

The Democrats' Blue-Collar Blues

Why is the president considering tanking thousands of union jobs in a 9% unemployment economy?

Blue and green should never be seen without a color in between," runs the old design line. An imperiled President Obama is learning the political pain of mixing colors.

His greens are certainly in evidence, camped in ever greater numbers in front of the White House to protest the proposed Keystone XL pipeline that will move oil from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. The pipeline officially needs State Department approval, though this week Mr. Obama further elevated the controversy by announcing that he would be making the final call.

Which gets us to his blues, or rather the 20,000 blue-collar construction jobs that would come with the pipeline, and the further 118,000 spin-off jobs. The unions—from the Teamsters, to the Plumbers and Pipefitters, to the Laborers—are out in force pushing for this giant job creator. "We can't wait to get America building again," blares a union-sponsored website in support of Keystone, poking at the president's latest political rhetoric. ...

Rather than court this constituency, Mr. Obama has spent three years waging war on them. Under the sway of (former) green czar Carol Browner, Environmental Protection Agency Director Lisa Jackson and the environmental lobby, the Obama administration has done more to kill working-class industries than any modern predecessor.

The EPA has labored over an ozone rule (estimated job losses: 7.3 million), power plant rules (1.4 million), a boiler rule (789,000), a coal-ash rule (316,00), a cement rule (23,000), and greenhouse gas rules (even Joe Biden can't count that high). The administration blew up Louisiana's offshore deepwater drilling industry, insisted Detroit make cars nobody wants to buy and, just to stay consistent, is moving to clamp down on the country's one booming industry: natural gas. ...

Most presidents would eat dog food for the chance to generate a job bonanza and billions in investment with a project his own State Department says poses no environmental threat. But the green lobby hates it, and that green lobby is a staple of the liberal, educated, affluent base, and that's the group the Obama team is ever more convinced it's going to need in 2012. ...

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