H.R. 8, The 'Fiscal Cliff' Bill, Passes Senate : Here's The Official Text. Now, About The House . . .

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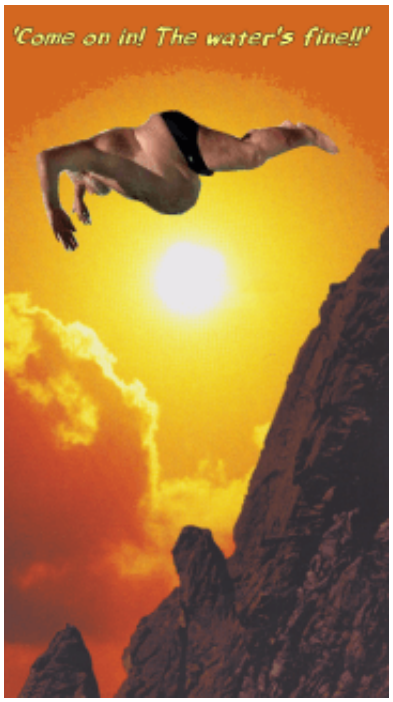

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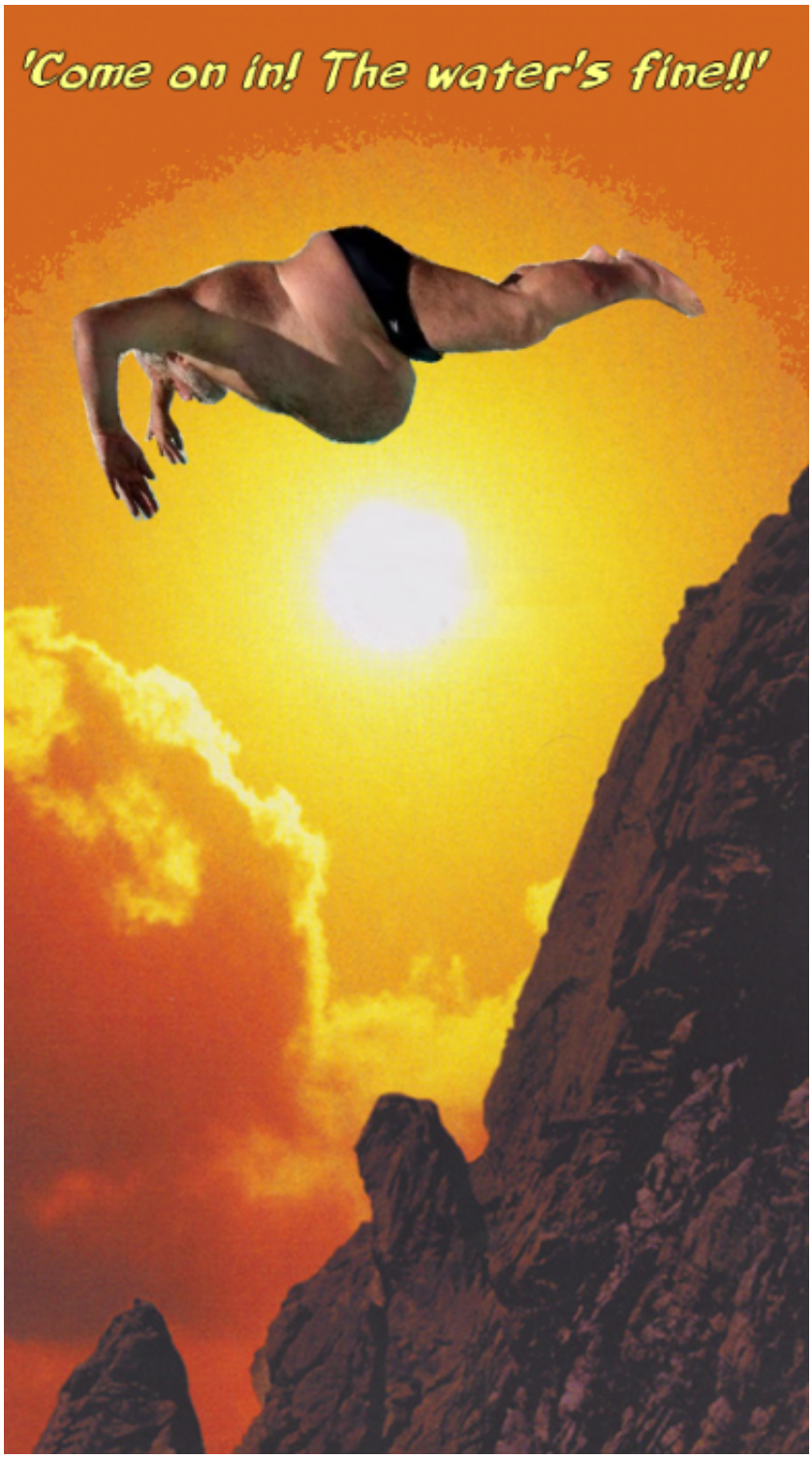

