

The Washington Post

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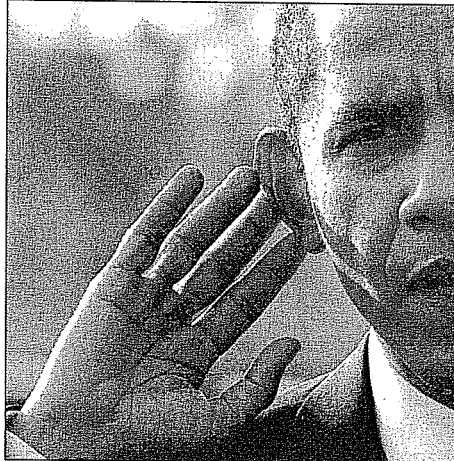
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2008

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FEDERAL DIARY

Joe Davidson

Obama Called on to Give Federal Jobs a Makeover



BY JASON REED — REUTERS

The Project On Government Oversight hopes President-elect Barack Obama will listen to its suggestions for how he should do his job.

Here are some interesting tidbits that recently knocked on the Federal Diary's door.

The Project On Government Oversight has one of the best acronyms in a city overwhelmed with them. POGO reminds me of Walt Kelley's comic strip, and that's almost always a more pleasant thought than whatever problem the organization has uncovered.

Like many organizations, POGO (the organization, not the comic critter) has suggestions for how President-elect Barack Obama should do his job. Some of them center on federal employees.

POGO says Obama should:

- Make federal employment more attractive by changing "pay scales to make them competitive with those in equivalent private-sector jobs, instituting agency honors programs, paying student loans in return for a period of civil service, [and] allowing retired civil servants to retain their pensions even if they are rehired by the government.

- Issue an executive order strengthening federal employee whistleblower protections. He also should boost the status of whistleblowers with commendations, public recognition and monetary awards.

- Examine whether his administration really needs the 4,000 political slots in the executive branch and consider converting some to civil service status "in order to enhance senior level institutional memory and competence at the agency."