



# CONSERVATIVE BATTLELINE ONLINE

*The "Bold Colors" Conservative Voice in Washington*

Issue 121 - December 3, 2008

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## Obama Bureaucracy Payoff

by Donald Devine

*Issue 120 - November 19, 2008*

Candidate Barack Obama may have murmured only sweet platitudes to the general public during the campaign but we now have learned he privately gave detailed assurances to Federal employees promising pretty much everything on the public union agenda.

In late October, John Gage, president of the largest federal union, the American Federation of Government Employees, asked Sen. Obama for specific promises for his members and bragged "he didn't flinch" putting them in writing, which the union distributed directly to its 600,000 supporters evading media scrutiny. The union members were given assurance without upsetting the average voter who tends to be suspicious of promising bureaucracy favors to those supposedly representing the public interest.

Separate letters were directed to nine agencies, but they all promised to reduce contracting government business to private sector firms, to make private sector regulation more aggressive on labor and environmental matters and to defer more to career bureaucratic expertise rather than "censorship" by political appointees. These are the three top public sector union priorities. They all mean more money and power to Federal unions. Less contracting-out means more union-represented work within government, more regulation means more government regulators, and deferring to careerists means more union influence and control. Sen. Obama did qualify his position somewhat by saying that "Because of the fiscal mess left behind by the current Administration, we will need to look carefully at all departments and programs," but the general tone was more power and responsibility to the unions and their employees.



**John Gage**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development was promised political leaders who supported HUD's "mission" as understood by its union employees, promising that careerists would become "part of the solution" of the nation's housing crisis, indicating this would mean more federal housing regulators. The Social Security Administration was promised more adjudicators to process claims. The Department of Labor was promised more inspectors, especially for the Bureau of Mines. The Bureau of Prisons was promised more corrections officers. The Environmental Protection Agency was promised tougher standards of regulation and presumably more regulators to enforce them.

The only agencies that were not promised more employees were the largest one, the Department of Defense, and the immense Department of Homeland Security – both of which were increased greatly already by President George W. Bush in the face of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Even the unions did not expect more bodies here but both of these agencies also were forced to create new streamlined personnel systems to avoid bureaucratic delays in the face of foreign or domestic emergencies. Since these two agencies represent more than half of Federal employment, the unions' greatest fear has been that if these new systems were successful, they would be applied to the rest of the government. The Obama letter specifically promised the new Transportation Security Administration a return to the same bargaining and work rules as the older bureaucratic agencies.

Over the years since the new agency procedures were adopted, the unions have challenged them in court, successfully delaying their implementation by claiming that the union right to collective bargaining overrides management's right to implement work decisions even in emergencies. The unions were successful in getting Candidate Obama to promise to examine the so-called "flaws" in

these pay and work-evaluation systems and to support collective bargaining for all work procedures. This would in effect negate the legislation intended to limit bargaining and allow more efficient work procedures in responding more quickly to terrorist and other emergencies, probably allowing the unions to pretty much return to the pre-9/11 red-tape procedures.

Frustrating bureaucracy reform, however, is merely a Pyrrhic union victory. In making these requests and by pressing President-elect Obama to accede to them, the unions are their own worst enemies. The fact that union employees can second-guess government management decisions is what made them so inefficient that, even before 9/11 and Katrina, administrations of both political parties have contracted out so much work to the more efficient private sector. Inefficient and expensive union work, evaluation and pay rules are precisely what chase work outside of government. Frustration with this inefficient personnel morass led Democratic President Jimmy Carter to reform the whole civil service system in 1976 and led even union-friendly President Bill Clinton finally not to fully implement his earlier plan to make all management decisions subject to the approval of labor-management councils giving equal voice to unions in management decision-making.

Democratic presidents are in an especially difficult position. They rely on organized labor support to win elections. With the great decline in union representation in the private sector, public sector unions are that much more important contributing funds and manpower to Democratic candidates. But Democratic presidents also believe in an active government that can perform a wide variety of functions better than the private sector, such as health care, education and energy. If the unions put procedure over results, as they tend to do, government clearly cannot deliver much less perform better than the private sector. That is why bureaucracy reform was so important for President Carter. He needed efficient government if government was to pursue a greater role over the environment, economy and social life generally.



If the Federal sector unions convince President Obama to scrap the new more efficient personnel systems for Defense and Homeland Security adopted in the wake of 9/11, it will likely just increase the recent tendency to contract more work out to the more efficient private sector. Yes, Candidate Obama also promised less contracting out to private firms but President Obama presumably wants a more effective national government to implement his promised new programs. Will he chose the unions or more effective government? Will he even in fact support giving more control to career officials over his own political appointees?

