



The Colonel's not-so-secret recipe to restore common sense in government

By Jim Waters

KFC's campaign to honor its famous founder, Colonel Harland Sanders, celebrates an innovator who lived out his own success story. But the goateed entrepreneur, famous for his white suits, also offers a healthy serving of common sense to inform the current debate over government's spending habits.

Here are a couple of pertinent anecdotes from Sanders along with some current day observations:

- “The hard way builds solidly a foundation of confidence that cannot be swept away.”

Politicians intensely resist taking “the hard way.”

It is easier to bail out companies “too big to fail” than to hold those firms accountable for their own wasteful decisions.

It's easier for Gov. Steve Beshear to allege he will achieve millions in Medicaid savings through [managed care](#) than to cut spending and verify his claims through an independent auditor.

It's much easier for Washington's leading actors to raise the debt ceiling and spout cheap talk about government living within its means than to do “the hard thing” that every responsible family does: stick to a budget based on income and spending priorities, recession or not.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates the federal government will collect \$2.28 trillion in revenue this year. Can any reasonable American seriously claim that's not enough cash to fund our necessary obligations with some left over for an emergency?

- “People will rust out quicker'n they'll ever wear out, and I'll be darned if I'll ever rust out.”

Compare the comments of Kentucky's most famous food icon to those of Bill Londrigan, arguably the commonwealth's most famous labor boss who heads up the state AFL-CIO chapter.

Londrigan vehemently disagrees with raising the age at which people are eligible for Social Security. This despite the fact that average life expectancy has increased from 59 years when the Social Security Act was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on Aug. 14, 1936, to 79 years today.

Londrigan was [challenged](#) on this point during a recent “Kentucky Tonight” show on KET by Ken Troske, a University of Kentucky economics professor, who pointed out that with people living longer, “they'll get the same amount of retirement if they retire at 70 as they did in 1936.”

Then, Troske went on to speak a language that seems foreign to Londrigan, noting: “we're a more productive society when we become healthier and when we have people that are more productive.”

But Londrigan wasn't about to allow such historically proven economic sense to impede his ideology. He claimed that raising the retirement age to 70 “may be good for the economy but not good for the people who are forced to work past 65.”

So, somehow or other, a good economy would not also benefit Kentucky's senior saints?

Londrigan also complained that asking "people to continually do work, there may be some hard labor when they should be enjoying some retirement leisure. Whatever happened to that idea?"

No one forced Colonel Sanders at the age of 65 to take \$105 of his first Social Security check and begin visiting run-down diners to hawk his blend of 11 herbs and spices – all while sleeping in his car after his initial restaurant went broke following construction of Interstate 75, which took customers in a different direction.

Londrigan probably would have advised: "Give it up, Colonel. Be satisfied with whatever leisure your Social Security check can bring you and attach yourself firmly to government's teat for the rest of your dismal days."

But while the Colonel's recipe for hot-selling fried chicken is a guarded secret, the ingredients he used to enjoy great success in America have been known since our nation's founding: Hard Work. Perseverance. Ingenuity. Personal Responsibility.

I'll take "original," please.

— *Jim Waters is vice president of policy and communications for the Bluegrass Institute, Kentucky's free-market think tank. Reach him at jwaters@freedomkentucky.com. Read previously published columns at www.freedomkentucky.org/bluegrassbeacon.*