

OUR VOICE Gov. No, No, No

Congratulations, Gov. Jim Gibbons, you are steadily and assuredly working your way toward being the most irrelevant state chief executive in the land. First you made the George H. W. Bush mistake of promising that you will not—and we repeat not—raise taxes during your administration. You said this to appeal to the moderate to conservative wings of the Republican Party, which believe that less taxes, smaller government and the free market (when left to its own devices) will ensure that the economy runs smoothly.

Then the global economy got waylaid by constricted credit markets. And the U.S. economy got hit with a triple whammy of a mortgage crisis, failing lending institutions and dried-up credit markets. And our state's tourism-based economy suffered once-in-a-generation crises. Tourism and gaming numbers dropped to their lowest points in 25 years. Wall Street cut off financing to the casino companies, whose profligate spending on ever-bigger and better megaresorts vivified the economy by providing thousands of jobs. Now many of these same companies are debt laden and doing everything in their power to stave off bankruptcy—from enacting layoffs and cutting hours to halting projects and frantically working with lenders to renegotiate bank terms. Your no-new-taxes mantra was fine when things were going well, but now it seems pointedly myopic and overtly political.

To make matters worse, you joined a handful of Republican governors across in the nation in indicating that you might not accept all of the \$1.5 billion Nevada is set to receive from the \$787 billion stimulus package passed by Congress. This unprincipled political stand puts you in lockstep with southern governors like Bobby Jindal of Louisiana, and Haley Barbour of Mississippi, as well as Texas' Rick Perry, George's Sonny Perdue, South Carolina's Mark Sanford and Alaska's Sarah Palin—all these chief executives have decided that politics is more important than people, that sending a "message" to President Obama matters more than taking care of the needs of constituents who put them into office.

To be sure, these two-faced Governors Grimm aren't rejecting all the funding. They're merely carping about the one to four percent aimed at providing unemployment insurance for people who qualify under existing state laws. Gibbons, the rest of the governors claim, that "once stimulus dollars expire, states are required to fund the expanded coverage base with state tax dollars. In order to fund expanded coverage, states will have no choice but to raise unemployment insurance taxes on Nevada businesses." In seeking to find its way back from the political fringes after huge defeats in the 2006 and 2008 elections, Republicans have staked their re-emergence (or death knell) on obstructionism, choosing partisan warfare over the needs of their residents. For his part, Gibbons has attacked Nevada's congressional Democrats for ridiculing his position: "Had [Shelley] Berkley and [Dina] Titus been working with the best interests of Nevada at heart, we would have raised the funding to help more Nevada citizens who have been laid off, provide more health coverage for families, and create more jobs. As it is, these two are now griping about an unemployment program that doesn't have federal strings attached, it has federal chains attached, I will not sell out our state's sovereignty."

Here's a thought: Why not ask the growing ranks of unemployed people if they'd rather have two years of help or none at all. If no's on two big issues weren't enough, Gibbons one-upped himself by declining to sign a bill that passed both state houses to impose a three percent tax on hotel rooms in Clark and Washoe counties. By not signing the bill into law, our invertebrate governor can claim he lived up to this promise of no new taxes. What he shouldn't claim is any credit for the legislation, which will raise \$230 million in much-needed funding for K-12 education. Since Gibbons included the tax, which stemmed from a teachers union ballot initiative passed in November, in his budget, doesn't that mean he did, indeed, renege on his promise to raise taxes? This should, of course, be obvious when you're dealing with Gov. No. Gee, governor, what else will you say no to?

MARCH Madness!

PINK SLIP



We need our share of stimulus

By Harry C. Alford
Special to Sentinel-Voice

The Stimulus Bill has just been passed and I have already heard people state "Let's hold them accountable" or "Let's see what they do this time."

That is the logic of a loser. Frederick Douglass said it in 1862 that "Power concedes nothing without a demand... you may not get all that you pay for but you will definitely pay for whatever you get."

Those words still hold true and it is us, African-Americans, who must collectively organize and pursue our fair share of the act. This is a chance to level the playing field that has for too long been tilted against us due to our lack of organization and focus.

Elected officials will not and cannot do this for us. They legislate and must please special interests not the general interest. Most of our politicians are Democrats and the orders come directly from the Democratic National Committee (DNC). The interests of Blacks will not be settled there or at the RNC. It is big money that rules there and we don't have big money. We have votes but those can be manipulated by big money. In the end, it is big money that stirs our political landscape.



HARRY C. ALFORD

The National Black Chamber of Commerce will form at least three committees to pursue these opportunities. There will be a Transportation Committee that will monitor and be active in the funds coming from the U.S. Department of Transportation — namely infrastructure projects.

There will be an Energy Committee that will do the same regarding the mammoth funding for energy related projects. The U.S. Department of Energy will expand ten times within the next four years and the opportunities will be plenty.

Finally, we will form a Section 3 committee to monitor all monies coming from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). All new jobs coming from HUD funds must comply with Section 3 of the HUD Act.

That means that 30 percent of all new jobs are to go to people living in public

housing or under the poverty level. Ten percent of all contracts are to be set aside for Section 3 businesses (businesses that hire Section 3 residents). In 1998, there were 5,000 recipients of HUD funding and only 3 were complying. The NBCC took this on and today there are 1,300 in compliance, which means we have 3,700 more to convert.

We will measure our progress by the number of contracts awarded and the number of jobs produced. We commit to doing whatever we can and encourage other organizations and community leaders to join in. It is the only way it is going to get done.

Traditionally, there are four major obstacles to deal with. One will be labor

unions, particularly construction unions, who have made a science out of "cherry picking" jobs in our urban areas and assigning them to people who live in suburban areas. Look at your freeways in the morning and evening and see all those people coming into our communities to work and to flee with the money at the end of the day.

That's why our unemployment is more than double that of Whites. We need to deal with this.

Secondly, the Drug Trafficking Industry will oppose our efforts. Our intent is to employ people who will live productive lives. Their intent is to addict and poison those same people and provide them with "hell" on earth. We will be going after their mar-

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