



CONSERVATIVE BATTLELINE ONLINE

The "Bold Colors" Conservative Voice in Washington

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How Big Government Will Fall

By Donald Devine

One has to admire the liberal capacity to whistle past the graveyard. Rather than face the fact government is out of funds to pay for new programs, progressives are now forced to deny there even is any such problem as big government.

Bill Clinton once said the era of big government was over but the thinker he gave credit as inspiration for his "New Democratic" thinking, E.J. Dionne, now claims that big and small government are simply "catchphrases" that "explain remarkably little about what politicians do or what voters want." He then cites Republican spending on Iraq, farm programs and health care as examples of "conservatives" favoring big government. On the other side, Michigan's Democratic Governor Jennifer Granholm is presented as a liberal facing a tough budget fight who wants to "put that old stuff aside" about big government and all just agree only on whatever spending is really needed.



In other words, it is not about big or small government for liberals or conservatives but how to spend what the taxpayers will pay. Translation: we should just give the progressive experts the money they want and let them make the decisions for us. It is the same-old, same-old that we should all be reasonable and become good progressive. But things have changed. Taxpayers will no longer give more. Dionne in particular has been a consistent advocate for a national health care system for all Americans. But he recognizes that people are probably not willing to pay the large costs and suffer the restrictions on medical availability this would require without some offsets and changes elsewhere.



Jennifer Granholm

This dilemma is excruciating as progressives near power. Now that Democrats are in charge of Congress, they have proposed a large expansion of the children's health program (by calling people "children" up to 25 years of age and defining "low income" up to 400% of the poverty level). But to win Congress, now Speaker Nancy Pelosi had also promised to "end irresponsible budget policies" and "restore pay-as-you-go budget discipline." So they propose to pay for the increase by cutting the popular Medicare Advantage program and increasing an insurance tax by \$375 million the first year. Granholm too proposes to save money to pay for her new programs in health and education by shortening sentences for less dangerous criminals and turning some crimes into misdemeanors so she can cut prison expenses.

The problem is these modest offsets to the new spending probably will not cover its long term costs and certainly will do nothing about the looming entitlement crisis. Over the next few years at the national level, spending will explode and fewer taxpayers will be available to support it. High-cost, low tax-paying seniors will surge from 12 to 20 percent of the population and the productive young will decline. If nothing is done, by 2030 Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security will consume 75 percent of the national government's real budget, according to the Congressional Budget Office, eating up the whole national government--with people less willing and able to pay the bills.

It is amazing how tough budgets make progressives deal with reality. Explaining Granholm's relative pragmatism, Dionne notes that at the state and local levels unlike the national, "the relationship between the taxes citizens must pay and the government programs that voters want is more explicit." But this fact that states and localities are more tied to concrete budgets is precisely why small government conservatives--and incidentally America's Founders--prefer the smaller government of states over a big and remote national government that can borrow and inflate the money supply without anyone understanding the "relationship," allowing it to be ignored.

It is not as if Dionne really does not understand this—after all he recognizes the states are limited and the national government basically is unrestrained—but he suffers the perpetual progressive dilemma: recognizing the difficulty of paying for the bills but constantly seeking more and more government programs to resolve more and more concerns. Indeed, after Bill Clinton was elected president, Dionne warned that if progressives did not undertake reforms in Medicare, Social Security and the other entitlements these programs would absorb the national government so that progressives would have no new money to spend to solve the nation's problems. President Clinton even considered entitlement reform early in his administration, calling it an obligation to the memory of Franklyn Roosevelt. But events soon intruded and the promise went unfulfilled.



Franklin D. Roosevelt

No political party has elected a president of the same party whose unpopularity has been as high as George W. Bush's today. So President Hillary Clinton just might get the opportunity to fulfill the obligation, if not for Franklin for Eleanor. Once in power, the entitlement facts will demand her attention. Notice the unprecedented recent reference by the Comptroller General of the U.S., David Walker, to the "striking similarities" between America's current situation and the factors that brought down Rome, including "declining moral values and political civility at home, an over-confident and over-extended military in foreign lands and fiscal irresponsibility by the central government. With the looming retirement of baby boomers, spiraling healthcare costs, plummeting savings rates and increasing reliance on foreign lenders, we face unprecedented fiscal risks."

Walker advised the candidates for president: "They need to make fiscal responsibility and inter-generational equity one of their top priorities. If they do, I think we have a chance to turn this around but if they don't, I think the risk of a serious crisis rises considerably." I bet Hillary will listen. Notice how reasonable and responsible she has become as she approaches power. Her major "big idea" is a national public service academy. Politically, it is clever. It sounds progressive to train all those good bureaucratic experts to solve all of the nation's problems. Actually, there already is a Federal Executive Institute—and it did not prevent the Katrina fowl-up—and no one trusts the experts anymore, anyway so it is silly policy. But it sounds like she is doing something—and it costs nothing! Smart.

Facing the very dilemma Dionne predicted back in the 1990s, President Hillary will be forced to try and cut entitlements to allow her and her progressives friends to implement their other expensive dreams. However, to solve the problem with additional taxes, it would require a 30 to 50 percent increase—impossible politically or economically. So she will have no choice. By then the squeeze will be too apparent to ignore. She—or some other future progressive--will have to shed other domestic programs in order save enough funds to make the bargain.

That is how big government will end. Solving the enormous entitlement crisis will force many current national programs to states, communities and the private sector. That is not the liberal plan but the inevitable result. Sure the remaining entitlements will still be large as will national and homeland security but many of the other responsibilities arrogated to the national level by Mr. Roosevelt will be forced back where they belong to smaller governments, paradoxically accomplished by a progressive Democrat, and in the not too distant future.



Hillary Clinton

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

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Editor**

Kyoto 10th Anniversary

by Myron Ebell

Ten years ago today the U.S. Senate did something that at the time seemed significant and now seems remarkably foresightful. By a vote of 95 to 0, the Senate voted in favor of the Byrd-Hagel resolution, which expressed the Sense of the Senate on the upcoming global warming negotiations in Kyoto, Japan.

Exercising its constitutional authority to advise the President on treaties, the Senate resolved that the U.S. should not sign any international agreement to set mandatory limits on greenhouse gas emissions that: (1) did not also set emissions limits on developing countries; and (2) that "would result in serious harm to the economy of the United States."

Further, the Senate advised that any treaty sent to it for ratification "should be accompanied by a detailed explanation of any legislation or regulatory actions" that would be required to implement it, plus "an analysis of the detailed financial costs and other impacts on the economy" that would result from implementing it.



To a large extent, the position that the Clinton administration took at Kyoto met the Senate's requirements. But when the negotiations faltered and threatened to collapse, President Clinton allowed Vice President Al Gore to fly to Kyoto in early December 1997 and capitulate. The resulting Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change of 1992 met neither of the Senate's conditions.

Although President Clinton signed the Kyoto Protocol in 1998, it's no surprise that he never sent it to the Senate for ratification. While President Clinton received very little criticism for not submitting Kyoto for ratification, when President Bush made the same decision in 2001 (for good Byrd-Hagel-ish reasons), the reaction was rather different. Environmental pressure groups, major European leaders, and leading Democrats branded Bush as the world's top environmental criminal.



Although Bush was right to reject Kyoto, in my opinion he went wrong when he did not make his case squarely on the Byrd-Hagel resolution. He should either have removed the U.S.'s signature (as he did from the International Criminal Court treaty) on the grounds that it didn't meet the conditions set by Byrd-Hagel; or, even better, he should have sent the treaty to the Senate for a ratification vote together with the required analysis of the measures and costs to implement it. There is no doubt that the Senate would have defeated it overwhelmingly -- and still would today. A Senate vote would have made it clear to the European Union and the international environmental

establishment that Kyoto was dead in the U.S. and not just because President Bush was a Texas oilman.

What has happened since Byrd-Hagel has confirmed the Senate's foresight and prudence. The EU is proving that it is possible to incur high costs to cut emissions without actually cutting them. Since Kyoto was negotiated in 1997, emissions have actually been rising faster in percentage terms in the EU than in the U.S.

As for developing nations, no one in 1997 predicted that annual Chinese emissions would equal U.S. emissions within a decade, as happened this year. And Chinese emissions will continue to rise rapidly if their economic growth continues at around 10 percent per year.

Thus, had the Senate ratified Kyoto, the U.S. would now be incurring huge economic costs to reduce emissions, while China and other rising competitors such as India and Brazil would not.

But that is history. The question is, what is the relevance of Byrd-Hagel for U.S. policy today? Global warming alarmists answer, none. And they also point out that the Senate agreed when it superseded Byrd-Hagel with the Bingaman-Domenici Sense of the Senate on Climate Change Resolution in 2005. That resolution said Congress should enact mandatory limits to "slow, stop, and reverse the growth" of greenhouse gas emissions.