Candidate Obama has promised his hand to the unions but Mr. Obama would not be the first president to break off the engagement when recognizing that the cost of public sector courtship is red tape, delay and frustration of policy goals. Will he fulfill his promise to increase Federal employment and power or will the modern trend of contracting public work to the private sector continue? Or, will the financial crisis be so severe that both civil service and contracted government workforces go down, as they clearly will in the private sector? We shall soon see if President Obama pays off the unions or tries to make the government work.

*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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## Spending Doesn't Stimulate

by Brian Riedl

Issue 121 - December 3, 2008

Congress wants to pass a stimulus package of up to \$300 billion.

Yet in the last year, hundreds of billions in “emergency” spending and \$150 billion tax rebates all failed to jumpstart the economy. Massive deficit spending has failed to jumpstart the economy. So why would the next spending stimulus plan suddenly succeed?

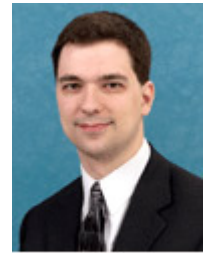
The problem is that government “stimulus” is based on an incorrect economic model.

Government stimulus bills are based on the idea that Congress can “inject” new money into the economy, increasing demand and thus production. But where does government get this money? Congress doesn't have a vault of money waiting to be distributed. Therefore, every dollar Congress “injects” into the economy must first be taxed or borrowed out of the economy. No new spending power is created. It's merely redistributed from one group of people to another.

Even redistributing from “spenders” to “savers” ignores the fact that nearly all savers either bank or invest their savings, where it is then spent by others.

Governments cannot create new purchasing power out of thin air. The only way to provide sustained economic growth is by increasing the productivity of the American workforce. And yet Congress' stimulus proposals generally ignore productivity.

*Brian Riedl is Grover M. Hermann Fellow for Federal Budgetary Affairs at The Heritage Foundation. For his full article on “Why Government Spending Does Not Stimulate Economic Growth” go to <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Budget/bg2208.cfm> (then click “print this page” for the pdf version)*



**Brian Riedl**

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## Obama's Wall Street Man

by Timothy Carney

*Issue 121 - December 3, 2008*

Sixteen years ago, when Bill Clinton was moving into the White House, good-government liberals were disheartened that the President-elect named his campaign's top fundraiser, Rahm Emanuel, as White House political director. They read this as a sign that cash would be king in the Clinton Administration. They were right.

Four elections later, after getting rich in a brief stint in finance, Emanuel is the favorite congressman of Wall Street, measuring by campaign contributions. In the midst of a financial crisis that President-elect Barack Obama blames on Wall Street's greed and excessive influence in Washington, Emanuel is once again headed to a perch of power in a Democratic White House, this time as chief of staff.



**Tim Carney**

Obama hasn't been in Washington for very long, and much of his tenure in the U.S. Senate has been spent barnstorming in Iowa, Colorado, and Indiana. In response to concerns that Obama lacks experience and doesn't know his way around Washington, the Democrat's supporters argued that he would surround himself with smart, knowledgeable people who know how the town works.

Emanuel certainly has been around the block.

Aside from his time in the trenches of Democratic machine politics in Cook County, Illinois, where he was Mayor Richard Daley's money man, Emanuel also served as a fundraiser and operative in the Clinton administration. Neither of these items on his résumé quite smells like clean government.

Considering Obama's promises to stand up for Main Street and take on Wall Street, Emanuel's deep ties with Wall Street are noteworthy. Emanuel was a chief advocate of the \$700 billion Wall Street bailout this fall, toiling to pass it through the House after it was first rejected.

Just as Emanuel has helped Wall Street, Wall Street has helped Emanuel. This past election cycle, more than a third of Emanuel's campaign contributions from political action committees came from financial sector PACs.

His top source of campaign funds this year was the subprime-rattled UBS (the Swiss bank's PAC and employees gave, corporations cannot give campaign contributions), who benefited from the housing bailout which Emanuel supported and has already shown an interest in expanding.

Hedge funds and private equity firms are also close with Emanuel. Over his career, Emanuel's best source of funds has been the private equity firm Madison Dearborn Partners. Hedge funds, facing a new slew of regulations, handouts, and rules, dramatically increased their contributions this year, and Emanuel was also their favorite House member.

The \$96,900 Emanuel pulled in from hedge funds places him above any Senator besides presidential candidates. In fact, Emanuel garnered from hedge funds more than the top 11 Republican lawmakers, combined.

Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan are also in Emanuel's top-five career sources of campaign cash. As reported by the Center for Responsive Politics, Emanuel received more money from the securities and investment industry—\$600,500 as of September 30—than did any other member of the U.S. House, and more than two presidential candidates (including Joe Biden) and the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee.

