



Walter Reed Army Medical Center

# CONSERVATIVE BATTLELINE ONLINE

*The "Bold Colors" Conservative Voice in Washington*

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## Bureaucracy Implosion

by Donald Devine

Whose heart was not rent at the sight of the recovering soldier at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center annex pointing at the gaping holes in the wall of his quarters and the report that rats were omnipresent? How could one of the best bureaucracies in the U.S. government treat anyone in this way, much less heroes?

The Army works, everyone knows, in small units. Every study shows soldiers fight for their buddies, not for patriotism or for other higher values. But once the wounded leave the battlefield they are thrown into large bureaucracies. The field and operating hospitals have direct injuries to repair over periods of time too short for bureaucracies to ossify so this works. Over 97 percent of those wounded who reach a military hospital survive and initial rehabilitation is excellent. Time and complexity, however, stress bureaucracies and Walter Reed proved this too. As the recent Senate hearings suggested, the same probably takes place at most other rehabilitation centers.

The Army was wise enough to place recovering troops needing rehabilitation in temporary companies to recreate the small unit structures with which soldiers were familiar. Yet, according to soldier testimony these were at best artificial, lacking unit pride, especially among a civilian staff that had no emotional attachment to patients. With the Iraq war lasting longer than planned, the Reed company became too large and, unfortunately, was not divided until just before the scandal. It was too late. The regular Army works by relying on chains of buddies and leaders. As the commanding general said, he does not inspect barracks but relies on a chain of command. However, in the medical world, there is no tradition of buddy chains. The Army system could work if patients remained assigned to their units, which could handle recuperation and evaluation of ability to return to duty. But this flies in the face of the "professional" ethic of the medical profession, which values expertise over élan and brotherhood.



Walter Reed Army Medical Center



If a soldier is declared unable to return to work, the patient is transferred to the Department of Veteran Affairs. A recent study by the respected RAND Corporation found that DVA patients received "better chronic and preventive care" than a sample of similar patients in the general population. However, the study only measured amount and type of care given, not how effective was that treatment. VA patients, for example, received significantly more medical visitations than non-veteran patients and therefore more treatment but neither cost nor results were compared. While quality measures were used, it was of the input variety not results. The DVA records were better and since all comparisons were paper ones, DVA had to measure better. While thing seem improved over the past, several studies have shown inferior veteran treatment on neurobehavioral matters related to battle

stress, which with the higher survival rates today are the most common residual problem, and 100 Veterans hospitals offer no such treatment at all.

The military provides health care to nine million and the DVA covers five million more. It is not surprising that the most widespread problems found at Walter Reed relate to transition between the two systems. Two massive bureaucracies baffle patients, to say nothing about the Physical Disability Board process that takes forever to make a determination regarding return to duty and degree of disability. Only 22 percent of the most widely used new drugs are available through DVA and three million have switched to the Medicare program to get its larger choice. Any bureaucracy requires lists and they become outdated quicker than the clerks can update them. Bureaucracy can only be avoided by directly assigning veterans the funds for their health care and letting them manage it with the assistance of their units, families, insurance agents and local charities.

It is not just soldiers. Its own government trustees say that the three largest government programs—Medicare, Social Security and Medicaid--will go seriously in the red in a mere dozen years, requiring unsustainable increases in taxes and/or severe inflation, leading to economic disaster. But no one will confront the status quo. In national defense, the U.S. is dominant so long as large armed forces face each other. It was not a contest when it was one bureaucracy against another in Iraq. But when it changed to a large American bureaucracy tied down with red tape and long chains-of-command against small highly-motivated sectarian units, bureaucracy found it difficult to adjust.

What could be more important than securing the homeland from terrorist attack? Department of Homeland Security airport screening methods have received the largest funds and management attention but the results have been abysmal. In tests between November 2001 and February 2002, screeners missed 70 percent of knives, 30 percent of guns and 60 percent of mock bombs. In 2003, testers were able to sneak explosives and weapons past the screeners at 15 airports nationwide. Between October 2005 and January 2006, homemade bombs were passed through security at 21 of 21 airports tested. Making things more difficult, the new Democratically-controlled House and Senate just passed bills that would allow union collective bargaining over screening matters. DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff recently told Congress the greatest need is more intelligence about local activities that can only be found if everyone gets "to know their neighbors better."



If it were not so serious, it would be amusing how inefficiently bureaucracy operates in modern times. Rules must be adopted and the larger number of circumstances they must cover, the less they will fit particular circumstances. The problem is inherent in big government, which shuts out the independent action desired by DHS, as Katrina demonstrated when agents kept out volunteers without security clearance--and are making worse by now creating "first responder" badges only for pre-approved bureaucrats. After a half century under a single rule for safety, the Food and Drug Administration has recently recognized it must shift to more individualized definitions for different persons with different reactions to drugs. But they do not know how to do it under a bureaucratic regulatory schema. The Securities and Exchange Commission knows it is chasing investors to the London exchanges with its inflexible rules but it is powerless in the face of its institutional critics to ameliorate its rules. The FBI is so sunk in Department of Justice legalistic rules, it is unable to operate counterterrorism effectively as every independent review right up to the Robb-Silberman commission has demonstrated. Yet, with multiple rules no one can possibly know or therefore obey, federal prosecutors can run amuck convicting any who fall in the way of momentary public displeasure. The inevitable result of the Scooter Libby conviction will be for public officials to routinely refuse to testify and invoking the 5th Amendment, further frustrating bureaucratic effectiveness.

The conventional wisdom is that the computer/internet age and technology advances are undermining large bureaucracies and returning power to individuals. It is true that large bureaucracies are undermined, and that helped end the Soviet Union. But this does not necessarily lead to individualism. A semi-religious belief in the efficacy of bureaucratic expertise still rules progressive and socialistic thinking so that new programs are passed daily to increase bureaucratic power in the U.S. regardless of its proven ineffectiveness. Actually, the new technology empowers small groups even more than individuals. One person cannot penetrate the complexities of modern life alone so he e-creates innumerable e-groups to help him, from buddy-lists, e-Pals and Email Penpals to buddy terrorists, recreating the spontaneity bureaucracy suppresses but cannot do without.



**Mikhail Gorbachev**

Bill Clinton did not know what he was saying when he reported, "The era of big government is over;" but he was right. The question is whether we can go local and private before it all implodes.

*Donald Devine, the editor of Conservative Battleline Online, was the director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management from 1981 to 1985 and is the director of the [Federalist Leadership Center](#) at Bellevue University.*

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Editor**

## Shame of the Schools

by Alan Caruba

A recent page one story in my local daily was headlined, "Retired teachers told: Medical bills on state." In what was described as "a side deal with the state teacher's union" New Jersey's Governor Jon Corzine had agreed that taxpayers would pick up their share of the bill cited at \$53.6 billion!

These kinds of sweetheart deals exist everywhere state teacher's unions wield the kind of political power that exists in New Jersey. Political pundits have concluded that, if the National Education Association—a union—ever deserted the Democrat Party, it could no longer exist. They are the volunteers and much of the money that keeps it going.



Alan Caruba

A week prior, my daily reported "High schoolers see grades rise even as they lag on tests", a story by Associated Press reporter, Nancy Zuckerbrod. She noted that, "Two federal reports out yesterday offer conflicting messages about how well high-schoolers are doing academically. One showed that seniors did poorly on national math and reading tests. The other—a review of high school transcripts from 2005 graduates—showed students earning more credits, taking more challenging courses and getting better grades.

One report was the National Assessment of Educational Progress. It was created in 1964 when Congress concluded that American students were lagging behind those in other nations. They still are. The only difference today is that they are getting passing and better grades because no school wants to be deemed a failure under George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind, enacted in 2002. We were assured it was going to be the cure for all our educational woes.

Instead, five years later, critics say that No Child Left Behind is the source of the problem. Have a problem with high standards? Don't want a school to be labeled a failure? Just lower the standards! The definition of "proficient" is such that not one, single State achieved the standards set by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, while at the same time showing that their kids were somehow doing just great.

Why we even have a federal Department of Education defies a decent answer. Ronald Reagan took office with the intention of eliminating it from the federal bureaucracy. By contrast, George W. Bush put it in charge of how education is to be conducted coast to coast, thereby insuring that this, along with just about everything else the federal government is responsible for, will be done poorly.

The Department of Education is the FEMA of education. Got a crisis? They will study it to death and still not come forth with any other answer than to test, test, and test! The National Assessment of Educational Progress, often referred to as the nation's report card, has been flunking teachers and administrators for decades.

Meanwhile, Leave No Child Behind comes up for review in Congress this month. Does anyone think the people elected to public office, many of whom are the products of our failed educational systems, are going to find a way to improve it?

Leave No Child Behind currently requires reading and math tests annually in grades three through eight and once in high school. The Bush administration wants to add more testing in high school. U.S. News and World Report recently noted that, "Two top Senate Democrats have introduced legislation that would require the federal government to define the standards against which all states would be measured."

That's what we need, a new definition! New federal standards! More tests!

By now, anyone who was blessedly home schooled or has any common sense knows this is not the answer. Something is horribly wrong when just one-fourth of twelfth graders score as proficient or better in math and three-fourths were deemed "proficient" readers at the basic level. One assumes this means that they can read a paragraph without having to move their lips!

Less than half, forty-three percent of the white students scored at or above "proficient" levels on the reading test, compared with twenty percent of Hispanics and sixteen percent of black students. Putting aside the more than half of the white students that were not deemed "proficient", no one can tell me that Hispanics and blacks possess brains that cannot, if properly taught, master these fundamental skills.

That, however, brings us to the crux of the problem of education in America. The teachers. Thanks to the unions, it is virtually impossible to fire an incompetent teacher. Merit has nothing to do with teaching. Longevity is the name of the game. And the multitudinous layers of "administrators", the top among whom receive salaries that rival and surpass those employed in private industry, are part of problem too.

America needs another Revolution, an Education Revolution. Parents must rally, school by school, to wrest back control from the teacher's unions. They must find a way to hire people who are actually competent in their subject areas. States must demand real standards for graduation from their colleges of education.

The Education Revolution can begin by writing to your Senator or Representative in Washington, D.C., and demanding that No Child Left Behind be allowed to go inactive. Then you will have fifty laboratories, the States, in which new curriculums can be tested to see what works and what doesn't. That knowledge will be shared and the overall quality of education will improve.

And maybe students will not have to attend schools that require armed guards at the doors and patrolling the hallways to maintain some semblance of civilization. Maybe students would not be just so much sausage to process through what passes for schools these days.

*Alan Caruba writes a weekly column, "Warning Signs", posted on the Internet site of The National Anxiety Center, [www.anxietycenter.com](http://www.anxietycenter.com). His book, "Right Answers: Separating Fact from Fantasy", is published by Merril Press.*

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## Reforming the Schools

by Bill Sizemore

It is hard to recall a day when our public schools were not in the midst of a funding crisis and desperate for more money. No matter how much money the taxpayers have shelled out "for the kids", it has never been even close to enough. Schools today with their never ending proclamations of "crisis" are worse than the little boy who cried, "Wolf!"



