

OPINION

Feds wasting taxpayer money

I had the opportunity a couple of weeks ago to bring up spending and transparency in two important hearings.

I questioned Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke on some highly questionable uses of funds at the Fed, and I asked Secretary of State Hillary Clinton about exorbitant spending at the State Department.



Paul

It is important to continue bringing up these issues, especially in light of our difficult economic times, when so many are out of work, as I saw up close in my district at the Oceans of Opportunity Job Fair in Galveston a few weeks ago.

Those who are working live with the fear of losing their jobs as they struggle to pay bills.

Meanwhile, Washington is talking of increasing their taxes, something voters were promised, clearly and adamantly, would not happen in this administration.

Government also struggles with money, but the struggle centers on how to get more of your money into government coffers. Rather than expanding the federal budget in the face of economic downturn, we should be focusing on eliminating waste and being the best stewards of public funds possible.

But the State Department is building a \$1 billion embassy in London, the most expensive ever. The plans even include surrounding it with a moat.

I asked the secretary of state about this massive expenditure, and she claimed the funds for this were coming from the sale of other properties.

If money can be saved, then save it. Don't spend it on such an extravagant structure overseas when people back home can't find jobs or pay bills.

I asked Bernanke about Fed agreements with foreign central banks and if he had conversations about bailing out Greece, which he flatly denied.

However, he has announced the Fed will look into Goldman Sachs' derivative agreements with Greece.

Goldman Sachs, as we know, has "too big to fail" status with the Fed, so it is conceivable that any Greece-related catastrophic losses at Goldman Sachs will again be passed on to taxpayers.

Perhaps most sinister are the revelations in Robert Auerbach's book "Deception and Abuse at the Fed" that \$5.5 billion was sent to Saddam Hussein in the 80s — money that allowed Iraq to build up its military machine to fight Iran prior to the first Gulf War, the very machine turned against our brave men and women within just a few years.

I agree with Bernanke's characterization of this, that it is indeed "bizarre" to think Americans at the Fed could engage in this behavior, which some have called "criminal."

The lack of accountability and transparency in our leaders on government spending is appalling. We must keep voicing our objections.

Ron Paul represents the 14th Congressional district of Texas.



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GOP targets state seats

The political world is fixated on whether this year's elections will deliver an epic rebuke of President Barack Obama and his party.

If that happens, it could end up costing Democrats congressional seats for a decade.

Some of the most important contests this Fall will be way down the ballot in communities like Portsmouth, Ohio, and West Lafayette, Ind., and in neighborhoods like Brushy Creek in Round Rock, Texas, and Murrysville Township in Westmoreland County, Pa.



Rove

These are state legislative races that will determine who redraws congressional district lines after this year's census, a process that could determine which party controls upwards of 20 seats and whether many other seats will be competitive.

Next year, legislatures in the 44 states with more than one congressional seat will adjust their districts' boundaries to account for changes in population.

Some 18 state legislatures could have an additional task. As many as 10 states will have to combine districts as they lose House seats. Eight states are expected to gain at least one seat each.

Seats will almost certainly move out of Democratic states and into Republican-leaning, faster-growing states. Battleground states such as Iowa and Ohio might also lose seats. This process will be marked by a historic event: For the first time since joining the union in 1850, California will probably not get any additional seat in Congress.

Control of the state legislature matters whether a state loses or gains seats. Take fast-growing Texas, which is expected to pick up as many as four seats next year. Democrats had a 17-13 edge in the state's congressional delegation after the 2000 elections.

Republicans won control of the Texas House in 2002 and redrew the state's congressional map. As a result, the GOP now controls 20 congressional seats in Texas while Democrats control 12.

Similarly in Georgia, following the 2000 census Democrats redrew district lines to give themselves control of the state's two new congressional seats.

In Pennsylvania, Republicans controlled 11 congressional seats and Democrats 10 before reapportionment cost the Keystone State two seats in 2001. Afterward, the Republican legislature redrew the map to the GOP's advantage, creating 12 Republican seats and seven Democratic ones.

To understand the broader political implications, consider that the GOP gained somewhere between 25 and 30 seats because of the redistricting that followed the 1990 census.

Republican strategists are focused on 107 seats in 16 states. Winning these seats would give them control of drawing district lines for nearly 190 congressional seats.

Nationally, the GOP's effort will be spearheaded by the Republican State Leadership Committee.

Karl Rove is former senior advisor to President George W. Bush.

Advertising remains key to survival

Newspaper advertising isn't what it used to be. Clients have more options, the media industry changes for the better or worse every day, and companies' advertising budgets are generally thinner.

While the larger newspapers have suffered substantially more than the smaller, community publications, most have faced the same revenue declines for the last few years.

What newspapers and customers don't realize is it doesn't have to be this way. Instead, it just takes some creativity, determination, and common sense for both to meet their needs.

The economy is usually blamed when companies spend less on print advertising or pull their business all together.

But a bad economy should be the primary reason for spending more money on advertising — not less.

Businesses can't sell their products and services without marketing them, and out of sight is out of mind. When the economy tanks — and inevitably it does — advertisers should become bigger spenders.

