

Opinion

Keeping Senators Out Of Soup Lines

by Pete Weichlein
Collegian Staff Writer

Congressmen are only human. They have financial burdens just like everyone else. They have bills to pay, mortgages to worry about, taxes to file.

Pete's Perspective

Congressmen like to drive fast, big cars, like to sit by the pool, like to vacation in their own holiday house. Congressmen are only human.

How could anyone expect a normal mortal to survive in Washington on less than \$100,000? Washington is an expensive city, restaurants are overrated and overpriced, a cab plus tip costs a fortune. One has to work a week to afford a steak. Nobody can live in Washington for under \$100,000.

Therefore Congressmen need a raise, a well deserved raise, a badly needed raise to keep Congressmen and their families away from the poverty level. And a raise they shall receive. When the average American citizen receives a raise he can expect anything between 5 to 10%. But Congressmen aren't average, they're special. They're 50 percent salary increase kind of special.

Congressmen will get a raise of \$45,000, which will bring the salary of a member of Congress to \$135,000. Congressmen are special and Washington is a really expensive town.

This pay raise symbolizes the perversity of our day and age. What has happened to the ideals of Franklin, Jefferson, and Adams?

Is being involved in our government to shameful and atrocious, that only the aspect of earning a six-figure salary can persuade you to serve your country?

Members of the government say that all the gifted scientists, all the genius economists, the theorists and thinkers who this nation could greatly benefit from,

are not tempted to work in the government because it doesn't pay enough.

A general pay raise would certainly eliminate this problem, but not the fact that working for the government is neither honorable nor reputable. The idea that serving the nation as a congressman is something to be proud of and content with, has been eliminated by scandals and bribes.

And what has happened to the men and women we voted for not long ago? Those beautiful, white-teethed candidates, who were so full of ideas, so eager to change the world to the better. What has happened to those candidates who seemed so proud to represent their voters in Washington? Why do they now feel that their work is so hazardous and disgusting that only a 50 percent pay raise can persuade them to subject themselves to the atrocities of Washington, D.C.?

There is only one argument to this salary increase, only one argument which in my opinion is justifiable. A Congressman who makes \$135,000 instead of "only" \$90,000 (I am sure, however, that there are certain economics majors on this campus with the firm belief that \$90,000 is just small change) will probably be less inclined to risk his whole career by taking bribes, or accepting lobbyist's money.

A pay raise would therefore increase the uprightness of our elected officials. In other words, with a salary increase of 50 percent this nation will be able to buy it's bureaucrats' honesty.

This raise has been called by many names, including "a reward for incompetence", "completely unjustified", or simply "a disgrace". And Congress is slowly recognizing the public relations mistake it has made.

So now, in order to placate America's tarnished opinion of its government, it looks as if the raise may be reduced to a 30% increase only. Dear taxpayer, rest assured that you have saved another Washington native from starvation.

LOVE ROB

50 Percent Raises For Everyone

by Rob Prindle

A few weeks ago I got very nice advertisement from the good people at Popular Mechanics. They wanted to sell me 'how to' books. Apparently they had gotten my name from Jimmy-riggers of America.

For approximately \$13,000 I could own the set of books they called "The Do-It-Yourself Encyclopedias." Although my financial situation wouldn't allow me to buy the books, I did enjoy the free gift that was included with the ad. It was a handy wall reference guide showing standard lumber sizes in one column and the actual size of the wood in the other.

This was news to me. I always thought that the wood was the size it said it was. Why would anyone ever think that the size on the wood wasn't the actual size? For some strange reason it isn't. For example: a common 2 x 4 is actually only 1 1/2 by 3 1/2". Hard to believe isn't it? And the chaos doesn't stop there. Almost all wood is smaller than it says it is. If you can't believe wood, what can you believe?

Once I found out about the 'wood conspiracy' I couldn't wait to call my friend Butch to tell him about the ridiculous inconsistencies. I thought he would be hopping mad.

