



CONSERVATIVE BATTLELINE ONLINE

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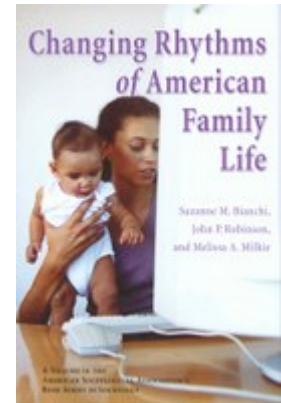
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Mothers: More Bonding/Less Available?

by Donald Devine

"We are better mothers than our mothers." At least that is the subliminal message from Professor Suzanne M. Bianchi in a new book, "Changing Rhythms of American Family Life," backed by the Russell Sage Foundation and the American Sociological Association. It is based on an on-going Census Bureau study she herself had led for sixteen years. The headlines were too good to be true, salving the consciences of mothers everywhere: "Despite Mommy Guilt, Time With Kids Increasing."



"We might have expected mothers to curtail the time spent caring for their children but they seem not to have done so," reported Bianchi the chairman of the University of Maryland sociology department and former president of the Population Association of America. While women still performed twice as much child care and housework as men in two-parent families, and almost all of this in single ones, mothers actually have increased the amount of time spent with their children. For married women, direct childcare activities increased from 10.6 hours per week in 1965 to 12.9 hours a week in 2000. Single mothers reported increasing from 7.5 to 11.8 hours per week.



Suzanne Bianchi

In what it curiously labels as greater "gender equality," the study--by Bianchi, the lead author, with professors John Robinson and Melissa Milkie--found that men and women worked about equal hours. Yet, there were great differences among women. Women without children worked and were paid about the same as men. Mothers worked even more total hours, at 71 per week, but it was almost equally divided between paid and unpaid work and they earned less. Married fathers worked significantly longer hours for pay but also increased their hours of child care from 3 to 7 hours and even of housework from 4.4 hours in 1965 to 9.7 hours per week in 2000, which however was not enough to offset a 13 hour decline in housework by married mothers.

"It seems reasonable to expect that parental investment in child-rearing would have declined" since the 1960s, reports the study, when 60 percent of all children lived in families with a breadwinning father and stay-at-home mother, while today only 30 percent live in such families. Yet, in 1965 all mothers spent 10.2 hours per week "tending primarily to their children—feeding them, reading with them or playing games, for example" based upon detailed time journals kept by thousands of women (and men). That number dipped in the 1970s and 1980s, began rising in the 1990s and is now "higher than ever at nearly 14.1 hours per week," according to the study.

This increase in hours of care for children by parents even with more hours working outside the home was explained by two main factors. Potential parents who did not want children and presumably would not care for them as well now had birth control readily available to avoid the responsibility. The remaining parents presumably were willing to commit more effort to child care. Second, parents had fewer children so they could devote more energy—and with increasing affluence, more funds--to each one. "As parents have fewer children, they feel "pressure to rear a perfect child," Bianchi explained.

The mothers themselves seemed a bit more skeptical than the professors. They still feel guilty. "It's almost like it doesn't matter how much they do, they feel they do not do enough," Bianchi pondered. Perhaps, the mothers know better what their mothers really did to provide "care."

The study only counts direct time spent with children by mothers. It admits it did not measure what it calls "availability," or having parents available for children, just being there if needed. In fact, in the 1950s the mothers' mothers thought too much time directly hovering over children was smothering.

Earlier mothers thought children should develop their own skills and that the best experience for them was experimental. Life was viewed as risky and children needed to test their coping skills rather than always running to mother, which was discouraged. But it was a risky world and it was considered invaluable that mother be available for crises, protection and even for simple child questioning when issues were still fresh in mind. To ignore this type of time was to ignore the most important time with children according to the previous generation of mothers.



To go to work is by definition not to "be there."

At a time when being at work outside the home is near universal for modern mothers, to recognize the importance of simply being available is a rebuke and is much better ignored. The fact that earlier mothers cared for more children only makes the comparison more invidious. Actually, the study does record something close to "being there" time but calls it "housework," as if it were simple dusting and scrubbing, which declined among mothers from 32 to 19 hours per week and was replaced in an "almost a one-to-one trade," as Professor Bianchi phrased it, with paid work, which jumped from 8 hours per week in 1965 to 23 hours in 2000.

While not mentioned in the study, most female work actually does accommodate itself to "being there." That is why part time, part year, and flexible and irregular hours predominate among American working mothers. Direct time with children has increased since the 1990s as these options have become more available at the demand of U.S. mothers. While the children receive fewer total hours of direct care and being there, they do benefit from the reallocation of outside work to direct care and it is curious why that momentous change is not celebrated in the headlines or the study.

Rather, the report touts a gender equality its own data refute. In presumably liberated 2007 America, nothing could be more unequal among parents than work. Even with the greater domestication of fathers in the study, mothers still devote twice as many hours to both childcare and housework as fathers (and one suspects much of their work is outside and the childcare is playtime). The fact is that fathers are in paid employment 60 percent more hours per week than mothers—still today forty years after the revolution and 87 since the right to vote! A resuscitated Equal Rights Amendment will not change that basic reality.



If it is not clear that today's mothers are better mothers than their own mothers, the temptations for them against mothering are much greater. Money, rewarding status and self-satisfaction are now universally available to take the place of childrearing time, which often can be boring and draining. As a result, there are fewer two-parent families and there are fewer children per mother. Yet, somehow, since the 1990s American mothers have limited the allure of paid work and transformed the workplace so they could spend more direct time with their children. They may not be as available as their mothers but they may be even more adroit in utilizing the time

they are willing to be there with their children.

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**E-mail the
Editor**

ERA Rise Again?

by Paul M. Weyrich

They are back, just when you thought it was safe. I mean the Feminazi crowd. And guess what they have in store for you? Why, they intend to re-introduce the Equal Rights Amendment in both Houses of Congress. The original fight should have been over in 1977 but then Congress gave the ladies (please forgive that term in this context) another several years to complete ratification. So you thought the fight was over by 1982? No, not at all. This time the authors of the ERA assure us that they will have no time limit for ratification. And there you have it: ERA forever.



Paul M. Weyrich

Certainly whatever legitimate issues raised by the ERA ratification fight have long since been overtaken by reality. This issue now appears to be generational. Older women who were of that bent still consider the failure to ratify the ERA a blot on their sisterhood. Younger women have no idea what that fight was about and most could care less. ERA proponents must obtain a two-thirds vote of both Houses of Congress to send the proposed amendment to the States. If the ratification process were to go that far ERA proponents would find a very different political landscape than they found when they first went to the States in 1972.

For those who don't recall the fight, the ERA yes crowd had a roller coaster ride the likes of which never had been seen. The first States ratified the Amendment in the wee hours of the morning on the day after the bill cleared the United States Senate. Day after day one State after another ratified the proposed Amendment. ERA proponents had created an image of invincibility. Commentators plotted the number of remaining days before the requisite three-quarters of the States would have ratified ERA. Once and for all, the Equal Rights Amendment would have been enshrined in the Constitution. But the pace began to slow: only eight States ratified the Amendment in 1973 and three in 1974. By then Watergate was happening and Republicans everywhere were taking a bath in special elections.

Along came Phyllis Schlafly, of Alton Illinois, President of the Eagle Forum. For years she had cultivated friends in the Illinois Legislature. Meanwhile Eagle Forum was building up a head of steam due to Mrs. Schlafly's leadership. ERA passed in Illinois by a simple majority vote but was unable to muster the three-fifths majority required to ratify ERA. Just a fluke, ERA proponents told themselves. The upshot was that ERA came with-in three states of ratification. Then Phyllis had an extra present for the proponents. She led a campaign for rescission and several States followed through. ERA proponents argued that once a State ratified an amendment it had no authority to repeal that ratification. A couple of States were prepared to argue their case before the Supreme Court but the time allowed for ratification expired.

In an unprecedented move, Congress extended the time for ratification. In fact, when the issue came up, Senator Jake Garn (R-UT) personally eyeballed almost every Senator and counted a substantial majority which agreed that the time extension should not be granted. You can imagine Garn's disgust when a majority of the Senate voted to give ERA another time extension. Most could not look Garn in the eye because they clearly had told him they were against the time extension. When he finally tracked down the Senators who had broken their word he heard excuses, such as "When I looked at my eight-year old daughter as I was leaving the house, I thought to myself 'I can't do this to her.'" Most of the others said their wives had been on their case and to keep peace in the family they felt they had to reverse positions. Only one Senator of the more than a dozen who changed votes had the courtesy to tell Garn why. That experience remained with Garn to the day he left the Senate. "When I grew up I was taught that a man's word was his bond." (He went on to recall an incident during the

Depression where his father kept a commitment to deliver some goods to a man who could no longer pay for it.)

ERA proponents made no progress during their time extension. When that time expired Phyllis Schlafly held her second victory dinner with her friends in the Conservative movement, who hailed her as a heroine. She was certain, as was I, that this fight was over once and for all. When ERA was first proposed many opponents said that proponents wanted unisex bathrooms and gay marriage. They claimed that this was the most vicious propaganda that the right had ever adduced. I don't know about unisex bathrooms but many of today's proponents do want homosexual marriage.