**Bill Sizemore**

What is most ironic about their incessant demands for more money is that more money would not improve the system in any meaningful way. In fact, if some benevolent billionaire dumped a truck load of \$100 bills on the doorstep of every public school in town, most if not all of the real problems plaguing those schools would still be there a year later. Why? Because their problem is not a shortage of money.

I recall a ruling by a liberal judge some years ago, I believe it was in Kansas City, where the judge ordered that the failing local school district be given whatever amount of money was necessary to succeed. As I recall, spending per student skyrocketed to something in the neighborhood of \$40,000 per student. Everything was first class. Everything money could buy a school was set before the kids.

The result: Grades dropped even lower and the drop out rate increased. Yet, in spite of this case, which proved once and for all that money is not the answer, the education bureaucracy across America continues to demand more money "for the kids", and naive voters continue to shell out the dough. And all for naught.

Following are just a few suggestions of things schools could do to make the public education system work far better than it is today. Judge for yourself whether these suggestions make more sense than giving schools more money. And feel free to give me your feedback by writing to me at [bill@otu.org](mailto:bill@otu.org).

**Suggestion 1.** Pay teachers based on their performance as teachers, not based on how long they have been there. Currently, approximately 95 percent of a teacher's pay is based on their seniority. The other five percent or so is based on their educational credentials beyond their basic degree. Almost nowhere in America are public school teachers paid based on the quality of the service they provide as teachers.

**Suggestion 2.** Require that teachers be assigned only to subjects in which they have demonstrated expertise. Did you know that in most cases, when there is a reduction in teaching staff, schools keep the teachers with the most seniority and lay off the newer teachers, even if they are the best teachers in the school. Sometimes that results in the school laying off its Advanced Algebra teacher, because he or she lacks seniority. The Algebra teacher is replaced by the English Literature teacher, who happened to have failed Algebra as a student, but will now teach Algebra because of seniority and in doing so waste an entire year in the education of hundreds of students.

This is not as uncommon a scenario as you might think and shows how seriously off-based the current system is, putting the seniority of teachers before the education of our children.

**Suggestion 3.** Authorize school administrators to pay higher salaries to high school math and science teachers than they do to first grade teachers, who teach kids to color and spell simple words like "cat". Don't get me wrong. First grade teachers are just as important as high school Trigonometry teachers. However, there are a lot more people with the skills to teach the first grade than there are those capable of teaching higher level high school math and science

classes. Thus the salaries of those teaching the more technical subject ought to be high enough to attract people with those rarer skills to the teaching profession.

There is a reason why U.S. students are lagging behind much of the industrialized nations of the world in math and science scores. Regardless of what the teachers union wants, you can't pay math and science teachers the same as P.E. instructors and attract enough highly qualified teachers to fill the positions. The teachers unions demand that all teachers of all subjects be paid essentially the same salaries, but continuing to do so is not only illogical, but in the end will destroy Americas ability to compete in a global economy.

Suggestion 4. Don't allow a high school drop out to get a drivers license until age 18. Want to drive? Stay in school at least through the 12th grade. Drop out and you lose your license to drive a car, something most teenagers value greatly.

Suggestion 5. Immerse all immigrant students in English. Don't teach them first to be proficient in their native language, as most districts do. First teach them to be proficient in English. Then teach them in English and only in English. It is common for non-English speaking students to be taught English one-half an hour per day and then be taught the rest of the day in English. This policy sidetracks immigrant students and prevents their being assimilated into society as Americans. Schools employ their current methods for various misguided reasons, one of which is the fact that they receive close to \$3,000 in extra funding each year for each student they keep in their English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

Suggestion 6. Authorize schools to administer the level of discipline necessary to maintain order in the classroom and thus allow teachers to create a classroom environment where learning can take place. Students or outsiders who sell drugs or bring truly dangerous weapons to school, should go to jail. The state and local school districts should abolish any requirement that schools provide expensive, private tutoring to kids who are kicked out for any behavior that warrants dismissal or suspension.

Suggestion 7. Dismiss teachers who are incompetent. I have known many great teachers, who are worth their weight in gold. But I have also known many teachers who were a complete and utter joke. They became teachers because education is one of the easiest majors in college and the major a lot of people gravitate to when they are unable to cut it in tougher, higher paying fields. Until schools are willing to buck the teachers union and remove the dead wood, (the dead wood that everyone from the janitors to the students to fellow teachers to the superintendent knows is dead wood), they should have no credibility to ask for one more dime from the taxpayers than they receive already.

Suggestion 8. Give the principal or superintendent of every school complete authority to make the hiring and firing decisions he or she believes are necessary to make their school excel. Then hold those administrators accountable for the failure or success of their school. Give them bonuses for success or fire them, if they fail. Corporations figured this out a long time ago. The man or woman at the top sets the pace, and if given the authority can right a sinking ship. To be effective, a good administrator cannot be tied down by union contracts that are not designed to help the kids, but to protect teachers.

The current system is not about results. Results are rarely rewarded and failure is rarely penalized in our schools today. In fact, the current system exhibits all of the classic signs of a socialist system where everyone is paid the same and creativity and performance are not rewarded, which is exactly the way the teachers unions demand things remain.

Many have complained that schools spend too much on administration and not enough on teachers. That notion is true and not true. Administrators today are often paid high salaries to manage, but then not given the authority to manage. It would be better to pay good administrators well enough that we attract more of them, give them the authority to make the

decisions necessary to turn their schools around, and then reward, dock their pay, or fire them based on the results they achieve.

The end result of teachers unions has been to hamstring and neuter school administrators, making no one ultimately responsible for the failure of our schools.

Suggestion 9. Based on my previous comments, you have probably been expecting this one: Get rid of the teachers unions. Even one of the foremost national leaders of the movement back in the fifties and sixties to unionize the teaching profession has repented and announced publicly that the experiment he helped promulgate has been a dismal failure.

Teachers unions do not improve the quality of teachers. They do not improve the quality of education. Instead, they dramatically increase the cost of public education and lower the quality by opposing any reform that holds teachers accountable or instills competition into the system. There can be no reform until teachers unions are eliminated.

Suggestion 10. If teachers unions are to remain, at least stop collecting their union dues and union political funds for them via the public payroll system. Make them collect their own money. If unions had to collect their dues and political "contributions" from teachers directly, eight to ninety percent of teachers would not pay up, electing rather to have nothing to do with their unions.

It should be obvious to even a casual observer that teachers unions are highly motivated to give campaign contributions to candidates for those public offices that control the purse strings of the schools. Those contributions have a very corrupting effect on public education, increasing the cost and eliminating accountability.

Suggestion 11. Do not allow teachers unions or any other union to donate money to the campaigns of any candidate running for an office that sets school policy, votes on collective bargaining agreements, or the budgets from which those contracts are funded. If a private sector union official was caught giving money to a member of management with which the union negotiates, that union official would likely end up in prison. Knowing that, we continue to allow teachers unions to "purchase" the other side of the bargaining table with their campaign contributions and then wonder why the cost of education is going up at the same time the quality is going down.

Suggestion 12. Let parents send their kids to any school they choose and let the money follow them. If we allow true school choice on an even playing field, competition between public schools and other public schools and competition between public schools and private schools would revolutionize public education within five to ten years, as schools compete for the kids and the dollars that follow them.

Nothing improves the quality of a product or service while lowering the cost like competition. Public schools are full of innovative people who would rise to the task in a truly competitive world, if we would just create that world.

In conclusion, public education today is about the following things in the following order: (1) Obtaining more money from the taxpayers; (2) Enhancing the salaries and benefits of school employees; and (3) Teaching kids. Until parents start demanding that school boards and state legislatures put the kids first, the system will continue its downward spiral and all of the money in the world can't change that.

*Bill Sizemore is president of the Oregon Taxpayers Union.*

## Amazing Grace

by Spencer Warren

"Statesman, Orator, Philanthropist, Saint; one of the greatest Parliamentarians in a great age, a friend of Pitt and Burke, of Fox and Canning – he did more than any other man, by his eloquence and courage, his industry and pertinacity, to bring about the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire. No Englishman has ever done more to evoke the conscience of the British people and to elevate and ennoble British Public life."

This imposing tribute greets the visitor to the room where William Wilberforce was born, in a large Georgian house in Hull, on August 24, 1759. Until the film *Amazing Grace* opened in this country late in February, to mark the 200 th anniversary of the effective enactment by Parliament of the bill outlawing the British Atlantic slave trade, Wilberforce had been largely forgotten here for over a century; nor was his life more than a dim memory in his home country. Now, thanks to the extraordinary reach of the (sometimes) wonderful medium of film, and the internet, more people today know about this great man than at any time in history. His name is all over the web and the anniversary is being commemorated by church groups across Britain, and some in the U.S. as well. The anniversary also is being used to promote awareness of 21 st century slavery.



*Amazing Grace* is an unusual movie for our time: Although it has serious historical omissions, it is an affirmative moral and cultural statement, and an inspiration to its audiences; the one at the show I attended broke into applause at the film's conclusion, and resumed its clapping when the screen displayed the actor who brilliantly plays Wilberforce (Ioan Gruffudd). The film accurately, if somewhat abruptly, takes us through the life of its protagonist. Son of a wealthy merchant family, he takes his seat in the Commons as a young man who is more ambitious and fun-loving than serious or knowledgeable. However, in 1785-6, he goes through a religious conversion and joins the growing numbers of Evangelicals in Britain – known as Methodists before it became a denomination outside the Church of England.

Believing his faith calls him to a life of solitude, Wilberforce is persuaded otherwise by certain other Evangelicals, chief among whom is John Newton. Newton (overpoweringly played by veteran Albert Finney) is the former slave captain who is now a preacher begging forgiveness for his sins. Newton, the author of the hymn *Amazing Grace*, advises Wilberforce he should practice his faith by using his invaluable platform to work for abolition of the detestable Atlantic slave trade. Wilberforce's chief assistant is another clergyman (although he is not portrayed as such in the film), Thomas Clarkson, who, among his many labors, did the exhaustive investigation of conditions on slave ships in the ports of Bristol and Liverpool, where they had transported sugar and other goods after leaving their slave cargoes in the West Indies.

Wilberforce first moved abolition in a factually detailed three and a half hour speech (given extemporaneously, from notes) in the House of Commons on May 11, 1789. The "godfather" of

conservatism, Edmund Burke (not seen in the film), rose to tell the House that “principles so admirable, laid down with so much order and force, were equal to anything I have ever heard in modern oratory; and perhaps not excelled by anything to be met with in Demosthenes.” In the course of the next 18 years, many of the most eloquent orations in history were made against the trade, by the Prime Minister, William Pitt (a close friend of Wilberforce’s and a major character in the film), by the long-time Whig leader Charles James Fox, and others. But success had to wait almost two decades – today we know all too well the arthritic ways of legislatures and the mighty power of entrenched interests. *Roe v. Wade* still stands after 24 years.

*Amazing Grace* is produced by Walden Media and its partner companies, which made C. S. Lewis’s *The Chronicles of Narnia* (2005) sequels to which are in the works, as well as the forthcoming *The Screwtape Letters*. We should applaud their production of a film starring an Evangelical Christian politician. Unfortunately, they seem to have felt a need to downplay his faith somewhat. One critic in USA Today complained that Wilberforce is shown praying in a garden, not a church. Actually, this scene is true to life, for on Easter Sunday, 1786, Wilberforce did indeed pray in his garden. But he is not seen in the film speaking of Christ or urging a new spirituality on his people, as he did in his book, *Practical Christianity*, perhaps the most widely read devotional book of his era (and still in print). The real Wilberforce told a constituent three years after his conversion: “A man who acts from the principles I profess reflects that he is to give an account of his political conduct at the Judgement seat of Christ.” To cite another example, the members of the famous Clapham Sect, of which Wilberforce was a leading member, are portrayed as social reformers but not the Evangelical group they were.

