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## eNews - March 19, 2009

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### The Week just past

"Words matter and in recent days the Obama Administration has announced changes in the way it speaks to the world.

"First, the term 'unlawful alien enemy combatant' was dropped in reference to the terrorists held at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. Now, the U.S. Justice Department will refer to them simply as 'detainees.'

"Then Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano told a German publication that she uses the phrase 'man-caused disasters' instead of the term 'terrorism' to describe events such as the attacks on September 11, 2001.

"This may be nothing more than political correctness run amok. However, as I also noted in an earlier eNews, the President did not even mention 'national security' in his recent State of the Union address.

"Representing New Jersey, a '9-11 State,' I am concerned that these changes in words and tone may signal a retreat from the policies that kept our nation largely free from attack since 2001."

### Frelinghuysen assures veterans on Obama proposal

Rep. Frelinghuysen met this week with representatives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and assured them that President Obama's proposal to force veterans to rely on private insurance company payments for treatment for service-connected injuries will not be approved.

"Our government owes our veterans the best medical care possible and his proposal violates that solemn pledge," said Frelinghuysen. "Veterans should not have to depend on private insurance companies, who bear no moral bond to soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines or their injuries, physical and mental. Those who have served should not be treated as just another faceless beneficiary."

Frelinghuysen assured the VFW that he will strongly oppose this ill-considered scheme and Congress will ultimately reject it as well.

As an indication of his opposition to the proposal, Frelinghuysen introduced his own resolution of disapproval, cosponsored two others and signed a letter to the President asking him to reconsider.

### **Exhibit A: Why Bills Should Not Rush Through Congress**

This justifiable furor over bonuses paid to executives of the American International Group (AIG) with taxpayer money had its roots in the \$1 trillion stimulus bill rushed through Congress in February.

ABC News reported this week that during late-night, closed-door talks last month, negotiators representing House Speaker Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Reid and the White House stripped out an amendment to the stimulus bill that could have restricted AIG bonuses. The amendment restricted all bonuses over \$100,000 at ANY company receiving federal bailout funds. However, this provision was stripped out during the closed-door conference negotiations involving House and Senate majority leaders and the White House. An amendment by Sen. Chris Dodd (CT) explicitly exempted bonuses agreed to prior to passage of the stimulus bill.

The reality is that only a handful of people were aware of the "Dodd exemption." Most Democrats and all Republicans in Congress and the American people had no idea that this provision was tucked away inside the 1,000 page bill because it was introduced, debated and passed in the House in the space of about 14 hours. No one brought this provision to public's attention. No one debated it. Certainly, no one voted on it.

"Nobody benefits when Congress does not allow the American people to examine legislation," said Frelinghuysen.

Recommended Reading: "How the Fed Failed to Tell Obama About the Bonuses", *Washington Post*  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/18/AR2009031804210.html>

### **House Budget Committee to Move Obama Budget**

The House Budget Committee next week is scheduled to consider President Obama's budget proposal for the fiscal year 2010 that begins in October. The budget unveiled earlier this month:

- Increases spending by \$1 trillion over the next decade;
- Includes an additional \$250 billion for another financial bailout;
- Probably leads to a 12 percent increase in spending;
- Permanently expands the federal government by nearly 3 percent of gross domestic product over pre-recession levels;
- Raises taxes on all Americans by \$1.4 trillion;
- Raises taxes for 3.2 million higher income taxpayers by an average of \$300,000 over the next decade;
- Removes incentives for certain charitable giving;
- Assumes a rosy economic scenario that few economists anticipate;
- Leaves permanent deficits averaging \$600 billion even after the economy recovers; and
- Doubles the publicly held national debt to over \$15 trillion.

Federal spending was \$24,000 per household before the recession. President Obama would raise it to \$32,000 per household by 2019 (after inflation).

## The Government's Commitments So Far

*Washington Post*, Thursday, March 19, 2009

\$700 billion: Initial financial rescue, passed last fall

\$570 billion: To AIG, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac

\$1 trillion: Funding of credit card, auto and small-business loans

\$787 billion: Stimulus package

\$1.45 trillion: Purchases of mortgage securities, including yesterday's \$850 billion pledge

\$300 billion: Purchases of U.S. Treasury bonds announced yesterday

## Bad Idea of the Week

The Obama administration is signaling to Congress that the president could support taxing some employee health benefits to pay for overhauling the U.S. health care system.

This proposal is similar to one Senator Barack Obama denounced just a few months ago as "the largest middle-class tax increase in history." Most Americans with insurance get it from their employers, and taxing workers for the benefit is opposed by many unions and some businesses.

"As we look to cover more American families with health coverage, the last thing we want to do is encourage U.S. employers to drop their insurance because some of it will now be taxable," said Frelinghuysen.

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