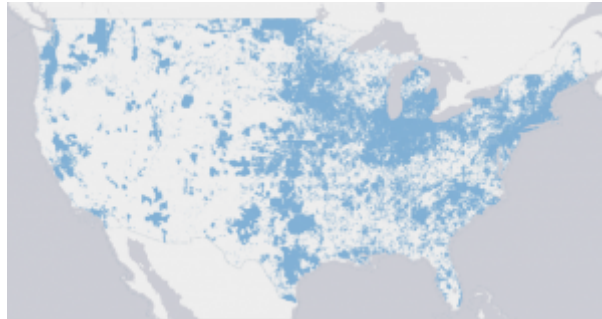


# MAYBE IRAQ SHOULD JUST REPLACE IDAHO AS OUR 50TH STATE



Back  
when  
Tony  
Fratto  
was  
arguin  
g that  
we  
should

shut down post offices because he uses the InterToobz and therefore only ventures into an actual post office once a year, I noted that we would effectively be kicking huge portions of our rural areas out of our country if we presumed everyone could replace the postal service with broadband, as the map here makes clear.

The NYT has a story focusing on one of the places Fratto is apparently willing to lose as part of this country: Idaho, which just got rated as the state with the worst broadband access. The story starts with an anecdote of how bears brought down a manufacturing company's broadband. But I was particularly struck by this quote.

“We have a guy here who was dropped into remote, isolated areas of Iraq to set up their telecommunications systems,” said Christine L. Frei, director of the Clearwater Economic Development Association in Lewiston. “He told me, ‘We had better communications in Iraq than you have in central Idaho.’ ”

So Iraq can have broadband, but not ID. And Pocatello, ID, the city with the worst download speeds in the nation, stands to lose one of its post offices, as do 22 other cities in the state. Maybe they can just replace the postal

workers with bears...

Meanwhile, it's not just postal services that Republicans would rather build in Iraq than in Idaho. All those Republicans refusing to fund schools and infrastructure to create jobs were happy to use deficit spending to do so in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA) voted for over \$120 billion to rebuild Iraq and Afghanistan, funds that were used to construct and repair schools, roads, bridges, and other critical infrastructure.

Now, Cantor is opposing President Obama's proposal to spend \$30 billion to modernize 35,000 American schools. Reuters has the story:

U.S. House Republican Leader Eric Cantor said on Monday he will not support President Barack Obama's proposal to renovate U.S. schools as part of the administration's bill to spur job growth.

He added that Obama should focus instead on cutting federal regulations that he says kill U.S. jobs...

The president's proposal is a modest effort. The total maintenance and repair backlog at U.S. schools is estimated at \$270 billion to \$500 billion. While the funding Obama is proposing is fully offset, Cantor voted to build schools in Iraq and Afghanistan with deficit spending.

These things—schools and highways and post offices—are what make us a country, a country that includes cities and suburbs and rural areas. But Republicans think we can't or don't need to afford to be a country anymore.

Republicans are literally choosing to fund our empire over our own country. I guess that makes it clear where their priorities lie.