Commercial banks lined Emanuel's pockets, too, with \$121,100, placing him fourth among House members.

Remember, too, that all of these industries that have favored Obama's next chief of staff so well also gave more to Obama than to McCain. And while Obama studiously rejected lobbyist contributions to his campaign, Emanuel had no such scruples.

In money from lobbyists, Emanuel was in the top 10% of House members, which is made more interesting by the fact he didn't face a competitive reelection at all in his solidly Democratic House district.

What does it portend for an Obama administration that his closest advisor would be someone so steeped in fundraising and so close to Wall Street?

Back in 1993, Fred Wertheimer lamented fundraiser Emanuel's top spot in the Clinton White House, calling it "a very dangerous appointment for the Clinton administration because it places in the White House an individual whose principal responsibility has been to raise huge sums of money from special interests seeking influence over government decisions."

Indeed, Emanuel had been crucial in steering Wall Street money into Clinton's campaign. His record suggests he will be the financial industry's man inside the Obama White House. At a time when the Washington-Wall Street relationship is changing rapidly, will Emanuel be the man to guarantee it's change the Wall Street firms need?

*Timothy P. Carney is editor of the Evans-Novak Political Report and a Washington Examiner columnist, where this first appeared.*

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## Palin Hoax Media Scandal

by S.T. Karnick

Issue 121 - December 3, 2008

[The New York Times thinks it's cute](#) that a couple of obscure filmmakers have repeatedly duped several big media outlets into printing outlandishly false stories.

What's more, the *Times* story agrees with the hoaxter in placing the blame on the blogosphere instead of on the mainstream media.

The very opposite is true.

Here's what happened, as the *Times* story accurately recounts it:

It was among the juicier post-election recriminations: Fox News Channel quoted an unnamed McCain campaign figure as saying that [Sarah Palin](#) did not know that Africa was a continent.

Who would say such a thing? On Monday the answer popped up on a blog and popped out of the mouth of David Shuster, an MSNBC anchor. "Turns out it was Martin Eisenstadt, a McCain policy adviser, who has come forward today to identify himself as the source of the leaks," Mr. Shuster said.

Trouble is, Martin Eisenstadt doesn't exist. His blog does, but it's a put-on. The think tank where he is a senior fellow — the Harding Institute for Freedom and Democracy — is just a Web site. The TV clips of him on YouTube are fakes.

Eisenstadt has been doing this for several months, the story notes, and other publications taken in by his hoaxes include *The New Republic* and *The Los Angeles Times*. The story does not acknowledge that [the New York Times itself recounted the absurdly false claim about Palin](#).

Most importantly, as noted earlier, the story sides with the hoaxters in laying most of the blame on bloggers:

But most of Eisenstadt's victims have been bloggers, a reflection of the sloppy speed at which any tidbit, no matter how specious, can bounce around the Internet. And they fell for the fake material despite ample warnings online about Eisenstadt, including the work of one blogger who spent months chasing the illusion around cyberspace, trying to debunk it.

Note the deceptive wording: "most of Eisenstadt's victims have been bloggers." *Of course* most of his victims would be bloggers—there are thousands of them and only a few mainstream media outlets. Very, very few of these blogs have even a small fraction of the reach of the mainstream outlets, however, and that makes their mistakes much less egregious and important than those by the major media.

Moreover, a great many bloggers opposed the Republican ticket and would have been delighted to recount such an embarrassing story. The readers of all blogs, however, would not assume that the reporters had dug up this nugget themselves but were in fact simply commenting on a fact derived elsewhere. As with talk radio and newspaper opeds, people expect bloggers to be giving opinion and analysis, not original reporting, unless the blogger says otherwise.

In fact, the great majority of those bloggers who reported the story surely got their information from the mainstream sources taken in by the hoax and recounted it in good faith, assuming—incorrectly,



it turns out—that the big-media outlets had done the requisite fact-checking before moving forward with the story.

Once the story hit the first few media outlets, even places such as Fox News, thought to be more sympathetic to McCain-Palin than most, recounted it in good faith. No one saw fit to check something that had been reported by such "credible" sources as MSNBC. It is those who raced to report it initially and have big audiences who are fully responsible for the dissemination of this blatant calumny.

So the real story here is the one the *New York Times* failed to report: that the hoax incident shows the appallingly low standards among the mainstream media, not the blogosphere.

And why were the standards ignored in this case? The answer could not be more obvious: because from the mainstream press's perspective as rabid haters of Republicans and the American right, the juicy tidbit about Palin was too good to pass up and too important to waste time checking for accuracy.

That's the real scandal here.