True, but Bingaman-Domenici also kept the Byrd-Hagel proviso that such limits should "not significantly harm" the economy. Instead of requiring that developing nations also adopt energy-rationing policies, Bingaman-Domenici merely suggests that the programs enacted should be designed so as to encourage other countries to adopt similar programs. It does not therefore supersede Byrd-Hagel, but rather softens somewhat the conditions for enacting an energy-rationing scheme.

As the Congress and President Bush move forward with new global warming policies, I think they would be wise to do so within the limits set by Byrd-Hagel, or at the least within the slightly less confining limits set by Bingaman-Domenici. What would this mean specifically? President Bush agreed at the G-8 plus 5 summit in June to participate in new international negotiations on what should follow after Kyoto expires on January 1, 2013. The President has said that the U. S. will consider a further round of mandatory emissions reductions, but has also insisted that the negotiations include the 15 countries with the highest emissions.

This is within the spirit of Byrd-Hagel because any agreement resulting from these negotiations would include China, India, and Brazil, as well as Britain and Germany. The question is why countries like China would ever agree to put such limits on their economic growth just because the EU, Japan, and the U. S. agreed to do so, or even why the U.S. would agree to do this. Moreover, international treaties do not have the same status in other countries as in the U. S. The EU, Canada, and Japan are failing to meet their Kyoto targets even though they ratified a UN treaty. That could not happen in this country. If the federal government was failing to enforce Kyoto, citizens could file suit in federal court to order the government to meet the targets. A federal judge would oversee our compliance.

The proviso to do no significant economic harm is a much higher hurdle to jump. President Bush recognized this when he nixed Kyoto and instead set voluntary targets for U. S. industry. The Bush administration also helped organize the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, which takes no interest in setting mandatory targets. Instead, its purpose is to foster development and deployment of new technologies that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

As for the Congress, there is now strong momentum to pass cap-and-trade legislation unilaterally. Many members of Congress now support measures that would force Americans to lower their use of hydrocarbon energy whether other countries are requiring similar cuts or not. That is, the goal of slowing and stopping global warming has been supplanted by energy rationing as an end in itself. This is directly contrary to Byrd-Hagel and is utter foolishness. The issue of the costs of cutting emissions has been swept under the rug by many members of Congress for years.

However, recently a glimmer of Byrd-Hagel sanity has been seen in Congress. Representative John Dingell, Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, announced that he will introduce a bill to put a tax on hydrocarbon energy use. He explained that his purpose will be to show the American people what the true costs of global warming policies are and thereby to show the

Congress that most Americans will not support such policies once they know what the costs are. Dingell's education lesson should be taken up seriously by other responsible members of Congress (of whom there are still some) and by the Bush administration. They should undertake a thorough study of the measures that would be required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions substantially and of the resulting costs.

This would not only comply with Byrd-Hagel, it would also force the Congress to confront the underlying economic realities. Global warming policies can be designed that will not do significant economic harm to the economy. Policies can also be designed that will reduce emissions significantly. No one has yet figured out what policies can accomplish both those goals.

Myron Ebell is director of energy and global warming policy at the Competitive Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C . This article originally appeared in Human Events.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Why Gas Costs More

by Alan Caruba

Finding, extracting, transporting, and refining crude oil is a very expensive business. It is also a very risky one. There are no guarantees that one will find oil and, finding it, there are no guarantees that the investment and all the assets involved will not be stolen by the governments that invite oil companies to tap their natural resources.

If you want to know why gasoline and everything made from oil is going to cost more in the years ahead, I give you, ladies and gentlemen, Hugo Chavez, dictator of Venezuela, and a number of other nations who have engaged in extortion.



Alan Caruba

On June 26, Hugo Chavez told the Big Oil companies that had invested in Venezuela's Orinoco Belt that they were going to have to sell their assets at a ridiculously low price to Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA), the state oil company. They were instructed to hand over majority control as part of Chavez's nationalization program.

In power since 1999, this disciple of Fidel Castro fired 75% of the managers of the state company after they staged a strike in 2003. Only the increased investment by foreign-owned companies kept Venezuela's oil industry from total implosion. This year he showed his appreciation by forcing out British Petroleum, Chevron, Total, and Norway's Statoil. ConocoPhillips and Exxon Mobil Corporation have since concluded they too could not continue their operations in Venezuela.

The popular myth about Big Oil is that it wields such great power that nation states cannot resist them. The reality is that, faced with dictators like Chavez, often the only alternative is to leave or cut the best deal they can. The other reality is that Venezuela's oil production has declined 25% since Chavez, a committed Communist, crushed the strike. With the major oil companies departing, how much greater a decline lies ahead? That is just one reason gasoline will cost more.

Russia may no longer be officially Communist, but it continues to be run like a Communist state. As Business Week recently reported, in June Russia "forced BP to sell a controlling stake in a massive east Siberian gas field called Kovykta for around \$700 million—a fraction of the project's potential value. Last year, Moscow strong-armed Royal Dutch Shell PLC into giving up control of its big Sakhalin II gas project in the Far East, and it's now battling Exxon Mobil over a similar field nearby."

Our neighbor to the south, Mexico, won't even allow foreign investment in its oil industry. Its nationalized oil company, Pemex, needs lots of capitol investment, but isn't getting it. That may lead to a decline in production.

Add to this the situation in Iraq that has caused a decline in oil production. Who can say what events will occur in Iran if it continues its intention to build nuclear weapons? Then add in the worldwide oil industry's need to grow by at least 3% annually to keep up with demand.

You're looking at a world that needs new production estimated at four million barrels per day and it's not going to happen. You don't just create production or refining capacity overnight. It requires lots of money, something the free market Big Oil companies have been willing to risk up to now. That's something Communists don't do.

There are other options, but right now the Democrats who control the U.S. Congress, led by Speaker Pelosi and Sen. Harry Reid, are howling like moon-besotted coyotes that the United States must become "energy independent."

Congress is refusing to allow known, vast oil reserves in Alaska to be extracted, or to facilitate exploration and extraction of other potentially vast reserves of oil and natural gas off the continental shelf of the United States. Indeed, they want to punish Big Oil for whatever profits they may have garnered from their investments in the Gulf of Mexico.

The vast matrix of insane "environmental" laws and regulations has made it impossible, i.e. unprofitable, to build a single new refinery in the United States since the 1970s. The New York Times recently reported that mechanical breakdowns in U.S. refineries "have created a bottleneck in domestic energy supplies", helping to drive up the cost of gasoline. Even if an oil company was to begin construction tomorrow, you're still years away from it coming on line.

Instead, the Democrats are wailing about "global warming" and "climate change", demanding the imposition of "cap and trade carbon credits" and, in general, racing toward the worst possible choices for a nation whose energy needs are being ignored in the name of fraudulent science and pure politics.

These are things you need to think about as the cost of a gallon of gasoline goes up at your local gas station or the price of heating oil rises as winter closes in on the northeast and elsewhere.

The mandated, increased production of ethanol from corn that Congress has imposed is already driving up food costs. Ethanol is so corrosive it cannot be sent through pipelines, so imagine what it doing to the engine of your car? As for the trucking industry on which the nation depends for the delivery of practically everything, its increased costs will just add to the cost of practically everything.

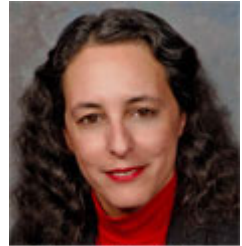
It is a "perfect storm" of international criminality when Communist thugs and others decide to line their pockets and bully the rest of the world. This is the kind of thing that causes wars and economic woes.

Alan Caruba writes a 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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No To You-Tube

by Liza Fabrizio



Lisa Fabrizio

The big news is that leading GOP presidential candidates are prepared to just say no to CNN's September edition of its YouTube debate series. In the aftermath of the other party's unutterably awful display of what passes for modern political debate in our country, this is a most welcome and commonsensical development. In addition to the most obviously embarrassing aspects of the Democrat debate — animated snowmen, phony rednecks, and a host of other wannabes eager for their 15 minutes of fame — was the inordinate amount of video-questions posed by young, MTV-types.

We unfortunately live in an age where youth trumps all. This phenomenon started in the 1960's and continues unabated today, to the extent that those who started the ball rolling have adopted a Peter Pan mentality: they won't grow up. And it was painfully apparent that the Democratic candidates, if not totally onboard with this concept, must at least pay it lip service if they want their party's nomination. So great is this feeling that the youth vote conquers, that even when choosing a commander-in-chief, immaturity rocks, dude.

