

The Credibility Gap

By Sarah Palin
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While I don't wish to speak too harshly about President Obama's state of the union address, we live in challenging times that call for candor. I call them as I see them, and I hope my frank assessment will be taken as an honest effort to move this conversation forward.

Last night, the president spoke of the "credibility gap" between the public's expectations of their leaders and what those leaders actually deliver. "Credibility gap" is a good way to describe the chasm between rhetoric and reality in the president's address. The contradictions seemed endless.

He called for Democrats and Republicans to "work through our differences," but last year he dismissed any notion of bipartisanship when he smugly told Republicans, "I won."

He talked like a Washington "outsider," but he runs Washington! He's had everything any president could ask for – an overwhelming majority in Congress and a fawning press corps that feels tingles every time he speaks. There was nothing preventing him from pursuing "common sense" solutions all along. He didn't pursue them because they weren't his priorities, and he spent his speech blaming Republicans for the problems caused by his own policies.

He dared us to "let him know" if we have a better health care plan, but he refused to allow Republicans in on the negotiations or consider any ideas for real free market and patient-centered reforms. We've been "letting him know" our ideas for months from the town halls to the tea parties, but he isn't interested in listening. Instead he keeps making the nonsensical claim that his massive trillion-dollar health care bill won't increase the deficit.

Americans are suffering from job losses and lower wages, yet the president practically demanded applause when he mentioned tax cuts, as if allowing people to keep more of their own hard-earned money is an act of noblesse oblige. He claims that he cut taxes, but I must have missed that. I see his policies as paving the way for massive tax increases and inflation, which is the "hidden tax" that most hurts the poor and the elderly living on fixed incomes.

He condemned lobbyists, but his White House is filled with former lobbyists, and this has been a banner year for K Street with his stimulus bill, aka the Lobbyist's Full Employment Act. He talked about a "deficit of trust" and the need to "do our work in the open," but he chased away the C-SPAN cameras and cut deals with insurance industry lobbyists behind closed doors.

He spoke of doing what's best for the next generation and not leaving our children with a "mountain of debt," but under his watch this year, government spending is up by 22%, and his budget will triple our national debt.

He spoke of a spending freeze, but doesn't he realize that each new program he's proposing comes with a new price tag? A spending freeze is a nice idea, but it doesn't address the root cause of the problem. We need a comprehensive examination of the role of government spending. The president's deficit

commission is little more than a bipartisan tax hike committee, lending political cover to raise taxes without seriously addressing the problem of spending.

He condemned bailouts, but he voted for them and then expanded and extended them. He praised the House's financial reform bill, but where was Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae in that bill? He still hasn't told us when we'll be getting out of the auto and the mortgage industries. He praised small businesses, but he's spent the past year as a friend to big corporations and their lobbyists, who always find a way to make government regulations work in their favor at the expense of their mom & pop competitors.

He praised the effectiveness of his stimulus bill, but then he called for another one – this time cleverly renamed a “jobs bill.” The first stimulus was sold to us as a jobs bill that would keep unemployment under 8%. We now have double digit unemployment with no end in sight. Why should we trust this new “jobs bill”?

He talked about “making tough decisions about opening new offshore areas for oil and gas development,” but apparently it's still too tough for his Interior Secretary to move ahead with Virginia's offshore oil and gas leases. If they're dragging their feet on leases, how long will it take them to build “safe, clean nuclear power plants”? Meanwhile, he continued to emphasize “green jobs,” which require massive government subsidies for inefficient technologies that can't survive on their own in the real world of the free market.

He spoke of supporting young girls in Afghanistan who want to go to school and young women in Iran who courageously protest in the streets, but where were his words of encouragement to the young girls of Afghanistan in his West Point speech? And where was his support for the young women of Iran when they were being gunned down in the streets of Tehran?

Despite speaking for over an hour, the president only spent 10% of his speech on foreign policy, and he left us with many unanswered questions. Does he still think trying the 9/11 terrorists in New York is a good idea? Does he still think closing Gitmo is a good idea? Does he still believe in Mirandizing terrorists after the Christmas bomber fiasco? Does he believe we're in a war against terrorists, or does he think this is just a global crime spree? Does he understand that the first priority of our government is to keep our country safe?

In his address last night, the president once again revealed that there's a fundamental disconnect between what the American people expect from their government, and what he wants to deliver. He's still proposing failed top-down big government solutions to our problems. Instead of smaller, smarter government, he's taken a government that was already too big and supersized it.

Real private sector jobs are created when taxes are low, investment is high, and people are free to go about their business without the heavy hand of government. The president thinks innovation comes from government subsidies. Common sense conservatives know innovation comes from unleashing the creative energy of American entrepreneurs.

Everything seems to be “unexpected” to this administration: unexpected job losses; unexpected housing numbers; unexpected political losses in Massachusetts, Virginia, and New Jersey. True leaders lead best when confronted with the unexpected. But instead of leading us, the president lectured us. He lectured Wall Street; he lectured Main Street; he lectured Congress; he even lectured our Supreme Court Justices.

He criticized politicians who “wage a perpetual campaign,” but he gave a campaign speech instead of a state of the union address. The campaign is over, and President Obama now has something that candidate Obama never had: an actual track record in office. We now can see the failed policies behind the flowery words. If Americans feel as cynical as the president suggests, perhaps it’s because the audacity of his recycled rhetoric no longer inspires hope.

Real leadership requires results. Real hope lies in the ingenuity, generosity, and boundless courage of the American people whose voices are still not being heard in Washington.