*S.T. Karnick edits The American Culture at [stkarnick.com](http://stkarnick.com)*

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Editor**

## Talk Radio Politics

by Spencer Warren

*Issue 121 - December 3, 2008*

Where would conservatives be without talk radio? Without Limbaugh, Hannity, Ingraham and the many others? No question, they have played a crucial role for the conservative movement since Limbaugh revolutionized talk and AM radio in the wake of the Reagan Federal Communications Commission's repeal of the so-called fairness doctrine in 1987.

During the Clinton years, Limbaugh and others who were on the air at the time served as conservatives' loudest opposition voice; they helped to stop Hillary's health care government takeover and surely contributed to the amazing Republican victory in the 1994 Congressional elections. This, and the immediate years following, constituted the high tide of conservatism since the advent of talk radio. It was the period of spending restraint, budget surpluses, welfare reform and the glorious, justified impeachment and trial of President Clinton (which may have won the 2000 election for George W. Bush).



Today, standing amidst the rubble of a defeat that has reduced Republican representation in Congress back to lowly pre-Reagan levels, it is hard to see how any conservative can call the George W. Bush years a conservative high point. Quite the contrary. "W" proved to be a conservative manqué and in many respects a liberal in conservative clothing, i.e. a neocon.

Why did conservative talk radio coincide with more success for conservatism in the nineties opposing the Clintons, than since 2001 arguing for President Bush and the Republican Congress of 2001-06? Can it be that during the Bush years, much of talk radio, led by Limbaugh, Hannity, Ingraham and others, confused conservative with Republican? In their endless promotion of the war between Republicans vs. Democrats – because it makes for the best ratings? – they usually overlooked the Bush administration's subversion of conservatism. From time to time Limbaugh would say, as an aside only, he "just can't understand" why Bush nominated Harriet Miers to the Supreme Court; or why Bush was blocking immigration enforcement and promoting open borders and amnesty – which will doom conservatism, Republicans and the U.S. as we know it -- even while he was sending Americans to die in Iraq and Afghanistan fighting the "War Against Terrorism."

Then Limbaugh would go right back to the party political battles (or, as the highly popular, half-cocked but honest Michael Savage says, "the Republicrats vs. the Republicrats"). Hannity, Ingraham, Mark Levin and others joined in the Bush and Republican cheerleading, complaining from time to time about the Republican Congress's unprecedented earmarking corruption as well as immigration, though shying away from its demographic threat to the Republicans. Ingraham at least did take an outspoken and active stand against the Bush-McCain-Kennedy immigration bills in 1986 and 1987.

But, to the best of this listener's knowledge, none of them made a comprehensive and determined critique of how Republicans, led by Bush, were betraying conservatism and digging their own grave. Indeed, after the 2006 defeat Limbaugh said he wouldn't "carry water" for the Republican Party any longer (thus admitting he was doing exactly that before); then he resumed lifting the same old bucket. And after McCain's defeat Limbaugh denounced the Republicans for abandoning conservatism under Bush, something he virtually never complained about when it would have made a difference.

As a result, these and other conservative talk radio hosts bear a measure of responsibility – not the main responsibility, but a measure -- for the disaster of the Bush years and the Republican Congress of 2001-06. It also is noteworthy that after strongly opposing the McCain nomination, most (especially Hannity) fell eagerly in line behind him, grateful for the meaningless crumbs he tossed to

them as a token of his self-proclaimed Reaganite conservative bona fides. Hannity, who showed great integrity for pushing Obama's radical ties into public view and several years ago leading the cause for poor Terri Schiavo, nonetheless seems to be so lacking in introspection that he always greets Fox's new analyst, Karl Rove, without any irony, as "The Architect."

A second point of criticism is that if only these hosts talked sometimes about underlying philosophic issues, they would do more to further public understanding of the Culture War which the left is winning. Limbaugh and especially Hannity may lack the deep education or reading to move beyond generalizations and clichés, but Ingraham reached a pinnacle of the legal profession as a clerk to Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. And Levin served as Associate Attorney General in the Reagan administration and is the author of learned books about the judiciary's tyrannical usurpation of legislative authority and abuse of the Constitution.

For example, in my listening, the hosts are ineffective, or not as effective as they should be, whenever they are confronted with issues such as banning religious expression in public places (even including a public school bus driver wearing a Santa Claus suit at Christmas time); the exhibition in public museums of vile, obscene anti-Christian works of "art" like "Piss Christ"; the sale and broadcast of obscene, pornographic "rap" "music"; homosexual "marriage"; homosexual adoption or such couples bearing children via artificial insemination; replacement of "Merry Christmas" by the term "Happy Holidays"; or complaints against reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in public school, to name a few. Their response often denounces "Political Correctness" or falls back on utilitarian arguments such as the best interests of the children, or makes a general reference to the wishes of the majority. But I have never heard from them a vigorous, conceptual defense of transcendent truths in society. (If I missed it, I would be eager to apologize.) This is particularly the case with Bill O'Reilly, to take another host, both on radio and his Fox television program. The unstoppable O'Reilly becomes almost tongue-tied when confronting opposing guests on such subjects.

