

Rush is Right - Who Knew?

Michael Sean Winters | Jul. 30, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

It's not every day I get to agree with Rush Limbaugh. [He attacked](#) [1] the government's offer of a \$7,500 tax break for people who buy the new Chevy Volt, an electric car that carries the outrageously steep sticker price of \$41k. I have never been a fan of tax credits as a means of inducing behavior. They clutter up an already over-cluttered tax code.

But, Limbaugh unwittingly also pointed the way to a better solution. He said that the true "game-changing" products don't need a government tax credit, that true game-changers will dominate the market, and he points to the iPhone. Of course, I remember when computers were very expensive, clunky things. They became cheaper and smaller as they became more widely available, as more and more people bought them and the technology caught up with the demand.

Cars that use gas, unlike computers that provide information, help destroy the environment and make the world's most volatile region, the oil-rich Mideast, more important than it would be in America's strategic calculations if we had pursued the possibility of electric cars twenty years ago. I suspect, however, that the largest purchaser of automobiles are federal, state and local governments so what the Obama administration should do by way of a new stimulus is order a bunch of Chevy Volts for government use. The increased sales would drive down the cost for other consumers and strengthen the nascent electric car industry in Michigan, all of it honoring the free market principles that Mr. Limbaugh holds so dear. After all, the government is in the "market" for cars anyway and people buy cars for all sorts of reasons. Why shouldn't the U.S. government buy cars that make our nation less dependent on foreign oil?

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