In the House I doubt the ability of the proponents to achieve a two-thirds majority. In the Senate the question is where Senators Elizabeth Hanford Dole (R-NC) and Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R-TX) will be. Other Republican female Senators likely will be in the pro-ERA corner. So it is conceivable that the Senate might come close to two thirds. Meanwhile, Phyllis Schlafly, now in her 80s, still is going strong. And she has a strong organization to pick up the fight.

Republicans control more state legislatures than during the first go-around. It may be that, rather than these being a serious legislative effort, ERA proponents simply want to draw a bulls-eye on conservatives at the state and local levels. If that is the case two can play the game. Just ask the good lady from Alton, Illinois.

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

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Editor**

Fire Justice Bosses

by David Keene

The combination of arrogance and incompetence on display at the Department of Justice boggles the mind. The attorney general, his hapless but conniving deputy and everyone associated with the two of them ought to be sent packing for the very reasons they claim they sacked the now-infamous eight U.S. attorneys: "performance issues."



David Keene

When Deputy Attorney General Paul McNulty went before Congress and created the firing controversy that is now consuming so much newsprint and airtime, he kicked off a display of bumbling incoherence that has yet to end. Rather than simply stating that 1) the appointment of U.S. attorneys is an exclusive political prerogative of the president; 2) the president had decided to replace some of those he had previously appointed and was in the process of doing so; 3) the president and the Justice Department appreciated the good work of those being replaced and the decision to replace them was not to be taken as any reflection on their performance as part of the administration's team; and 4) he was not prepared to go beyond this, McNulty instead tied the changes to the performance—or lack thereof—of those being fired.

This, as is now obvious, was stupid. The administration has the absolute right to hire and fire political appointees such as U.S. attorneys. They have always had that right, and any of those Democrats complaining today would insist on it for themselves or one of their colleagues should they win the White House in next fall's elections. As President Clinton's successful firing of a U.S. attorney actively investigating a sitting Democratic member of Congress demonstrated, this power is subject to few restrictions.

The attorney general moved quickly to compound McNulty's goofiness, attempting to quiet the political firestorm touched off by his deputy by providing numerous conflicting versions of what happened and why as well as his role in the whole thing. His ultimate defense, of course, is that he has no idea of what goes on around him and can hardly be held responsible for the mistakes of his staff or, indeed, anyone else at the Department.

At one point, he likened himself to the CEO of a large corporation who just cannot know what everyone in the corporation is doing. That is, of course, perfectly true as far as it goes. What he failed to note is that in the real world such CEOs are held accountable for the stupidity of their underlings even when they neither knew nor authorized the stupidity. In fact, such hapless businessmen are often held accountable in this way by lawyers employed by his department.

The same rule should apply here. Gonzales and his boys have managed to mismanage far more than the firing of a few political appointees. They have created the illusion of wrongdoing out of whole cloth, lied to Congress and the media in the process, embarrassed the president of the United States and his supporters in Congress and proven themselves unsuited to hold the jobs entrusted to them.

The real story within this story, however, reflects badly not just on the Department of Justice and the administration, but on the Congress as well. At one point, the administration considered using a hitherto unnoticed section of the USA Patriot Act that would allow the fired U.S. attorneys' replacements to take their jobs without Senate confirmation. Prior to the passage of the Patriot Act after Sept. 11, 2001, when a U.S. attorney died, resigned or was fired, the federal court in the jurisdiction for which he or she was responsible would recognize

one of the assistant U.S. attorneys as "acting" until the president appointed and the Senate confirmed a successor.

The attorney general says that no one seems to know who authored the change when the Patriot Act was drafted; those in Congress who voted for it defend themselves by noting that the bill was long and went mostly unread by those who voted for it. In other words, no one was willing to take credit for a major change in the way the justice system functions. Congress quickly "corrected" the problem by repealing the offending language and went back to pillorying the administration.

It would seem, however, that this whole incident has exposed enough incompetence to tar everyone involved. Further embarrassment should be avoided, the president should get rid of the incompetents who allow his critics to charge him with incompetence and his critics ought to get back to the serious problems facing the nation, rather than wasting time trying to create imaginary conspiracies out of the foolishness of nincompoops.

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Editor**

Real Inconvenient Truths

by Paul Driessen

Amidst Al Gore's recent Capitol Hill love fest, the much publicized eco-anxiety over catastrophic climate change, and the attention given to "socially responsible" companies that have embraced global warming as a crisis – few have recognized the links between the lethal DDT scare of four decades ago, and the global warming scare that many of the very same environmental groups are now using to advance their anti-fossil-fuels agenda. And yet, this new scare could prove even more deadly than the ban on DDT, for it would keep billions of people deprived of energy and dying of diseases that abundant, reliable, affordable electricity could largely eradicate.



Paul Driessen

"When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean," said Humpty Dumpty – "neither more nor less." Lewis Carroll's "Looking Glass" logic too often seems to be a guiding principle for environmental and corporate social responsibility (CSR) activists.

They claim to be committed to people and planet, not just profits – and to honesty, transparency, accountability and human health. One would expect that such basic ethical standards would apply equally to for-profit companies and nonprofit advocacy corporations. However, the activists who defined CSR standards routinely exempt themselves and use the terms primarily to pressure companies, raise money and advance political agendas.

Forty years ago, Environmental Defense (ED) was launched to secure a ban on DDT and, in the words of co-founder Charles Wurster, "achieve a level of authority" that environmentalists never had before. Its high-pressure campaign persuaded EPA Administrator William Ruckelshaus to ignore the findings of his own scientific panel and ban DDT in the US in 1972.

The panel had concluded that DDT is not harmful to people, birds or the environment. That's especially true when small quantities are sprayed on walls to repel mosquitoes and prevent malaria. However, ED and allied groups continued their misinformation campaign, until the chemical (and other insecticides) were banished even from most global healthcare programs.

Thankfully, DDT had already helped eradicate malaria in the United States and Europe. But the disease still sickens 500 million people a year and kills 2 million, mostly African women and children. Since 1972, tens of millions have died who might well have lived if their countries had been able to keep DDT in their disease control arsenals.

A year ago – after an extensive public education effort by the Congress of Racial Equality, Africa Fighting Malaria, Kill Malarial Mosquitoes NOW Coalition and other health and human rights groups– the USAID and World Health Organization finally began supporting DDT use once again. But ED, Pesticide Action Network and other agitators still promote ridiculous anti-DDT themes on their websites, claiming it is "associated with" low birth weights in babies and shortened lactation in nursing mothers.

Even if these assertions were true, notes Uganda's Fiona Kobusingye, such risks "are nothing compared to the constant danger of losing more babies and mothers to malaria." She has had malaria at least 20 times and lost her son, two sisters and five nephews to the disease. "How can US environmentalists tell us we should be more worried about insecticides than about malaria?" she asks. "Their attitudes are immoral eco-imperialism – a crime against humanity."

None of these anti-insecticide pressure groups has ever apologized for their disingenuous campaigns or atoned in any way for the misery and death they helped perpetuate – much less been held accountable. Instead, they blame today's horrendous malaria rates on global warming.

Malaria was once common even in Ohio, Virginia, California and Siberia – and they claim it is spreading because global temperatures have risen a few tenths of a degree. Even worse, they are using fears of climate chaos to justify their long antipathy to energy and economic development.

Two billion people rarely or never have electricity – for lights, refrigeration and cooking, water treatment plants, hospitals, schools, offices, shops and factories. Women and children are plagued with lung infections caused by wood and dung fires, and by acute intestinal diseases caused by tainted water and spoiled food. Up to ten million die from these causes every year.

But instead of helping destitute families get abundant, reliable, affordable electricity, Rainforest Action Network, Environmental Defense and other pressure groups block efforts to build coal and gas generating plants, because they would release greenhouse gases. They block hydroelectric and nuclear projects on equally questionable grounds – and then praise Citigroup, JP Morgan and Bank of America for being “socially responsible,” by refusing to finance any major power projects.

Up to 95% of people in Sub-Saharan countries have no electricity, Al Gore personally uses more electricity in a week than 25 million Ugandans do in a year – and agitators are telling Africans the biggest threat they face is hypothetical climate change.

Environmental Defense is poised to rake in millions from emissions trading credits, through its new alliance with Morgan Stanley, and an axis of anti-developers is telling the Third World: You can't have electricity. You can't have a modern, industrialized society. Your future is expensive, intermittent, insufficient “renewable” energy: a solar panel on your hut, to power a light bulb, radio, hot plate and tiny refrigerator – and eventually a few wind turbines to electrify a school, clinic and minimal light manufacturing operations.

Such a future would perpetuate poverty, deprivation, misery and disease in Third World countries – ensuring death tolls that would likely dwarf even the activists' malaria records

In the United States, coal generates half of all electricity. Fossil fuels account for 80% of all the energy that fuels US technology, progress and living standards. Canada, Australia and Europe also rely heavily on fossil fuels.

