blind.

It smacks of jailhouse conversions during which inmates — faced with tough sentences — have a “come-to-Jesus” experience.

Yes, Democrats and Republicans have been equal-opportunity contributors to the expansion of government power and the erosion of personal freedom. They joined to bail out failing private companies and assumed mortgages for those who bought more house than they could afford.

But the politicians continue to preach the same worn sermon “America faces a crisis. We’re doing this for the good of the country. Yes, we may be interfering in the marketplace and taxing you to death, but you’ll thank us some day.”

But wise Kentuckians know that “some day” never comes.

So, I’ll play Nostradamus and tell you what *is* coming: Payday for our kids and grandkids. We already have a national debt equal to \$40,000 for every man, woman and child in America.

Meanwhile, back home, the tax-and-spend orgy in Frankfort rolls on.

Andy Hightower, executive director for Kentucky Club for Growth, recently measured the dimensions of obesity in the commonwealth’s current budget:

- It contains a record debt of more than \$1 billion.
- It assumes a significant decrease in revenue but still increases spending.
- It spends 90 percent of the state's Rainy Day fund.
- It offers no serious provisions to shore up the \$30-billion liability facing the state's pension system.

Again, Democrats were “enabled” by Republicans who opened the gate for the spending flood.

The new budget committee chairman, Rep. Rick Rand, D-Bedford, picked right up where his predecessor, Rep. Harry Moberly, D-Richmond, left off. Neither saw any tax cuts they loved or spending increases and costly state-government regulations they didn't fawn over.

Republicans vowed to hold the line on spending and promised to bring Medicaid spending more in line with nearby states. Instead, they supported a budget correction: “Cut if you have to, but spend the Rainy Day fund first.”

Fortunately, big-government types aren't the only ones seeing opportunity in crisis.

Thousands of freedom-loving Americans in cities throughout the commonwealth and nation attended rallies called “Tea Parties” on April 15, “Tax Day.” The Bluegrass Institute will hold its Bluegrass Tax Liberation Day at Applebee's Park in Lexington on Saturday, April 18.

Some in the media have tried to make this week's “Tea Party” protesters look like kooks living on the fringe. But the truth is that “Tea Party” attendees represented a coalition of all political, cultural and social stripes — people throughout the country determined to use the economic crisis to help our nation find its footing.

Those were the people who showed up when I spoke earlier this week at Paducah's “Enough is Enough” rally and Louisville's “Tea Party.” How appropriate that the Louisville event was held in the shadow of a statue of Thomas Jefferson, who once said: “The natural progress of things is for government to gain ground and for liberty to yield.”

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