The film’s Wilberforce is a positive, warm-hearted believer (as well as a sickly man, at times dependent on opium, then often used as a drug). But his spiritual passion might have been made stronger. In his public profession of his faith, he always strove to follow what he called the New Testament’s “injunction to rejoice.” He deprecated the view that “Religion is made to wear a forbidding and gloomy air and not one of peace and hope and joy.” Also, brief reference could have been made to some of his many other moral campaigns – the reformation of public morals, relieving conditions of the poor, his role in founding the SPCA, and his giving away large amounts of his fortune to the destitute. This evangelical politician, the greatest humanitarian ever to hold public and elected office, probably had more positive impact on the moral life of his nation than any in all of history.

Among other criticisms, the film could have worked in a brief reference to the early leading role against slavery of the Quakers and Granville Sharp. The final, crucial role of the new Prime Minister, William Wyndham, Lord Grenville, in pushing abolition first through the House of Lords on February 5-6, 1807 (by a vote of 100 to 36) also is left out. (Grenville, following Wilberforce’s practice, emphasized in his speech morality and justice, not policy issues, a lesson that some social conservatives today should note when they argue against homosexual “marriage” mainly on utilitarian policy grounds; this allows our opponents to confuse the issue in the limited format of TV “debates.”) These omissions can be excused on the ground of narrative clarity. What is not excusable is the treatment of the grand scene in the House of Commons early that February morning in 1807, when after almost twenty years of difficult exertion, abolition was approved overwhelmingly, by 283 to 16. The House is shown standing and rather politely clapping, when in fact the members were cheering three hurrahs. And the fantastic tribute to Wilberforce by the penal law reformer and Solicitor-General, Sir Samuel Romilly, is given to Fox, who practically mumbles his speech. Worse, this tribute is completely rewritten and dumbed down, as is so typical in contemporary entertainment (and education as well). Here is what Sir Samuel did say, comparing Wilberforce to Napoleon, the French tyrant. It merits quoting at length:

When I look to the man at the head of the French Monarchy, surrounded as he is with all the pomp of power, and all the pride of victory, distributing Kingdoms to family . . . , seeming, when he sits upon his throne to have reached the summit of human ambition, and the pinnacle

of earthly happiness, and when I follow that into his closet or to his bed, and consider the pangs with which his solitude must be tortured, and his repose banished, by the recollection of the blood he has spilled, and the oppressions he has committed; and when I compare with these pangs of remorse, the feelings which must accompany my hon. Friend from this House to his home, after the vote of this night shall have confirmed the object of his humane and unceasing labours; when he shall retire into the bosom of his happy and delighted family, when he shall lay himself down on his bed, reflecting on the innumerable voices that will be raised in every quarter of the world to bless him; how much more pure and perfect felicity must he enjoy in the consciousness of having preserved so many millions of his fellow-creatures, than the man with whom I have compared him, on the throne to which he has waded through slaughter and oppression.

Amidst the subsequent cheers, Wilberforce sat with tears streaming down his cheeks. In the outstanding six-part BBC "docu-drama," *The Fight Against Slavery*, broadcast in New York in 1975 shortly before *Roots*, this speech is given verbatim and the scene is inspiring; here it is clumsy and relatively flat.

A film can take reasonable liberties with history, for it is a different medium. But *Amazing Grace* would have been even better had it shown more fidelity to the stirring facts. It also is somewhat limited by screenwriter Steven Knight's jumbled narrative and director Michael Apted's mostly tight shots and "in-your-face" direction, so typical of modern films but more suited to TV shows or commercials than to the big canvas of the silver screen. In the end, what makes this film inspiring is its extraordinary story, the moral and religious character of its protagonist, its outstanding acting (all the historical characters are real, believable individuals) and its vivid feeling of time and place, thanks to the superb candle-light cinematography.

Finally, I do not wish to be too critical of a film that deserves praise. But due to its historical nature, it must be open to wider judgment. And three more historical criticisms must be added. The film begins with a title explaining that from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries an estimated 11 million Africans were enslaved in Africa by their own people and transported across the Atlantic by Britain, Spain, Portugal, France and the United States. The title places much of the onus on Britain as the then "super-power," when in fact, according to Hugh Thomas's *The Slave Trade* (1997), Portugal and Spain were responsible for 57 percent of the trade and Britain about 20 percent, although it was the worst transgressor in the eighteenth century. The film also fails to tell the audience that after the 1807 abolition (well ahead of the other countries), the Royal Navy's West Africa Squadron, for most of the remainder of the century, fought to suppress the trade, later also fighting our Arab Muslim friends' thriving trade on the east coast of Africa.

The film also inexplicably and totally fails to inform the audience that in July 1833 (less than three days before Wilberforce died) Parliament enacted a bill to emancipate all slaves in the British Empire, a fight which Wilberforce continued to lead until his later years. Why was no title appended at the end to explain this to the audience? Would it have seemed too pro-British, too pro-West? What an astonishing omission.

*Spencer Warren is ConservativeBattleline's media critic.*

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Editor**

## Salesman For Progressivism

by Thomas Brewton

The recent death of Professor Schlesinger brings to mind his wonderfully well-written historical surveys. It also reminds us of the misguided liberalism he ardently espoused and sold to a generation of Americans.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., was a history professor at Harvard and the City University of New York, twice winner of the Pulitzer Prize for works of history, and a member of President John F. Kennedy's White House staff.



**Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.**

His life-long devotion to liberal-Progressivism came partly from his family background, and partly from his undergraduate education at Harvard. When he received his degree in 1938, Harvard was in the vanguard of the relatively small number of secular universities that were educating the Eastern liberal establishment.

Among his many historical analyses, one of the best known is *The Age of Roosevelt*, a three-volume, worshipful panegyric to the vast liberal-socialistic changes wrought by President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal.

Franklin Roosevelt was himself a Harvard graduate, trained during the university's transition from Christianity to socialism. In December, 1933, FDR adopted the collectivist, statist economic doctrines of British economist John Maynard Keynes's, which prescribed massive Federal spending on anything, whether it produced useful products or not. Deficit spending, at unprecedented peacetime levels, was based on the Keynesian presumption that private businesses had failed and that henceforward the Federal government would have permanently to fund the major part of employment and economic activity.

Keynes was also a palpable influence on the climate of opinion at Harvard during Schlesinger's undergraduate years there. Harvard was the launching pad for Keynesian economics in the United States, and Professor Alvin Hansen was the foremost Keynesian exponent in this country.

Between 1933 and 1940, the New Deal nationalized agriculture, promoted the expansion of membership and power of communist-led labor unions, and pushed businesses into the National Recovery Administration (NRA), an imitative version of Mussolini's Fascist state corporatism.

In *The Vital Center* (1949) and *The Politics of Hope* (1963) Schlesinger depicted such actions, the creeping socialism of English Fabians, as a moderate and responsible mean between a failed conservatism and a revolutionary, radical socialism. He described Teddy Roosevelt's New Nationalism, Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom, and Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal as continuations of the 19th century's Progress that presumably was leading mankind toward social perfection.

Professor Schlesinger wrote that liberalism is not socialism, because it rejects the "...classical connotation of state ownership of the basic means of production and distribution."

This, however, was an intellectually dishonest dodge. Henri de Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte, who first codified socialism as a coherent doctrine, explicitly identified government regulation alone as both the essential element of socialism, and as sufficient to effect it. The social engineering mechanisms they proposed were precisely the sort that were imposed in the

1930s New Deal: a managed currency; control of farm output and prices; regulation of industrial output, prices, and wage rates; steeply-graduated income tax rates; welfare-state benefits, and, as an outgrowth, PC control of education, so that only liberal-socialist doctrine might be taught.

Anyone reading Schlesinger's "The Age of Roosevelt" would come away believing that the New Deal had greatly improved business conditions and had effectively ended the Depression.

That picture, however, was a white-wash job. Statistics from the Federal Reserve Board and the Bureau of Labor Statistics relate a far bleaker reality. For eight years under the New Deal, unemployment averaged in the teens, more than twice today's number. In 1939, the seventh year of the New Deal, unemployment averaged 16.7% for the entire year, almost four times as high as the 4.6% rate in January of 2007.

The Fed's index of industrial production moved downward more often than up. Compared to the 1923-25 index base, industrial production was down 29% at the end of the New Deal's first year. In 1939, when the economy was gearing up for the impending World War II, industrial production was still 8% below the level of fourteen years earlier.

Compare those numbers to our most recent recession, from the peak in 1999 to the bottom in 2001, when industrial production declined only about 1.75%.

There is no way to avoid the conclusion that the New Deal's chaotic, anti-business programs produced the worst economic performance, for the longest time on record in the United States.

While the record of the politics the historian preached is questionable at best, Professor Schlesinger was enormously successful in selling it to a generation of Americans who will bear the costs of his salesmanship.

*Thomas E. Brewton is a staff writer for the New Media Alliance, Inc. The New Media Alliance is a non-profit (501c3) national coalition of writers, journalists and grass-roots media outlets. His weblog is [THE VIEW FROM 1776](#)*

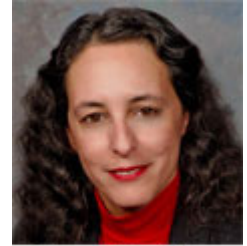
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## Anna Nicole All-American Girl

by Lisa Fabrizio

I admit it. I watched portions of the Anna Nicole Smith "custody hearing." Not, mind you, because I intended to, but because I'm in the habit of keeping a muted TV set turned on in case some real news might intrude on the daily gossip roundups and grave reports of snow in winter. After reading somewhere about the odd conduct of the judge in the case, when Fox News went to live court coverage, I decided to see for myself.



Lisa Fabrizio

Usually, contact with network or cable television fare leaves me merely disgusted, but the sounds and sights of the goings-on in this case produced in me a profound state of sadness. Not just for Smith herself or her family, or the sorry cast of shysters, finaglers and hangers-on that modern wealth and fame seem to produce; but for our country. In a way, her piteous saga is a microcosm of much that is wrong in our once blessed and morally prosperous society.

Smith's is a modern-day American success story. She saw what she wanted and went out and got it. A sugar daddy, a new body and her own reality-TV show; in short, everything the new all-American girl could want. The price? Not too expensive when you consider that sex is today's currency. It's not a new story either; in fact, it's one of the world's oldest.

The practice of using sex appeal as a lure dates back to Biblical times. However, just as in the past we were cautioned that 'crime never pays', so too was the mantra that 'good girls don't' a reminder that sinful behavior has consequences harmful to society in general. And for most of our history as a nation founded on Judeo-Christian values, it served us well; but those days are fast disappearing.