This however, is nothing new. [Recall](#) the 2004 election season, when CNN televised the "Rock the Vote" Democratic debate which featured questions like, "I'd be curious to find out, if you could pick one of your fellow candidates to party with, which you would choose... If you get sick, who's going to hold your hair back? If you see a cutie across the room... who's going to be your wing man? Who's going to take one for the team?"

Things were not that different [this time](#) around, as an ad featuring Chris Dodd's hair color was aired as well as a question by a young black girl asking, "Who was your favorite teacher and why?" Cute stuff, but not exactly what Time Magazine's Ana Marie Cox [wrote](#) would be "heralded as an almost life-changing event for American voters."

Of course there were some illuminating moments, one of which was this treasonous ditty from Mike Gravel: "Well, of course I want to take credit and admit that I'm the guy that filibustered for five months, all by myself, in the Senate to end the draft in the United States of America. And I'm very proud of that because George Bush does not have the boots on the ground to invade Iran."

Or this bit of vintage trial-lawyer John Edwards: "I think the people who are powerful in Washington — big insurance companies, big drug companies, big oil companies — they are not going to negotiate. They are not going to give away their power. The only way that they are going to give away their power is if we take it away from them."

But the highlights of the evening were provided by the youngsters Democrats feel will put them in the White House. Just how uninformed many of them are, was nicely illustrated by a Constitutionally-challenged little gal from St. Louis Obispo: "[I]f I can go to any state and get the same triple grande, non-fat, no foam vanilla latte from Starbucks, why I can't I go to any state and vote the same way?"

Another beaut was from Anne in Pennsylvania: "My question is, we here at Planned Parenthood support comprehensive sex education and I'd like to know if any of you as candidates have talked to your children about sex and used medically accurate and age-appropriate information?" If ever there was a "that's none of your damn business" moment, this was it. Predictably though, it was not forthcoming.

The truth, thankfully, is that the 'youth' vote will not materialize in the way long envisioned by liberals. After all of their efforts the past few years, a greater number of the 18-29 year-olds voted in '04, but failed to deliver the election to John F. Kerry. It was hardly the landslide predicted by the "[Vote or Die](#)" crowd, as 44% of the coveted demographic did the unthinkable and voted Republican.

No, I don't think we'll see that huge tsunami of liberal twenty-somethings rushing to the polls in '08 either. They're too busing ordering their lattes on the way to their Planned Parenthood gigs after which they will seek out their wing men or women to aid them in their quest for medically accurate and age-appropriate sex.

Being a 'grownup' is not simply about one's numerical age; were that so, we would not be defended so magnificently by our young people in uniform. Nor is the reverse true. Witness the petulance of the Democrat candidates toward debating on Fox News; a juvenile display of taking their bats and balls and going home if there ever was one.

Out of the 13 Republican debates, only two have or will be carried by Fox, while the rest will be hosted by, shall we say, more liberal networks, including two by the YouTube-less CNN. As for the 14 proposed Democrat confabs, all will be played on home turf.

If Democrat candidates really want to reach all young voters, maybe they should appear on Fox. After all, Barack Obama has no problem sitting down with vicious, murderous dictators; could Britt Hume be that bad?

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

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Media Support Dems

by Brent Bozell

Bill Dedman, investigative reporter for MSNBC.com, recently published a story that documents, through Federal Election Commission records, the political contributions of 144 journalists from 2004 through the start of the 2008 campaign.

The facts show: 125 journalists gave to Democrats and liberal causes while only 17 journalists gave to Republicans; another 2 gave to both parties.

This story re-confirms what the Media Research Center has been documenting for years—that most of America's newsrooms are infested with liberals and that this mindset, in countless ways, spills over into the news coverage, producing liberally biased news stories on a variety of issues: Iraq, taxes, immigration, government, culture, the arts. You name it.

The people controlling the content of the news and feeding it to the public are mostly ardent liberals who are spinning their stories with one hand and writing checks for the DNC and Moveon.org with the other hand. It is a liberal media culture and they cannot be trusted to give Americans a fair presentation of news and the issues.

Of course, journalists, like every other American have the right and should be allowed to make political contributions to whomever—Democrat, Republican, liberal or conservative. However, there should be full disclosure and reporters who give to political causes should recuse themselves from covering them.

But when CNN's Guy Raz (now a defense correspondent with NPR) gives \$500 to John Kerry the same month he was embedded with U.S. troops in Iraq in 2004, or when *The New Yorker's* Judith Thurman writes a profile of Teresa Heinz Kerry and then gives \$1000 to the Democratic National Committee, this makes a mockery of the idea of impartiality.

Kudos to MSNBC's Bill Dedman for his excellent reporting on this topic.

Brent Bozell is president of the Media Research Center



Bill Dedman

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Dark Lord

by Frederick Meekins

"Dark Lord: The Rise Of Darth Vader," the book by James Luceno, follows the exploits of the legendary Sith Lord as he hunts down a band of Jedi escaping the fate of their brethren as a result of a regiment of clonetroopers that refuse to implement order 66.

Towards the end of "Return Of The Jedi", Darth Vader turns on the Emperor and hefts the villain to his fate at the bottom of some kind energy reactor.

However, from "Dark Lord: The Rise Of Darth Vader", readers learn that this was not necessarily the result of a sudden change of heart upon seeing Palpatine hurl lightning from his fingertips at little Luke.

Rather, it slowly unfolds throughout the novel that the relationship Vader has with the Emperor is not that of a worshipful underling but instead that of a resentful sycophant wanting what his superior possesses.

"Star Wars" fans will enjoy seeing the unfolding development of familiar characters rising to prominence in the years between the two trilogies such as Chewbacca, Grand Moff Tarkin, R2D2 and C-3PO. Also of interest to devoted Star Wars fans will be the prominence given to Kashyyyk and the Wookies in the novel's climax.

Though "Star Wars" is known more for its faced paced action than its more cerebral counterpart "Star Trek", "Dark Lord" is not without profound reflective moments relevant to the chaotic times in which we live.

In an exchange with Bail Organa of Alderaan, Vader muses, "Harmony is the ideal of the New Order, Senator, not dissension." And in another insightful passage, the text reads, "The ideals of democracy hadn't been stamped out by Palpatine ... the citizens of countless worlds and star systems, grown weary of the old system, had allowed democracy to die (319)."

Were Darth Vader an actual historical figure, few good people would care what reasons he might invoke to justify his atrocities. However, as a fictional character, the saga of Anakin Skywalker serves as sympathetic warning of how small bad choices have a way of accumulating in such a manner as to ruin the lives of not only those making them but the lives of those around such individuals as well.



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3 Billion Decisions

by John Goodman

Close your eyes and try to think of every health reform plan you've ever heard of beginning with Hillary Clinton's plan about 15 years ago right up through Arnold Schwarzenegger's plan today. Think left and right. Think big and small. Don't overlook the self-serving plans devised by hospital, insurance and drug company trade groups. And don't overlook Len Nichol's plan, which is supposed to be rooted in the Old and New Testaments and the Koran.

Yes, I know. No one should have to do this on a full stomach. So you may want to put this exercise aside for a few hours and then come back to it. But if you really concentrate, at least three or four dozen plans should easily spring to mind.



John Goodman

As I have argued before, there are three important questions to be asked of one and all:

1. Does the plan force anyone--any patient, any doctor, any nurse, any hospital, any insurer, any employer, any government agency, any anybody anywhere--to choose between health care and other uses of money?
2. Does the plan force any provider of care--any doctor, any nurse, any hospital, any anybody on the provider-side--to compete for patients based on price and/or quality of care?
3. Does the plan allow patients now trapped in schemes that ration care by waiting--Medicaid, S-CHIP, Medicare, emergency room free care, VA system, CHAMPUS, Indian Health Service (Indian Health? yeah, why not?)--to have the same access to doctors, hospitals, clinics, etc., that privately insured patients have?

If the answer to the first question is "no," the plan will not control costs. If the answer to the second question is "no," the plan will not improve quality. If the answer to the third question is "no," the plan will not increase access to care. If the answer to the full set is "no, no and no" (and I believe in almost all cases it is "no, no and no"), the plan is hardly worth talking about.

Two hundred years from now, anthropologists will look back on our era and wonder why there was so much sound and fury over plans that from the get-go could not possibly succeed. To help them out, I plan to entomb this article in a cornerstone somewhere.

Health care is a complex system. It may be the most complex of any social system. Complex systems cannot be managed, planned, controlled, etc., from above. If they are functional, it is only because the people down below face good incentives and feedback loops. If 300 million potential patients make just 10 health care decisions every year, that's 3 billion decisions on the demand side of the market alone. No one can manage, plan, control, etc., 3 billion decisions, to say nothing of the supply side of the market. The problem with all of the plans you have been thinking about is that they all violate this principle.

