

# Government spending done right

Scissortales | Our opinions takes flight  
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The lone star is a bit tarnished by the global recession, but the Texas economy continues to outshine the nation. How is this possible in a state with niggardly government spending?

It's possible *because* of that, not despite it. A state with no personal income tax is home to six of the country's 25 largest cities. Seventy percent of U.S. jobs created in 2008, by one estimate, were created in Texas.

Writing in the July 20 issue of *National Review*, Kevin D. Williamson contrasts the Lone Star State with California. The former has relatively low taxes and low public outlays. The latter has just the opposite.

Texas is expected to gain three or four congressional seats after the next census. California is expected not to gain a seat for the first time in history.

Both states have Republican governors, but Rick Perry and Arnold Schwarzenegger have little in common other than speaking in accents — Perry's twang and Schwarzenegger's Austrian lilt.

Perry's philosophy? "Don't spend all the money." California's? "Spend everything and then some. Raise taxes. Issue IOUs."

Like Oklahoma, Texas is suffering from a dip in energy prices. But a vibrant, diverse economy helps counter downturns in a heritage industry. To counter lower state revenues, Texas cuts spending and avoids significant increases when times are better.

It's earned a gold star for fiscal sanity — something Sacramento and Washington seem incapable of grasping.

## Curb your junk

The "cash for clunkers" program isn't the only scheme designed to lighten the load of Americans. Curbday.com is promoting a twice-yearly junk removal plan to encourage a wholesale cleanout of the nation's attics, garages and closets. The next national Curb Day is Oct. 24. Promoters urge people to begin thinking about the things they can live without and be ready to haul it to the curb, where (we hope) someone will haul it away for free. Cash for clunkers involves vouchers for the purchase of new vehicles that would replace cars and trucks with poorer gas efficiency ratings. Participating in Curb Day won't get you a voucher or cash, but it could free up space for things that would go out to the curb on the following Curb Day, set for May 2010.

## Circling the bowl

Don't try this at home: Flush 18 golf balls down the toilet, followed by 38 rubber tubes, then 16 Water Wigglyies (plastic tubes filled with water) and then 40 feet of toilet paper.

American Standard did this for a video to prove that its high-efficiency toilets (rated at 1.28 gallons per flush or less) are "just as powerful as the less efficient models." It's all part of a promotion called GreenPlumber to promote environmentally friendly (and relatively expensive) plumbing devices. We have no objections to the devices, but a national mandate to limit the water consumption of toilets seems to be circling the bowl toward federal control of every aspect of our lives.

### Getting it backward

Last Sunday we wrote of the "he-cession" in which the troubled economy is having disproportionate negative affects on male workers. Despite that, feminist groups have urged Washington to direct the bulk of stimulus money to jobs generally held by women. In fact, if there's to be any set-asides based on sex, race or other factors, it would seem to make sense that traditional male jobs be targeted. We don't favor hiring preferences, but the feminists clearly do. The stimulus package targeted infrastructure and that means construction jobs are emphasized. Most of those jobs are held by men; the downturn has affected men the most because these jobs disappeared. The same is true for heavy manufacturing. Leave it to the feminists to get something so backward as to try to punish men with federal spending policies when the economy is already punishing males.

### In English, please

Sen. Tom Coburn gave it a whirl: When his turn came to quiz Supreme Court nominee Sonia Sotomayor on Wednesday, Coburn suggested they have a conversation most Americans could understand. An obstetrician, Coburn, R-Muskogee, suggested the only thing as eye-glazing as a bunch of lawyers talking legalese would be a bunch of doctors immersed in medical lingo. The judge didn't take the hint. Her responses to Coburn's questions were dotted with lawyer talk — "precedents," "reaffirming," "core holding," "claimant." And when Sotomayor explained the word "fundamental" is defined differently in legal circles, eyeballs all over America frosted over. Nice try anyway, senator.

### Early learning

Think small. That's not the advice a lot of experts will dispense when it comes to expanding business and the economy. But the idea that states must focus on better preparing small children for school is gaining ground. Nobel-prize winning economist James Heckman and two other early childhood education advocates will be in Oklahoma City on July 27 to talk about the connection between the economy, business and early learning at the Oklahoma Economic Summit on Early Childhood Investment. Several state and local civic and business leaders also will talk about the connection between education and the economy. For more information, call 278-6978.

### Mass transit ... finally

Passenger rail comes to Seattle today, the first day the city's new Link system gets up and running. Music, free rides and shuttle service to some train stations will be part of the festivities. The Associated Press reports that Seattle officials expect 40,000 to 50,000 riders today, with about 26,000 expected to use it daily. The light rail covers

13.9 miles from downtown to near Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. Plans are for the system to cover 55 miles by 2023, and eventually more than that. Worth noting: Today's debut in Seattle culminates an effort that started four decades ago, clearing a number of hurdles along the way.



**Edmond police cadets begin training: July 20,**

View photos of the cadets as they begin training.

5 photos



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View storm-related photos submitted to NewsOK.com by readers July 16, 2009.

11 photos



**Storm damage: Thursday, July 16, 2009**

Oklahomans access the damage after storm. Photos by Steve Gooch

10 photos



**Bricktown Hotel and Convention Center**

The Bricktown Hotel and Convention Center was damaged in a storm. Thursday, July 16, 2009.

4 photos