



## Just keep it simple, stupid...

**W**atching the political debate about what to do with the economic mess our country is in and watching the majority of the press on all sides of the political spectrum characterizing it is enough to make one either have an intense desire to watch repetitive reruns of “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest” or drive one to drink. Fortunately—or unfortunately, your call—I liked the movie but have no compelling desire to see it again anytime soon, and I already drink.

As I understand it, one side of the debate says to take a bunch of money and provide every taxpayer \$500 (give or take a few bucks) and provide everyone and every corporation a tax break. The theory is, by doing that, everyone will have more money in their pocket and have an overwhelming desire to spend more money, thus stimulating the economy. Businesses will use their tax breaks to increase profits, which they will immediately invest into hiring more employees, who’ll make more money and buy more goods and thus stimulate the economy.

OK, let’s see: We’ve got more people at the poverty level than at any time since the Great Depression. Some of those folks don’t have jobs or make so little money that they don’t pay taxes and therefore would not be entitled to tax breaks or, arguably, would not be entitled to the 500 clams. Then we have low-income earners who are just trying to hang on to feed their families and pay the rent. In either case, the former category wouldn’t make a dent on the economy, ’cause they’re not getting “stimulusized,” and the latter category won’t reinvest because they put what little money they make on this plan into food, paying the back rent or staving off mortgage foreclosure. (And, by the way, illegal aliens are not included in this or any other category; I’m talking legitimate American citizens.)

Businesses who get these tax breaks won’t invest in outsourcing to other countries nor build up salaries for executives or retirement bonuses for managerial elite. Of course, they’ll invest in hiring people off the street. Trickle-down. Yep!

Then we’ve got the diminishing middle class of citizens

and the wealthiest Americans. A certain percentage of the former and a large percentage of the latter just took a bath in the stock market or real estate investment over the past two years and are definitely a sure thing to want to take any money they get with tax breaks or rebates and re-invest rather than save to recoup some of their losses. Sure! Further, a significant amount in the former category have experienced a dramatic devaluation or elimination of their dedicated retirement plan and would surely not want to save that money toward their retirement rather than invest into the economy. Of course not.

**On the flip side of the argument is the premise that the vast majority of any stimulus package should be funneled toward building back our infrastructure.** Let’s see. We refurbish all of our roads, bridges and dilapidated buildings by hiring hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of unemployed Americans at fairly decent wages, immediately removing a significant number from both the welfare and unemployment rolls, saving billions of dollars in costs to taxpayers for welfare payments, food stamps and subsidized health care. At the same time, those immediately created jobs put billions of tax dollars into government coffers to more readily offset the deficit. And the beauty of it is that it happens as quickly as developing a plan to funnel the money to the appropriate level of government, develop an infrastructure-rebuilding priority plan, and invoke a hiring strategy. New workers with newfound income above the poverty level start buying other goods beyond necessities for them and their families and the positive influence on the economy is virtually immediate. Hmm, sounds like a no-brainer. But that’s just me.

When a politician says, “The liberals want to do that and tax breaks are the only way to go,” or “The conservatives want to do that and building up the infrastructure is the only sound alternative,” wouldn’t it be nice to have a legitimate intellectual debate without the name calling—“flaming liberals,” “right-wing neocons”? Drop the stereotypes, the hypocrisy, and just keep it simple. Americans deserve that. ☒