Well, I called Butch and explained what I had learned. He didn't get mad, he didn't yell, he just sighed and began to speak calmly.

"Rob, how can you worry about something as stupid and trivial as lumber when a real life tragedy is facing America. Don't you know that Congress refused to accept their 51 percent pay raise? You should be spending your time writing to your Congressman demanding that he take the astronomical raise."

I had to explain to my friend that I too was for the raise. I believe that our congress preforms a service which is vital to our nation. Congressmen only make \$89,500. Surely these people deserve to be paid as much as some small time CEO or a bench-warming major league baseball player. Why in the world would the voting public yell and scream and write nasty letters demanding that our government be paid so little, and why would the elected officials listen to them?

My comments did not make my friend very happy. He let out a growl, then snapped "Give me a break, Rob, voters are fickle, and Congressmen want to keep their jobs and you know it. The only work these guys do is during the election, and why would they want to make that work any harder? You gotta' know it would be harder for Congressmen to be re-elected when their opponents can remind everyone that they gave themselves a 51% raise."

"After these guys get elected they spend the rest of their time letting lobbies treat them to vacations in Hawaii. Heck, most Congressmen would take the job without pay. Go ahead and give them an ultimatum like the voters did and they show that their job is more important than the money. Besides they'll still make plenty of money because



Rob Prindle

they're allowed to take huge sums of money for speeches. I might add that most of that speaking money also comes from political lobbies. Who else would pay to hear Jim Wright speak? Those fees are nothing but legalized bribes."

Butch had a good point. It does seem that, in the long run, it would have been better for America if Congress had accepted the raises and gotten rid of the honoraria.

Everyone deserves a raise once in a while, and anyone who refuses a raise is insane. The members of America's House of Reps are showing that they believe in re-election by voting to refuse the raise. Anyone who refuses a raise is stupid in my book, and I don't believe that we should have stupid people running the government.

It would have been smarter for Congress to have voted for a much smaller raise. I don't think anyone would have been upset enough to write nasty letters to their Congressman over ten percent. I think that what this whole raise issue proves is that our congress isn't much smarter than the people who vote for them.

I have a theory. Maybe if the Houses of Congress hadn't been so stingy when it came to raising the minimum wage, they would have encountered less opposition to their own raise. Congress has repeatedly refused to raise the it saying that they believe the minimum wage is just fine at what it has been for the past 300 years?

In a perfect world, our government would agree to take their raise, then abolish their sneaky ways of making money from lobbies. Then The House and The Senate would vote to raise the minimum to get it back on par with inflation and restore credibility to the word 'wage' in minimum wage.

Letter to the Editor: Reaction to Rob's View on Abortion

Dear editor,

The Love Rob column of the January 25th Collegian leaves something to be desired, mainly a sick feeling of disgust. His approach on the issue of 'so called', right-to-lifers, came across like the ravings of an obsessed mad-man.

While I am not writing to take a side on the issue, I feel Rob's remark's against right-to-lifers are viscerously slanderous. He thinks it's a joke that these people claim such a

strong alliance with life. With his incredible foresight and wisdom, Rob asks us to envision "any young girl you know, then picture that life with a child." Are we to think such a picture is the equivalent of damnation? If so, God must be whispering in Rob's ear, not the lawmakers.

Rob continues by claiming that becoming pregnant while young, results in "no school, no money,..." basically the end of existence. I'm

sorry to tell you Rob, that it is not the end. Although for most I'm sure it is a struggle, these women do try to provide the best life for the child they can. As a matter of fact, I know two young single mothers that are working on B.S. degrees right now. They are surviving in this modern world of ours, without having paid "a few hundred dollars to have a doctor shove a vacuum hose into themselves," as you so eloquently phrased it.

The problem by the end of the article was, that I could not decide if Rob was a 'so called' pro-choicer, pro-lifer, or, I hate opinionated people person (a category he fits!). We are all anxiously awaiting to know which person the man behind the shaky sunglasses really is!

Sincerely,
Mark B. Louis