The introduction in the early 1960's of the Pill, 'liberated' women from the dreary task of having and raising children when inconvenient, and separated the sexual act from its naturally designed purpose. Shortly afterward, legalized abortion and the gay rights movement further demonstrated that bearing children had taken a decidedly unimportant backseat to a kind of sexual recreation; devoid of responsibility and thus any real fore or afterthought.

Those who decried these happenings were (and are still) told that what goes on behind closed doors is nobody's business. Except now, it's America's business; and one which constitutes a huge industry dedicated to the cult of unbridled sexual gratification, and one in which its exercise extends even to practices and drugs which may put one's health or life at risk. A maxim for the Third Millennium might just be the old line from the '60s: If it feels good do it, and if it does good, feel it.

And so the coverage of Miss Smith's life, death and apparently unending afterlife, sadly reflect the times. Cable news cannot resist running constantly-looping clips of her various photo ops which only short years ago would have been classified as soft porn. Heartbreaking images of a human being put through her paces like some sort of performer in a sexual dog and pony show, turn ever more minds away from thoughts of love and the protection of women to their mere objectification. The results are truly soul-stealing.

Adding to this brutal modern tragedy are the oh-too-obvious depredations on marriage and parenthood. Smith--herself the daughter of woman married five times--and her lawyer Howard K. Stern held what is odiously called a "commitment ceremony" only weeks after the death of her twenty year-old son and the birth of her daughter whose parentage remains a mystery. In a true sign of our times, a friend of Smith's took to TV to proclaim her doubts that Stern was the father because Anna told her that she'd wanted a blonde, blue-eyed child to "match" her son Danny.

That the drug overdoses which allegedly killed Miss Smith and her son are so often referred to as "medication" is not so much a reflection on them, as on a society in which the predictably disastrous effects of lax morals are simply dosed away as if they were merely symptoms of the malady and not the cause.

A punctuation mark to this tragic tale was the sideshow act of Florida Circuit Judge Larry Seidlin. His court--which was little more than a setting for a pathetic screen-test--produced a weeping opinion that "We all come with some broken suitcases;" a wretched substitute for the justice our system used to guarantee to all Americans.

So the next time images of Anna Nicole Smith roll across your TV set, mourn not only the death of a beautiful woman whose choices were mostly her own, but the fact that she was doubtless also a victim of a society where all of the above is hailed as "progress".

*[Lisa Fabrizio](#) is a columnist who hails from Connecticut.*

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## **Don't Lard War Bill**

by Brian M. Riedl, Baker Spring and Alison Acosta Fraser

President Bush has proposed \$99.6 billion in supplemental spending for the global war on terrorism and an additional \$3.4 billion for Hurricane Katrina-related reconstruction. As Congress prepares for its annual ritual of larding up emergency bills with unrelated domestic spending, President Bush should draw a clear line in the sand and vow to veto any supplemental bill that would spend more than his requested total.



**Brian Riedl**

Lawmakers have already begun assembling a laundry list of additional spending to add to the war on terrorism spending bill. Among the rumored add-ons are:

- Farm subsidies (\$5 billion to \$7 billion),
- The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP, perhaps \$1 billion),
- The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP, \$1 billion),
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG, perhaps \$1 billion),
- The Army Corps of Engineers (at least \$1.3 billion),
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA, \$1 billion), and
- Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC, \$3.1 billion).

This comes to an additional \$13 billion to \$15 billion in unrelated add-ons that could be piled on to this important national security legislation.

## **Busting All Budget Caps**

Lawmakers have bragged that the recent Continuing Resolution-Omnibus spending bill passed in mid-February limited fiscal year 2007 discretionary spending (excluding emergencies) to the President's cap of \$873 billion, an increase of "*only*" 3.5 percent. But these figures become meaningless if Congress turns around and attaches billions more to an emergency bill in order to evade the budget caps. After all, classifying additional farm subsidies or CDBG spending as an "emergency" doesn't save taxpayers from their costs. It merely allows Congress to deny that it is busting the budget caps by simply not counting all the additional spending. Annual budget caps are designed to force Congress to set priorities and make trade-offs in order to rein in the cost of government. Abusing the "emergency" loophole for regular spending makes a mockery of these caps and the new leadership's pledges of fiscal discipline.

Congress should have real budgetary debates about spending priorities and trade-offs in order to live within the budget caps it set in the CR/Omnibus, rather than treat the supplemental as a spending gift. Sadly, this Congress appears ready to continue previous Congresses' penchant for spending without fiscal discipline by using the supplemental war funding bill to circumvent substantive debate over the budget. Congress should separately consider the pros and cons of any spending adjustments to FY 2007 spending levels in an honest budget discussion. Extra funding for Base Realignment and Closure to achieve significant savings down the road is a priority that makes sense, but it is not an emergency. Nor is it a federal emergency to bail out states for their lack of fiscal discipline when they vastly exceeded SCHIP guidelines. Such initiatives should require a rigorous discussion to determine if they are sound policies.

Furthermore, discretionary programs have not been starved for funding. From 2001 through 2006, non-security discretionary spending has increased by 40 percent (21 percent after inflation). In fact, since 1990, non-security discretionary spending has increased three times as fast as defense and homeland security spending. In particular, recent discretionary spending increases for education and health have been among the largest ever. Furthermore, Congress continues to appropriate money to wasteful and unnecessary programs like the Advanced Technology Program, which spends much of its \$150 million budget subsidizing Fortune 500

companies. The combination of recent spending increases and wasteful spending mean Congress should be able to work within the actual discretionary spending caps set in the CR/Omnibus.

### **Separate Funding for Separate Defense Efforts**

Troops abroad fighting to protect our nation deserve to have the resources they need to do the job right. While some question the nation's continuing involvement in the war, the supplemental is not the place to debate war strategy. Delaying approval of war funding only disrupts other vital military programs and undercuts readiness, while jeopardizing adequate and consistent resources for the troops on the frontline. Funding for the troops should be accomplished in short order.

In times of war, there is always the challenge of not letting the requirements for conducting current operations undermine the ability of the military to fulfill its commitment to field first-rate forces in the future. The Bush Administration has recognized this challenge and responded by using supplemental appropriations to fund ongoing operations to fight the war against Islamic fascists. This has served the purpose of keeping these expenditures from crowding out funding for core investments in the future defense program. If the costs of current operations had been incorporated into the annual defense budget, the temptation to rob future military capabilities to fund current operations would have been overwhelming.

Congress, therefore, should continue the practice of recent years of funding current contingency operations through supplemental appropriations. A 4 percent of GDP benchmark for the defense budget will protect the core defense program and future defense capabilities. This means that the roughly \$400 billion Congress should add to the defense budget to maintain a 4 percent of GDP benchmark for defense between 2009 and 2012 will go to both supplemental appropriations and the annual defense appropriations bill. If the funding requirements for ongoing operations start to decline, therefore, the resources should be shifted over to the core program. By the same token, the Bush Administration and Congress should resist the temptation to fund elements of the core defense program out of supplemental appropriations bills. Doing so will have the effect of binding enduring defense programs to a funding source that could easily decline in future years.

As its first order of business, Congress should move quickly to fund the troops fighting abroad in a clean supplemental that funds only operational war-related needs.

### **Conclusion: Building on Last Year's Progress**

Taxpayers have seen this all before. Last March, the Senate took the President's \$92 billion war on terrorism supplemental bill and attached \$14 billion in additional unrelated spending. This included \$4 billion in farm subsidies (even as farm incomes reached record highs), \$15 million for "seafood promotion strategies," \$594 million in national highway projects, and even \$700 million to re-route a functioning rail line several miles away, reportedly to help private developers build casinos near its present location. After a firm veto threat from the President, Congress relented and stripped away the wasteful spending.

This year, the new congressional leadership must resist the temptation to lard up a vital bill for ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan with unrelated, non-emergency spending. If Congress wavers, President Bush should repeat last year's move by making clear to Congress that he will veto any unrelated spending.

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## **Markets Work For Health?**

by John Goodman

**John Goodman** Perhaps you have heard that health markets work reasonably well when patients pay with their own money. LAZIK surgery and cosmetic surgery are two examples. Yet, the authors of a new study dispute this claim.

The article is called "Self-Pay Markets in Health Care: Consumer Nirvana or Caveat Emptor?" It was funded by the Center for Studying Health Systems Change (an RJR outfit) and appears at the Health Affairs web site. [http://www.mckinsey.com/mgi/rp/healthcare/accounting\\_cost\\_healthcare.asp](http://www.mckinsey.com/mgi/rp/healthcare/accounting_cost_healthcare.asp). The authors (both non-economists) focus mainly on LAZIK surgery, but also include in vitro fertilization, cosmetic rhinoplasty and dental crowns. They do not find nirvana.

But first things first. Buried in the middle of the article, in the middle of a paragraph, with no bold heading and no mention in the Abstract, as though it were only of passing interest, is this amazing factoid: over the past decade, the real price of LAZIK surgery has decline by 30 percent. Equally buried, is another startler: The satisfaction rate among patients is 93 percent. And we can all be thankful the editor's shears did not expunge this tidbit: unlike every other kind of surgery, in LAZIK surgery higher quality service routinely commands premium fees.

Is there some relationship between falling prices, high patient satisfaction, higher pay for superior quality and the fact that patients are paying out of pocket? The authors never ask this question.

Given that the rest of the world is apoplectic over rising health care costs and people everywhere are telling pollsters how much they dislike their third-party payer systems, you have to wonder. Either a) the authors are remarkably uncurious, or b) their world view is several standard deviations away from the mean.

The authors did find many blemishes, however, causing them to conclude that self-pay markets don't work, or don't work very well. Although they never talked to any actual patients, interviews with people on the supply side revealed a market with inconsistent pricing and inconsistent bundling. (Some quoted prices include initial screening and follow up procedures; others do not). Worst of all: the primary source of patient information is word of mouth! Alas.

Here's a personal confession. Before I go to the supermarket I do not know the price of bread. Nor do I know the bundles (is the sales price per loaf? Or is it buy one, get one free?) I would not be surprised to learn that most shoppers are just like me. But prices are not determined by what most buyers do. They are determined by the buyers at the margin.

It's economics 101.

A new report from McKinsey claims that the United States spends \$477 billion a year - \$1,645 per person - more on health care than other OECD countries do, after adjusting for differences in income and wealth. To make matters worse, we do not get better care. Paul Krugman of the New York Times is going gaga over the report.

However, the study makes a fundamental economic error, surprising for McKinsey. The real social cost of any good or service is not the amount of money spent on it. It is the real resources used to produce it. This is especially important in health care, where the suppression of market forces in every country makes cash flows an unreliable indicator of real resource use.

Surprisingly, there are fewer practicing physicians, nurses and acute care bed days per capita in the United States than the average OECD country. We do use 54 percent more medical devices - defibrillators, pace makers, coronary stints, hip implants, knee implants, etc. But our consumption of drugs is 20 percent lower than in other countries. If health outcomes among developed countries are pretty much the same, the United States does not look so bad in terms of resources used to produce those outcomes.

In the McKinsey study, almost 60 percent of the higher U.S. cost of care stems from high prices paid for inputs. However, in other developed countries, governments use their buying power to force providers to accept below-market reimbursement, just as Medicaid and Medicare do in the United States. For instance, the income of a physician is 5.5 times that of the average worker in the United States, on average. The ratio for Germany and Canada is 3.4 and 3.2 respectively. The comparable ratio is 1.5 in Sweden and 1.4 in the United Kingdom.