Following is one conceptual conservative approach to these issues. It certainly is not the only one, but when do we ever hear a conservative talk-radio host respond with such comprehensiveness, or in such conceptual terms? He or she could say that our country is beset by a radical movement that can be called "Minority Rule." That is, the principle of ordered liberty under the Constitution has been corrupted to mean that any minority, such as militant atheists or radical homosexuals or anti-Christian bigots, for example, are given a veto over the majority whenever they feel "offended" by a display of the traditions and beliefs of the overwhelming majority. And tolerance has been turned upside down to mean that minority "rights" trump the majority's; indeed, the majority should be required even to give up its historical identity to avoid offending a tiny minority, such as radical Muslims who want to wear the hijab in public schools, refuse to allow their faces to be photographed for a driver's license, claim to need foot-baths in public restrooms, or make the daily prayer to Allah spread out in public parks or in rest-stops along the New Jersey Turnpike.

There is no longer any such thing as democratic majority rule or majority rights, in this widespread view; it – and our venerated national traditions -- are being replaced by "diversity" and "multiculturalism" and enforced by judicial usurpation of the majority's rights in the name of protecting "individual liberty." Such thinking or unspoken assumptions underlie the state court decisions recognizing homosexual "marriages" and the attacks, led by the most radical, subversive organization in America today, the ACLU, on religious displays in public places or in schools (except Muslim displays, which are OK to promote "diversity").

Conservatives in particular should understand that society – the vast majority – has rights too: Society -- its religious, cultural, political and other institutions and beliefs -- represents the received wisdom of the ages. It is the fertile soil in which good, moral souls grow and thrive and allowed America to succeed. It also is needed as a check on the unfettered will of fallen individuals who, in the exercise of their "freedom," confuse liberty with license and think they can live as they please, "wandering," as Tocqueville wrote in *Democracy in America*, "over a boundless field." This, of course, means anarchy, not ordered liberty as understood by the framers of the Constitution and

every other responsible authority before the 1960s. Tocqueville and the framers further believed religion was vital to the foundation of our republic, because it supplied the morality that put a check on individual appetite, in the absence of which limited government could not survive.

Conservatism is much harder to explain than liberalism because it is based on rational thought and knowledge of the past, rather than merely personal feelings and "compassion" divorced from any historical, social or religious or transcendent context. To succeed, leading conservatives must recognize this. How interesting that Joe the Plumber and Tito the Builder (two men right out of *Democracy in America*, the kind of real Americans admired so greatly by Tocqueville in the 1830s) were better able to articulate the meaning of America than the Republican presidential candidate. He should have listened to his brilliantly articulate running-mate, Sarah Palin, who was even better than Joe and Tito.

In order to continue the invaluable service they have rendered to conservatives, the conservative broadcasters who sit behind their truly golden microphones would do well to take to heart the two constructive criticisms made here. Everything is at stake in the battle against the cultural left: our country's future and the future of Western civilization.

*Spencer Warren is ConservativeBattleline's media critic*

*Update: A year ago I wrote about Turner Classic Movies' repeated one-sided presentations about the Hollywood blacklist and host Robert Osborne's glorification of Stalinists and his falsification of the history of attempted communist subversion in 1940s Hollywood, which led to labor strikes and threats on the life of their most determined enemy, Ronald Reagan. One would know nothing of the latter listening to Osborne. In linking to this article, Power Line used the title, "Turner Classic Communists." The latest episode was the November 6th prime-time honoring of the blacklisted Communist party member, screenwriter and director Abraham Polonsky. Any intelligent viewer could see the communist and/or anti-American propaganda promoted by *Body and Soul* (1947), *Force of Evil* (1948) and *Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here* (1969, starring Robert Redford), the three films that were shown. This is at least the second time Osborne has held an evening honoring Polonsky in recent years. Both the vice president in direct charge of Turner and the president of the parent company, Time Warner, failed to respond last year to the factual, detailed criticisms which were presented to them, documented with historical sources, demonstrating that they join host Osborne as organizations that hold their audience in contempt.*

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## TV Sex Effect

by Brent Bozell

*Issue 121 - December 3, 2008*

The Washington Post announced an important new study from the respected Rand Corporation on its front page on November 3. Teenagers who watch a lot of television featuring sex talk and sex scenes are much more likely than their peers to get pregnant or get a partner pregnant, according to the first study to directly link television programming to teen pregnancy.