Naturally, consumers spend less during recessions, so it makes sense for businesses to call out to their customers more during rough times.

People are always going to need certain products and services, even during a bad economy. And that's when newspapers are often at their best.

I laugh when I hear some of the reasons people tem-

porarily pull advertising. I have to resist the temptation to pick up the phone, call the customer, and delve into a 10-minute session about how spending less on advertising can only hurt their businesses.

Sure, their bottom lines might improve for a quarter. But their year-over-year numbers are probably going to suffer. That's because regardless of whether you've been in business for 75 years or 30 days, you can't reach your customers by a two-week marketing run and word-of-mouth — especially when customers look for businesses in more than one media.

For papers like the Statesman, advertising is everything. We can't print the news without ads, and we can't print ads without the news. Certainly, without advertising, we couldn't exist.

However, the advertising business isn't like it was during the golden age of newspapers, when ad revenue was soaring and the closing of media companies was rare.

Today, it's not just about loyal businesses paying to publish their messages in their newspapers.

With the increasing popularity of online media and niche publications, advertisers must become news-



Bryant

paper supporters instead of simply being advertisers in newspapers.

For example, one of the Statesman's advertisers has made good on a promise to faithfully spend money with us because he recognizes what it means to our livelihoods.

Not only that, but the paper has worked with him in more ways than one to serve his needs while also serving ours.

It's a good partnership, and we very much appreciate him doing business with us.

I talk regularly with this advertiser and his people about the future of large and small newspapers. Face to face, we discuss the challenges of today's print industry and the role of advertisers in newspapers' survival or failure in a down economy.

He understands what we go through every day and how tough it is for even the most well-intentioned and business-minded newspaper owner to keep all his employees on payroll and all the lights turned on.

Make no mistake: An already difficult career became much more difficult when Wall Street and Main Street tanked. Fine newspaper people are still losing their jobs, and once proud, powerful, and profitable newspaper companies are still closing their doors. As a career newspaper professional, that's always tough to see.

And I remind myself, and my staff, that we're fortunate to still be in the indus-

try. At the same time, we can't cast the blame entirely on the economy. We must help advertisers understand that it's not just about them anymore.

It's about all of us. Small newspapers like this one can only do so much for so long without community support editorially and financially. And none of us can be taken for granted.

Without ad revenue, we cease to exist. It doesn't matter how hard we work, how good the paper looks, and how much we're liked and enjoyed.

Without support, we can't make it, and that's what's happened to many good newspapers around the country — large and small.

So let's work together to make it through. We want to see your businesses thrive, and we want to prosper as well. If your ad is not big enough, call us and let us do something different for you. If you're not getting enough attention, let us design an ad that will bring you plenty.

And if you have ideas you think will help us both, let us know.

Because without us, you can't get your message across. And without you, we can't serve our communities.

Paul Bryant is managing editor of *The Chandler & Brownsboro Statesman*. In a 16-year career, he has been recognized by state press associations for investigative and political journalism, features writing, and photojournalism.

CHECKLIST CHARLIE

Looking back: Little knowledge at 18

I totally love this time of year when all the seniors are settling on their plans, wearing their class rings, and fitting for caps and gowns and prom dresses.

Wahoo! If only I'd known this stuff when I stepped across the stage and smiled at the camera with my high school principal.

- College classes at 8 a.m. are a bad idea.
- Pizza is not an all-encompassing food group.
- Two full years of language might gobble up four full years of school, since each semester might have to be repeated and could be hard on GPAs.
- Faithfulness is not measured in a day, which is a relief on some days.
- Mean snobby girls were

really very insecure. Bless their hearts.

- In a crisis, the worldliest person will seek out the Christian they normally persecute.
- Ideas evolve. And that while God is all-knowing, I am not.
- By 40, we all know a ton of things that we couldn't possibly know at 18. Which means we should be in awe of 80-year-olds because they probably know tons of very mysterious and humbling stuff.
- Leadership equals service.
- Instead of looking for Mr. Right, look for the person who will commit with you to putting up with each other for 50 years.
- The disciples wrote an evangelism tool and it is not

“The four spiritual laws.” The book we call John was written to introduce Jesus and, at 21 chapters, is probably the most condensed version that is appropriate — except for a life that looks like His.

- Pay attention in class because chemistry will come in handy later in life.
- And algebra. And anatomy.
- Some of the best advice I ever got was from people who hated me. (Or: A true friend is one that tells the truth even if it hurts. Or: Wouldn't I rather hear it from anybody before it is too late?)
- God's will is simple: It is to love others in ways that are sacrificial.
- Modern-day Pharisees are still people who love

tradition more than truth. This would have helped me figure out whom to follow.

- The momentary benefits of alcohol were not worth the ultimate cost.
- All Americans are pretty much rich by international standards.
- Going against the crowd is nine times out of 10 the right thing to do. Or as one friend says: Take the blame now because it will be credited later.
- People who say “I don't have any regrets” are probably lying.
- Oops, that's 19.
- Congratulations to the soon-to-be graduating class of 2010.
- Cathy Primer Krafve lives and writes with a Texas twang. Visit checklistcharlie.blogspot.com.

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