Monopolistic buying power - however, does not lower the real social cost of health care; it shifts those costs. A different way of achieving the same result would be to pay doctors market-determined fees and then impose a special tax on them, leaving their net income where it is today. The virtue of this alternative is that it would be clearer that social costs have not been lowered; they have merely been shifted to the providers of care.

A few other economic errors in the McKinsey report are worth noting. They treat the profit of for-profit hospitals as a cost not borne by public hospitals - as though capital used by government has no opportunity cost. And they treat the taxes paid by for-profits as a cost not born by public hospitals - as though real social costs were affected by whom the government chooses to tax.

I'll save the quality discussion for another day, but leave you with this thought. If the United States performs far more knee replacements than other countries then one of two things must be true: either 1) we are increasing the quality of life for our seniors relative to seniors in other countries, or 2) we are subjecting our old folks to a lot of unnecessary (and painful) operations.

Read the full report: <http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/content/full/hlthaff.26.2.w217v1/DC1>

*John C. Goodman is President of the National Center for Policy Analysis*

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## Union Stamp Increase

by Charles Guy

Brace yourself. Postal rates are about to go up again - by a whopping 7.6 percent, on average, in May. First-class stamps will cost 41 cents. Despite all the cheering over postal reform legislation signed by President Bush in December, Congress failed to address the most glaring weakness of the Postal Service - its out-of-control labor costs.

And so the cost of stamps will continue its upward spiral.

Fortunately, the Postal Service doesn't need a second round of congressional horse-trading to solve its problem. The service is perfectly capable of restraining its labor costs without the help of Congress. But will it?

Just look at the recent contract negotiation between the Postal Service and its largest union, the American Postal Workers Union, which represents close to 300,000 workers. The union has done an excellent job of securing generous wages and benefits for members, while management has done a poor job of holding the line against these cost increases.

Postal Service employees are paid significantly more than their private-sector counterparts. In 2005, "the average annual pay and benefits for career bargaining unit employees was \$62,635," according to the Postal Service's 2005 comprehensive statement on postal operations. Consequently, labor costs represent about 80 percent of all Postal Service expenses.

Although some union leaders deny that this wage premium exists, there are long waiting lists for postal jobs. And the quit rate of postal workers is far lower than in the private sector. In fact, the Postal Service has documented a 20 to 30 percent wage premium and presented the evidence at almost every arbitration since the 1980s.

But in the most recent negotiation, the Postal Service didn't even try to go to arbitration with the union. It just surrendered.

The new contract contains two raises of just over 1 percent, irrespective of performance, as well as semi-annual cost-of-living adjustments. A third raise is also included in the form of a guaranteed upgrade from one pay level to the next. In addition, workers are protected from layoffs, regardless of whether there's work for them to perform.

Management could have tried to challenge the cost increases by going to arbitration. But instead, the Postal Service decided to settle, raise prices and not aggressively confront its labor costs.

Admittedly, cost-cutting medicine is difficult to swallow. But the long-term alternative is grim. A continued decline in first-class mail volume - driven by higher prices and electronic communications - could force the Postal Service down the path of companies like GM and Chrysler, which have laid off thousands of workers.

Postal Service management is in desperate need of more labor flexibility. That includes the freedom to hire new employees at market wages - without the premium. Current employees shouldn't fear such a measure. It might reduce union coffers over the long term, but that's not their concern. The important thing is that it would not require a cut in wages. And it would help employees secure greater wage increases in the future.

The Postal Service pay structure should also incorporate geographical differences in the cost of living, which is common practice in the private sector. It makes a great deal of sense for wages to reflect the fact that life in New York City, for example, is much more expensive than in rural Kansas.

The Postal Service likes to think of itself as a corporate entity. But when it comes to streamlining its labor costs, it functions like a stereotypical government agency, failing to be aggressive about its future and following the path of least resistance.

The latest round of negotiations may benefit postal unions. But it doesn't benefit the workers they represent. Clearly, many union members deserve far more than the incremental raises they'll receive as a result of the new contract. But they'll never get the high increases they deserve as long as they're forced to subsidize new hires who are overpaid, or inefficient workers who can't be laid off.

When stamp prices go up again, no one should be surprised.

*Charles Guy is an adjunct fellow with the Lexington Institute and former director of the Postal Service's Office of Economic and Strategic Planning.*

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## Forced School Immunization

by Paul M. Weyrich

One of the clearest measures of a society can be found in its public school system. For example, it is no accident that in totalitarian states, such as North Korea, what is allowed to be taught comes directly from the government. Children are indoctrinated early to believe their "Dear Leader" never is wrong even though many do not have enough food to eat. And in war-torn countries or those which are deeply divided by religious differences there are few, if any, functioning public schools.



Paul M. Weyrich

By contrast the United States has a proud history of public education for all of its children. Or at least it did. I have watched as American public schools have gone from generally good to abysmal because of the many changes in our society and because of government meddling. From forced school-busing to classes taught in every language except English, to removing "Under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance, our State and Federal Governments have been butting into the business of local schools for more than 30 years and the schools are the worse for it.

One of the latest developments in public education is that schools believe they are the de facto parents of the children who attend them. With so many children living with only one parent or two parents who work, with who knows who looking after them, it is no wonder. Now some States are trying to require girls entering the sixth grade to be immunized against something called HPV (Human Papilloma Virus), a virus that only can be transmitted through sex and which causes certain kinds of cancer. What does that say about our public schools and about the state of our culture?

There are so many things wrong with the idea -- and the fact that the immunizations would be mandatory rather than voluntary -- that it is difficult to know where to begin. However, I shall try. First, the obvious: what do we know about the vaccine? We know it is made by Merck & Company, Inc., a very large pharmaceutical firm that has been busy hiring lobbyists and advertising the drug, called Gardasil (registered trademark), in magazines and on television. We know that immunization consists of a series of three shots at a cost of approximately \$400.00 per child and that making the vaccine mandatory is a Merck goal. We know that Merck lobbyists have descended upon State capitals throughout the country and created a group called Women in Government, which has samples of the "correct" legislation posted on its website. And we know that the Federal Food and Drug Administration approved the vaccine late last year.

What we do not know is whether the vaccine is safe. There has been no long-term study as to the possible side effects of the vaccine -- which include nausea, headaches and fevers -- and the few short-term studies were on college-age women, not the young girls the legislation is targeting. Unfortunately, many State legislatures appear to have little reluctance and are falling down like bowling pins, rushing to do Merck's bidding. Among many others, Kansas, South Carolina, Indiana and Colorado all either have bills pending or have already have approved the plan. The latest State to approve legislation to make the vaccine mandatory is the usually sensible State of Virginia, while Texas Governor Rick Perry -- who many believe has aspirations to higher office -- has just signed an executive order requiring the same thing.

Certainly, a vaccine that prevents any type of cancer is the sort of medical breakthrough for which many of us pray. The vaccine against HPV may yet prove to be safe but requiring vaccinations after so little research sets a dangerous precedent.

Of course, there are the obvious cultural and moral implications. What does it say about our society that eleven and twelve-year old girls might need protection against a virus which can infect them only if they are sexually active? Why on earth should young girls be given this vaccine? This sends the message that educators and parents and guardians simply don't care. More importantly, how do we as parents send a message to our children and grandchildren that they should stay abstinent until marriage when the schools require them to get vaccinations designed for the sexually active? It makes no sense at all. Gardasil (registered trademark) is not a vaccine for polio or even chicken pox, both of which were eventually – after several years of study and gradual introduction – required by law for all school-age children. The HPV virus cannot be spread through sneezing, coughing or playing with other children.

Finally, there is the matter of enacting any law that would force all children or all boys or all girls to be immunized. It should not be mandatory for anybody, adult or child, to get a vaccine for a disease that is not a public health threat. Such treatments always should be voluntary, yet over the last few decades it seems many things have come down from on high and citizens were just told, "Deal with it. It's the law." What happened to "Opting in" if you wish to go along with a program or a new technology or new medical treatment? When did we decide it was okay to force our citizens and their children to abide by new policies?

Let the parents decide whether or not their daughters should receive this vaccine. And only after there are more studies done on the vaccine itself, about which we know very little except one thing: we do know that a mandatory inoculation program costing \$400 per child with approximately 2,000,000 girls in the appropriate age cohort (11-12) currently in the United States would equal an awful lot of money for a pharmaceutical company that is very much in favor of this legislation.

*Paul M. Weyrich is Chairman and CEO of the Free Congress Foundation*

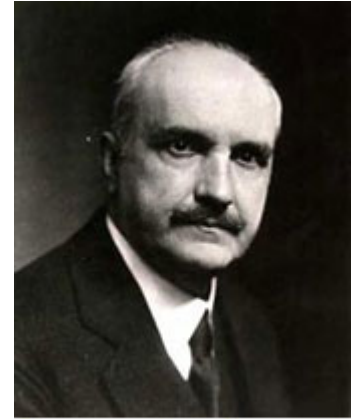
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**Multiculturalism and Reality**

by Byron Matthews

Today's multiculturalism is of little use for either analysis or action, because it is based in what George Santayana termed "mystical neutrality": the myth that despite their surface differences all cultures are fundamentally similar. If cultures are really not very multi, then virtually everything about cultural differences becomes unproblematic. Essential commonalities of perspective and longer-term interest must mean that cultural conflicts will always yield to sufficiently skilled negotiation.



George Santayana

But cultures define themselves by what is specifically not negotiable, and only by confronting that reality does any view of cultural differences earn the right to be taken seriously. Under a naive theory of the benignity of cultural differences, manifest outrages can evoke only excuses or reflexive denial. Thus, the brutal subjugation of women by some Muslim societies is met mostly with silence from women's organizations; a Dutch film director is murdered by an Islamist assassin, and our arts and entertainment elites stand mute. Yet, multiculturalists are quick to condemn outside demands for reform as exercises in cultural imperialism. That we are no better than they, whoever they are, is, after all, a straightforward corollary of the myth of cultural similarity.

When it comes to practices sanctioned by a foreign value system, multiculturalists find no permissible basis for making, let alone for enforcing, judgments of unacceptability. Unacceptable according to whose values? And what gives those values the standing to decide, for example, how women should be treated? Questions like those threaten to leave us stuck on Square One, where it's all a matter of different strokes. Are we finally doomed to an endless regress of question-begging when it comes to values?

No, we aren't, because one species of value system has, so far at least, demonstrated its competitive superiority in practice. Setting the inconclusive meanderings of ethical theory aside, defensible judgments about values must be based on the outcomes of the pragmatic tests that occur when value systems face off in the real world. Those results argue for the superior fitness of the sorts of value systems that have characterized liberal democratic societies. Liberal democracies have demonstrated, overall, a singular ability to survive, and even to prosper, in military and economic competition with societies representing every extreme of political and economic theory. Some of those competitors looked good on paper, and some had briefly successful runs; but in the end, they all flunked the final exam.

Many factors contribute to the staying power of liberal democracies. But important among them are value systems that sustain internal diversity of all kinds, making those societies more adaptable to unexpected challenges. Parallel to the role of variation in natural selection, internal diversity provides a greater range of alternatives to draw upon when change is required. Tolerance for diversity lets liberal democracies keep more kinds of arrows in their quivers.