The study was published in *Pediatrics*, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics. It tracked more than 700 12-to-17-year-olds for three years, and found that those who viewed the most sexual content on TV were about twice as likely to be involved in a pregnancy as those who saw the least. About 25 percent of those who watched the most were involved in a pregnancy, compared with about 12 percent of those who watched the least. The researchers took into account other factors such as having only one parent, wanting to have a baby and engaging in other risky behaviors.



**Brent Bozell**

"Sexual content on television has doubled in the last few years, especially during the period of our research," said Rand researcher Anita Chandra, author of the study. "Watching this kind of sexual content on television is a powerful factor in increasing the likelihood of a teen pregnancy....We found a strong association."

Unfortunately, like so many nonpartisan researchers, Chandra rushed to insist that she is not moralizing. She suggested the problem wasn't so much that the amount of steamy TV, but that broadcasters fail to include un-sexy notions about the potentially negative consequences of sex, from sexually transmitted diseases to what Barack Obama inartfully called being "punished with a baby." All of this leaves the viewer with a rather rosy and unrealistic view of TV's quick "hook-ups."

The Rand researchers said the study showed there were important findings for broadcasters. "Broadcasters should be encouraged to include more realistic depictions of sex in scripts and to portray consequences such as pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases," they said.

Hollywood's been hearing this for years, and shows no sign of bending. Cigarette makers are forced to put a Surgeon General's warning about the dangers of smoking on every box. Pharmaceutical manufacturers have to list every conceivable side effects of its drugs. (Is there any medicine that doesn't cause possible nausea or headaches or blurry vision?) But television feels no need to offer warnings about its wild and swinging liaisons, because they aren't "selling" anything, therefore there can be no cause-and-effect consequences.

The Rand recommendation to broadcasters is something – but falls short. What they should have pushed, but couldn't find the nerve to push, is the simple idea that broadcasters should stop promoting adult messages about sex to impressionable children.

The Rand team said parents should consider limiting their children's access to programming with sexual content and spending more time watching programs alongside their children so they can discuss the consequences of sex. That advice is sound, but again, only to a point. Parents ought not to have to devote themselves to discussing with their youngsters that which should be kept from them in order to protect their innocence.

Doctors are even urged to ask teenagers "about their media use," a concept which smacks of political correctness and dilutes the seriousness of the report.

Predictably, the knee-jerk defenders of anything-goes television have tried to dismiss these findings, mocking the idea that TV shows can lead to any kind of behavior. In an online chat at The Washington Post website, one questioner joked, "If I watch steady TV diet of the 3 CSI's, Law and Order, Life on Mars, Cold Case, and NYPD Blue reruns, will I turn into a police detective?"

To which there's the obvious answer: Rand's researchers in no way tried to prove a drop-dead connection, that television causes pregnancy. They merely suggested the logical, that there is an association – just as the people who advertise for the Olive Garden hope there's an association that leads more people to eat at their restaurants. Rand also suggested other media – magazines, the Internet, certainly pop music – have an effect as well.

Another Post chatterer more sensibly wrote, "Surely if we did a study of adults, we'd find that adults who watch shows about politics were also more politically active." There is no doubt that hormone-exploding teenaged viewers are going to find a sex scene interesting to watch, which is why Hollywood complies by producing so many of them.

Once again, the TV networks and their lobbyists have responded to Rand's research by insisting that no one can prove their deluge of sex scenes has any influence on any of our country's social problems. It is what one professes when he has nothing with which to defend himself.

*L. Bent Bozell III is president of the Media Research Center*

**E-mail the  
Editor**

## No Gas Cut Hearings?

by Robert Higgs

*Issue 121 - December 3, 2008*

Driving yesterday past the gasoline station where I usually buy fuel, I noticed that the price of the lowest grade of unleaded—the one I buy—was down to \$2.09 per gallon. Registering this perception as a little piece of good news in an unhappy world, I drove on.

Later, however, I began to mull over the altogether unsurprising fact that, to my knowledge, Congress has held no televised hearings to look into the tremendous fall in fuel prices since last summer, when I paid more than \$4.00 per gallon for a while. Oil company executives have not been summoned to Washington so that they can be applauded for sloughing off the greed that (allegedly) impelled them to charge so much for their products in June and July. No member of Congress has apologized for calling the businessmen there last spring to [berate and threaten them](#) while angrily mouthing sentiments that can only be described as idiotic.

