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Audacious Arrogance The Other Side of the Tracks By Perry Redd BC Columnist

You're watching what I'm watching: an injured team playing with a losing hand, trying to bluff their way to a victory. "Never let 'em see you sweat" is inapplicable when you're in the furnace. The Republican Party is working tooth and nail to convince us they have a winning hand. Nothing is further from the truth.

House Republicans offered their own proposal this week in the tug-of-war to avert the so-called fiscal cliff, but President Obama's Administration adeptly worked from the Republican playbook - and said "No!" Remember the Party of No?

Why did the Administration turn down the Republican proposal? Because the Republicans did what they've been doing: protecting rich folk! They refuse to demand more from the nation's wealthiest taxpayers.

Last week, House Speaker John Boehner deemed the President's plan, "not serious." How insulting! Then, he proposed a non-serious plan...go figure! "The GOP plan promises \$2.2 trillion in deficit savings over the next decade, including \$800 billion from tax reform, \$600 billion from Medicare reforms and other health savings, and \$600 billion in other spending cuts," House Republican leadership aides said. It also pledges \$200 billion in savings by revising the consumer price index, a measure of inflation. Did you hear any skin in the game from the rich? Me either..

The Republicans spent a considerable amount of effort trying to convince the American public that the election was not a mandate to raise taxes on the highest income earners. They told us through House Speaker Boehner that the election was "a mandate to work together." Doesn't he understand that we witnessed the Republican's idea of "working together" and it is *not* working together? We spent the past two years watching the Party of No, say no. Now, we - the American people - say no!

Don't the Republicans realize that the Grover Nordquist playbook of "no tax hikes no matter what" failed to score with - I mean scare - the 99%? I saw the game, you saw the game and so did the Republicans. And the jig is up! The working class wants a piece of the pie. Corporations, banks, Wall Street have been piling up profits and are sitting well; now, it's our turn.

Like President Obama said during his re-election campaign, his deficit reduction plan would increase tax revenue by almost \$1 trillion over 10 years - a significant cut of a \$4 trillion overall deficit reduction goal. In addition to adding a \$50 billion stimulus package, his proposal closes loopholes, limits deductions, raises the estate tax rate to 2009 levels and increases tax rates on capital gains and dividends (those are rich folk).

Republicans are the kind of folks who'll piss on your head and then tell you that it's raining! They offered the same plan during the election (no, we didn't forget; we'd recognize the Ryan budget plan anywhere). We not only said no, we said "Hell no!" (And, Democrats won the election.) The House Republicans are hanging on by a thread, though they are the majority in that chamber. Their credibility is zero, and yet they act as if they have the winning hand. Their strategy is either one hell of a bluff, or one arrogant show of audacity.

Wanting to cut benefits for the working class and not accept tax hikes for the richest Americans will never fly. The Republicans are zooming this plan down the runway and acting as if that plane is going to take flight. It'll crash; it just won't fly. It doesn't even have wings!

They talk about averting the "fiscal cliff." I truly don't care whether the country goes off or not. The President's Bowles-Simpson deficit commission proposed across-the-board cuts last year which are exactly the kind of imperfect but fair middle ground that averts a fiscal cliff, without hurting our economy and destroying jobs. The Republicans want to play hardball to which I say, "Go ahead; go off the

cliff." There's nothing harder than the bottom. Working-class Americans already know where bottom is *and* know what it feels like. It's been scores since rich folks felt *the bottom*. Let's get their skin in the game for a change.

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