In contrast, the high value placed on social and ideological uniformity leads illiberal societies always to suppress diversity, and always to their longer term detriment. The Nazis could not countenance Jewish mathematicians and scientists in their universities and research programs; liberal democracies welcomed them, and the Allied war effort benefitted accordingly. Moscow could not countenance dissent from Lysenko's pseudo-scientific orthodoxy, and for two decades Soviet agriculture descended further into ruin. Mao talked about letting a hundred flowers bloom, but only liberal democracies walk that walk. That difference in values is

eventually decisive, because diversity is the only reliable hedge against the demands of an unpredictable future.

When cultural differences come up for discussion, self-identified multiculturalists are typically loudest in extolling their value and desirability. But, ironically, the radically nonjudgmental view of diversity they offer is based in a denial of fundamental cultural differences and the differences they make. A vacuously celebratory theory of diversity that refuses to make contact with the reality of its own subject matter is no theory at all, finally having nothing to offer but empty moralizing.

Internal diversity is always problematic, a constant source of conflict.

But, within limits, it has instrumental value in its consequences for longer-term societal survival. That's what makes diversity worth the trouble it causes. The competitive advantages of liberal democracies are due partly to value systems that tolerate and promote internal diversity; a claim for the superiority of those values is therefore more than a mere assertion of parochial cultural preference. It is around issues like these that serious discussions about multiculturalism and cultural differences should be taking place.

*Byron Matthews is a sociologist retired from the University of Maryland; he lives near Santa Fe, NM.*

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**E-mail the  
Editor**

## Capitalism or Freedom?

by David Strom

Why is "Capitalism" a dirty word for some people?

It makes no sense at all. Since the decline of feudalism and mercantilism, the rise of capitalism has given us the most remarkable expansion of wealth, health, and general well-being that the world has ever seen.

In the last few centuries, our life spans have doubled, our wealth has expanded immeasurably, our educational attainments are unparalleled in human history, and our productivity growth has allowed us to enjoy leisure and entertainment inconceivable only a century ago.



David Strom

All these facts are certainly attributable mainly to the development and expansion of capitalism and the division of labor that springs from it; yet with few exceptions intellectuals and many others consider capitalism with suspicion and even hostility.

Why?

It seems to me that the term itself puts people off. After all, if you think of the three major economic ideologies, Capitalism, Socialism, and Communism, one has as its descriptive root "capital" which usually means money, while the others both refer to human relations themselves. In short, it looks like capitalism focuses on money, while socialism and communism focus on people.

Who would prefer an economic and political system that focuses on the good of money or capital versus one where the good of people comes first?

But of course, history and experience show that a liberal society with a capitalist economic system is infinitely superior to the command-and-control communist model, and a far better wealth and well-being generator than the increasingly creaky democratic socialist states seen in much of Europe. (The average European Union citizen is only 70% as wealthy as the average American, and falling further behind).

Adam Smith, the iconic economist and philosopher of Capitalism had a much different way of describing our system than we use today. Smith did not call what he was describing and advocating for "capitalism;" instead the term he used was in many ways superior, if not as succinct: "the system of natural liberty."

Smith's formulation is superior to the term capitalism, if for no other reason than it defines one of the great moral differences between free market economics (capitalism) and its more statist rivals: capitalist economies are free economies with free people, while socialist, communist, and fascistic economies are characterized by central planning and control, which requires some level of coercion.

Milton Friedman's most famous work, *Capitalism and Freedom*, drives home this point. Friedman argues correctly that economic and political freedoms are indissoluble. You simply cannot be politically free without economic freedom. It is not only the case that capitalism or free market economies are superior at producing wealth; without basically free markets people themselves aren't free.

Both Smith and Friedman point to the most salient point about what we call capitalism, that it isn't about the efficient allocation of capital. It's about the maximizing of human freedom.

Capitalism and freedom don't just coexist comfortably; what we call "capitalism" really is just another way of saying what Smith did: capitalism is freedom expressed in economic relations. It is the economic system of people making free choices. And capitalism works so well precisely because free people trading freely become ever more productive, and do well precisely to the extent that what they have to trade is wanted by others.

Liberal democracies with free markets are so successful precisely because free people prosper precisely to the extent that they are successfully "other directed;" individuals prosper as they learn to satisfy the wants and desires of other free people.

So really, we need to think up a modern version of Smith's "system of natural liberty," because in a way people are right to cringe at the term "capitalism." The focus shouldn't be on capital, it should be on freedom.

Even "free market" doesn't capture the essence of what we are talking about, because it still implies that the market is free, but maybe not the people.

Maybe instead of "capitalism" or "free markets" we should just cut to the chase. Our preferred alternative to planned economies or European corporatist socialism is simple: call it "freedom."

*David Strom is President of the Taxpayers League Foundation*

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**E-mail the  
Editor**

## Checks on Prosecutors

by George W. Liebmann

The news that the Bush administration has replaced seven United States Attorneys, each appointed with the support of their state's senators and none charged with or guilty of wrongdoing, with seven persons fairly describable as Washington apparatchiks should give pause to all those concerned with America's working Constitution. This recent action was made possible by a little-noticed provision of the so-called 'Patriot Act' allowing the President to make interim appointments of United States attorneys, a function previously confided to the federal district courts. It supplies further evidence, if evidence was needed, of Congress' carelessness with federal jurisdiction and the administration of federal criminal law.



George Liebmann

The office of United States Attorney is a powerful office, far more powerful than it was at the time of the ratification of the Constitution. Its functions are no longer confined to federal specialties such as customs and revenue offenses, but extend to virtually the entire range of criminal offenses. Congress has mounted a 'war on drugs' extending to even minor possession offenses. It has re-enacted a sweeping mail fraud statute stripped of jurisdictional limitations imposed on it by the Supreme Court. To the accompaniment of demagogic rhetoric emanating from both the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations, it has created several dozen new federal death penalty offenses. Stringent federal sentencing guidelines, more severe than their state counterparts, have rendered federal prosecutions the prosecutions of first resort, even for categories of street crimes. During the tenures of Attorneys General Reno, Ashcroft and Gonzales, the number of federal prosecutors has exponentially increased.

Hitherto, the choice of these officials has been subject to local and political checks. As contemplated by Alexander Hamilton in the Federalist No. 75, the requirement of Senate confirmation has operated to prevent the staffing of these positions by pliant presidential cronies: the local Senators, particularly those of the president's party, in practice have nominated United States attorneys and normally have been concerned not to outrage the local bar by parachuting in persons with no knowledge of the culture, mores and customs of a state. While the appointees have always served at the President's pleasure, and are usually of his party, politically motivated removals have been guarded against by vesting the power of interim appointment in the local federal judges, usually drawn from both parties, who have generally appointed senior career officials pending a presidential nomination and Senate approval of it.

The enthusiasts for unlimited executive power and a compliant Congress have now changed this. Defenders of the change declare a purpose to uphold the separation of powers by excluding the judiciary from appointments and rendering appointees fully subject to the will of the President; they also laud the academic qualifications and experience of the seven new 'inside the beltway' appointees. But their theory of government is not that of the Constitutional framers. Art II, Sec. 2 of the Constitution expressly allows judicial appointing powers. The Humphrey's Executor and like cases allow Congress to limit presidential removal powers on Justice Brandeis' premise that the function of the Constitution was "not to promote efficiency but to preclude the exercise of arbitrary power." The current apostles of a 'unitary executive' are less vocal in its support during Democratic administrations and do not seek to impair the independence of the Federal Reserve Board; we may hope that the swing of the political pendulum will clear their minds even further.

In the wake of Watergate, Congress, at the urging of Attorney General Edward Levi, roused itself from its torpor by providing the F.B.I. director with a ten-year fixed term to insulate him from Presidential whims. The explosion of federal criminal jurisdiction renders imperative thorough Congressional review of the provisions for appointment and removal of all important federal law enforcement officials, not merely U.S. Attorneys. We take for granted the

dispersion of police and prosecutorial power, the bedrock of American civil liberty. In all but two or three states, prosecutors are elected for short terms; the most powerful state prosecutor, the District Attorney of Los Angeles County, exercises control over only about 3% of the nation's population.

In almost all states, primary law enforcement is a local, not state, function; the most powerful policeman, the Police Commissioner of New York City, similarly exerts sway over less than 3% of the nation. Governors possess and exert very limited control over law enforcement. The insulation of law enforcement from political abuse is not easily accomplished. We do not want prosecutors to be laws unto themselves, like some abusive 'special prosecutors'; neither do we want an elective dictatorship. Geographic dispersion, of which Congress has lately grown careless, has historically been the American answer to this problem. The growth of 'Main Justice ' renders it imperative that old controls be reinstated and new ones devised.

National police and prosecutorial bureaucracies are notoriously difficult to control and uproot, as both Russian and French history adequately attest .The residents of the seven judicial districts affected by the new appointments do not yet have reason to remonstrate against an Executive who has, in the language of the Declaration of Independence, "sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people and eat out their substance", but the new appointments, and the statute authorizing them, impair local self-government and overly aggrandize the federal executive.

*George Liebmann, a Baltimore lawyer, is volunteer executive director of the Calvert Institute for Policy Research, a center-conservative 'think tank' and the author of The Common Law Tradition: A Collective Portrait of Five Legal Scholars (Transaction Books, 2005)*

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**E-mail the  
Editor**

## Rigging Union Elections

by David Keene

My father spent most of his working life as a labor-union organizer, serving for more than a decade as the head of the Rockford, Ill. Labor Council. Not to be outdone, my mother got herself elected head of the Women's Auxilliary of the United Auto Workers back in the '40s. They came up through the union ranks during some very tough years and paid a price for their devotion to organized labor.



David Keene

I'm not at all certain, however, that they'd recognize what's become of the union movement today. They were strong believers in freedom of association and free elections. My dad wanted his fellow workers to join up not because they had to but because they recognized the benefits of union membership. That was back in the days when the union meant something and when men and women were fighting for their rights in an often hostile working environment.

Later, however, much of organized labor got fat and union leaders began to lose touch with the men and women they were supposedly elected to represent. Today, they are more likely to be found on the golf course or at pricey restaurants and nightclubs than at the negotiating table or on the picket line. As a result, workers who were once proud of their union affiliation have begun to turn away in droves. Less than 7.4 percent of the private-sector workforce in this country is unionized today, and the percentage is steadily decreasing. More and more workers, when given the chance, are either leaving their unions or refusing to unionize in the first place.

One would expect, given the situation, that union leaders would get together and ask themselves what they might do to make union membership more attractive. But that's not what's happening.

Since they've been losing a fair number of elections among workers they are seeking to unionize, they've decided that such elections ought simply to be abolished.

Elections are too cumbersome and time-consuming anyway, and union organizers aren't all that comfortable with letting workers actually decide what they want in the privacy of a voting booth. They would rather look workers in the eye and get them to sign on the dotted line or perhaps dare them not to do so given the pressure and harassment that might follow a refusal to do the right thing.

They can already get employers to contractually agree to forgo an election as long as the union can produce cards signed by a majority of their workers stating that they do indeed want to be represented by a union; they've discovered that they are far more likely to win this way than by actually letting workers vote. Companies that are reluctant to sign away their employees' right to a secret ballot are pressured by left-wing groups to give in and — today's corporate officers being what they are — many of them roll over. After all, they can save themselves some trouble and it's not their right to vote they're giving up.