These congressional show trials, which are held whenever gasoline prices rise substantially, always adhere to a tight protocol and a traditional script for each of the actors. Members of Congress huff and puff, demand to know how much the executives are earning, threaten new taxes and controls, and suggest ominously that the government may have to take over the companies unless something gives. Company executives do not laugh at these antics or dismiss them as the foolishness they are, but rather respond in solemn seriousness, explaining how changes in supply and demand have brought about the price increases.

Yeah, yeah, supply and demand. Isn't that just the sort of excuse you'd expect a robber baron, caught red-handed, to invoke?

It's no wonder the public always believes that conspiracies among the companies explain the high prices, and hence that the public supports government action to whip the conspirators into line or to impose price controls. It's a perfect match: ignorant (and immoral) members of the public and ignorant (and immoral) members of Congress to represent them in Washington. We are witnessing democracy in action. As H. L. Mencken said, "votes are collared under democracy, not by talking sense but by talking nonsense."

I first became aware of this moronic charade back in the 1970s, during the first "energy crisis." William E. Simon, whom Nixon appointed to be the "energy czar" at that time, later gave a hilarious account of it in his book *A Time for Truth* (1978). Simon described "the demagoguery that is often unleashed at these hearings and is a gross caricature of the process of seeking information." He illustrated his claim by reproducing the transcript of an exchange he had at one of the hearings with Congressman Joe McDade, who was certainly among the most corrupt members in the history of the corrupt House of Representatives. Read it (on pp. 62-64) and weep. "I knew," wrote Simon, "I was faced with an economic illiterate or with a political hypocrisy so great that it stunned me."

I challenge you, however, to read the transcript of the hearings the House conducted to bully the oil company executives as recently as last spring and reach a conclusion any different from Simon's.

In his book, Simon noted "the compulsion in a dominantly liberal Congress to believe any rumor, however baseless, from any source, however absurd, which suggested that the shortage was 'unreal,' a product of a vicious oil company plot, and the compulsion to 'demagogue' whenever the red light of the television camera lit up."

The more things change . . . .

*Robert Higgs writes for The Independent Institute's "The Beacon," where this first appeared.*

**E-mail the  
Editor**

## Fix Foreign Aid

by Paul Weyrich

*Issue 121 - December 3, 2008*

As the American economy continues to struggle through a mortgage crisis, credit crisis and job losses, part of the immense worldwide phenomenon, it would be wise for our elected representatives to consider reducing the amount of taxpayer money they spend annually. One area where substantial cuts could be made is in foreign aid. The United States spends more money on foreign aid than any other nation in the world. Some of this is beneficial in both a humanitarian and a strategic sense. Some, however, should be eliminated.



Paul M. Weyrich

President George W. Bush's Fiscal Year 2009 Foreign Operations Budget for the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other foreign affairs agencies totals \$26.1 billion. The requested amount is an 8.9% increase over the total Fiscal Year 2008 (October 1, 2007-September 30, 2008) amount enacted to date, including emergency funding. In addition, the United States contributes well over \$3 billion to the United Nations, an organization which in turn welcomes our enemies to speak against us. The U.S. State Department notes that the United States is a generous supporter – in many cases the largest supporter—of key U.N. programs. In 2004, the U.S. contributed 48% of the budget of the World Food Program to help feed 104 million people in 81 countries; 17% of the budget of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to feed, vaccinate, educate and protect children in 157 countries; and 31% of the budget of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to safeguard the rights and well being of 19.2 million refugees in 116 countries. According to USAID, such large amounts of money are needed to promote "responsible sovereignty, not permanent dependency" among recipient nations.

After decades of giving ever increasing sums to various countries and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) throughout the world, American taxpayers should see return benefits on their contributions, including the successful development of third-world countries and a decrease in anti-Americanism. Yet it seems that the opposite occurs. More people accuse us of not doing enough to help the poor and the less fortunate; more demand greater sums of money; more hate us, in part through envy; and more seem ungrateful for the benefits they do receive. In addition, few if any countries or organizations ever declare that they have reached the point of self-sufficiency and no longer need to receive monies from the United States. In spite of USAID's lofty rhetoric, it seems that most of the Federal Government's foreign aid creates dependency and enables some foreign bureaucrats and NGOs to enrich themselves at the expense of those they purport to serve and help.

As a new administration prepares to take office, it would be wise for our newly elected officials to consider reforming and reducing the amount of foreign aid. The Brookings Institution noted two years ago that the current system of U.S. foreign assistance is "an incongruent structure that includes 50 separate offices which address a dizzying array of more than 50 objectives ranging from narcotics eradication to refugee assistance. Different agencies pursue these overlapping objectives with shockingly poor communication and even worse coordination between them. At best, the lack of integration means that the United States fails to take advantage of potential synergies; at worst, these disparate efforts work at cross purposes. As a result, America punches well below its throw weight in the international arena as the quality of its aid strategy compromises the quantity of its absolute aid dollars." In order to improve the strategic and humanitarian effectiveness of our foreign aid, we would do well to trim and streamline the bureaucracy which handles it and to demand results from those who receive it.