Proposals to reduce global carbon dioxide emissions by 80% over the next few decades would put US companies at a competitive disadvantage, cost millions of jobs, and add \$2000-4000 to the average American family's annual bill for electricity, gasoline, food and other basics, say government and other studies. Other developed countries would suffer similar fates.

Moreover, all this pain would bring no gain in the climate change arena. Ice core and temperature data covering thousands of years clearly show that planetary temperatures rise first and, 400 to 800 years later, atmospheric carbon dioxide levels increase. Temperatures fall and, centuries later, CO² levels decline. Even Al Gore's own temperature-and-CO² graph demonstrates this.

Warm oceans release trapped CO², while colder seas absorb the gas, in cycles controlled by changes in solar energy and cosmic ray output, shifts in the Earth's orbit and other natural forces. (See “The Great Global Warming Swindle” [here](#).)

Talk about an inconvenient truth!

It demolishes the central premise of climate alarmism – that CO² is responsible for climate change. It makes it clear that the Kyoto Protocol and assorted legislative proposals are nothing more than hundred-billion-dollar-a-year symbolic gestures, whose primary effect would be to give bureaucrats and activists an ever greater “level of authority” over energy, economic and personal decisions.

To Humpty Dumpty, the central question when defining words was “who is to be master.” It’s become the central question when discussing climate cataclysm theories.

Instead of CSR, we need *global* social responsibility: for all corporations, including multinational activist corporations; for all people, especially the Third World’s poor and families on low and fixed incomes; and for all concerns, health and economic, as well as environmental. A healthy dose of sound science and robust debate would be equally helpful.

Paul Driessen is senior policy advisor for the Congress of Racial Equality and Atlas Economic Research Foundation, author of [Eco-Imperialism: Green power - Black death](http://www.Eco-Imperialism.com) (www.Eco-Imperialism.com), and a featured expert in “The Great Global Warming Swindle.”

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Editor**

More Inconvenient Truths

by Nathan Tabor

Hollywood praises Al Gore for revealing what the media elite consider to be inconvenient truths. But the fact is, at some point, Mr. Gore needs to face a few inconvenient truths of his own.

Among environmental activists-those who wear their allegiance to green on their sleeves-Gore has achieved superhero status. And yet his own household habits indicate he is not an energy-saver.

During a global warming hearing, Senator James Inhofe (R-OK), the ranking member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, presented Gore with a "Personal Energy Ethics Pledge." That's the type of pledge you would think that Gore would be eager to sign onto. However, the former Vice-President refused to take the pledge. In other words, he simply could not commit to consuming no more energy than the average American household.

For the record, Gore is no slouch when it comes to energy use. He's a big-time user. It's been reported that his electricity usage is 20 times higher than that of the average American household.

Senator Inhofe tried to appeal to Gore's sense of environmental chivalry, telling him, "There are hundreds of thousands of people who adore you and would follow your example by reducing their energy usage if you did. Don't give us the run-around on carbon offsets or the gimmicks the wealthy do."

The energy ethics pledge that Inhofe presented to Gore is quite straightforward. It states, "As a believer that human-caused global warming is a moral, ethical, and spiritual issue facing our survival; that home energy use is a key component of overall energy use; that reducing my fossil fuel-based home energy usage will lead to lower greenhouse gas emissions; and that leaders on moral issues should lead by example; I pledge to consume no more energy for use in my residence than the average American household by March 21, 2008."

Inhofe did not ask Gore to be some kind of super-saver, besting the energy savings rate of typical Americans. He simply requested that Gore be average in his energy usage. Just average. And Gore declined the opportunity.

I would never use the word hypocrite lightly. After all, we're all sinners, as far as Mother Nature is concerned. There have probably been times in my life when I myself might have failed the noble aim of the Personal Energy Ethics Pledge.

However, can one really point the finger at SUV-driving, high heating bill Americans, when you yourself are using 20 times more than your fair share of energy?

The truth can certainly be inconvenient-especially to a man busy casting himself as a latter-day messiah.

Earth to Gore: the position's already been filled. Thanks anyway.

Nathan Tabor is a conservative political activist based in Kernersville, North Carolina. He has a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in public policy. He is a contributing



Nathan Tabor

editor at www.theconservativevoice.com and his 60-second commentaries are heard on over 250 stations daily. Visit www.aconservativemoment.com to hear them.

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Editor**

Art Degeneration

by Thomas Brewton

Art historically expressed the highest aspirations of society. In the 20th century art reversed field.

I had the pleasure recently of viewing an exhibition of three-dimensional photo collages by Renee Kahn, who has an unerring eye for the artistic aspects of reality. Her subject was "Urban Dreamscapes: Stamford as a Work of Art."

The occasion was a discussion panel (an artist, an art critic, a film historian-columnist) limning the 20th century setting of art and film as background for Renee's work.

I was forcibly struck by recurrent themes in their presentations, some intended, some paradoxical.

A dominant theme was art, including movies, as recorder of the degeneration of life quality in the great cities.

What came across, however, was the presenters' disdain for the source of order that historically had prevented that degeneration before the 20th century.

The presentations were infused by more than a whiff of the liberal-Progressive-socialist perspective, which asserts that crime and other forms of aggression are caused by the existence of private property and by disparities between top and bottom rung incomes. Free-market capitalism, in the artists' view, is apparently the villain in the degeneration of the great cities.

All of the speakers alluded to New York's former Mayor Rudi Giuliani as having diminished the quality of life in the city. Did they truly mean that stopping graffiti is repressive denial of liberty?

One of the presenters, photos of whose work were warmly received by the audience, has made his career by illegally plastering graffiti "art" on public buildings and private property in New York City. One has to wonder what such artists' conception of a good society is.

Another theme was the alienation of the individual in industrial and post-industrial society, as seen in the film noire of the 1930s and in the 1950s and 1960s. Film noire movies generally had a negative perspective of life, emphasizing despair, loneliness, and danger. Individuals were alone in a Darwinian world without design or reason, a world of chance and survival of the fittest.

Alienation was a fundamental element in Karl Marx's damnation of capitalism and his apotheosis of socialism's atheistic materialism. The gist of Marxian alienation is that division of labor and machine production dehumanized work and reduced the worker to a commodity called labor. The worker was at the mercy of a hostile world, alienated from his fellows.

Yet it was Marx and his fellow liberal-Progressive-socialists, to the present day, who did the most to destroy the one social institution that mitigated the hardships of life for the less fortunate, an institution that created local communities of devotees who supported each other and offered hope for redemption.

That institution was Christianity, which since the fall of the Western Roman Empire had been the common ground for whatever sense of decency and human kindness that existed.

Another theme was dwindling public funding for the arts. Ironically, while the speakers applauded the movie made of Woodward and Bernstein's book about nailing President Nixon, it was Mr. Nixon who opened the spigot wider than any other president for public funding of the arts.

In classical Greece and in the Roman Empire, public buildings were both civic monuments and temples to the gods that represented virtues of home and public life that rulers wished the people to emulate. After the fall of Rome in 476 AD, art, funded by the Church and wealthy patrons, focused upon glorifying God. In addition to incomparable painting and sculpture, we have the magnificent, awe inspiring cathedrals.

That tradition of wealthy families and churches funding art endured into the 1930s. Everything began to change with the New Deal and its favorable disposition toward the sort of socialist art then admired in the Soviet Union. The Federal Theatre Project in New York channeled enough Federal money to support much of the Broadway theatre scene, where large numbers of playwrights, actors, and theatre craftsmen, if not members of the Communist Party USA, were sympathetic to the party line. Activities of the Federal Theatre Project in New York were dominated by V. J. Jerome, the cultural commissar of the Communist Party USA.

The Wikipedia says of it:

The [Federal Theatre Project] was the most controversial and short-lived of the WPA's arts projects. Hallie Flanagan, former head of Vassar College's Experimental Theater, served as director and shaped the FTP into a forum for experimental theater committed to creating public awareness of contemporary issues. Creating public awareness of contemporary issues" meant propagandizing for socialism, which many people in the 1930s, but especially in the arts, viewed as the only approvable form of government.

A final theme was expressed by one speaker, who made much of contemporary art in Stamford, in which she saw a reversion to the art and religion of the Sumerian period. To the extent such elements are present in the art she displayed, however, it is at a very superficial level.

Ironically, it was from Ur, one of the principal cities of ancient Sumer, that God called Abram (Abraham) to journey westward to the land of Canaan, to begin the progression from godlike rulers to individual morality in a society under a ruler who is subject to a higher law of morality and has no prerogative to usurp God-given, inalienable individual rights.

Kingdoms like the Sumerian city states and the successor empires of Assyria, Babylon, and Persia, were ones in which their subjects had no direct relationship with God. Rulers were thought to be gods or to be the people's only nexus to divine blessing and social order. Rules of social conduct were whatever the ruler declared them to be.

Israel under God, however, was a society in which every individual was held accountable for living in accordance with God's Word. Later the prophets rebuked kings face to face for their failing to deal charitably and justly with the poor, widows, orphans, and disabled.

None of that would have been thinkable in a society like the city states of ancient Sumer, where representational art glorified the deified ruler. Yet it is that sort of society to which some artists, we were told, are reverting for artistic and spiritual inspiration.