Once union organizers work things out with the employer, they send squads to the workers' homes, corner them and use the sorts of tactics one might associate with an earlier generation of aluminum-siding salesmen to get them to sign. One former organizer told a congressional committee last fall that if he could get into a worker's home, he simply wouldn't leave without the signature he was seeking.

The workers themselves, along with most other Americans, aren't all that happy about this. Various polls in recent years have shown that upwards of 90 percent of those polled think

there is something wrong with doing away with the secret ballot so important to any democratic process.

Since not all employers have been willing to so cavalierly sign away their employees' right to make up their own minds, labor leaders have done what they do best: They've gone to their friends in Congress and asked them to simply require employers to accept this "card check" alternative to the cumbersome process of allowing workers to make up their own minds free of harassment. Of course, their friends in Congress have complied.

The House of Representatives has just voted for HR 800 to make America's workers second-class citizens. Many of the Democratic co-sponsors of this bill just a few years ago wrote in outrage to the Mexican government for not allowing workers there a secret ballot, which they argued is "absolutely necessary in order to ensure workers are not intimidated into voting for a union they might not otherwise choose." The double standard may simply be a reflection of the fact that it's American rather than Mexican unions that contribute so many millions of dollars to the campaigns of so many members of Congress.

*David Keene is the chairman of the American Conservative Union and a managing associate with the Carmen Group, a Washington, D.C.-based governmental-affairs firm*

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**E-mail the  
Editor**

## Conservatives and Republicans

by JB Williams

In a recent column titled "Are Conservatives Running Scared," I asked conservatives to examine and explain their apparent early support for a presidential candidate who is pro-abortion, pro-gun control, pro-gay rights, pro-illegal amnesty and sitting on a record of appointing 75 judges, 8-1 liberal. The column about Rudy Giuliani sparked an interesting debate and it provided some interesting answers to my question.



The '08 presidential primaries are shaping up to be a bout between conservatives and Republicans. We have known for some time that while most conservatives are Republican by default, not all Republicans are conservative. George W. Bush has spent like a drunken liberal for six years now, refused to respect American sovereignty and security at our borders and fought perhaps the most important war of this generation in a politically correct manner instead of with a single purpose of victory. Such things do not make a conservative, just a typical modern politician, a Republican at that.

As the campaign for the next president heats up, the difference between conservative and Republican comes into stark focus as the party leadership attempts to force-feed three social liberals down the throats of their conservative base and after six years of compassionate conservatism, the gag reflex is in overdrive.

Are conservatives running scared? No, but Republicans are! What's the difference?

After a trouncing in the '06 mid-term elections that hoisted Democrats back into control of both houses of Congress, the Republican Party and true partisan constituents are desperate to make certain that a President Hillary or President Obama never becomes a reality. The prospect of such an event is so frightening to both Republicans and conservatives that some are willing to do whatever it takes to keep it from happening, and rightfully so.

But the difference between conservative and Republican is this. Conservatives are married to their principles, the ideals and values that they believe make America worth defending, protecting and preserving. They bought into the Declaration that promises an unalienable right to LIFE, Liberty and the individual pursuit of happiness. They believe in the First Amendment that says nobody can silence their religious expression or right to dissent. They hold dear the Second Amendment that guarantees every free law abiding citizen the right to bear arms in the protection of his family and property. And they insist upon leaders who support these same principles and ideals, which they don't consider to be conservative notions, but wholly American ideals.

Republicans have bought into the Party power principle and they are increasingly willing to toss their core conservative principles overboard in exchange for making certain that their party wins the election.

Republicans are willing to accept less than conservative candidates as mandated by the Party powers, who tell them with the help of a liberal press, that only liberal Republicans can win today. They are almost sold on the notion that Life, Liberty and Individual happiness can no longer be successfully defended by conservative values, against a rising tide of voters consistently seeking favor from the treasury. They are becoming convinced that to defeat the left, they must join the left, only at some lesser degree.

As a result, people who support life, liberty and individual rights, find themselves promoting candidates who don't. And that sets the stage for a square off between conservatives still clinging to the fundamental values and looking for a real conservative leader, and Republicans simply looking to block Democrats from winning the White House, by any means available.

There is something to be said for focusing on the primary goal of keeping today's socialist Democrats out of the White House. There is no more worthy goal on earth at this moment in time, other than booting them back out of control of the Congress and courts as well. But the debate is over how to best accomplish this worthwhile goal.

Republicans argue that this goal is more important than clinging to our core conservative principles. Conservatives argue that without a leader who shares those core principles and values, we have not elected anything different than a Democrat in Republican clothing.

Republicans want to support candidates who do not share their core values on the basis that they can win. Conservatives want to know what they won when a leader is elected who doesn't share their conservative values, no matter what Party they belong to.

For decades, Americans have been complaining that we have no real choices worth supporting in the general elections. That's because for decades, we have allowed the national committees to anoint candidates early in the primary season, then protect them from honest debate with silly rules and limited public exposure intended to conceal the fact that they often can't hold their own in a simple college level debate.

We are talking about electing the next leader of the free world in a manner in which we wouldn't even elect a high school class president.

There was nothing more embarrassing than watching Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama pander to their black brethren in the south by using demeaning faux southern drawls and poorly written slavery references as they both failed their desperate attempts to appear as black and southern as the congregation.

Yet watching conservatives twist and turn in an effort to justify their unjustifiable support for candidates who openly stand against much of what they claim to believe in, is almost as embarrassing. Republicans are dangerously close to falling into the same trap the Democrats fell into years ago and can't get out of now. Buying into partisan power over people power, Party over principle.

While any fool can see the need to unite behind a solid candidate to protect the nation and indeed the world from the prospects of a President Hillary, the question is at what expense?

Are McCain, Giuliani and Romney the best we can do? If it is, we deserve to lose and my guess is we will.

Clinton and Obama are on a collision course to destroy each other at present. Allowing that to continue much longer will completely divide the DNC vote and the DNC will not allow that to happen. Pressure will mount to end that cat fight over voters and once Obama comes to the realization that he can not survive a full scale Clinton war-room assault, the first female President and First Black Vice President will be joined on the same ticket.

No social liberal Republican can compete with a fully liberal Clinton/Obama ticket. Only a real alternative, a true conservative ticket rooted in true conservative values can draw the much needed moral majority out of their complacent resting places into the voting booths to defeat the likes of a completely socialist anti-American ticket across the aisle.

Accepting liberal Republican candidates early in the primaries is akin to the woman who knowingly marries a drunken abusive loser with the thought that she can fix him after the wedding. It ain't gonna happen! The same folks angry over how Bush betrayed the base over the last six years will soon be angry again over how they got snookered into electing someone even more liberal than Bush.

Conservatives are going to hold on to their principles no matter what. That's what it is to be a conservative, principle over politics. But Republicans are going to have to choose between political expediency that will leave their Party divided over the social issues and uniting their Party on the basis of conservative principles instead political rhetoric and weak excuses.

The last thing this country needs is a defeatist socialist hate-filled Democrat in the White House. But if Republicans think that they can unite the Party behind a liberal candidate without the principled core of the Party on board, they are sadly mistaken I'm afraid.

If a candidate does not stand for the unalienable right to Life, personal Liberty and the individual pursuit of happiness in a free-market economy free from federal tyranny and constant attacks on marriage, gun rights, religious expression and common decency, what makes him any different from today's Democrats?

The war on terror? You think someone who can't get the moral fundamentals right, can somehow get the war against international jihad right?

I realize that all the Republican talk show hosts, liberal press and political pundits are promoting the liberal frontrunners. It's good to have friends in high places. Politics always trumps principle in certain circles. What about at your home around the kitchen table?

Conservatives are awake and paying close attention. Republicans had better wake up!

*J. B. Williams notes that he is a business man, husband, father, and a writer. His website is at <http://www.jb-williams.com>.*

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**E-mail the  
Editor**

## American Soldier

by Hope Tinoco

Regarding your article "Complete Victory in Iraq", we agree. But supporting the troops also means supporting them after they come home, especially the one who come home sick and maimed and mentally unstable.

We are a military family. Mike Fonseca fought bravely and never came home. Our tribute to him is at: <http://www.joetinoco.com/veterans>.

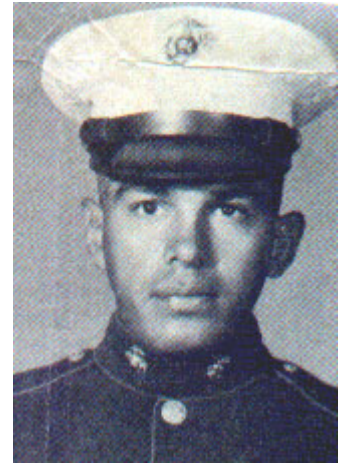
The song "AMERICAN SOLDIERS" (<http://www.joetinoco.com/CountryMania/page3.htm>) was written by Mike's son's son, Joe Tinoco. Joe's father fought in Vietnam and is a combat wounded Veteran.

You may use the song on your site if you wish.

Keep up the good work. Thanks for sending your articles.

God Bless, Hope Tinoco

**[Editor responds:** *God Bless you and your wonderful family, especially for Mike's sacrifice. We highly recommend that our readers go to the family's "In Memory of Michael Fonseca" website at <http://www.joetinoco.com/veterans>.*]



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**E-mail the  
Editor**

## Letter from Turkey

by Warren Coats

Istanbul is a beautiful city. I stayed in Bebek on the Bosphorus, the magnificent shipping lane connecting the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. It divides Istanbul into its European and Asian halves. I visited my friend Ernest McCall, bought one Persian carpet, and sipped coffee in a café at the edge of the water on the European side looking across to Asia. I spent many pleasant hours this way reading Michael Lind's *The American Way of Strategy*, which all American's should read to understand what has gone so terribly wrong with our foreign policy over the last decade.



My last morning in Istanbul I had breakfast with a delightful young Turk I had worked with in Ankara in 2000 and 2001 during the Turkish banking and balance of payments crisis of those years. He made some interesting observations that I will share with you. Though the banking sector has been very significantly strengthened since 2000 and inflation has been reduced from over 80 percent to below 10 percent, the economy remains fragile because of Turkey's failure to modernize enough of its laws and the continued government ownership and involvement in far too much of the economy and all of the corruption that that always involves.

Very interestingly my young Harvard trained friend noted that Turkey lacked the human capital of the Europe it hoped to join. Most of its citizens lack the level of education and related skills of most Europeans. As a result Turks living in Europe sink to the bottom of the economic ladder. Workers of poorer European countries rise faster and further than Turks because they are better educated. He was not blaming Europeans or their governments but rather the failings of his own government to direct its efforts appropriately. How refreshing.

He also noted that the great fondness and respect Turks had always had for America has in the last few years largely turning into suspicion of America's motives and integrity. In this respect, Turkey is like every other place I visit.

