THE EVOLUTIONARY ARGUMENT AGAINST THE INCOME TAX

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[This Monday's Archive was originally published on November 10, 2004. It still applies to today even more so. Perhaps Trump or RDS could start promoting it, for the current version viaFairTax.org recognizes it won't work with the repeal of the 16th Amendment.]

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A number of people in Congress have suddenly become very interested in an obscure scholarly article in the October 1, 2004 issue of *Science* magazine, America's premier scientific journal. Written by UCLA paleobiologist Blaire Van Valenburgh and her colleagues, it's entitled "Cope's Rule, Hypercarnivory, and Extinction in North American Canids".

The paper is being scrutinized on Capitol Hill because a pair of science advisors to several Congressmen, Durk Pearson and Sandy Shaw, pointed out implications the paper has for US tax policy.

Canids form a "clade" or group of related species, that today includes dogs, wolves, foxes, and coyotes. Valenburgh has studied the clades of large carnivorous mammals focusing on which of their member species have gone extinct over the past 50 million years. We know that a gigantic meteor hit wiped out the dinosaurs 65 million years ago.

But what knocked off all the "megafauna" that flourished since yet exist no longer? Giant ground sloths, woolly mammoths, cave bears, saber-toothed tigers, giant Irish elks, dire wolves, and bone-crushing dogs?

The fossil record shows that many species tend to evolve towards greater body size. Named after paleobiologist Edward Drinker Cope (1840-1897), Cope's Rule applies to many species because of the evolutionary advantages of increased size: greater ability to capture prey or avoid being preyed upon, greater reproductive success via sexual selection, expanded habitat containing acceptable food, fewer annual deaths and extended life span.

A number of factors seem to be responsible for the extinction of megafauna in general (such as paleo-Indians arriving in North America and killing them off). Valenburgh discovered, however, one factor that applied to carnivores in particular.

The larger a carnivore becomes, the more dependent it is on very large prey. The energy the animal has to spend hunting smaller prey becomes greater than the energy acquired from eating them. Once an animal becomes what Valenburgh calls a “hypercarnivore,” this energy ratio threatens its survival as a species.

This is because the larger the prey, the smaller its population – there are a lot fewer big animals than little ones. The smaller a population, the more it is subject to wild fluctuations due to environmental changes. If a disease or climate shift knocks off 90% of a species totaling 10,000, there’s still 1,000 left to regenerate.

But if the total is 100, the 10 left may be headed for extinction city. And even if those 10 left are able to reproduce enough to save their species, they are not enough for a hypercarnivore to survive on.

The evolutionary lesson is clear. Hypercarnivores become extinct because they are dependent on hunting very big animals of which there are not very many. Once environmental changes result in even less of them, a hypercarnivore can get wiped out.

Just like Governor Grey Davis in California.

California’s government had plenty to feed off during the dot-com bubble. But when the bubble burst, the population of the large wealthy prey the government was dependent upon dropped off the dot-bomb cliff – and the hypercarnivores in Sacramento quickly faced political extinction. Goodnight, Grey – hello, Arnold.

You can see how this applies to the entire tax structure of the federal government. The US Government is a hypercarnivore, dependent upon the tiniest fraction of its subjects for tax-food.

Only 1% — one single percent – of taxpayers pay over one-third (33.71%) of all income taxes. 5% pay over half (53.80%). 10% pay almost two-thirds (65.73%). 50% of taxpayers pay 96½% of taxes. The other 50% pays 3½%. (Figures from The National Taxpayers Union.)

It’s not just that this is a golden platter invitation to demagoguery, with the lower 50% having no skin in the game, demanding government handouts they don’t have to pay for. It’s the lethal counterproductivity of our “tax-the-rich” income tax system – which John Kerry wanted to make even worse.

President Bush wants to move in the opposite direction, not only making his tax cuts permanent, but proposing to restructure the whole tax enchilada. The Congressman on the cutting edge of this is John Linder (R-GA).

His *Fair Tax* bill [now HR 25 for 2023) would eliminate all corporate and individual income taxes, payroll taxes, self-employment taxes, capital gains taxes, estate taxes and gift taxes – and replace them with a revenue-neutral personal consumption tax. You can expect Linder to be explaining how the hypercarnivory of the income tax is mortally dangerous to our economy on the floor of Congress – and in the Oval Office.

He'll explain how hypercarnivory is responsible for the gigantic federal budget deficits, not Bush's tax cuts. Environmental fluctuations such as the Internet bubble-burst and the 9/11 terrorist attack affected the 5% who pay half the taxes far more drastically than the other 95%. To the extent this ratio were reversed, such fluctuations would result in far smaller decreases in tax-revenue, perhaps no deficits at all.

Linder and his co-sponsors now have real hard scientific evidence and mathematical models to support his Fair Tax legislation. For the survival and health of government budgets – the life-blood of politicians – the US government must stop being a hypercarnivore and revert to normal carnivory.

Successful carnivores survive on smaller prey taken from large populations. By extracting a smaller tax-bite from most people, rather than huge tax-bites from a handful of wealthy people, the Feds can ensure they will not go the way of cave bears, dire wolves, and Grey Davis.