

Published on *Standard-Examiner* (<http://www.standard.net>)

Sen. Hatch's tough words hide a lot of verbal shenanigans

Charles F. Trentelman, Standard-Examiner staff
Created Nov 17 2010 - 11:07pm

Sen. Orrin Hatch threw around some tough language in an editorial he wrote for this paper last week.

Hatch wants to save the nation from the "bloated" federal government. Health care reform is that "financially ruinous \$2.6 trillion health law" with a "punitive" and "job killing" employer mandate.

Funny he should mention bloat. Most of his editorial is hot air, when it's not deceptive.

Yes, deceptive.

He denounces "this administration," meaning President Obama's, then says that "since 2008 Congress has passed a trillion-dollar stimulus bill, bailed out our two largest automakers," and approved health care reform.

He's right about health care reform and the stimulus, but the way he writes that, he's saying Obama bailed out GM and Chrysler, too.

Obama didn't. The \$17.4 billion auto bailout was President Bush's.

Bush, in his memoir, is proud of that bailout. Hatch voted against it. If GM and Chrysler had gone under, Hatch would have helped kill hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Despite sounding as if unemployment that "still remains near 10 percent" is a bad thing, Hatch wants to be a job killer. He wants to cut back federal civilian employment to pre-Obama levels because the government is "bloated," up 20 percent since 2008.

Hatch's office tells me the senator is not counting the Postal Service and the 720,000 civilian employees of the Defense Department. Using his criteria, federal employment was 1.204 million right before Obama took office and hit 1.428 million this year.

Fire 200,000 people? Not so fast.

Hatch forgets the Census hired 500,000 temporary workers this year. Hatch's numbers are FTE, "full time equivalents." Temporary jobs added up to a chunk of those 200,000 full time numbers.

Estimated federal jobs for 2011 are already down to 1.34 million. Hatch wants to fire another 140,000, but why exclude civilian defense workers? DOD must have some bureaucrats it can spare.

Federal employment is actually stable. Total civilian FTE jobs, including defense and Postal Service, was 2.4 million in 1962 and 2.7 million in 2009. Not bad over 48 years.

Hatch doesn't mention civilian contractor bloat, where federal jobs are replaced with private companies. President Bush exploded federal contracts from \$200 billion to \$400 billion, which buys a lot of jobs and enriches a lot of private companies that make campaign donations.

Federal jobs did soar in congressional and court staffs, from 30,000 in 1962 to 60,000 now. Maybe Hatch could lay off some of his people.

Hatch really slams the "financially ruinous" and "job killing" health care reform.

Reform costs money, but health care is ruinous now. Insurance premiums -- the taxes supporting our current system of socialized medicine -- have outrun wage growth for decades.

Hatch says employers worry health care reform costs will hurt their ability to hire people -- the "job killing" mandate.

But some of the loudest Utah voices for health care reform have been small businesses that can't keep good employees because they can't provide health care. The Utah Health Policy Project (www.healthpolicyproject.org ^[1]) has dozens of stories of companies losing good, valued employees, or going broke trying to keep them.

Killing health care reform will kill jobs. You can't work if you're sick.

I just got off the phone with a woman who needs dentures. She's got leukemia, is in a wheelchair and spends \$500 a month on prescriptions. She wants to go to work, but the leukemia ruined her teeth.

Nobody hires people with no teeth. She needs \$2,100 up front to get new ones.

There's real financial ruin. There's job killing. Does Hatch have any answers for that woman?

Ease up on the tough words, though. She's having trouble chewing.

Wasatch Rambler is the opinion of Charles Trentelman. You can call him at 801-625-4232 or e-mail ctrentelman@standard.net ^[2]. He also blogs at www.standard.net ^[3].

Copyright © 2010 Standard-Examiner

Source URL: <http://www.standard.net/topics/economy/2010/11/17/sen-hatchs-tough-words-hide-lot-verbal->

shenanigans