How do we know if the participants in a complex system face good incentives and good feedback loops? We can begin by asking whether they have the power to make things better. Although the three questions above are very good questions, here are three that are even more fundamental:

4. Does the plan allow doctors and patients to freely recontract, so that a better, higher-quality bundle of care can be provided for the same or less money?
5. Does the plan allow providers to freely contract with each other to reduce costs or raise quality?

6. Does the plan allow the insured and the insurers to freely recontract in order to change the boundaries between self-insurance and third-party insurance and arrive at more desirable allocations of risk?

The really disconcerting thing is not that the answer is "no, no and no" for all of the plans. I'm sure you already anticipated that. The really troublesome thing is that the answer is "no, no and no" for the current system.

Sorry if I ruined your day.

John Goodman is president of the National Center for Policy Analysis.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Nonsense Energy Policies

by Paul Driessen

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, "it means just what I choose it to mean."

That's apparently the operative philosophy for many politicians these days. Legislators should be working to ensure that markets work properly, so that we have abundant, reliable, affordable energy – to meet the needs of a growing population and technologies that safeguard and improve our lives.

Our economy's digital infrastructure alone accounts for more than 10% of our electricity demand. Data centers are voracious energy consumers.

Unfortunately, legislative bills could more accurately be called anti-energy and even anti-environment. They may reflect gratitude for special interests that get legislators elected, but they hardly serve the interests of consumers or the nation.

These politicians insist that the United States' output of 5 billion gallons of "renewable" ethanol last year is a great victory for energy independence and the environment. As King Pyrrhus remarked, "One more such victory, and we are ruined."

This heavily subsidized fuel came from a sixth of the Montana-sized 93 million acres America planted in corn in 2006, instead of sowing other crops or leaving land as wildlife habitat. By comparison, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge could produce some 21 billion gallons of gasoline annually for 20 years from just 2,000 acres – one-twentieth of Washington, DC.

Moreover, to grow this corn, convert it into ethanol and truck the fuel to gas stations (it cannot be pipelined), we expended billions of gallons of water, millions of pounds of fertilizers and pesticides, and vast amounts of energy. Analyst Michael Economides calculates that it took nearly 9 billion gallons of gasoline equivalent to get that 5 billion gallons of ethanol.

Motorists pay more per tank for this politically correct fuel, but get less mileage than from pure gasoline. Ethanol enriches certain farmers – but raises costs for cattle, pork and chicken farmers, as well as prices of meat, milk, soft drinks, tortillas and countless other products.

When markets do this, Capitol Hill calls it price-gouging. But when politicians do it, they call it consumer protection. Hardest hit are poor families that these pols profess to care about most.

Conservation should be encouraged whenever it makes economic and environmental sense. But where the heavy hand of government is involved, the results can be perverse.

Intense opposition to onshore and offshore drilling means every barrel saved via conservation is offset by several barrels of declining domestic production. Congress has already locked up an estimated 40 billion barrels (1.7 trillion gallons) of onshore and offshore oil. As a result, we are importing increasing amounts from increasingly unfriendly sources. We need that oil – not more snake oil. But instead, we're locking up our natural gas, too, and promoting other equally questionable ideas.

Mandating that we use millions of expensive compact fluorescent lightbulbs could result in vast quantities of mercury heading to landfills or high-cost recycling centers.



Paul Driessen

Tougher mileage standards could mean more miles driven in vehicles that are more fuel efficient because they are lighter, less able to haul heavy loads, and more likely to cause thousands of additional injuries and deaths. (Perhaps the term Corporate Average Fuel Economy or CAFÉ should be replaced with Conserve Our Refined Petroleum to Save the Environment – or CORPSE.) Other ideas make more sense.

Streamline traffic flow, especially along main corridors during rush hour. Too many lights are timed to impede traffic, as along Routes 50 and 123 through Fairfax, VA and Route 202 in Wilmington-Talleyville, DE. In this computerized era, that is unacceptable.

Eliminate toll booths, especially along interstates like I-95 in Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania. The gasoline wasted and pollution emitted by cars waiting to get to booths or EZPass lanes is monumental – and any revenues collected are more than offset by wages and taxes lost because workers are stuck for hours in miles-long parking lots. Besides, interstates were built with federal tax dollars, and should not be subjected to interstate-commerce-choking state revenueurs.

We might even consider eliminating air-conditioning in the 1,500 federally owned buildings. This would save energy, ensure that government focuses on high-priority items, protect taxpayers and small businesses from hyper-regulation at least a few months a year, and help achieve Rep. Nancy Pelosi's goal of a carbon-neutral Congress – without relying on phony "carbon offset" indulgences.

However, even concerted common-sense conservation won't alter a basic fact: America needs more energy – especially electricity – to support economic freedom, health, industry and modern living standards. Where will that energy come from?

Coal generates 52% of the electricity America uses: over 300,000 Megawatts. Its low cost per kilowatt-hour is a blessing for poor families, businesses, manufacturing and jobs. And over the coming decade, new technologies will eliminate most remaining power plant emissions.

But green activists and politicians say carbon dioxide from coal-fueled power plants causes disastrous climate change. Numerous scientists disagree with this dire assessment – and with the notion that humans have suddenly supplanted the sun and other natural forces that caused innumerable climate shifts throughout Earth's history.

Moreover, if we curtail coal use, what will replace it? Congress continues to make oil and gas prospects off limits to drilling. Liquefied natural gas requires ports that greens and local communities oppose. And reliance on these globally traded resources puts additional upward pressure on prices.

Many greens and politicians also oppose nuclear power and waste repositories. Their substitute of choice is wind turbines. "Socially responsible" companies like those in the Climate Action Partnership want to sell more of them. So they support subsidies and mandates, to "save the world from climate apocalypse."

However, wind supplies only 0.4% of US electrical output – and the unreliable electricity it generates must be backed up by instant-on (peaking capacity) power plants that burn the natural gas that legislators have put off limits. Otherwise, traffic lights, schools, offices, assembly lines and operating rooms go black whenever the wind stops blowing.

In fact, for every 10 MW of wind power, you need 9 MW of gas, says Wood McKenzie vice president Bob Fleck. And those new gas power plants increase wind energy costs dramatically – up to twice as much as for electricity generated from existing coal plants. Wealthy activists, politicians and celebrities may not mind. But minority and other poor families would be hammered.

Wind power also requires vast stretches of land – much of it once-scenic wildlife habitat. Replacing just one-third of all coal-fired generating capacity with wind farms would require blanketing an area

the size of Virginia and North Carolina with huge turbines. We'd also need some 200 new gas-fired power plants – or a new breed of Americans who don't mind repeated power outages.

People sense that they are getting do-nothing energy bills from a do-nothing Congress. That may help explain the dismal 14% approval rating Congress received in recent polls.

Anti-fossil-fuel politicians and environmentalists want to encumber and dismantle the energy and economic system that has brought so much opportunity and prosperity. But do they have the ability or wisdom to create a new one to take its place? If only we could use their hot air to generate electricity.

Paul Driessen is senior policy advisor for the Congress of Racial Equality and Committee For A Constructive Tomorrow, and author of Eco-Imperialism: Green power · Black death (www.Eco-Imperialism.com).

**E-mail the
Editor**

Child Plan Sinks Budget

by Brian Riedl

Democrats are committed to ending years of irresponsible budget policies that have produced historic deficits. Instead of piling trillions of dollars of debt onto our children and grandchildren, we will restore "PayAs You Go" budget discipline. —House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)

No new deficit spending, no new bridges to nowhere, heaping mountains of debt on our children. —Speaker Nancy Pelosi

If you want to have a new program, figure out a way to pay for it without raising taxes. —Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV)



Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House

Following their promise made to the American people during the 2006 campaigns, the House and Senate Democratic majority recently enacted Pay- As-You-Go (PAYGO) budget rules requiring that all tax and entitlement legislation be deficit-neutral. However, they are already turning their back on that promise, as the Senate bill (S. 1893) to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), authored by Senator Max Baucus (D-MT), would put into motion \$60 billion in new deficit spending over the next decade. This is a clear violation of PAYGO and an assault on America's taxpayers.

The Senate bill would gradually increase federal funding for SCHIP from the current \$5.6 billion level to \$14.1 billion in 2012. Then, suddenly, funding would plummet to \$6.2 billion and \$4.7 billion over the subsequent two years, and not top \$5.0 billion again through 2017 (see Chart 1). If Congress enacts this legislation, lawmakers in 2013 will face two options:

1. Drop SCHIP funding 70 percent, substantially reducing the number of enrollees, or
2. Add approximately \$60 billion in new spending over the next five years to maintain current enrollment.