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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Making School Loans Worse

by John Berlau

The current federal student loan programs are a mishmash of subsidies and regulations that cause distortions, not the least of which is to raise the sticker price of tuition significantly more than it would be otherwise.

This doesn't mean that it's not possible for the student aid system to get worse — even much worse. To Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-Mass., who is once again chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions, or HELP committee (a misnomer for a political body if there ever was one), the problem isn't the fact of government interference, but the fact that private banks are still involved at all. He wants to make student loans a 100 percent government-run system, because he and others claim that this would save money by knocking out the middleman. So in his recently introduced Student Debt Relief Act of 2007, which is co-sponsored by fellow Democratic Sens. Barack Obama, Barbara Mikulski, Chuck Schumer, Dick Durbin, and independent Joseph Lieberman, the government would basically bribe schools with extra federal aid to participate only in the Direct Loan program, rather than have subsidized dealing with private banks.

But we only need to look at the history of this "direct" loan program to see that Kennedy's plan would result in massive waste as well as burdensome red tape for students and parents trying to finance a college education.

When signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1993, "direct lending" of student loans to college students was sold as a way to actually make money for the government by cutting out the "middleman." Since the 1960s, the government has subsidized banks and other firms that lend to students to make student loans more affordable. Clinton and other advocates argued the government would spend less money and could even profit if it made the loans and collected the interest itself.

Direct lending's defenders, such as Clinton's former education aide Robert Shireman, point out that Congress and the Bush administration still score direct loan cost estimates as costing less than subsidized private loans. But the key word is cost estimates, and for the past decade the estimates have been wrong. On a cash flow basis, Congress's General Accounting Office has found that the program has actually lost \$10.7 billion for the government from 1995 to 2003. This is largely because the Department of Education loaned money to students at a lower rate of interest than it costs the government to borrow money to finance its spending.

In a report from 2005, Elizabeth Wright, a vice president of Citizens Against Government Waste, details some of the reasons why. If the government were to charge higher interest rates, it would defeat the purpose of providing affordable student loans. Private lenders, however, while protected by the government against default, take on the risks of interest rate risks themselves. They have charged around the same interest to students as the government, while bearing responsibility for the costs of that specific risk.

The bottom line is that in the ten-year time frame direct lending has been in existence, the costs of direct lending have been coming in higher than their estimates and have been increasing, while subsidized loans have cost the government less than their estimated costs. The White House budget for fiscal year 2006, the same one that estimates that direct lending will be cheaper, reports that direct lending has cost the government \$7 billion more than initially predicted over the last decade, while subsidized loans have cost the government \$5 billion less than they were estimated to.

Since there are different numbers of schools and students in the programs (and more in subsidized loans, both because it's older and schools say they find it easier to work with), it's difficult to compare costs. However, a study by American Student Loan Providers, an industry group, did find that costs as a percentage of outstanding loans were less for subsidized loans for every year the two programs were in existence except one (and that year was close to a tie). For 2004, the cost was over 3 percent for direct lending, and less than 1 percent for subsidized loans.

Direct lending has also failed in its promise to greatly reduce default rates. Clinton Administration officials actually predicted there would be no defaults with direct loans. Yet Department of Education statistics show a projected default rate above 15 percent for direct loans in 2005. The rate for subsidized loans, by contrast, was a slightly lower 13 percent.

One even more interesting aspect, direct lending really isn't direct. It hires contractors to help collect the loans and build its computer systems, going against its stated promise of cutting out the "middleman." The only middlemen its cuts out are the banks.

So, in a nutshell, critics have said that subsidized loans were wasteful because banks were on the hook for only part of the loan. To an extent, they're correct. But longtime government waste experts such as Wright point out it will likely be even more wasteful when the government is on the hook for 100 percent of the loan.

There is also the issue of unnecessary red tape. As with many situations in dealing with the government directly, schools have found service from the government to be less than they desired. The reason schools, with both programs to choose from, have stayed with the banks is that the banks' offer the private sector's level of service. Some 600 schools have stopped participating in direct lending, and survey of schools cite poor service as the primary reason.

So if we were to make federal student loans totally government-run, we would also lose the innovation that private firms can show in servicing their customers even in situation that's not the free-market ideal.

Expansion of tax-favored education savings accounts like 529s would be a great way to help students and parents with college costs. The tax benefits would go solely to parents and students, without encouraging tuition hikes at schools. So while we're debating free market reforms for the existing student loan programs, free-market advocates must make sure that the program doesn't take even more giant steps toward total government control.

John Berlau is director of the Center for Entrepreneurship at the Competitive Enterprise Institute. He is the author of [Eco-Freaks: Environmentalism Is Hazardous to Your Health](#).

**E-mail the
Editor**

No Mental Mandate?

by John Goodman

How could we be so heartless?

I believe the NCPA is the only organization that has held a Congressional briefing challenging the idea of mental health parity. We may also be the only organization that has produced (not one, but three) publications opposing the idea.

As both houses of Congress stand poised to legislate, a bipartisan effort is being led by Senators Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Pete Domenici (R-NM) and backed by the mental health industry, one of the strongest lobbies found anywhere. Employer and insurance groups have caved. President Bush is also on board. So increasingly we are alone, as the only ones with any apparent pity for the poor souls this grand coalition is out to "help."



Here's the issue: Health insurers would not be required to cover mental health at all. But if they did, they would have to apply the same deductibles and co-payments that apply to other services. To The New York Times, the law will be a "boon to the millions of Americans who suffer" from addiction, depression and even "stress." Yet anyone who has taken economics 101 will recall that raising the cost of something usually means fewer people will acquire it.

Here's the question: Would you want to pay higher premiums for an insurance plan that had the same deductible and co-payment for every procedure? Need time to think about that?

Then try this: Does it make sense to have the same deductibles and co-payments for chiropractic therapy as for setting a broken leg? Or from the mental health field, should the payment terms that cover bipolar disorder be the same as those that apply to marriage counseling (required coverage in some states)? Should pastoral counseling (also required in some places) be reimbursed the same way as coverage for schizophrenia? If you have any sense, the answers are: No, No, No and No.

One way to keep insurance costs down is through incentives. Patients should pay more of their bill when they exercise discretion and especially where patient discretion is appropriate. In mental health, this principle applies in spades because: 1) the illness is often experienced subjectively, 2) there are often no objective standards for diagnosis or treatment, 3) doctors often exercise enormous discretion, 4) patients also exercise a lot of discretion and 5) patient cooperation is often crucial to any cure. Unlike fixing a broken leg, these are precisely the conditions that make patient cost sharing highly desirable.

If I haven't convinced you so far, consider this National Bureau of Economic Research study finding: 38 percent of all mental health patients - representing 28 percent of all treatment visits - are people who do not have any mental health disorder.

No matter how bad the new law is, the proponents wish it were worse - and they won't be satisfied. If the history of other mandates is a guide, the advocates will be back for another round in the not too distant future.

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

<http://www.ncpa.org/pub/ba/ba410/>

<http://www.ncpa.org/pub/ba/ba411/>

<http://www.ncpa.org/pub/ba/ba412/>

Responsible 2008 Budget

by Andrew Grossman

The budget blueprint reported out of the House Budget Committee recently and supported by Democratic leadership is a study in fiscal irresponsibility. Coming on the heels of a campaign season in which Democrats slammed Republicans' profligacy, the House budget resolution boosts discretionary spending, does nothing to tackle out-of-control entitlement spending, and, worst of all, would impose the largest tax increase ever on the American people. The shortcomings of this budget are thrown into relief by a substitute proposal made by Representative Paul Ryan, ranking member of the House Budget Committee, and House Republicans. The Republican budget would freeze non-defense discretionary spending while directing more money to priority areas, take several steps toward entitlement reform, strengthen budget enforcement, and extend the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts that have done so much for the economy. The Republican budget sets a standard that Congress should strive to meet.

The Democrats' Budget

The House budget resolution reported out of committee and scheduled for a floor vote makes much of the claim that it would balance the budget in just a few years. And it would accomplish this goal on the backs of taxpayers. Even so, the balanced budget would be temporary because the budget does not take steps to rein in coming increases in Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

To begin with, the budget assumes tax increases of \$900 billion over five years, which would be accomplished in part by allowing the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts to expire. These tax cuts have been successful at promoting economic growth by reducing disincentives to work and encouraging investment. Since their enactment, economic growth has been robust, and the economy has added nearly 8 million new jobs. Allowing these tax cuts to expire risks great damage to the economy and would raise taxes on 4.7 million Americans. In addition, the budget does not provide for an "AMT fix" that would prevent the Alternative Minimum Tax's boom from sweeping in more Americans.

Further, the budget proposes large increases in spending on tax compliance and assumes that the result will be additional revenues squeezed out of taxpayers. But IRS officials are less optimistic, predicting that the increased revenues would be minor—nowhere near enough to pay for the budget's spending increases. Moreover, the last time Congress acted to eke more funds out of the "tax gap," it set the stage for widespread IRS abuses, eventually sparking a taxpayer backlash. With the greater complexity of the tax code today, it is likely that taxpayers would suffer even more.

