



## Education: The Game-changer in Conservatives' Political Prospects

Blankley didn't say precisely when this about-face would occur, but if not in the coming 2012 election, then probably around 2024. That is the year, Blankley predicts, by which it will become abysmally clear to voters that Obama's math-challenged \$4 trillion deficit-reduction plan (combining "\$1.3 trillion in taxes and \$2.7 trillion in spending cuts") didn't even make a dent in America's economic collapse.

What Blankley left out of this scenario is "*Education*" — more precisely, the business of educating America's youth — the missing element in nearly all conservative analyses of America's political future and, indeed, our way of life. To liberal-left statisticians, on the other hand, education has always been the trump card, the ace-in-the-hole assuring a Nanny State agenda.



Blankley states that until a couple of years ago he "assumed that America was on a slow, irreversible trek to the statist side." But between the Obama administration's general ineptitude, a semi-permanent economic impasse in Congress, and recent statements by the likes of his sometime nemesis, Ed Kilgore, special correspondent for the *New Republic* and frequent talk-show adversary, Blankley sees signs of a turnaround. A defining moment came when Kilgore inadvertently provided, in a piece for the magazine, a new and improved label for "constitutional conservatism" — constitutional *restorationism*.

The intent of Kilgore's piece, apparently, had been to bash Rep. Michelle Bachmann (R-Minn.), and others like her, who favor a return to constitutional principles. [Kilgore charged](#) that what her ilk really wants is a "radical policy of returning to the pre-1930s view of the Constitution with its strict interpretation of the federal government's limited powers, [taking] the originist view of individual and property rights and [urging] the removal of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal legislation." Kilgore implied that this was a regressive, backward stance, completely out-of-step in a 21st-century world. But because he coined a new term for it, "constitutional restorationism," he ended up giving the idea unexpectedly fresh legitimacy. Consequently, Blankley thinks that Americans actually may reject Nanny State socialism and adopt anew the Framers' original intent of constitutional principles, if for no other reason than to regain some measure of self-determination, which is under assault across the board.

"The sheer incompetence and, in some cases, mendacity of the current crop of statist politicians in both the executive and legislative branches," wrote Blankley, "seem likely to bring on an economic crisis that will actually force Americans to decide between a constitutional restoration and a full embrace of statism." Blankley argues that when the economic fire does finally hit the fan, and America actually begins "running out of money to pay for promised benefits" — Medicare, ObamaCare, Social Security,



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and other entitlements — the populace could well decide to become the “constitutional restorationists” of Kilgore’s nightmares.

But education is the game-changer in any debate over which side — Nanny State socialism or representative democracy — ultimately wins. At least [90 percent](#) of children attend public (government) schools, where every new class of high-school graduates since 1966 — that’s over 40 years’ worth — has endured a predominantly leftist indoctrination package of K-12 curricula, spearheaded by the National Education Association (NEA) and its co-founded brainchild, UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). Over the years since 1947, the NEA and UNESCO have plied schools with increasingly extremist propaganda, complete with phony standards, phony tests, and fuzzy instruction in critical subjects like history, civics, literature, and economics, until the sheer capability of sustaining a *republic* (assuming pupils even know what that term means) is now in jeopardy. Many private (and even some religious schools) contain similar leftist offerings, thanks to compromised departments of teacher preparation in the universities. Every new crop of college graduates, regardless of career path, has been more left-leaning than the last. Classroom debate has long since veered away from “academic freedom” toward mandated “political correctness” — and increasing characterizations of contradictory ideas as “hate speech” — the infractions for which have morphed into suspension, expulsion, and/or “mandatory psychological counseling.” Blankley’s vision of “three presidential administrations and six Congresses from now” — when the U.S. Treasury runs out in 2024 — ignores the realities that 13 more years of educational mayhem will surely impose.

Now-grown children of the 1960s, '70s, and '80s constitute much of today’s “voting public” — when they are not busy watching reruns of *Friends* and *American Idol*. The few that avail themselves of more serious fare like PBS’ *Nightly Business Report* or *Frontline* and read *The Economist* do not realize they are still getting a highly condensed, skewed view of the events, often without context — and they don’t have the incentive, even with the Internet, to do the types of in-depth research it takes to correct any misperceptions. While certainly there are alternative programs and publications out there that generate hundreds of thousands of subscriptions and “hits” weekly and/or monthly, these reports and op-ed pieces, no matter how worthy, still require the reader or viewer, in an era of information overload, to compare them with their equivalents in various opposing forums — i.e., publications and presentations having a different slant. Although subconsciously people realize the need to know what “the other side” is saying, those who do not make their living from this sort of activity are simply not going to dissect every story and compare it with five or more other versions. This is especially true of topics which, at first blush, do not appear controversial — even though, in actuality, some topics, such as social issues or “traffic” cameras are arguably more controversial than their foreign policy or economic counterparts because they establish a troubling pattern of government incursion into everybody’s daily life — which is the very essence of “statism.”

Tony Blankley is not mathematically challenged. Nor is he any political ingénue: He helped shape the public discourse as former Press Secretary to U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich, and he served as speechwriter and political analyst for President Ronald Reagan. He has appeared regularly on CNN’s *Late Edition* with the liberal Wolf Blitzer and sparred on CNBC’s *Hardball* with liberal Chris Matthews. He did a brief stint as editorial page editor for the *Washington Times*.

And he got it partly right: For example, his assertion that even “if the federal government really went after all those billionaires the Democrats snarl about, and confiscated all the property of the country’s 400 billionaires ... it would yield only \$1.3 trillion — about five months of federal spending....This



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pantomime deficit-reduction process is evidence that those in charge have lost their mental grip on the true dimensions of the fiscal crisis.”

But the down-side of long-term immersion in the self-important world of Capitol Hill politics presents a different set of challenges to “mental grip” — the kind that eventually insulates politicians and their staffs from the majority of Americans, which assume the status of pesky mosquitoes that take time away from the more important business of schmoozing and jockeying for position among the “well-connected.”

Blankley sees clearly the time frame Americans have in which to turn things around. But *education* is the missing link that busts his argument to Kingdom Come.

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