It is no mystery that lawmakers will select option two. After all, Congress has a long and rich tradition of masking the true costs of new federal programs by adding in future budget cuts they have no intention of keeping. For example, Congress wrote into the Medicare laws a trigger that is supposed to reduce physician payments if they begin rising too quickly. The rising payments are a symptom of a profoundly flawed physician payment system, which is grounded in administrative pricing and price controls. Rather than reforming the system, Congress sidesteps the tough policy issues and routinely passes "emergency" legislation to reverse the scheduled cuts. Even on the tax side, Congress passes legislation each year preventing the scheduled increase in the Alternative Minimum Tax and extends dozens of expiring tax cuts. Despite the inclusion of option one in the bill, the chances that Congress would allow millions of children to be cut from SCHIP in 2013 are virtually zero. A \$60 billion "emergency" package in 2013 would be a forgone conclusion.

Once the eventual emergency bailout comes, the Senate SCHIP expansion will have added approximately \$60 billion to the budget deficit over 10 years. This is a clear violation of the PAYGO budgeting promised by the new Democratic majority. The Senate PAYGO rule requires that all new tax and entitlement legislation be deficit-neutral over one, five, and 10 years. The gimmick of temporarily excluding the \$60 billion in deficit spending, and then eventually designating it as an "emergency," will allow the Senate to avoid an official PAYGO point of order. However, the loophole clearly violates the spirit of the law. After Congress violates PAYGO for SCHIP, it will be more likely to violate PAYGO elsewhere. Nearly identical loopholes have been employed to cover up a \$15.3

billion PAYGO violation in the House higher education reform bill. Congress is also under pressure to violate PAYGO and add billions of dollars in new farm subsidies. Despite PAYGO's convenient use as a fiscal discipline talking point, lawmakers are not allowing it to actually put a brake on new deficit spending.

The Senate SCHIP bill contains numerous problems. The program was originally designed for children in low-income families but would continue enrolling children in middle-class families. Many families eligible for SCHIP would end up losing the private health insurance they already have, a phenomenon known as the "crowdout" effect. The bill rejects free market principles that should govern health care policy, retreats from any serious health policy reform, and raises taxes. And after all that, the Senate bill would violate congressional Democrats' own PAYGO pledge and add approximately \$60 billion to the budget deficit over the next decade. With Congress's approval rating at a record low, lawmakers should rethink the decision to break the PAYGO promises they made to the American people.

Brian M. Riedl is Grover M. Hermann Fellow in Federal Budgetary Affairs in the Thomas A. Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation. American people.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Middle East Threats

by Daniel Pipes

Quiz time: Which Middle Eastern country disappeared from the map not long ago for more than six months?

Answer: Kuwait, which disappeared from August 1990 to February 1991, becoming Iraq's 19th province. This brutal conquest by Saddam Hussein culminated intermittent [Iraqi claims](#) going back to the 1930s. Restoring Kuwait's sovereignty required a huge American-led expeditionary force of more than half a million soldiers.



Daniel Pipes

This history comes to mind because an Iranian spokesman recently enunciated a somewhat similar [threat against Bahrain](#). Hossein Shariatmadari, an associate of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and editor of the daily newspaper *Kayhan*, published an op-ed on July 9 in which he claimed: "Bahrain is part of Iran's soil, having been separated from it through an illegal conspiracy [spawned] by ... Shah [Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, along with] the American and British governments." Referring to Bahrain's majority Shiite population, Mr. Shariatmadari went on to claim, without any proof: "The principal demand of the Bahraini people today is to return this province ... to its mother, Islamic Iran."

These comments, the Middle East Media and Research Institute (MEMRI) reports, "caused a storm in Bahrain," with protesters outside the Iranian Embassy, severe statements by the government, alarmed resolutions by both houses of parliament, and even a fatwa prescribing death for Bahrainis who should endorse this Iranian irredentism. Other Persian Gulf states joined in with equally scathing statements.

The subject is a sensitive one. Tehran's claims on Bahrain go back to 1958, when it declared the island to be Iran's 14th province, even apportioning it two seats in the national parliament. Although the shah formally recognized Bahrain's independence in 1970, claims such as Mr. Shariatmadari's have surfaced episodically and are reminiscent of periodic Iraqi claims to Kuwait before 1990.

So, Kuwait actually vanished down the Iraqi maw, and Bahrain could face a similar fate. Nor are they alone, as three other Middle East states are also threatened with extinction.

- Jordan has always been precarious, perched between several larger, more powerful, and often aggressive states. In one memorable articulation of this fear, during the peak of the Kuwait crisis in November 1990, then-Crown Prince Hassan worried that his "small country of 3.5 million is on the brink of extinction."
- Lebanon's independence has been in question since the state came into being in 1926 because its Syrian neighbor has never reconciled itself to losing Lebanon's territories. Damascus has variously expressed this reluctance cartographically (showing the boundary with Lebanon as "regional," not international), diplomatically (never opening a Syrian embassy in Beirut), and politically (more than three decades of dominating internal Lebanese affairs).
- Israel's existence as a Jewish state was threatened the very day of its declaration of independence in 1948. Winning many rounds of war over the next decades brought it a certain deterrence and permanence, but a directionless electorate and inept leadership since 1992 means the country faces elevated threats to its existence comparable to those dating to [before the 1967 war](#).

The existence of this quintet of endangered Middle Eastern states prompts several thoughts. First, their predicament points to the uniquely vicious, volatile, and high-stakes quality of political life in

this region; so far as I know, there is no state outside the Middle East whose very survival is in doubt.

Second, this singular pattern results in part from a widespread problem of unsettled boundaries. With only a handful of exceptions — ironically, including two of Israel's international boundaries — most borders in the Middle East are neither delineated nor mutually agreed upon. This lower-grade revisionism feeds grander ambitions actually to eliminate a polity.

Third, this situation places Israel's quandary into perspective. However anomalous the threat of extinction in the world at large, it is banal in the immediate region. Israel's troubles may overwhelmingly be the best known of the group, with hundreds of times more press coverage and books than about the other four countries combined, but all five face a comparable threat. This context implies Israel's unsettled status continuing for a long time.

Finally, these deep, unresolved tensions throughout the Middle East point, once again, to the absurdity of seeing the Arab-Israeli conflict as the motor force of the entire region's problems. Each endangered state faces its own unique circumstances; none of them drives regional politics as a whole. Solving the Arab-Israeli conflict does no more than solve that specific conflict.

Mr. Pipes (www.DanielPipes.org) is director of the Middle East Forum.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Is Organic Enough?

by Alex and Dennis Avery

A new study published in an alternative agriculture journal has gained widespread attention by claiming that organic farming not only could adequately feed the world, it might even yield more food and require less farmland. It is a truly sensational claim.

In science, the more sensational the claim, the more robust the evidence needed to support it. This time, the evidence doesn't stack up. In fact, the evidence fell so far short that the journal that published the paper also published not one, but two scathing and dismissive "editorial responses" in the same issue. This is anything but a ringing endorsement.



Kenneth Cassman

A simple comparison of the authors of the paper and critiques is revealing. The "organic can too feed the world" authors are a collection of urban academics without any agricultural experience. The lead author studies fossil squirrel's teeth at the University of Michigan's Museum of Paleontology. The others are with Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment. In contrast, the authors of the two critiques are an agronomist at the University of Nebraska, Kenneth Cassman, and Colorado organic farmer Jim Hendrix.

As Cassman put it, "their analyses do not meet the minimum scientific requirements for comparing food production capacity in different crop production systems."

First, many of the studies they relied upon to support their claim simply aren't reliable. One large data set (comprising over half of the "yield ratios" they used to estimate food production in the developing world) are merely guesstimates of increased productivity from a questionnaire sent to activists running organic "demonstration" farms. That doesn't even remotely approach "science," especially when the returned questionnaires include implausible organic yield increase claims of more than 500 percent. Another large dataset used by the Michigan researchers is so questionable that a paper critical of it published in the journal *Field Crop Research* was titled "Fantastic yields in the system of rice intensification: fact or fallacy?"

Central to this entire debate is the shortage of organic nitrogen fertilizer, a.k.a. manure. Currently, there is only enough animal manure to support one fifth of current global crop production. The only way to get more organically is to devote more land to legume crops or animal pastures that fix more nitrogen—which would require billions of acres of additional farmland the world doesn't currently have.

The Michigan researchers dismiss this sobering reality by calculating that, theoretically, enough nitrogen can be fixed by growing cover crops during fall/winter and between crops to make up the shortfall. As Dwight Eisenhower once stated, "Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil and you're a thousand miles from a corn field."

The final, sadly amusing testimony to the fantasy world occupied by these researchers comes from the conclusion of their policy forum article, where they point to the shining example of Cuba as "one of the most progressive food systems in the world" where organic farming is successfully feeding a country. Ah, yes, the famed Cuban "agricultural enlightenment" brought about by the ending of Soviet industrial fertilizer and pesticide donations.

