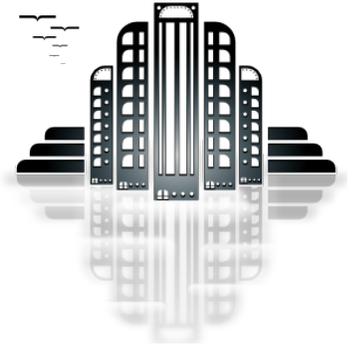


American Scene



Trump, Flint Water and Other Noxious Substances

By David Beagan

Donald Trump has proven all the pundits wrong with his ascent to the precipice, now that he is the presumptive nominee for the GOP nomination for President. He has done it his way, with a brash, insulting, even vulgar, take-no-prisoner's style. So the proposition for the electorate is: Washington has become divided and dysfunctional full of lobbyists and politicians who are just looking out for their own interests and misguided ideals. Elect a successful billionaire businessman – a winner if you will – who is willing to turn Washington on its head, break down barriers, brush aside the incompetence of the incompetents, and to bring a businessman's success to the running of the Federal Government.

Keeping that question in mind, consider the city of Flint Michigan. At this relatively small scale, we can see just how inept a government can be. Under the control of an emergency manager the city switched the source of its water from the Detroit water system to the Flint River to save money. What they failed to do is to treat the water with a few hundred dollars of chemicals to prevent lead from leaching from outdated water pipes. Governmental employees and politicians at city, county, state, and even Federal levels failed to act when it should have been apparent that the water in Flint was seriously tainted with lead. Would a Governor Trump, if we would have had one, have prevented this tragedy from happening? It is impossible to know for sure, but it seems very doubtful that he would have had any effect in preventing it from happening. The reason is that the failures of government that occurred are inherent in the day-to-day functioning of government. Whether through incompetence, misguided notions of not wanting to alarm the public, not wanting to look bad, or just a feeling of power over a group that is considered unimportant, the would-be protectors stood by while the lead tainted water continued to flow.

The fact is, the U.S. Federal Government is a huge and an entrenched bureaucracy. Moreover, the leadership, allegedly the U.S. Congress, has devolved into a dysfunction, where it seems that each faction would rather see the other fail than that to succeed through of cooperation where some of the credit might go to the other side. It hardly seems possible that there is so much crumbling infrastructure and congress can't find a way to do so much more of what needs to be done. This kind of issue is something that it would seem both political parties

could get on board with. I don't see Trump being able to exert control over them. Perhaps, with the threat of veto, and appeals to the public he could shame them into action, could wield some power over them. If Trump is as bold as he likes to project himself as being, how about Trump testing a rumored power of the president, the line item veto. When congress passes a bill with all kinds of unrelated items, stuffed with pork that could never pass muster on its own, I would like to see Trump test the line item veto by crossing out all the specific items on the bill that he disagrees with before signing it into law. When congress vociferously objects, when the courts are called up on to rule on this, then Trump could rally the American people to his side – something he seems good at. A president with a line item veto could do so much to curtail the use of these crazy multipart bills coming out of congress.

If Trump is serious about making the country better, and not just advancing his narcissistic ambitions, here are some more issues that he could push for during his candidacy:

Flat tax, a flatter tax system would eliminate all the economic machinations that take place, not for promoting the individual and greater good, but rather to achieve some tax benefit. Untold billions are simply being wasted. Step up here and win my vote, Donald.

Social Security, the just-released 2015 Trustees of the Social Security and Medicare trust funds report has tucked deep inside is this nasty fact, these are \$25.8 trillion underfunded. Trump's often bragged about business acumen needs to be brought to bear on this situation. Or is it all just talk. Step up here Donald and win my vote.

Decriminalize drugs, the government declared a war on drugs, billions of dollars later, thousands of years spent in prison later, and untold promotion of crime later (yes making drugs illegal funds the criminal underworld, a lesson learned and apparently forgot from prohibition in the 1930s) and here we are the war has been lost. Finally some sanity with changing marijuana laws, is taking hold. Step up here Donald and win my vote.

One bonus item, commit to continuing the current administrations strong support for stem cell research. Step up, on real issues, Mr. Trump.