The budget would use these increased revenues to pay for increases in non-defense discretionary spending, boosting such spending by \$22.5 billion in FY 2008. Further, the budget assumes that non-defense discretionary spending will rise faster than the projected rate of inflation from FY 2009 through 2012.

At the same time, the budget's pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) provision would allow for increases in entitlement spending if matched by additional tax increases. The budget also includes an additional \$115 billion in "reserve fund" spending that would have to be offset by cuts elsewhere or (more likely) still more tax increases.

A Difference in Vision

The Republican substitute budget (PDF link) differs significantly from the majority's proposal. While it would also balance the budget, by 2012, it would accomplish this without raising taxes. The key to the plan is freezing discretionary spending and starting to reform the big entitlement programs.

On the tax side, the Republican budget would extend the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts, thus avoiding the largest tax increase in history and addressing the risk of economic slowdown. Unlike the majority budget, it assumes an extension of AMT relief, which is all but certain. Finally, it would fix PAYGO so that it applies only to spending increases, focusing, as is appropriate, on the size of government and reducing the risk of entitlement expansions matched with tax hikes.

The Republican budget also takes several important steps to rein in out-of-control spending. First, it would implement a five-year freeze in non-defense discretionary spending, limiting Congress's ability to boost funds for pet projects and ineffective programs. This freeze would also encourage Congress to prioritize its spending, making the kinds of tradeoffs that families make when they decide how to spend their money. Congress has fallen short in this; non-defense discretionary spending grew 40 percent (21 percent after inflation) from 2001 through 2006. The Republican budget, however, stresses the need for tradeoffs by accommodating increases for important priorities, such as veterans' health care.

No less important, the Republican budget does not shortchange defense. Rather, it meets the President's request for defense funding in FY 2008 and 2009.

The other crucial step in the Republican budget is that it would start down the road to reforming the big entitlement programs. These programs grow on autopilot from year to year and are poised to swamp the budget with the retirement of the baby boomers, pushing the size of government to unprecedented heights and threatening major tax increases. Instead of putting off dealing with entitlements—and thus making it more difficult and expensive to fix them later—the Republican proposal would enact several reforms that would save a projected \$279 billion over 5 years. This is an important step toward addressing the nation's long-term spending crisis.

Finally, the Republican budget includes several measures to prevent Congress from getting around its budget commitments and using gimmicks to boost spending. First, the Republican budget includes funds for emergency appropriations. Emergency funding bills have become so routine, and so loaded with non-emergency spending, that it is disingenuous to exclude them from any budget proposal. Second, it includes a presidential line-item veto measure that could have some success in trimming pork from the budget. Finally, as mentioned, it includes a PAYGO provision that focuses on the real problem—growth in spending.

Conclusion

Unlike the House Democrats' budget resolution, the Republican budget substitute embodies a vision of fiscal restraint and economic growth. It begins to address the difficult problem of unrestrained growth in entitlement spending and maintains the tax cuts that promote continued economic growth. Members of Congress should give the measures of the Republican budget serious consideration and use the proposal as a basis for responsibly getting the budget under control.

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Editor**

Rethinking Egypt and Israel

by Daniel Pipes

Ninety-two percent of respondents in a [poll of one thousand Egyptians](#) over 18 years of age called Israel an enemy state. In contrast, a meager 2% saw Israel as "a friend to Egypt."

These hostile sentiments express themselves in many ways, including a popular song titled "[I Hate Israel](#)," venomously [antisemitic political cartoons](#), bizarre [conspiracy theories](#), and [terrorist attacks against visiting Israelis](#). Egypt's leading democracy movement, [Kifaya](#), not long ago launched an initiative to collect a million signatures on a petition demanding the annulment of the March 1979 [Egypt-Israel peace treaty](#).



Daniel Pipes

Also, the Egyptian government has permitted large quantities of weapons to be smuggled into Gaza to use against Israeli border towns. [Yuval Steinitz](#), an Israeli legislator specializing in Egypt-Israel relations, estimates that fully 90% of PLO and Hamas explosives come from Egypt.

Cairo may have no apparent enemies, but the impoverished Egyptian state sinks massive resources into a military build up. According to the [Congressional Research Service](#), it purchased \$6.5 billion worth of foreign weapons in the years 2001-04, more than any other state in the Middle East. In contrast, the Israel government bought only \$4.4 billion worth during that period and the Saudi one \$3.8 billion.

Egypt ranked as the third largest purchaser of arms in the entire developing world, following only population giants China and India. It has the tenth largest [standing army](#) in the world, well over twice the size of Israel's.

This long, ugly record of hostility exists despite a peace treaty with Israel, hailed at the time by both Egypt's president [Anwar El-Sadat](#) and Israel's prime minister [Menachem Begin](#) as a "historic turning point." U.S. president [Jimmy Carter](#) hoped it would begin a new era when "violence no longer dominates the Middle East." I too shared in this enthusiasm.

With the benefit of retrospect, however, we see that the treaty did palpable harm in at least two ways. First, it [opened the American arsenal](#) and provided American funding to purchase the latest in weaponry. As a result, for the first time in the Arab-Israeli conflict, an Arab armed force may have [reached parity with its Israeli counterpart](#).

Second, it spurred anti-Zionism. I lived for nearly three years in Egypt in the 1970s, before Sadat's dramatic trip to Jerusalem in late 1977, and I recall the relatively low interest in Israel at that time. Israel was plastered all over the news but it hardly figured in conversations. Egyptians seemed happy to delegate this issue to their government. Only after the treaty, which many Egyptians saw as a betrayal, did they themselves take direct interest. The result was the emergence of a more personal, intense, and bitter form of anti-Zionism.

The same pattern was replicated in Jordan, where the 1994 treaty with Israel soured popular attitudes. To a lesser extent, the 1993 Palestinian accords and even the aborted 1983 Lebanon treaty prompted similar responses. In all four of these cases, diplomatic agreements prompted a surge in hostility toward Israel.

Defenders of the "peace process" answer that, however hostile Egyptians' attitudes and however large their arsenal, the treaty has held; Cairo has in fact not made war on Israel since 1979. However frigid the peace, peace it has been.

To which I reply: if the mere absence of active warfare counts as peace, then peace has also prevailed between Syria and Israel for decades, despite their formal state of war. Damascus lacks a treaty with Jerusalem, but it also lacks [modern American weaponry](#). Does an antique signature on a piece of paper offset Egypt's Abrams tanks, F-16 fighter jets, and Apache attack helicopters?

I think not. In retrospect, it becomes apparent that multiple fallacies and wishful predictions fueled Arab-Israeli diplomacy:

- Once signed, agreements signed by unelected Arab leaders would convince the masses to give up their ambitions to eliminate Israel.
- These agreements would be permanent, with no backsliding, much less duplicity.
- Other Arab states would inevitably follow suit.
- War can be concluded through negotiations rather than by one side giving up.

The time has come to recognize the Egypt-Israel treaty – usually portrayed as the glory and ornament of Arab-Israeli diplomacy – as the failure it has been, and to draw the appropriate lessons in order not to repeat its mistakes.

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**E-mail the
Editor**

DC Gun Law Out

by Bob Barr

Every once in a while — a long while — a federal court decision comes along that is so lucid and solid it deserves kudos. Thus it is with the decision rendered by the U. S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, throwing out the 30-year-old Washington, D. C., ban on private ownership of firearms.

While the 2-1 decision directly affects only the District of Columbia, the opinion will likely be widely cited in other jurisdictions. Even though the District of Columbia government has indicated it will appeal the decision to the full Court of Appeals panel, this case may well become the vehicle through which the Supreme Court will, after more than two-and-a-quarter centuries, squarely address the question of whether and to what extent the Second Amendment to the Constitution protects an individual right to keep and bear arms.



Bob Barr

The case on which this seminal opinion was based was brought by six average citizens of the nation's capital. In fact, the parties included a police officer in the District who was authorized to carry a handgun while working at the Federal Judicial Center, but was prohibited from keeping a gun at his home.

The District of Columbia was joined in its effort to uphold its anti-firearms law by the Brady gun control organization, and by governors and mayors of many pro-gun control cities and states, including Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, New York City, San Francisco and Chicago. While Eleanor Holmes Norton, the District of Columbia's non-voting delegate in the House of Representatives was vehement in blaming the National Rifle Association for the Court of Appeals' decision, the NRA was simply one of a long list. Pro-Second Amendment attorneys general and civil rights organizations filed friend-of-the-court briefs backing the six District of Columbia residents.

The two judges who authored the 58-page majority opinion began and ended their decision with the one-sentence-long Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States: "A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms shall not be infringed." The jurists quoted liberally from previous court decisions that touched on different aspects of the Second Amendment, and they drew on historical writings and debates surrounding adoption of the amendment. But the judges relied as well on common sense and basic rules of grammar in concluding that:

- The right to keep and bear arms, as a fundamental right of a free people similar to those rights dealt with in other parts of the Bill of Rights, existed independently of and preceded the document in which they were enumerated.
- The right is an individual one as opposed to a collective or civic right.
- The operative clause in the amendment is "the right of the people," and the reference to a "Militia" is merely "prefatory."
- The right to arm oneself included the right of self-defense, and was not limited to hunting as some have argued.
- Handguns clearly were contemplated as being included in the concept of "Arms" in the amendment.

