



## ‘Ask and ye shall receive’ verse lost on state leaders

By Jim Waters

I’ve never claimed to have all the answers, but I do have many questions about the world.

Some involve personal annoyances:

Why do so many people who go to Wal-Mart enter through the "Exit" doors and exit through the doors clearly marked "Enter?"

Why is it that so many gas stations now require you to prepay at the pump with your credit card, but then still make you go inside to get the receipt?

Why is that so many restaurant servers wait until you have a mouth full of food to ask you: “How is everything?” And why is it that servers ask you how everything is before you even have a chance to take a bite and find out?

Others cause my Facebook readers to ponder deeper issues: Why is it that “friends” and associates often will empathize and be “with you” when you are down and constantly growl about how bad things are but become jealous — even meanspirited — if you express joy at the glass half full?

One of my Facebook friends reminded me that such envy is “amazingly ugly,” which describes the redistributionists who resent the successful and capitalism in general and want to turn us into a groveling, entitlement-minded people. If you want to know what their world looks like, take a look at what’s happened to our economy during the past decade. It’s been run into the ground by pork barrel spending and a failure to address the hard issues.

This leads me to questions about Kentucky’s political leadership.

For labor bosses and politicians: Since you vehemently oppose parents having the freedom to send children to [public charter schools](#) — which are improving education in other states — what plans do you have to rescue more than 10,000 students currently behind educational bars in [Kentucky’s Tier 5 failing schools?](#)

And a question for Gov. Steve Beshear, who recently proposed raiding \$167 million from next year’s Medicaid budget to pay for the government program’s deficit this year. He said the shell game would allow the state to take advantage of federal stimulus money. Isn’t that just putting off the inevitable — delaying tough decisions about cuts and changes that eventually will arrive?

Hmmm . . . that brings to mind other questions: Could the governor be thinking more about his political future by delaying hard decisions until *after* this year’s gubernatorial campaign? He wouldn’t do that, would he?

Meanwhile, questions abound about [House Bill 193](#) sponsored by Rep. Susan Westrom, D-Lexington, which would establish a statewide, government-imposed smoking ban on privately owned businesses in the commonwealth:

- The bill lists “sole proprietorship” among the categories of regulated businesses. Why should we believe that this won’t lead local health department bureaucrats to trample upon privately owned property and fine a farmer (sole proprietor) for smoking a cigarette in his tobacco field?
- Will it be considered discrimination if a business refuses to hire someone because they smoke — just as it would be if a business refused to hire a physically disabled job candidate?
- The Ohio Department of Health reported that the Buckeye State has spent more than \$3.2 million identifying businesses violating the statewide smoking ban, which went into effect in 2007. Yet, the state only collected \$400,000 of the \$1.2 million in fines levied. Why should Kentucky taxpayers believe that House Bill 193 won’t add to the state’s faltering fiscal health, as well as trample on private property rights and civil liberties?

British philosopher Francis Bacon once said: “Who questions much, shall learn much, and retain much.”

It’s true.

I’ve learned much – very much – about how our state leaders consistently avoid answering tough questions concerning the questionable ways they deal with important issues.

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