This uidentified 51st U.S. Senator votes for passage of H.R. 8, thereby putting it over the top.[/caption]

More on this later, but how good a bill this is for progressives? Perhaps, unfortunately, this is the best we could get in light of the fact that the administration conceded too early – and when not under pressure to do so - the $250,000 tax rate increase threshold, and the number of taxpayers comprising that group is large. Passing tax increases on the wealthier folks with yearly incomes

below $400,000 will be nearly impossible until the 114th Congress in 2015, Have our elected officials now decided that a joint filer with an adjusted gross income of $399,999 is a *"middle class"* income?

Although passage of HR 8 by the House seems to be in the cards, it may get dicey. Just yesterday, many House Members, including Speaker Boehner, were mightily (and hypocritically) miffed by President Obama's comments on the plain fact that the GOP has been a consistent roadblock to a fiscal cliff agreement. Consequently, they are probably more irate than usual. [1. *Obama Fiscal Cliff Remarks Spark Republican Threats To Blow Up Deal*, Sabrina Siddiqui, Huffington Post, Dec. 31, 2012]

Also, recall two weeks ago when so many Republican House Members objected to Boehner's 'Plan B' which set the income threshold at a very high $1,000,000. So restive were the Tea Partiers over this tax increase on the top 1%, the Speaker was unable to even bring Plan B to the floor for a vote.[2. *'Plan B' Vote Spiked In House In Major Setback For Boehner*, Michael McAuliff and Arthur Delaney, Huffington Post, Dec. 20, 2012] So are we now to believe they will accept a threshold of *$400,000*?

- Boehner, first off, faces a vote on his Speakership on January 3rd, so until then he may feel the urge to finesse H.R. 8 by pandering to the Tea Party backbenchers, and especially to pesky Majority Leader Eric Cantor, Boehner's potential Brutus. So will Boehner once again fail to garner enough GOP votes to pass HR 8?
- Second, the Democratic party House progressive contingent of some 70 House Members[3. Congressional Progressive Caucus (accessed 01-01-2013] is important, if not essential, to pass this bill, especially if Boehner cannot bring his Tea Partier on board. Will Nancy Pelosi and her Minority Whip Steny Hoyer be able to whip up progressive votes for HR 8? Will Pelosi *herself* accept the Senate bill? However, realistically, with the majority of Democrats likely on board, the progressive and Tea Party caucuses do not have enough votes (around 160 combined) to scuttle the bill. Iff Pelosi can vote 'Yea,' even if while holding her nose, that would auger well for passage.
- Yet, will HR 8 be amended, and how? Questions never cease, eh?
- And if the 112th Congress in its last two days cannot get HR 8 passed (or a substitute out of the House), how will the more Democratic party weighted 113th Congress view all this on January 3, when it convenes? And don't forget, likely first order of business: election of the Speaker. This is better than *West Wing!*

We'll quickly see what happens, if anything, and what results, if any, and when, if ever . . .

Senate-Passed Fiscal Cliff Bill - HR 8-01-01-2013