- While the right as guaranteed in the amendment is not absolute, a law that effectively prohibits its exercise cannot be tolerated.

Importantly also, the majority opinion did not attempt to go beyond the specific question presented it. For example, the court did not address the issue of whether D.C. residents have a right to carry firearms outside their homes. This narrow focus of the majority's opinion strengthens its chances for being affirmed on appeal.

The majority did, however, employ unusually strong language in its characterization of the District of Columbia's arguments seeking to have its 1976 anti-gun ordinance upheld based on its opinion that the Second Amendment reflects not an individual right but a collective right limited only to organized "militias" and that handguns were not contemplated as being included in the term "Arms." The majority referred to such arguments by the D.C. government as "outlandish," "strained," and "risible" (that is, "laughable," according to the dictionary to which I was forced to turn upon encountering the word in the opinion).

The appeals court opinion certainly does not represent the federal court system's final word on the Second Amendment. However, its clear language and sound reasoning provide hope this unfairly maligned provision in our Bill of Rights finally will be accorded the respect its companion measures have long enjoyed.

Former Congressman and U.S. Attorney Bob Barr practices law in Atlanta. He is a National Rifle Association board member. Web site: www.bobbarr.org.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Morality Separation?

by JB Williams

They call it "Separation of Church and State" and they say it is in our Constitution, that the two, religion and affairs of the state, shall never mingle. They say that the founders established a "separation clause" for the purpose of making certain that government could never establish, endorse, acknowledge or even discuss religion or morality.



Of course, none of this is factually true or accurate. But decades of intentional politically motivated disinformation on the subject and a general acceptance of the notion among those who have not bothered to verify, has caused a growing separation between basic moral tenants of free civilized co-existence and individual moral self-governance, from society at large.

The basis for a separation of religion from government affairs exists only in two places in American history. First, in the First Amendment of the Constitution which plainly says exactly what the founding fathers intended it to say, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

This clause was clearly intended to keep the federal government out of the business of dictating specific religious doctrine by way of a legislative effort, since Congress alone is the legislative branch of our government responsible for the making of all laws. But where does it imply that government must be void of any reference to religious or other moral principles or ideas? Where does it imply that government officials can make no public claim of their individual moral beliefs or religious teachings?

The second basis for the so-called "separation clause" which is specifically recorded or implied nowhere in our founding documents, is an 1802 letter written by Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury Baptist Association, in response to an inquiry which asked if the new federal government would have any power at all to legislate religious doctrine.

The entire text of Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Association reads as follows;

January 1, 1802

GENTLEMAN,

"The affectionate sentiments of esteem and approbation which you are so good as to express towards me, on behalf of the Danbury Baptist Association, give me the highest satisfaction. My duties dictate a faithful and zealous pursuit of the interests of my constituents, and in proportion as they are persuaded of my fidelity to those duties, the discharge of them becomes more and more pleasing.

Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legislative powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," thus building a wall of separation between church and State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.

I reciprocate your kind prayers for the protection and blessing of the common Father and Creator of man, and tender you for yourselves and your religious association, assurances of my high respect and esteem. (Thomas Jefferson)

Does Jefferson sound like a Godless man, or a government official unable to express his religious views in this letter? What did Jefferson say and why did he say it?

To some degree, the answer lies with what it is the Danbury Baptists were asking.

"Our Sentiments are uniformly on the side of Religious Liberty - That Religion is at all times and places a Matter between God and Individuals - That no man ought to suffer in Name, person or effects on account of his religious Opinions" (Danbury Baptist Letter)

The inquiry was sent to Jefferson because at the time, seven of the thirteen colonies (states) had already "established" state recognized Christian religions and their moral tenants as the official religions of the individual territories. The Danbury Baptists were concerned that the US Constitution might give the newly formed federal government a special right to legislate over the colonies (states) on the subject of religion, to mandate a federal religion by law.

Having experienced the sanctioning of the Church of England, this was of utmost concern to many who arrived in America for the single purpose of establishing free religious expression, recently outlawed in England.

Therefore, Jefferson's response must be read in context with the question being asked at the time. His response, was to simply affirm that which was written in the First Amendment of the US Constitution, that:

"Congress (the federal legislative branch) shall make no law (legislate) respecting (concerning) an establishment (creation or adoption) of (federal) religion, or prohibiting (silence) the free exercise thereof."

In this regard, Congress has in fact made no such laws, either establishing a federal religion or prohibiting the free exercise or expression of individual religious beliefs. However, the judicial branch has, via judicial fiat. Jefferson spoke about this too:

"The dignity and stability of government in all its branches, the morals of the people and every blessing of society depend so much upon an upright and skillful administration of justice, that the judicial power ought to be distinct from both the legislative and executive and independent upon both, that so it may be a check upon both, as both should be checks upon that." -- Thomas Jefferson to George Wythe, 1776. Papers 1:410

In an ideal free world as envisioned by the founders in 1776, this would be the case. However, one flaw in our founding design might have been the right of partisan politicians to seat those supposed to be "independent" of politics and political agenda, and their right to seat the high court for life, short of an impeachable offense.

By 1821, Jefferson was already seeing the fruits of this flaw:

"It is not enough that honest men are appointed judges. All know the influence of interest on the mind of man, and how unconsciously his judgment is warped by that influence. To this bias add that of the esprit de corps, of their peculiar maxim and creed that 'it is the office of a good judge to enlarge his jurisdiction,' and the absence of responsibility, and how can we expect impartial decision between the General government, of which they are themselves so eminent

a part, and an individual state from which they have nothing to hope or fear?" --
Thomas Jefferson: Autobiography, 1821. ME 1: 121

By 1823, the fruit of this error in design was falling from the tree and rotting on the ground:

"At the establishment of our Constitutions, the judiciary bodies were supposed to be the most helpless and harmless members of the government. Experience, however, soon showed in what way they were to become the most dangerous; that the insufficiency of the means provided for their removal gave them a freehold and irresponsibility in office; that their decisions, seeming to concern individual suitors only, pass silent and unheeded by the public at large; that these decisions nevertheless become law by precedent, sapping by little and little the foundations of the Constitution and working its change by construction before any one has perceived that that invisible and helpless worm has been busily employed in consuming its substance. In truth, man is not made to be trusted for life if secured against all liability to account." --Thomas Jefferson to A. Coray, 1823. ME 15: 486

As a result, some 180 years later, the general American population has come to believe that the presence of basic moral tenants have no place outside of the church. They have come to accept a complete separation of morality and society. They have adopted the notions of Godless politicians seeking ever greater political power over the people, and followed the lead of many self-appointed federal deities to the immoral destruction of self-governance, in the name of tolerance and a greater common good.

America was designed to forever be a moral people willing and able to govern themselves through the moral tenants taught in every Judeo-Christian church, once taught in every public school house.

Morality and self-governance are inseparable. If ever fully separated, both will cease to exist. and America will become just another third world nation ruled by anarchy and governed by survival of the fittest and most evil.

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

**E-mail the
Editor**

Bad Supreme Court Science

by Alan Caruba

In March of 1857, in the famed Dred Scott decision, the United States Supreme Court declared that all blacks, slaves as well as free, were not and could never become citizens of the United States. It also declared that the 1820 Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional, thus permitting slavery in all territories and future, new States. By 1861 the United States was fighting a Civil War.



Alan Caruba

Sometimes the Supreme Court makes spectacularly bad decisions and this was manifest on April 2 when five of its nine members yielded to the specious argument by twelve States and several environmental organizations that the science of "global warming" was so conclusive that it could declare that carbon dioxide (CO²) should be regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as "a pollutant."

CO² is not a pollutant. It exists in the earth's atmosphere and every blade of grass and every great tree is utterly dependent upon it. In that regard, other than the oxygen on which all living creatures depend, CO² is the second most essential gas for its ability to harness the energy of the sun and, through photosynthesis, maintain every form of vegetation on earth.

The court's ruling, however, insures that the cost of every automobile, truck and tractor in America is likely to increase for no good reason. The many mandated formulations of gasoline that are part of its cost might also increase.

As William O'Keefe, the chief executive officer of the Marshall Institute, noted in December 2006, "Given current automotive technology," the only way to further reduce CO² emissions "would be via mandates for hybrid or diesel vehicles costing \$3,000 to \$5,000 more than gasoline counterparts." Consumers are not buying hybrid cars. Their sales currently constitute just over one percent of the market.

Requiring the auto industry to manufacture hybrids and convert diesel engines would have, O'Keefe noted, "serious economic effects." That's a nice way of saying it would be a disaster that any sane nation would avoid.

In March the leaders of General Motors, Ford, Toyota and Chrysler, along with the head of the United Auto Workers, made a rare joint appearance before a House subcommittee. According to an Associated Press report, "They stressed that proposed increases in gas mileage standards would be extremely expensive and could have calamitous results."

