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The Opacity of Hope

Toward the end of last summer, President Obama did away with his "transparency" czar. And after two years in the White House, Americans can understand why. It turns out that this administration never had a real commitment to disclosure. Mr. "[Transparency Will Be Touchstone](#)" has actually presided over one of the most secretive White Houses in history. This week, the President plans to pull that curtain over the debt talks--a strategy that his Press Secretary [openly admitted](#) was in his party's best interest. "We will continue to have conversations and meetings without much elaboration about the details of what's being discussed there, *simply because we believe that enhances the prospects of reaching an agreement.*" In the President's mind, what "enhances" the debate is keeping voters in the dark. It certainly helped his cause with ObamaCare, the Dodd/Frank finance bill, and this spring's budget resolutions. Unfortunately for Democrats, the country has wised up since then. Americans don't trust legislation that's cooked up behind closed doors. Nothing could add more toxicity to this debate than concealing it.

Meanwhile, the President focused on--not only how he negotiates--but *who* he negotiates with. Is it any coincidence that the White House waited until after the House had gone home to their districts to pick up the debt limit conversation? Liberals would much rather hash out a deal with the Senate--whose minority has a tendency to wither (see "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," DREAM Act, START Treaty, John McConnell) when it matters most.

But not every Senator is happy with the arrangement. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wisc.) lashed out at the administration for trying to take the discussion under ground. "Although I'm glad the President has finally decided to get personally involved in addressing the nation's most severe economic and budgetary problems, it would be far better if that discussion and debate occurred in the open where the American people can see and hear the results." Unlike the Senate, Speaker John Boehner's (R-Ohio) chamber opened up the legislative process--almost painfully so--to prove that it has nothing to hide. When his Majority Leader, Rep. Eric Cantor (R-Va.), left the working group last week, Boehner expected to start bargaining one-on-one with the President. While both sides are trying hard not to push the panic button before the August 2 deadline, the Speaker is still waiting for the President's call. Given that the House likes to do business in broad daylight, there is no telling when or if the White House will come calling.

Until then, the GOP's presidential candidates have made it clear what ingredients they want in a final deal: cutting the deficit, capping spending, and balancing the budget. [More 2012 hopefuls](#) have inked their names to the Cut, Cap, and Balance pledge, which now includes Herman Cain, Newt Gingrich, Rep. Ron Paul, Gov. Tim Pawlenty, and Sen. Rick Santorum. You can join them! [Click over to the website](#) and be counted!

Here Come the Brides!

You might remember the controversy in 2008, when a lesbian couple tried to hire Elane Photography for

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their "wedding" in New Mexico. The company refused, and its owners were hauled before the state's Human Rights Division and ordered to pay a \$6,600 fine. This outrage happened in a state that hadn't even legalized same-sex "marriage." What can we expect from New York, which has? When the debate unfolded in the state senate last week, the lack of religious exemptions was the biggest stumbling block for leaders. It turns out that they had a reason to be concerned. While the New York Senate assures everyone that it closed the loopholes threatening opponents of homosexual "marriage," our friends at the Alliance Defense Fund beg to differ.

"[\[The law\] does not protect individuals](#). It does not protect private business owners. It does not protect, for example, a bed and breakfast owner who is using their own private personal property in the type of intimate setting that a bed and breakfast is. It does not protect licensed professionals. For example, it does not protect counselors. It also does not protect lawyers--you may have a family law attorney who does not want to do a same-sex divorce because of their deeply held religious beliefs. It does not protect fertility doctors who may have a strict belief and only want to help [heterosexual] married couples because they believe a kid deserves both a mom and a dad."

The dominos from this decision are just starting to fall. One newspaper is reporting that the New York Department of Correctional Services is already rewriting its rules for inmates' "conjugal visits," which will now be open to homosexual "spouses." Prisons will provide the condoms. Others, like MSNBC's Chris Matthews, are going on the offensive in the media, trying to lecture African Americans about their need to embrace marriage of any kind. In an interview with FRC's Ken Blackwell, he implied that same-sex "marriage" is the solution to family breakdown in the black community. Click on the video to see more.

In Homosexual Military Report, The Fix Was In

When the [Washington Post](#) last November used leaked information in claiming that 70% of servicemembers would have no problem serving with open homosexuals, "the primary source of the information was someone who had a strong emotional attachment to the issue of furthering a repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.'" Although that seemed obvious, the [Department of Defense Inspector General \(IG\) confirmed it in a report](#) on the leaks that was completed in April, but just released by the [Center for Military Readiness](#). The IG noted that the much-repeated "70%" figure represented a selective reading of the data that reflected "pro-repeal sentiment," and that they could just as accurately have said, "82 percent of respondents said the effect of [repeal] . . . would be negative, mixed, or no effect." The IG investigation was unable to determine who spoke to the reporter--but five White House staffers with access to the information were not interviewed.

In addition, DOD General Counsel Jeh Johnson was clearly careless about confidentiality, since six of fifteen unauthorized recipients of information about the report received it from him. One was "a former news anchor," to whom Johnson read a draft of the executive summary in early July--*before the survey of servicemembers had even begun*. We may not know who talked to the *Post*, but we know that the Pentagon report on "repeal implementation" was no "study"--the fix was in from the start.

**** To hear where the House freshmen stand in the debt ceiling debate, check out rising star Rep. Joe Walsh (R-Ill.) in this short clip from last week's FRC Action webcast.**

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