How has Cuba fared after "going organic?" According to unofficial statistics, Cuba suffers massive food shortages and rations basic food staples. But don't take my word for it. Listen to these Cuban immigrants interviewed in a December 27, 2006 story on National Public Radio's Morning Edition:

Joel Lopez, a skinny 19-year-old who arrived on Dec. 14, 2006 in Miami through the [immigration lottery], or Bomba as it is called in Cuba. Through a translator: "Everything is so surprising here, the cleanliness of the streets, the food, the shops. Well, there is no comparison. . . . I have been telling [my friends] about a Chinese buffet I went to. I told them about how you can serve yourself again and again!"

Sitting next to him is Louisa Martinez. Her husband was a baker in Cuba. But still for her, it's the food that is the most dazzling. Through a translator: "Oh the food! Here there is a surfeit of food. Over there, there is a LOT of hunger. It's terrible."

So who are you going to believe: The urban pencil pushing elites, or the real farmers and real victims of the so-called "progressive food" movement?

Alex Avery is Director of Research and Education at the Hudson Institute's Center for Global Food Issues and author of the new book, [The Truth About Organic Foods](#). Dennis Avery is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute. Readers may contact them at Post Office Box 202, Churchville, VA 24421 (www.cgfi.org).

**E-mail the
Editor**

A Gay Event

by S.T. Karnick

The Democrat candidates for the party's presidential nomination just held a debate in which they discussed exclusively issues of interest to homosexuals.

The candidates of the party of homosexual activism got together in Hollywood to tell how each of them is serving the radical homosexual interest groups that provide major amounts of funding for the Democrats.

A moment of discomfort arose when New Mexico Gov. William Richardson, a strong supporter of homosexual activism in the law, answered a question about the causes of homosexuality.



Dennis Kucinich

Only two candidates came out explicitly for forcing all of society to recognize homosexual "marriages." Those were the Obscure and Obscurer candidates Dennis Kucinich and Mike Gravel.

The audience erupted in great cheers when each of the two nitwits made their call for forced legal recognition of homosexual "marriages."

The issue, it is important to remember, is not whether society will allow homosexuals to "marry." They may already do so, in whatever church or other sanctioning body is willing to do the deed. No, what is in contention is whether the government will force everyone to recognize such marriages. It is a governmental intrusion of monumental proportions.

The more prominent candidates kept their heads down and clearly tried to avoid making any big mistakes. They all dutifully promised to scuttle the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, so as to compel the armed forces to allow open homosexuals into the ranks. They also all came out for forcing insurance companies to provide health benefits for same-sex "partners" instead of leaving it up to the companies' discretion.

Sen. John Edwards courageously apologized for once having said that he opposed gay marriage for religious reasons. He said that he wouldn't impose his "faith belief" on the American people. Instead, he heroically promised to impose others' unbelief on the American people.

New Mexico Gov. Richardson agreed with the boilerplate Democrat policies the other prospective candidates called for, but he blundered when asked whether homosexuality was a matter of biology or choice. (The great majority of homosexual activists claim that it is biological, so that they can try to force governments to prosecute as illegal discrimination any private or public actions that treat homosexuals differently from others.)

When asked whether homosexual behavior is a biological imperative or a choice, Richardson said, "It's a choice." Some people in the audience gasped audibly.

His campaign organization then issued a denial of what he said in the debate, quoting him as saying, "I do not believe that sexual orientation or gender identity happen by choice."

This is the party that characterizes itself as championing individual freedom.

S. T. Karnick, The American Culture.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Election Predictions

by Paul Weyrich

With little more than a year remaining before the next presidential election, I have some ideas about who will win and who will lose. My record to date has been remarkably accurate.

Years ago I believed that there was a silent majority in electoral politics. Thus, right before the 1964 election I disregarded all of the polls and instead let my heart speak. I truly believed that the silent majority would win and Barry Goldwater would be elected. Election night of 1964 quickly disabused me of this belief. I had the displeasure of reporting that all of my friends in Congress who were up for re-election had been defeated.



Paul M. Weyrich

I vowed I would never have such an experience again. I had been too emotionally involved to make accurate predictions so close to Election Day. Instead I began making predictions a year prior to the election. This has worked well ever since.

In 1967 I predicted that former Vice President Richard M. Nixon would be the Republican nominee for President and then-Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey would be the Democratic nominee. There was talk of Governor George Wallace of Alabama running as a third-party nominee, which he did. Once Nixon and Humphrey received their respective parties' nominations, my prediction was that Nixon would win the presidency in a landslide. Nixon did win, but I had to stay up until 5:00 AM EST to hear the official announcement. Humphrey nearly beat him. The election was so close in part because of Wallace. He carried five states and took many votes from Nixon.

In 1971 I had no idea that George S. McGovern would be the Democratic nominee for President. I was sure of one thing: President Nixon would win re-election. I was correct.

Four years later Gerald R. Ford was President. He had pardoned Nixon in 1974, a pardon that proved controversial. At that point, I had not heard of Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter. However, it was clear that a Democrat would win control of the White House. That proved to be true.

By 1979 Carter was unpopular. Many pollsters said a one-term president would not be defeated. I believed otherwise, but I thought former Texas Governor John B. Connally, Jr. would be the Republican nominee. This was not the case, but I predicted the Republicans would win in 1980 and they did.

In 1987 President Ronald W. Reagan was immensely popular. I thought Jack F. Kemp, Jr. might be chosen as the Republican nominee to succeed President Reagan. Had I analyzed the process in greater detail, I would have realized that the Republicans would choose the Vice President, George H. W. Bush. He had been loyal to the Party on nearly everything, or at least voters perceived so. The mood was such that it mattered little who the Democrats chose for their candidate.

Bush lost his chance to be re-elected when he raised taxes. Voters who knew little about him remembered his quote: "Read my lips: no new taxes." I thought Bush would lose and I was correct.

During President William J. Clinton's first term in office, there were rumors that Senator Robert J. Dole (R-KS) would be his Republican challenger. He was and I was sure Dole would run an incompetent campaign. Clinton was vulnerable and could be defeated but Dole was not the man to do so. He proved this true.

In 1999 I was wrong. I thought that perhaps the Republicans would nominate someone other than Texas Governor George W. Bush. It seemed that Bush would be unable to defeat the Democratic

nominee, then-Vice President Albert A. Gore, Jr. I believed Gore would win. Gore did win a greater share of the popular vote but Bush won the Electoral College and therefore the presidency.

In 2003 it was clear Bush would win re-election regardless of who the Democrats nominated. It was only as the election neared that I worried Bush might lose.

This brings us to 2007. I believe that the Democrats, most likely with Senator Hillary R. Clinton (D-NY) as the nominee, will win. The Republicans, regardless of who they nominate, will lose because of the war in Iraq. Voters want to punish the Republicans for Iraq.

I also believe the Republicans will lose seats in the Senate. Their incumbent candidates are weak and they have few, if any, potential challengers to Democrats who may be successful.

The House of Representatives is different. If the Democrats do not fulfill the promises they made to their base and the country, the Republicans could win the 16 seats needed for a majority. This will be difficult but it is not impossible.

There you have it. If I am wrong, I will change my phone number. If I am correct you can expect to hear about it again.

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

**E-mail the
Editor**

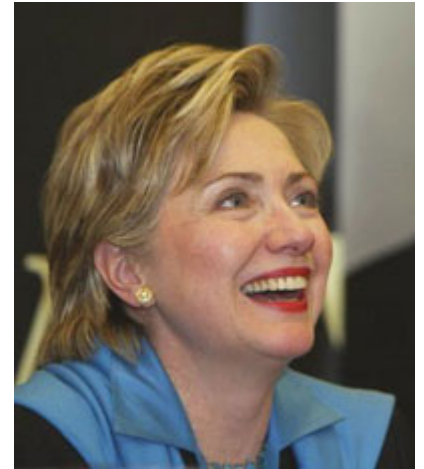
No Issue Advantage

by Scott Rasmussen

While America's voters are not particularly happy with the current Republican President, the leading Democratic [Presidential Candidates](#) have no advantage over the top GOP Hopefuls when it comes to Iraq, the Economy, or Restoring the Nation's Optimism. Democratic candidates do have an edge when it comes to the environment while the GOP candidates hold the lead on immigration.

Among the nation's pool of unaffiliated voters, the GOP candidates also have the edge when it comes to the economy.

These surprising results come from a Rasmussen Reports national telephone survey that asked voters to name which individual candidate they trust most on particular issues. On an individual basis, New York Senator Hillary Clinton was the top choice on four of five issues among all voters. Another Democrat, Illinois Senator Barack Obama did especially well among unaffiliated voters.



Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani was the top choice among Republicans on four of the five issues, but his lead was typically modest over former Tennessee Senator Fred Thompson.

Among [Democrats](#) Clinton was the top choice on all five issues and enjoyed a double digit lead on four of the five. Forty-nine percent (49%) of Democrats named Clinton their top pick when it comes to managing the economy. Only 15% of Democrats said the same about Obama.

See a [summary of the results for each question](#), including partisan breakdowns.

The parity between the two party Presidential candidates is also reflected in data showing a virtual tie between the frontrunners—[both Giuliani and Thompson hold a statistically meaningless one-point advantage over Clinton in the latest general election match-ups](#).

When it comes to resolving the situation in Iraq, 42% of the nation's voters say they are most likely to trust one of the leading Democratic Presidential candidates while 41% name a Republican candidate. As for the economy, 44% say they're most likely to trust one of the Democratic candidates while 43% opt for a Republican. On this issue, the GOP enjoys a 12-point advantage among unaffiliated voters.

The Democrats enjoy a very modest three-point advantage on the question of restoring the nation's optimism. A recent survey found that just [26% believe the United States is better off than it was four years ago](#). Another survey found that just [36% believe the nation's best days are still ahead of us](#).

Republican candidates enjoy a collective six-point advantage when it comes to handling the immigration issue. Democrats have an eleven point edge on the environment.

While the Republican and Democratic Presidential candidates are fairly evenly matched on these issues, [Democrats overall are trusted more than Republicans on ten key issues](#) tracked by Rasmussen Reports. Democrats also have enjoyed a consistent lead on the [Generic Congressional Ballot](#).

Scott Rasmussen, president of Rasmussen Reports, has been an independent pollster for more than a decade. Rasmussen Reports is an electronic publishing firm specializing in the collection,

publication, and distribution of public opinion polling information. The Rasmussen Reports [ElectionEdge™](#) Premium Service for Election 2008 offers the most comprehensive public opinion coverage ever provided for a Presidential election. During both Election 2004 and Election 2006, RasmussenReports.com was the top-ranked public opinion research site on the web.

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Editor**

Louisiana Again

by Jeff Crouere

Each day brings a new revelation about a disgraced Louisiana politician. In June, Congressman Bill Jefferson (D-New Orleans) was hit with a 16-count indictment on charges including bribery, racketeering and money laundering. In July, U.S. Senator David Vitter (R-LA) admitted involvement with the D.C. Madam and is going to be called as a witness in the upcoming federal trial. He was also linked to a prostitution ring being operated by the Canal Street Madam in New Orleans, a charge he denies.



Jeff Crouere

The embarrassments are not confined to the state's congressional delegation, for now the longest serving member of the New Orleans City Council, at-large representative Oliver Thomas, has pleaded guilty on federal bribery charges for demanding payments from a vendor that was hired to operate three parking lots in New Orleans. The charge carries a jail sentence of 10 years, although Thomas has been cooperating with federal prosecutors and will likely receive a lighter sentence. Due to this guilty plea, Thomas will resign his council position in shame, bringing another unfortunate spotlight on our political scene.

As Thomas divulges more information about local political corruption, it is quite possible that more politicians become ensnared in this criminal case. As more corrupt politicians are identified, it will help clean up the rotten political arena, which is certainly a positive development. However, in the long recovery process, the image of the city and state will continue to suffer.

No other state has so many prominent politicians in trouble with the law. The lawbreakers are not confined to New Orleans, it is a statewide epidemic. The former Governor of Louisiana is still in jail serving a ten year sentence; the former Elections Commissioner was convicted of crimes including money laundering; three Insurance Commissioners in a row were sent to jail; the Agriculture Commissioner has been indicted on bribery charges and the former President of the State Senate is still in jail on charges including insurance fraud and money laundering. In addition, numerous state legislators have been sent to jail on a variety of charges, including former gubernatorial candidate and KKK leader David Duke on tax fraud charges.

In the New Orleans area, in recent years, a very successful Wrinkled Robe investigation has netted the conviction of two Jefferson Parish judges. There has been an active investigation into the activities of the Orleans Parish School Board and several convictions have been received, including former board President Ellenese Brooks-Simms who pleaded guilty to accepting \$100,000 in bribes from a consultant working for a vendor. The consultant was reported to be none other than Mose Jefferson, the brother of the indicted congressman. Another scandal involved the girlfriend of Mose Jefferson, former Councilwoman Renee Gill-Pratt, who improperly used donated vehicles that were sent to the city post-Katrina for her own personal benefit.

Of all the local investigations, the one that has netted the most prominent convictions involves the administration of former Mayor Marc Morial. Several administration allies, including Morial's uncle, his good friend Stan "Pampy" Barre and his administration's property manager have all admitted to crimes. It was this case that resulted in the discovery of bribery by Thomas, when Barre started talking to the federal government in the hopes of earning a lesser jail sentence.

This development has shocked the New Orleans political community. Thomas was seen as the heir apparent to Ray Nagin as Mayor. In contrast to Nagin, Thomas was viewed as a bridge builder and a more responsible elected official who did not "shoot from the hip" or embarrass the city he represented. Of course, with his guilty plea, Thomas has not only embarrassed himself, but his family and all of his constituents in New Orleans. Now, he becomes just another in a long line of Louisiana politicians who have run afoul of the law.

It is time for voters to demand more from politicians and seek out those who are reputable and trustworthy. Voters must insist that tougher ethics laws are passed on both the local and statewide levels. For many years, it has been apparent that the deals at City Hall have been questionable and possibly illegal. It is common knowledge that insiders and politicians profit from the city contracts and that smelly practice must end immediately. It should be mandatory that no council member be allowed to receive "consulting fees" from any companies doing business with City of New Orleans or have an ownership role in those entities. On the state level, no legislator should be allowed to do business with state government or profit from their public service. In most states, these are elementary ethics requirements, but in Louisiana, they involve a whole new way of thinking.

For politicians, public service should be a sacrifice, not a way to line their pockets. Everyone in Louisiana has seen too many politicians supposedly receiving only a minimal salary driving around in fancy cars and wearing expensive clothes. Where do they get the money since it certainly does not come from their minimal salaries? Tragically, all too often, the lucrative perks come from underhanded dealings.

Just as the state is asking for more federal assistance, another one of our supposedly pro-reform politicians is nabbed in a corruption probe. This does not give the rest of the nation any confidence that hurricane recovery dollars will be spent wisely and not squandered on politicians looking for payoffs.

It is no longer entertaining to see so many politicians in trouble. It is disheartening and very disturbing and, of course, damaging to the state's already tarnished reputation.

Jeff Crouere is a native of New Orleans, LA and he is the host of a Louisiana based program, "Ringside Politics," which airs at 8:30 p.m. Fri. and 10:00 p.m. Sun. on WLAE-TV 32, a PBS station, and 5 till 9 a.m. weekdays on WGSO 990 AM in New Orleans and the Northshore. For more information, visit his web site at www.ringsidepolitics.com.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Courts Push Risk Avoidance

by Renny Hartmann

Thanks for Thomas Brewton's "Thomas on Free Speech."

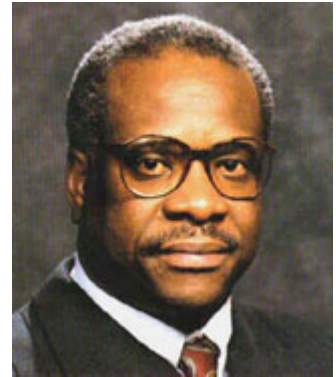
No one mentions the Hazelwood decision of 1989, where the Supreme Court in a student-newspaper case, ruled that, as educational leaders, principals and superintendents have interests (including disciplinary) in all areas of student expression (I actually thought it would have an enormous effect on student dress codes, such as they are), a damper somewhat on Tinker.

It certainly covers the "Bong Hits 4 Jesus" case. (I was a scholastic newspaper adviser for 13 years at Toms River High School East for The Raider Readout.)

As to the deleterious results of the Supreme Court's Tinker decision, it has produced nearly 30 years of risk-averse administrators. They frequently become administrators because they want to get out of the classroom and not face a 30 hostile audience 6-7 hours a day. This often produces lax, inconsistent, and wildly useless disciplinary policies and practices.

This in turn literally makes some school buildings into armed camps with gangs and in-house police officers, with accoutrements of metal detectors and lockdowns, and a concomitant failure in classroom instruction.

Tinker should surely be reversed, although Justice Abe Fortas was kind enough in his extension of "free speech" to public school students to include teachers.



