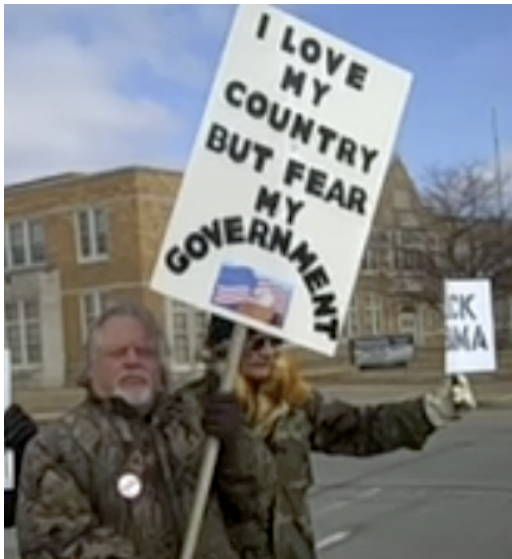


Video: Quad Cities Tea Party Draws Diverse Crowd

Written by Todd McGreevy

Saturday, 28 February 2009 18:28

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A diverse crowd of protesters gathered at the corner of Brady and Locust streets in central Davenport today, unified in their contempt for last year's bailouts and this year's stimulus bill approved by Congress and signed by Obama last week. (The bill is the H.R.1—American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and can be read at <http://www.opencongress.org/bill/111-h1/show> . The following story includes a 4 minute video log of interviews at the protest.)

Between 60 and 75 people, in all age brackets from 10 years old and up, gathered with handmade signs signifying their disapproval of the recent legislation that they believe seriously threatens and undermines the country's future. Protesters came from Davenport, Bettendorf, and Buffalo, Iowa, and from as far away as Hampton, Silvis, and Rock Island, Illinois, to participate. The protest signs ranged from "Bailout is Robbery" and "Commander in Thief" to "Teaser Mandates" and "I Love My Country But am Afraid of My Government." Many people stressed that this was the first time they have ever attended such an event.

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Between noon and 1pm, many drivers and passengers in cars honked and waved to the cheering crowd who were making their presence known on this sunny, but cold February Iowa. Occasionally, passing cars rolled down their windows screaming "Obama, Obama!" One Davenport Police officer appeared briefly to remind people to stay off of private property and out of the street. Protesters were present on all four corners with the majority on the southwest and south east corners.

Anti-stimulus protest rallies have been popping up nationwide ever since CNBC's Rick Santelli's harsh criticism of congress' out-of-control-spending was heard around the world last week. He unleashed his rant from the Chicago Board of Trade floor, calling for a Chicago Tea Party (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEZB4taSEoA>) to protest the bailouts in July.



Susan Frazer, a Scott County resident, said she had planned to go to Chicago in July for the Tea Party, but was excited to hear that communities were already organizing their own Tea Parties this weekend, including one in the Quad Cities. Word about the protest was primarily spread via blog postings and email networking. When asked what she would have happen other than the bailouts and stimulus bill, Ms. Frazer said, "I would like a return to the Constitution."

One Rock Island man's sign read, "Braley Hare Out in 2010", referring to Bruce Braley, Iowa's First District congressman and Phil Hare, Illinois' 17th District congressman. "I see several long time democrats I know here. They have had enough too," he observed.

Chris Sweatman recently moved here from South Carolina for a new job and had only been in the Quad Cities for a month. He held a sign that read: "Obama Stimulus Destroys Dollar." "I

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think the economy has proven that it will rebound on its own, if the government stays out," said Sweatman. He encouraged people to read the book [The Forgotten Man](#) as evidence of Roosevelt and Hoover's mistakes and their prolonging of the Depression. "To say that we need to do what Roosevelt did is a big mistake," he warned.

Iowa Senator David Hartsuch, Davenport 5th Ward Alderman Bill Lynn and 2nd Ward Alderman candidate Bill Edmonds were the handful of politicians present amongst a mostly non-partisan protest.

Local artist John Bloom said, "All my so called Liberal artist and musician friends... they think they're all liberal. But they know this is wrong, they're really moderates." Bloom pointed out his friend's sign as a good summation of how he thinks most people feel. It read: "I love my country, but fear my government." "That's true," said Bloom. "I do. Right now, I really do."

One protester stated, "The lean towards socialism is so obvious. To not respond in some way [is wrong]. The irony is at my age, I retire and then do this? I got money, I don't need to be here. There's something wrong. To not see it, to not smell it?"

His friend stated, "I look after my kids and grandkids. I can't see them having this burden on their shoulders. They say no taxes, but you know it's coming. Somebody's got to pay for this. There's no free lunch."

Many people questioned out loud if there was going to be another Tea Party protest and how could they find out when and where. James Getmann and Mike Angelos shared with several attendees that their local group, SuperLiberty.com, meets the first and third Saturday's of each month to educate citizens about the Constitution and encouraged Tea Party protesters to come to the next meeting.