The UAW leader, Ron Gettelfinger, noted that it could include the closing of additional facilities and the loss of tens of thousands of automotive jobs.

It's not like CO² even constitutes a problem. According to the Department of Energy, CO² represents a concentration in the earth's atmosphere of 368 parts per million or 0.0368 percent, i.e., three hundred sixty-eight ten-thousandths of one percent! It used to be even less, but in the past there weren't six billion humans exhaling two and a half pounds of it every day.

For a long time environmentalists and political fear-mongers who have been attempting to foist the strictures of the global warming theory on the world through the Kyoto Treaty were stymied by the legislative process. The Senate totally rejected it. Now they have found five

members of the Supreme Court who decided to ignore its own 1993 standard for scientific evidence.

At the time the court said that, "the trial judge must insure that...all scientific...evidence is not only relevant, but reliable." How reliable is the science of climate change when the U.S. government continues to spend billions of dollars every year just to study it?

In the recent decision, however, Supreme Court Justice Stevens declared that CO² is "the most important...greenhouse gas." There is no scientific proof of that. Moreover, there is no proof that human activity has anything to do with the greenhouse effect.

What is the most significant greenhouse gas, accounting for an estimated 95% of the earth's greenhouse effect? It is water vapor. Its origin is 99.999% natural. If you wondered where the snow goes when it melts, it becomes for a time, water vapor. The vast percentage of the earth's surface is water!

John A. Charles, Jr., president of the Cascade Policy Institute, notes that, "emissions of hydrocarbons from cars and trucks in the U.S. have fallen 99.3% on a per-mile basis since 1968, and carbon monoxide emissions have declined by 96 percent." We already have clean air and this has occurred despite increased motor vehicle and energy use.

Contrast that with a U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization report that the global livestock sector is responsible for a higher share of greenhouse gas emissions than transport. According to the report, livestock account for 9% of anthropogenic CO² emissions, 37% of methane emissions, 64% of ammonia emissions, and 65% of global nitrous oxide.

The Supreme Court decision suggests that a global warming of significant and dangerous proportions is actually occurring, but that too is wrong. The earth has not warmed significantly since around 1850 when a century of "warming" ended with an increase of just one degree Fahrenheit.

We are going to pay the price for this decision that empowers the Environmental Protection Agency to consider CO² "a pollutant" worthy of regulation. The court had previously ruled that the EPA is *forbidden to consider cost* when setting national ambient air quality standards.

The court's decision also impacts many of the nation's power plants dependent on inexpensive coal. They are going to have to increase their rates to customers to cover the cost of major renovations. Fully half of the all electricity generated nationwide relies on coal-fired plants.

The twelve, mostly northeastern states that brought the case argued that their air quality was being adversely affected by these plants. According to an Associated Press report, "The states want to reduce the current limit by one or two micrograms of soot allowed per cubic foot of air. The current maximum is 15 micrograms."

A microgram is *one millionth* of anything, such as soot, being measured. Their idiotic lawsuit ignores the fact that particulates from as far away as the Sahara desert routinely show up in the U.S. They might as well have sued several African nations.

The 2007 court has given its blessing to the environmental movement's irrational hatred of all forms of energy that improves our lives. It's a nasty world in which the environmentalists want us to live.

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

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Editor**

Democrats Need Tax Cuts

by Thomas Lindaman

Senate Democrats recently unveiled their budget proposal, the first one they've written as the majority party in 13 years. After months of campaigning about how they were going to "roll back the Bush tax cuts" and "restore fiscal responsibility," there were high hopes for the Senate proposal. And what did they deliver? No attempts to roll back the Bush tax cuts until 2010 (which is when they would expire) and a demand that there be spending cuts to pay for the tax cuts.



Wow. Makes you glad these folks are in control of tax policy, doesn't it? Maybe next time they can propose to force Blockbuster to waive all late fees for movie and game rentals.

This year, my annual appeal for tax sanity is directed at the party who needs tax sanity the most, the Democrats. Now that they control Congress, it's their responsibility to come up with a plan to address the serious tax issues that face Americans. And if present conditions are any indication, they're going to need my help badly.

What I'm about to say may come off as condescending to some. That's because I'm convinced trusting the modern left to make economic and tax policy is like trusting Paris Hilton, Lindsey Lohan, and Britney Spears to build a nuclear reactor: you can't say precisely how much knowledge they have, but your best guess is that it's just not enough, and the results are bound to be explosive. I want you to be able to understand this so that I don't find myself being put in a 200% tax bracket because I mock Howard Dean.

Here are five suggestions to help you guys along as you try to figure out the mysteries of the tax code.

1) Tax cuts are your friends. For as much grief as Democrats have given the Bush tax cuts, or any tax cuts they don't like for that matter, the fact is that they've resulted in higher than expected income for the government. This may seem counterintuitive to liberal economists...ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ... sorry, but I always laugh when I hear or see "liberal economists." Force of habit. Anyway, time and time again tax cuts increase revenue coming into the government because lower taxes mean more money goes back into the taxpayers' pockets. And with us being a consumer-driven society, that means we spend more. And when we spend more, we pay taxes on what we buy, which goes back to the government. That, boys and girls, gives you more money to spend!

2) Tax cuts don't cost anything. If I hear another Democrat talk about how we have to pay for tax cuts, I'm going to go out in public without panties, shave my head, and go in and out of rehab like Britney Spears. Well, maybe not, but I'm still sick of hearing it. The truth is tax cuts don't cost anything to enact, unless you want to get super technical and say it costs us money for Congress to write and pass legislation and the President to sign it into law. And if you're going to get that technical, then you really need more of a life. Coming from me, that's saying something.

3) You can't have it both ways with the middle class. Democrats love to complain about the shrinking middle class in this country. Yet, what's the only tax cut they'll come out in favor of every time? A middle class tax cut. Politically, this makes sense, but logically it doesn't. Why cut the taxes of a group that's supposed to be getting smaller?

4) Drop the "pay your fair share" stuff because you don't really mean it. Democrats love to complain that the rich don't pay their fair share, and they know this for a fact because the people doing the most complaining about it have accountants to ensure they don't pay what they suggest all the rich should. Listen, I know you're trying to make yourselves look like the champions of the working guy, but socking it to the rich doesn't do the trick. You really don't want people to pay their fair share because if you did you'd be supporting a flat tax or a consumption tax. What you want to do is make the rich pay tons of money to the government while doling out the money to the poor, which helps neither rich nor poor. Just level with us for a change, wouldya?

5) Get on the alternate tax bandwagon. The current tax code is more complicated than it needs to be and you guys aren't making it any better. There are simpler ways to get the necessary tax revenue to run this country. One option is the flat tax, where everyone pays the same percentage. The other is a consumption tax, which is when people pay for the services they use. This is what we currently have, at least in theory, on such items as gasoline, tobacco, and alcohol. It doesn't matter what you prefer, either system is infinitely easier than the current tax code. If you don't think so, try doing your taxes using a long form. Which long form? Any of them! If that doesn't turn you into an alternate tax acolyte, nothing will

Okay, Congressional Democrats, the ball is in your court. You ran and won on reform, so start with reforming taxes. If you accomplish this before the 2008 elections, you might stand a shot at keeping Congress.

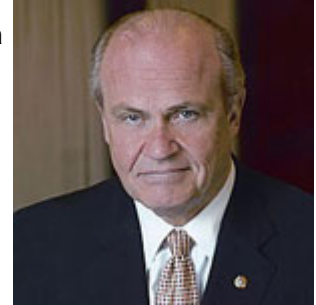
Thomas Lindaman is a Staff Writer for the New Media Alliance, Inc. and NewsBull.com. The New Media Alliance is a non-profit (501c3) national coalition of writers, journalists and grass-roots media outlets. He is also Publisher of CommonConservative.com.

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A Thompson Candidacy?

by Lisa Fabrizio

If you're like me, you feel that *The Godfather Part II* is one of maybe a dozen fine movies to come out of Hollywood in the last 50 years. In it is a scene that often comes to my mind: In Cuba, Michael Corleone says to Hyman Roth, "I saw an interesting thing happen today." While he goes on to relate a tale of Castro's guerillas, the line represents a major turning point in the plot.



Similar critical moments also occur in some political seasons, one of which may be the 2008 presidential contest. While many money men have already committed their considerable funds and fundraising machinery to one candidate or another, the hearts of many voters remain un-won.

This is especially true in the Republican Party where most of its conservative base is left largely uncommitted; wandering in the desert, searching for a savior to bring it home. The smart-money guys--this includes the above-mentioned professional consultants and operatives as well as the mainstream media--are peddling a bill of goods touting Rudy Giuliani as The One, but to many conservatives he remains a false prophet at best.

Many experts saw the 2006 midterm elections as a sign that the American electorate has soured on the GOP and the 'values' issues they reportedly held so dear in returning George W. Bush to the White House only two short years before. Indeed, media Democrats are so emboldened by their congressional majority, they feel confident enough to helpfully suggest that only a 'moderate' Republican like Rudy can hope to prevent The Clintons Part II.