*Warren Coats, Washington D.C.*

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**E-mail the  
Editor**

## Reader Comments

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Editor: In regard to your "Complete Victory in Iraq" and with all due respect for those brave men and women serving in Iraq, I do not foresee Victory as being attainable. After serving in the military for 20 years I have concluded that the Iraqi people expect Americans to tackle the task of securing their borders while many of the Iraq citizens continue fighting each other in the Sunni-Shiite conflict and the Arab-Kurd conflict. I believe that the solution is to tell all of the Iraqi people that are trained, armed, and willing to die for their cause to make Iraq their cause. They need to secure their own borders, fight terrorism and stabilize their own country. They need to set their differences aside and join us in the fight for their freedom. Remember the last 2 times that the United States was attacked? Following the attack on Pearl Harbor and the attack on the World Trade Centers all Americans dropped their religious, race, gender and political differences and we engaged the enemy as one nation. If the Iraqi people do this then we should stay and help them. We should leave if they continue to regard our military as being backfill for their people who cannot support the Iraq due their being occupied with internal fighting. Regards, Peter R. Burg, Master Sergeant, USAF (Retired)

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Editor: I enjoyed your column on "Complete Victory in Iraq"--and especially going back to your pre-invasion column. Nice to see we shared so many of the real concerns on how difficult nation-building would be. Eric Rohrbach

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Editor: In regard to "Complete Victory in Iraq?" 1) George W. Bush ensured a U.S defeat four years ago when he changed the mission just prior to the invasion; from a military one (ousting Saddam Hussein and securing Iraq as a U.S. ally), to a political one (winning the hearts and minds of Iraqis by giving them a version of democracy). 2) The entire war effort has lacked a clear mission ever since Saddam Hussein was ousted. Bush and Rumsfeld showed weakness, ensuring a long protracted stalemate, when they used polling data to direct war policy, and refused to pursue a scorched earth policy in the Sunni Triangle during 2003 and 2004. 3) By dragging out hostilities with no results to show, the Bush Administration has lost public confidence and support in the United States, and made the U.S. one of the most despised (or least admired) nations internationally. The domestic setbacks have also severely damaged the credibility of the Republican Party, and conservatives, to the extent that they remained loyal to Bush, and not to principles. At this point, George W. Bush has few (if any) options to save his presidency. With the economy slowing, and a losing war of his own choosing, he is headed into history as a total failure. It is clear that he has no strategy for winning. His "surge" was a last ditch more-of-what-has-already-failed effort, and it has accomplished nothing. In order to 'win' in Iraq, the United States is going to have to engage in an offensive on the scale of General Sherman's 'scorched earth' march to Atlanta, or Harry Truman's decision to drop an atomic bomb on Japan. Both actions would have failed in polls, but unfortunately, it seems that Bush lacks the courage and strength of character needed to lead. Brian Lynch, Austin, Texas

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Editor: Thanks for "Complete Victory in Iraq?" The straw poll at the Conservative Political Action Conference, which had over 6,000 attendees half of whom were too young to remember Mr. Reagan, also made it clear that Mr. Bush is mostly irrelevant to the conservative movement. In the poll, 79 percent described themselves as a "Ronald Reagan Republican," but just 3 percent said they were a "George W. Bush Republican." CM

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Editor: "Veteran Reflects on Iraq" is an outstanding article. It really hits home with us vets who understand where Sgt Gill is coming from with his comments. Please thank Sgt Larry Gill for his willingness to stand up and be counted when it comes to supporting the country and the military. Hal Koster

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Editor: Kudos for Larry Gill's column, "Veteran Reflects on Iraq". Hit the nail right on the head with that one. I'm a former Combat MP Sgt - pulled some time in Iraq in 2003. He's right on with what he's saying. Rock on Sergeant Gill... Tom Nelson

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Editor: I really think Mr. Gill's article hit on how many of us, families of combat wounded soldiers from this war in Iraq feel. Great article, I couldn't agree with him more. Thanks Kim Hall

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Editor: Thank you Joseph Morris so much for making my day with "Islam and 9/11 Terrorism"! Your article was one of the best I have ever read regarding the Islamic fundamentalist and their agenda towards taking over the world. Their "close-mindedness" will never tolerate other religions or belief systems to exist. Their ultimate plan is to exterminate everyone that doesn't follow their beliefs. Even their own fellow Islamic people will be killed for having been contaminated by dealing with the likes of Christians, Jews, etc. Once they have collaborated with us, I am convinced they are then marked for death. These people don't have the capacity to forgive. They have been programmed since birth to hate, kill and destroy everything in their path that isn't of their belief system. I believe the children brought up with their books and teachings of hatred have only one motivation and that is to DIE for Islam and their promise of a better life after death. This complete "brainwashing" tactic is going on in the Saudi Arabia sponsored schools that exist in Britain, even today. Thank you for your extremely informative article. You are so logical in your conclusions and presentation and are so fair towards everyone concerned. But, that is the very difference in you and these people. You are guided with compassion, love for your fellow man and understanding. GOD BLESS US ALL AND PROTECT US FROM THIS EVIL FORCE THAT IS BENT ON CHANGING AND/OR DESTROYING THE WORLD, AS IT EXISTS TODAY. Thank you so much for allowing me to vent my fears and what I have been feeling within the very pit of my heart and soul. J. Emmons

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Editor: What is Joseph Morris thinking in "Islam and 9/11 Terrorism"? "As grave as I believe such sins as abortion and homosexual conduct to be, they pale in comparison with the sins of murder and aggressive war as committed by those who attacked us on September 11th." There were 1.2 million unborn babies murdered each year in America and he calls that "pale in comparison" to the less than 3,000 lives lost on 9/11? Every life is precious ... but his reasoning is a bit off on this point. Thanks, Dale Rusnik, Chesterland, OH

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Editor: Regarding Joseph Morris' "Islam and 9/11 Terrorism," bin Laden mentioned several instances of American presence in countries where sites important to Muslims are, and the support of Israel to the exclusion of Palestinians, as reasons for attacking America. He didn't

mention our 'culture and our mores' as a reason, but rather our politics. Why then the obfuscation and focus on the cultural and not the political? That sounds suspiciously like Dinesh d'Souza's agreement with Islamic extremists about our culture. Karen Isaacson

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Editor: Joseph Morris' "Islam and 9/11 Terrorism," makes one ask, what in the world is going on? We have Muslims in Minnesota demanding Sharia law and others in Detroit and Virginia who are trying to influence our children in school. Enough is enough. Secular Progressives are so busy being politically correct they don't see the forest shrinking before their eyes. They won't see it until the last tree is standing and then it will be too late. Why aren't conservative and Christian organizations fighting vigorously to defend our birthrights? If the liberal media can run erroneous stories claiming it to be fact, why can't conservative organizations clear up the record on the front page of the Wall Street Journal or the Washington Times or the Fox News network. Live simply, love generously, care deeply, speak kindly, and leave the rest to God! Thanks, John Careccia

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Editor: Good article by Carey Roberts, "Sad Tale of Lisa?" Many of us have come from disfunctional families but we don't go out and attempt to murder someone because of it. We rise above our situation through the grace of God and go on to change for the better. She does need some help in the mental health field to replace her evil thoughts with good ones. Maybe some Bible reading and returning to worship? Angela Defranco

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Editor: Great article by S.T. Karnick, "Hardaway Free Speech?" I agree that speech is not free to all. Declaring someone else has a problem is difficult when we are supposed to be free to believe in whatever we want, like religion, NBA basketball (I do not watch), or politics. Many verses in the Bible talk against homosexuality. Yet many will not allow talk of why Jesus or Paul (Corinthians) might have been opposed to it. I have objections to the idea of homosexuality, yet do not have the same connections an NBA ball player might have showering daily with they might be threatened by or playing next to a type of person who have a high likeliness of having a communicable disease. Yet people want to ban smoking because of 2nd hand smoke? Michael Monson

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Editor: John Goodman did not even mention in "Bush Health Reform" what I and others feel is one of the major reasons our health costs are sky-high: the AMA and the FDA operate in a cabal to shut out anything they do not like or feel will deprive them of revenue, even if it might be more effective, safer, and CHEAPER. Unless other methodologies are allowed into the fray, we will definitely see our health costs continue to spiral upwards, and also see the general level of health decline. Many of the so-called "approved and accepted standard of care" medicines and procedures only collect money, and do very little actual good on a LONG-TERM basis. I ought to know - I have been adding accepted and tested supplements for Type 2 Diabetes to my diet for a number of years, and have not seen the disease progress. They are cheap, have no side effects other than to benefit me and my well being. Only Alternative Doctors understand them - my regular doctor does not, nor was he even interested when I asked him if he would like to know why I was doing so well. Steven S. Purdy, Kannapolis, NC

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Editor: That was an excellent article on Eastwood by Spencer Warren, "Letters from Iwo Jima." I am sick to death of the Hollywood crowd who re-write history as they age and fear their own mortality, vainly trying to "make nice" to everyone--what a coward. Ellen Crawford

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Editor: I am so glad to have finally found something pointing out the truth about Eastwood's ridiculous movie, "Letters from Iwo Jima." They are cowards who acted without a shred or morality or integrity. And they have yet to apologize formally for the numerous war crimes committed by their country. Worse still, the Japanese PM recently stated that he believes that the comfort women were NOT coerced. In essence he is calling the comfort women survivors liars and prostitutes and in the same breath he is pardoning the Japanese military and selfishly saving face. I have blogged about the comfort women statements here: <http://www.xanga.com/mustardseed71>. One of the most ridiculous comments was made by Nariaki Nakayama: "Nariaki Nakayama, chairman of the group of about 120 lawmakers, sought to play down the government's involvement in the brothels by saying it was similar to a school that hires a company to run its cafeteria." "Where there's demand, businesses crop up. . . . But to say women were forced by the Japanese military into service is off the mark," he said. `` This issue must be reconsidered, based on truth . . . for the sake of Japanese honor." Thanks again to Spencer Warren for writing his review, Steve

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Editor: Great article by Paul Weyrich on "Bring Back Streetcars" !!! This is a cause I have been championing almost all of my adult life. I know that trolley lines rarely make a profit. Most people that also know this think there should be subsidies for them by some level of government. I find this answer distasteful, I think they should be able to make a profit large enough to sustain themselves and future upgrades. If this is not possible, and I realize that it simply is not sometimes, then the businesses that are serviced by the line should each own part of the line and invest in their future prosperity. I have lived in the Los Angeles area for more than twenty years and would love to see a restoration and expansion of the old Red and Yellow Car lines. The electricity used here in this area could be generated by wind, solar and methane methods that would also benefit our communities. Yes, let's bring back the trolleys, relieve the traffic congestion and diminish our dependency on foreign oil. Glenn O. Simar

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Editor: Thanks to B. Friend for speaking out in his article "Spanking Social Engineers." I agree with him wholeheartedly. DG

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Editor: I know you are busy for CPAC and I am sorry I will miss it this year because I am in Germany. The reason I contacted you was to try to send out an alert to conservatives that the Armed Forces Network radio, at least here, is broadcasting mainly news with a very liberal slant. Before moving to New Jersey three years ago, I listened for a number of years and noticed its having become more and more liberal. An example: When UPI became more conservative a number of years ago, it was dropped immediately from AFN. Before, the hourly news was rotated between UPI and AP; now it is only AP. To me, soldiers having to hear constant negativity about the war, is not right. Thank you very much for your attention to this important matter. Sincerely, Patricia (Pat) Degen