Candy Culture

Easter came last weekend and the massive infusion of sugar into my bloodstream (I ration all of my kids’ Easter candy to a piece a day which gives me time to reallocate all their chocolate to me) got me thinking about our candy culture. I’m beginning to think that our motto on the US dollar should be changed to “Of Candy We Lust”.

To celebrate Christ’s death and resurrection we eat candy. To celebrate Jesus’ birth we eat cookies and candy canes. To show someone that you love them on Valentine’s Day you give them candy. Halloween is just an entire holiday dedicated to the giving of candy. Throw in birthday cakes and 4th of July cupcakes and I begin to think that all good things must be associated with copious amounts of sugar.

It should be of no surprise that American politicians play on our desire for more candy. After all, who can make the world go round? [The Candy man can](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9B_6PH4dhU). All of our “heroes” from Santa Claus to the Easter Bunny bring us free candy. Let’s be clear, our politicians provide us with candy because that is what we ask them to do.

We want free health care, free housing, free food, free roads, and free public protection from enemies here and abroad. We want it all for free and we want it all now. We have become so impatient in our candy grubbing that I think that instead of Americans we should be called Candians - not to be mistaken with Canadians. How do you tell the difference between Candians and Canadians, other than the size of their national debt? Canadians have an extra a, “eh”, in them.

 From time and memorial, countries have impoverished themselves by going to war. Wars cost a lot of money. In order to pay for wars, countries have generally resorted to inflating their currency, running up their national debt, and stealing stuff. Sound familiar? This time, the powers that be have gone on a candy binge. The result? A soaring national debt, Federal Reserve policy to inflate the currency, and a president who wants to “tax the rich”. (I’m still reeling from being subjected to the AMT this year.)

Liberals and conservatives will always differ on their optimal sized government, but they should both come to an agreement that nothing in life is free. Liberals who want to spend and borrow aren’t any worse than conservatives who want to spend and borrow. People who want to invade Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and who knows where, need to honestly face the electorate with the bill in hand. People who want courts, police, and military protection need to pay for them. The only way that all taxes can be bad is if the government doesn’t do anything right; yet, the clear definition and enforcement of property rights is needed for a market economy to work.

For an example of conservative anti-tax lunacy, see Grover Norquist, head of Americans for Tax Reform. He opposes ending ethanol subsidies because that would constitute a tax increase. Ethanol is a waste of resources that drives up food prices, so ending ethanol subsidies makes great economic sense[. Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) is right to stand up to Mr. Norquist’s complete “no tax increase” stance](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703961104576148762589469794.html). (Editorial note: I spent a summer as an intern for American’s for Tax Reform).

Here in Kentucky we continue to gorge on candy. [The WSJ reported this week](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703856704576285390476977106.html?mod=ITP_pageone_1#project%3DPENSIONS20110425%26articleTabs%3Dinteractive) that Kentucky’s unfunded pension liabilities grew each of the last two years. Not only did Kentucky not make progress regarding its unfunded pension liability, it failed to tread water. Kentucky managed to not even meet its current year pension funding obligations taking its pension system down to a 54% funded level.

Politicians will continue to feed the electorate candy if that is what the electorate wants. Future generations don’t get to vote in current elections. The candy culture has to be ended from bottom up. Each of us needs to understand that there is no such thing as a free candy laden lunch. We must hold politicians accountable to that understanding. If we don’t, there won’t be a dentist alive who will be able to fix our rotten, candy decayed, first quarter GDP growth was only 1.8% economy.