

## **A “Crisis” of Governors**

By Alan Caruba

If you can have a pride of lions and a gaggle of geese, then I suggest that the forthcoming July 17-20 meeting of the National Governors Association can be described as a “crisis” of Governors.

This once-esteemed office, a platform from which some launched campaigns to become President, has become a sinkhole of sexual misconduct and corruption; witness New York’s unlamented Eliot Spitzer, New Jersey’s James McGreevey, and now South Carolina’s pathetic, moon-struck Mark Sanford and Illinois’ Rod Blagojevich whose alleged sins involved money.

Because states are sovereign republics and because being governor is primarily a “local” responsibility, the job requires significant administrative and political skills to ensure the state meets those obligations closest to voters. Infrastructure must be maintained. Issues of public safety, health, and education are paramount concerns.

With a few exceptions, today’s Governors are struggling with bloated budgets and huge deficits despite the fact that most states require a balanced budget or at least the semblance of one. Watching Arnold Schwarzenegger announce that California will be paying its bills with IOUs would be comic if it were not so serious.

Watching Governor David Paterson of New York desperately trying to get that state’s legislators to even convene a session reflects the absurdity of watching the House of Representatives vote on trillion-dollar legislation it hasn’t even read.

**What, in fact, Americans are witnessing is a failure of government at both the state and federal level. The nation has managed to elect too many people to public office that are so clearly inept, incompetent, and untrustworthy, it poses a threat to the republic.**

When the National Governors Association meets this week, we shall have an opportunity to see this group address the challenges facing the nation. Chaired by Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell, it is to his credit that he has focused on infrastructure—bridges, roads, tunnels, water treatment plants, the electrical grid, schools and hospitals.

In earlier times, infrastructure was seen and understood to be essential to America’s growth and prosperity. Not so today. It is, generally speaking, vastly under-funded.

The NGA will open with meetings of two committees, The Economic Development and Commerce Committee and the Education, Early Childhood and Workforce Committee. If California is any example—and it is—than economic development has long since been thrown overboard as state-after-state has denied or delayed permits for the building of new plants, coal-fired or nuclear—for the generation of electricity. No energy. No development. As for education, it is a national disgrace.

On Sunday, the Health and Human Services Committee will discuss health care reform. The present White House proposal, unbelievably vague, and whatever will emerge from Congress will add more trillions to the national debt, require everyone to purchase a national, not private health insurance, and end up rationing health services because that

is the only way a national system can function. It is a very bad idea that has already failed in Massachusetts.

The Natural Resources Committee will concurrently “examine barriers to American energy independence and security.” I can virtually guarantee you that the Governors of America’s coastal states will resist exploration and extraction of vast natural resources of oil and natural gas from their offshore areas. Others will call for huge expenditures for wind and solar energy that cannot even begin to meet the energy needs of America.

On Sunday afternoon, Janet Napolitano, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, will join others to discuss “emergency preparedness” and, if Hurricane Katrina was any indication, the nation’s and the state’s ability to respond to emergencies is not encouraging. The former Arizona state governor is usually glassy-eyed and phlegmatic when questioned about issues.

Monday’s session will examine energy and the economy. Given how poorly these related areas of concern have been addressed at this point, one is tempted to suggest that the Governors pack their bags and skip that little gab-fest.

The Governors are a microcosm of the entire nation’s ills. Many, if not all, are dependent on federal largess in order to fund the needs of their states and many states send more to the federal government in tax revenues than they receive in return. You could call it a redistribution of wealth.

A growing number of state governments are passing resolutions stating they will not be bound by federal mandates regarding health, education, immigration and other key issues. They are declaring their sovereignty to reassert control over those areas of governance which, until the major shift to federal control at the mid-point of the last century, were their province and their responsibility.

This nation fought a Civil War over the issue of state’s rights, over the right of secession. Now the issue facing California is whether other states have an obligation to bail it out of its financial problems and the answer is no. A host of other incursions of state’s rights, enshrined in the Tenth Amendment, is sparking resistance.

Too much centralized government in Washington, bad management, too much control by public service unions, ignoring infrastructure needs, failure to provide for the provision of energy to a growing population, and the distractions of idiotic issues such as same-sex marriage are combining to destroy a once-great nation.

Alan Caruba writes a daily blog at <http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com> and a weekly commentary at <http://www.anxietycenter.com>, the website of The National Anxiety Center.

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