Recently I wrote of the amazing draft Fred Thompson movement. And this week, I saw an interesting thing happen. As dubiously as I normally regard polling data, the latest from [Rasmussen](#)--its first *national* telephone survey involving Thompson--may be highly instructive. The results show that without even the brim of his hat in the ring, he already leads Hillary Clinton by a percentage point.

True, it also has him trailing Barack Obama by 12%, but the bad news for Obama is that although he has a robust 54% favorability rating, he has a 36% unfavorable mark, which means that only 10% of those polled are left with no opinion of him. Likewise, only two percent are undecided about Mrs. Clinton; not surprising since she's been in the national spotlight for nearly 15 years. And while Rudy beats both of them head to head [poll-wise](#), only a slim five percent of those polled had no opinion of him.

In other words, with nine months to go before the first primaries kick off, most folks have their minds made up about the front-runners. On the other hand, according to the poll Thompson shows a 36% favorable and only a 23% unfavorable number meaning that he's got a potential 41% of the folks to win over. Should his Reagan-like affability and common sense values appeal to say, even half of them, we've got ourselves a horse-race with a real conservative entry in it.

There are those who say that it's too late for Fred; that it takes an enormous amount of time to build up name recognition. These people obviously never sit around, as do I, enjoying adult beverages with regular folks who can effortlessly identify everyone, from last night's contestants on American Idol to the latest missing mountaineer by name.

Some also contend that he's way behind in endorsements and fundraising. But [scuttlebutt](#) has it that nearly one quarter of House Republicans may be ready to back him when he visits Capitol Hill on April 18th. And money from grassroots conservatives and the rest of the Vast Right Wing Conspiracy could pile up quickly should they feel they have one of their own in the fight.

And so, following Vito Corleone's advice to his son regarding enemies, let's listen to what our close friends at the [Daily Kos](#) think of Thompson:

[H]e's popular with the Republican base and has proven electoral appeal with swing voters and independents... he's very intelligent, a strong speaker and an excellent debater...Moreover, he would have several strengths against any of our top three candidates. He comes off to most as more likable than Hillary Clinton. Unlike McCain, Giuliani or Romney, he'll certainly out-Southern John Edwards. And he'll score well on the gravitas score against either Edwards or Obama (less so for the latter).

Let's hope he doesn't run, or that if he does, all the top money and operatives have already been snatched up and he gains no more traction than, say, Mike Huckabee.

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

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Editor**

Support U.S. Hero

by Melanie Morgan

I don't know about you, but I've been bothered by the media's recent behavior regarding the controversy surrounding Walter Reed Medical Center.

It seems like the media is more interested in demoralizing our wounded warriors, and putting them in the middle of a media frenzy, than they are in improving the quality of care our wounded heroes receive.

I've applauded efforts by groups such as FreeRepublic.com to hold pro-troop, "We Love You" vigils outside Walter Reed. They've done this so that the recovering troops and their families didn't have to only see the anti-war "Code Pink" protestors who have conducted weekly protests in an attempt to shame our troops for serving in their missions in Iraq & Afghanistan.

Now there's something ALL OF US can do to help the men and women recovering from their injuries at Walter Reed.

I've learned of an incredibly uplifting account by an American hero who defied the odds to serve as an inspiration for the people of this nation. The story is relayed in the new book, "[My Decision to Live](#)" by Nader Elguindi.

The proceeds from this new book will directly benefit the recovering troops at Walter Reed Medical Center.

Nader Elguindi is a volunteer peer advisor at Walter Reed, and with good reason. He overcame a horrific accident that severed both of his legs, causing him to permanently lose his right foot. Elguindi overcame the odds, miraculously clinging to life and then rebounding to become the first U.S. Navy submarine officer to earn his qualifications (Dolphins) with a prosthetic leg.

At a time when it seems like all we hear from the media are negative stories about our heroic men and women of the U.S. military, now we can hear about a tale of heroism and bravery.

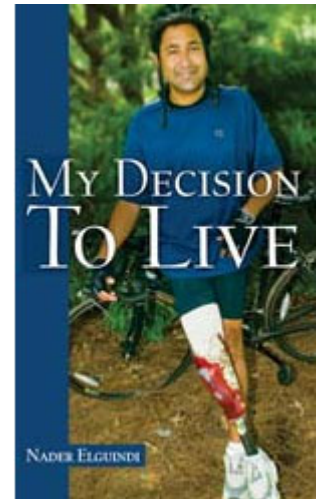
And again, every single book purchased will help our heroes at Walter Reed.

I am not making a single cent by helping to promote this book. None of the proceeds will go towards Move America Forward either.

The incentive I have to help out is the motivation to have Nader Elguindi's incredible story shared with this nation, and in doing so to help improve the lives of those who have been injured in their brave service to this nation.

Please help, by getting a copy of "[My Decision to Live](#)" right now.

Melanie Morgan is chairman of Move Forward America



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Reader Comments

Editor: Thanks for your "Christian Unity" issue. Keep up the good work. Shannon Reeves

Editor: "Christian Unity" is nicely done. You finessed the premature release of the Anglican material I originally sent and put it into its proper context. And your explanation of Christian tolerance is elegantly simply and very clear. Best, Joseph A. Morris

Editor: Very good article on "Christian Unity." There is an interesting article on the Opinion Journal web site about Biblical interpretation of divorce by David Instone-Brewer on April 6, 2007. Something the Church should think about. Grounds for divorce would be adultery, neglect--emotional and physical, abandonment and abuse. Hope you had a pleasant Easter, Tim Sullivan

Editor: Thanks for the very interesting article on "Christian Unity," especially for Easter. Rich Byman

Editor: "Christian Unity" is an interesting article with a very optimistic outlook. In reality, a biblically sound definition of Christian would separate out many of the so called "Christian Denominations" leaving true Christians who could in fact unite. However, Catholics would be excluded by definition and would not change anyway for union. Union with the Catholic Church would require all joining denominations to bow to the doctrines of the Catholic Church, which would obviate the results of the Protestant Reformation. Dream on. The only union of Christians will truly be the meeting of the believers in the air with our Lord at the rapture. John Roush

Editor: Contrary to your "Christian Unity," the history and evolution of the visible Christian church with its many denominations cannot be viewed as the real church. The real Christian church consists exclusively of those individuals who have trusted alone in Jesus Christ for their salvation (not in their own good deeds). Many of these individuals are not members of any denomination. But Christ knows who they are and they know that they belong to Him. Christian unity is a question of individual Christ-like character development through Faith in Jesus and Obedience to what He has told us to do. Jeff Tucker

Editor: Regarding your editorial, "Christian Unity," Christian unity can only be achieved by adherence to the Bible. Groups that add man's ideas to the scriptures (Enlightenment, etc)

cannot be part of a unity with a denomination that considers the scriptures to be the ONLY rule of faith and practice. Organic union on any other basis only joins secular groups in a man centered religion. Frank Ells

Editor: Your article "Christian Unity" was well expressed. Thank you. I recently came to the conclusion that "a religion" is good for the individual person but it is bad for society. The deeper religion gets into dogma, the wider the divide. Some of our forefathers' beliefs led them to spiritual Unitarianism, a common simple belief in a deity and willingness to treat others as you would want them to treat you--a base point for a society with a conscience to establish social moral and ethical beliefs which ennoble all society. People would recognize the difference between their religion and a society: but would the religious leaders? Charles Fisenne

Editor: I have actually taught Biblical allusions under the form of rhetorical devices and literary terms for years, because students cannot read any Western literature without them. Juniors and seniors in high school and freshmen in college do not know who Moses is, what 40 days and 40 nights mean, the crown of thorns, etc. Worse maybe, if they have some inkling of Moses, they think he "invented the Ten Commandments". I just had a student write me that sentence. I will say outright to my classes that I cannot tell them what to believe, but if they want to achieve in reading literature or even understand the evening news, they have to have a good comprehension of Biblical allusions. Although I am not particularly a conspiracy nut, I do believe the decades-long opposition to any mention of religion in public schools by leftists like the ACLU is the destruction of the foundations of Western arts (and civilization). If you are not cognizant, the same leftist assault is occurring in archeology to "prove" Solomon and David (10th and 11th Centuries BC) never existed and, ergo, Israel never was a state; therefore, today Israel should not be a state. Renny Hartmann, adjunct professor, Ocean County College (formerly honors teacher public schools)

Editor: Bill Sizemore has written an absolutely excellent treatment of a problem that cannot seem to get traction in our country in his "Reforming the Schools." We sit idly on the sidelines as our school children are denied opportunities to learn, as our country descends into "third-world" mediocrity and as this nation becomes less and less competitive in this world of rapid change. Thank you, NEA (WEA in Washington) for your blindly selfish approach to your own needs instead of to your responsibility for the education of our children. Eynon Hughes

Editor: Hurrah for Bill Sizemore's "Reforming the Schools"! It is what Thinking People Everywhere are Saying! Susan C. Sherman

Editor: The link for 'The Great Global Swindle' is not available. Wanda Wikoff [*Editor replies: The site was taken down after publication. A new link is on site at <http://www.veoh.com/videos/v291101Y8Pqys52>*]

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