

MEMO FROM EMMETT MAYOR GORDON W. PETRIE

SUBJECT: THINK BEING A LEADER IS EASY? ASK SENATOR STEVE THAYN!

One hears the term leader or leadership often. It can certainly mean different things to different people, but what is the essence of leadership? Simply put, it's what gets things done in an organization. Leaders comprise those individuals who take responsibility and accountability for what does and does not happen in the system or organization they lead. Leadership is a lonely occupation and true leaders seem to be an endangered species, especially when it comes to the accountability metric. Leaders lead. Sometimes leaders find themselves way ahead of the pack. I know one: Senator Steve Thayn.

Full disclosure: Steve Thayn and I are kinda sorta related by marriage. One of his sons married my daughter-in-law's sister, but the sisters are both from Challis, so that allows me to toot the senator's horn some without having to suffer the charge of cronyism...maybe.

When it comes to education in this state, Sen. Thayn is a combination of a modern-day prophet in the wilderness with a touch of Thomas Paine, but a good touch of Paine; a "Common Sense" kind of touch, not the Revolution-for-the-heck-of-it touch. Senator Thayn's latest pamphlet *The Missing Element* should be required reading for parents with children who want them educated, because it educates the parents first about important concepts. Senator Thayn and I have been students of the family dynamic for years—his from a personal and educational aspect, mine from a personal and legal aspect. As it turns out, these aspects often merge.

Senator Thayn's premise is at the same time simple and fundamental while absolutely revolutionary in today's "I'm personally offended by your belief system" environment. He actually believes in empowering the family to solve its own problems. Good grief! Why didn't I think of that?

Senator Thayne makes the point on page 23 of his pamphlet that “[i]n order for individual freedom to exist, government must be limited.” This, of course, was the general theme of the capitalism versus socialism memos I submitted to you last spring and summer. The senator goes on to write that since the founding of our nation, power has slowly migrated from We the People of the United States trying to form that more perfect union long dreamed of by those who came before us to the institutional governmental bodies of that very union.

Here’s a not-so-fun fact set out by Senator Thayne. At the beginning of the 20th Century, 8% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) funded everything governmental—from local to state to federal. To be sure, that was a far different time. No New Deal, Fair Deal, or Great Society programs operated then. Washington, D.C., especially the Compassionate Conservatives (think Jumbo Shrimp) who apparently misunderstood Bill Clinton’s remarks about “ending welfare as we know it” had not yet made the system established in 1935 by FDR bigger and more costly than ever before.

Indeed, in 1900 we had not yet seen the Federal Reserve System, the Sixteenth Amendment authorizing Federal Income Tax, two world wars and the plethora of little wars preceding and following them. Yet, all the seeds had been planted with the likes of the Spanish American War and Progressives on the ascendency, like FDR’s cousin, Teddy. Today, in the 21st Century, we see 50% of our GDP going to taxes, deficit spending (fully encouraged by the Federal Reserve System and, indeed, the very reason for the system) not to mention the extra costs imposed on the American people due to regulations, admittedly some needed because people really aren’t well behaved when they should be while other regulations simply befuddle.

It has been demonstrated that the breakdown of the American Family, that is, clumps of kin living in close proximity to one another and taking care of one another started with the

introduction of the steam engine coupled with the completion of the railroad system to the west. Perhaps it can be argued that an accelerant to the breakdown includes the creation of a bureaucratic deeply rooted state that has taken hold in our nation's capital and just like the plant in *Little Shop of Horrors*, continuously demands to be fed.

Perhaps what is needed is a secular cultural reformation (I hesitate to use Cultural Revolution because Mao had that with executions, beatings and banishments to gulags, which is not what I'm looking for.) Instead, we need to figure out a way to get back to why this country was formed in order to create a more perfect union in the first place: individual freedom. That result, however, requires the rugged individualism our fore parents exhibited. What this means is we need to collectively find a way to begin once again the strengthening of the American Family.

Senator Thayne thinks so and so do I. We support the strengthening of the American Family. So there it is; Senator Thayne is not as alone as he might think. Nevertheless, that doesn't change the fact that leadership is still hard work.