**E-mail the
Editor**

Against William & Mary

by John Kennedy

Students at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia know better than anyone how the left seeks to undermine traditional values. Last school year, we witnessed a newly elected liberal president attack the traditional faith our college was founded upon. A bit of history must be covered to get the whole picture.



The College of William and Mary is the second oldest college in America. The Wren building on the William and Mary campus is the oldest educational building still in use in America. It was built with an adjoining chapel that was designed to serve as a sanctuary for Anglican services. A part of the mission of the college, as stated by its royal charter in 1693, was to propagate the Christian faith among Native American peoples. A large plaque states this mission on the Wren building for all to see.

Since those days, the college has become public and is now funded in large part by the state of Virginia. The chapel has remained though and retains much of its Anglican influence, including ornate oak walls and a beautiful organ.

Roughly 70 years ago, a small gold cross was donated to the Wren Chapel by Bruton Parish, a nearby Anglican parish that had a strong relationship with the college since its inception. At no cost to the state and in consideration of the college's history of Christian influence, no issue of church and state had ever been raised by the cross's presence on the altar. That is, not until President Gene Nichol arrived on the scene.

Nichol, a far-left liberal, came to the college with all of the typical rhetoric: "diversity," "affirmative action," "a welcoming campus to all!" His attempts to run for Congress (as a Democrat) didn't hurt his popularity at the rather liberal college. Of course, no one believed that Nichol would desecrate one of the most cherished traditional monuments at a college that prides itself on its traditions.

But Nichol did just that, deciding to remove the cross without consulting anyone else. He then sent out an unassuming email to the student body indicating that he had the cross removed to ensure that the chapel remains more "welcoming" to *all* students, but most welcoming to non-Christians, of course.

Though it was an overt act upon the most revered symbol of the Christian faith, it was also much more than that. Nichol's decision teaches us once again that the left considers long-established traditions to be optional frivolities. The cross represents the traditional faith of our forefathers, whether we are Anglican, Catholic, or Baptist. It is not an offense to any other reasonable religion or philosophy. A connection with the past comes alive today in the Christian services of students who continue to practice the faith that Rev. James Blair, the founder of William and Mary, believed over 300 years ago. To remove the cross from the Wren chapel is an attempt to ignore the Christian heritage of the college and debase the still-present faith of Christian students. In the spirit of Christian tolerance, other faiths have always had the opportunity to practice their religious services in the Wren chapel.

When tradition is no longer allowed to inform education then we can confidently say that tradition is dead. But that is *not* the case because conservatism won this battle. After petitions and a massive public outcry, the Board of Visitors of the college determined that Nichol's decision had been made in error and required the return of the cross to the Wren chapel.

The cross's presence in our chapel is a welcome sight, but it's presence in the hearts of devoted Christians is what placed it there.

John R. Kennedy is a Senior at the College of William and Mary and an Intern at the American Conservative Union.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Reader Comments

**CONSERVATIVE
BATTLELINE
ONLINE**

Editor: I just wanted to say that I enjoyed your article "Caesar or God: Who Is Dead" in the current ConservativeBattleline. I hope all goes well. Best, Myron Ebell

Editor: I thought "Caesar or God: Who Is Dead" was very well written. I am sharing it with friends. Shirley F. Wallace, The Woodlands, TX

Editor: You just hit a home run with this article, "Caesar or God: Who Is Dead". Too bad the bases were empty. We need leaders with vision and faith instead of politicians who continue to make promises (requiring debt or taxes) in order to get re-elected. Thanks, Jim

Editor: "Caesar or God: Who Is Dead" was an excellent, enlightening piece, as usual. Rich Byman

Editor: Thank you for publishing that fabulous article "Bush Teaches Constitution." Apparently very few Americans know much about this subject as we move further and further away from the Constitution's intent. Leah Kelley, Libertarian Party of Colorado

Editor: I just got to read your article on the U.S. Attorney firings in the 7/11 issue, "Poor Personnel." (I love being able to download CBO for later reading, and archiving.) The ineptitude with which this was handled is obvious--and significant. You captured their failings both succinctly and rationally. Did someone forget that politics is a game? Your point about everyone being afraid of accusations that political activities are political is but another symptom of Through The Looking Glass thinking. Clinton fires 50 attorneys and not a peep. The U.S. Senate votes 98-0 not to ratify Kyoto, yet Bush is an environmental blackguard for not resubmitting it. Anyway, nice column. Tom Tripp

Editor: Amen to John Goodman's analysis of Michael Moore in "Michael and Me" Moore is a Real Sicko!!!! As a Registered Nurse, I was appalled when I received a flyer from the California Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee, promoting Michael Moore and his film, Sicko. This is plainly a union involved and as a long time, active R.N. I am incensed by this endorsement. The web site they gave is as follows: www.guaranteedhealthcare.org/sicko. They received a very shocking reply on the card sent to detach and mail. I am very glad that I receive your comments via the internet. Sincerely, Earlyne Robertson, R.N.

Editor: I probably enjoyed Carey Robert's article "Katie on Way Out" more than I should have. There are only three people who will cause me to reach for the remote to change channels and Katie falls in right behind Byrant Gumble and ahead of Jesse Jackson. Thanks for the treat. Steve Carson, Chicago, Illinois

Editor: Regarding Carey Robert's "Katie on Way Out?" she was a dud on the morning show but all the publicity about her made her a high paying item. When will people realize these people are over paid, plus remind the public she was ready to divorce her hubby but the cancer thing made her the perfect wife. Give me a break these people are all self centered thanks to good publicity. Anne Hanlon

Editor: I couldn't tolerate Katie Couric's LIBERAL BIAS on The Today Show, and refuse to watch her on the evening news. Has she ever considered staying home????????????? Pandj

Editor: Hey, We didn't like her on the show she had before, why would we like her as a news person? Letha

Editor: Thank Carey Roberts for his "Duke 88 Disgrace Ad" for letting the world know what is going on in our universities and what they are teaching our young ones today. Reading about the elitist attitudes of today's college professors is unnerving, and needs to be brought into line. I'm so sick and tired of hearing about the leftist attitudes in this country, and their idea of what I should or should not do in my life, but should be led by their leftist illusions. I have always been a Democrat, but more importantly I have always been a patriot, (now I am a Republican) and it breaks my heart when I see spineless Republicans who are running this country are of such poor convictions, and lack a spine. We are on a slippery slope towards self destruction, and we need to change the course of this nation, back to the vision of Our Forefathers. Again, thank you and God Bless America. Don Pelchat

Editor: Thank you! Excellent article! These 88 names belong in a Hall of Shame. I am in agreement with Carey Roberts. It was a Lynch mob for sure! Dickie Harris

Editor: Even though I loathe cigars Alan Caruba's "Taxing Joy", shows the proposed tax is a ridiculous amount of money to spend. However at 71 I have seen what will happen especially during WW2. It was called Black Market then and is still called same. Don't worry sir after the government is through we will be doing the same with human organs, health visits to doctors, food and water. Thanks for article. Patty Gibbons, Sarasota, Fl.

Editor: Thanks for publishing Alan Caruba's "Taxing Joy", which sums up the anti-people and anti-freedom attitude of our national government as well as any article I've seen. This sorry state of affairs cries out for redress! Out of all the nearly 20 candidates - declared and undeclared - from both parties, there's only one man who has consistently beat the drum for less government and more freedom for the last 30 years. Do I even need to mention his name? Rep. Ron Paul is the "no-brainer" choice of anyone who's not content with stopping the growth of government control of our lives, but wants to begin rolling back that control. Sincerely, John Nehring

Editor: Regarding Alan Caruba's "Taxing Joy" I have been waiting for smokers to say enough. I don't nor have I ever smoked. But since it is not illegal, it is your right to smoke. I have always wondered when the first suit was filed why the cigarette companies just didn't pull their product from the market in that state. Seem to me the people would have rebelled before now. Joann Glaser

Editor: I often describe myself as a William F. Buckley Jr conservative, as his entire career was the basis for my own formulation of political and commercial ideologies. As such, I found the newest links to ConservativeBattleline writers' stories to be outstanding. Please keep up the good work, as the Left regardless of who actually wants it is pushing for a USA subsistence culture lead by--as currently in Illinois--self-selected officials who interpret rule of law as "le etat c'est moi" and can pay their "henchmen" by raising current taxes and diverting Federal funds from even farms or foodstamps, with no eye toward future buying power, national debts, risks of just bringing in and funding any immigrants (so cash passes through to elite few, ala mass-scale housing project style), or needs for any State budget. Anybody can siphon off a nation; conservatives offer a better plan and will likely prevail in 2008. As long as you, I, and the rest keep up the good work! Respectfully Submitted, Daniel C. Arendt, Wadsworth, Illinois

**E-mail the
Editor**