I should note that in addition to taxpayer-funded foreign aid, Americans are more generous with private donations to charities than other peoples in the world. According to the annual Index of Global Philanthropy and the Department of State's Bureau of International Information Programs, in 2005 (the most current data available) \$95.5 billion in American foreign aid came from private foundations, corporations, voluntary organizations, universities, religious organizations and

individuals. And the dollar amounts do not indicate how much time Americans spend volunteering overseas.

Many American families are making sacrifices this fall and winter, reining in their spending and setting reasonable budgets for themselves. Perhaps the Federal Government can learn from them and do likewise.

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

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Editor**

## Wrong On Mental Health

by John Goodman

*Issue 121 - December 3, 2008*

It was easy to overlook in the midst of a historic financial crisis, but buried in the middle of the bailout bill was a mental health parity law. It contains so many loopholes and exceptions, it may not have any more impact than the previous mental health parity bill - enacted in 1996.

Ostensibly, employers of more than 50 people must apply the same copayments, deductibles, etc., to mental health services as they have for medical services. But the employer doesn't have to cover mental health at all. And if there is coverage, employers can pick and choose which disorders they will cover.



**John Goodman**

So why does this interest us? Because it is an example of very bad law. It does the opposite of what good public policy should be all about.

With respect to insurance for any health condition there are three public policy questions:

- Is there a legitimate social interest in whether private insurance covers treatment costs at all?
- Is there a legitimate social interest in how private insurance contracts allocate coverage between third-party insurance and individual self-insurance?
- If the answer to 2 is "yes," what should the allocation be?

The law just passed implicitly says "no" to question (1), "yes" to question (2) and "equal allocations for all covered services" to question (3). These are the wrong answers to all three questions.

There may be a legitimate social interest in whether people insure for catastrophic mental health care costs, just as there may be a legitimate interest in insurance for other catastrophic costs. But given some level of catastrophic coverage, there is rarely any good reason to substitute the judgment of legislators for the judgment of the marketplace with respect to the division between self-insurance and third-party insurance. And there is no conceivable reason to dictate the terms of question (2), while leaving the private sector completely free to answer "no" to question (1).

Further, even if there was a legitimate social interest in question (2), the legislation gets it all wrong. There is no conceivable circumstance in which rational people would freely choose to be in plans in which deductibles and copayments are the same for all services. To the contrary, people should self insure for those services where it is appropriate and desirable for patients to exercise discretion. They should rely on third-party insurance for services where it is inappropriate and undesirable for patients to exercise discretion.

Mental health services frequently have the very characteristics which make patient discretion highly desirable. Therefore, it is far more efficient to put funds in Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) and let patients make more of their own decisions. But even within the category of "mental health," we would almost never want the same amount of self insurance for every service.

Notice that the same mistake made by the mental health parity bill is also embedded in the HSA law. Congress has left people free to decide whether to insure, but has chosen to dictate the division between third-party insurance and self-insurance for those who choose to do so - even going so far as to regulate what the deductible can be for every service!

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

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Editor**

## Muslims On Obama Win

by Daniel Pipes

Issue 121 - December 3, 2008

Ali ibn Abi-Talib, the seventh-century figure central to Shiite Islam, is said to have predicted when the world will end, columnist [Amir Taheri](#) points out. A "tall black man" commanding "the strongest army on earth" will take power "in the west." He will carry "a clear sign" from the third imam, Hussein. Ali says of the tall black man: "Shiites should have no doubt that he is with us."

*Barack Hussein* in Arabic means "the blessing of Hussein." In Persian, *Obama* translates as "He [is] with us." Thus does the name of the presumptive American president-elect, when combined with his physical attributes and geography, suggest that the End of Times is nigh – precisely what Iranian president [Mahmoud Ahmadinejad](#) has been predicting.



Daniel Pipes

Back down on earth, the Muslim reaction to Obama's victory is more mixed than one might expect.

American Islamists are delighted; an umbrella group, the [American Muslim Taskforce on Civil Rights and Election](#), opined that, with Obama's election, "Our nation has ... risen to new majestic heights." Siraj Wahhaj, Al-Hajj Talib Abdur Rashid, the Council on American Islamic Relations, the Muslim Public Affairs Council, the Islamic Society of North America, the Islamic Circle of North America, and the Muslim Alliance in North America [responded with similar exuberance](#).

[Hamas](#), and Islamist movements in [Egypt](#), Jordan, [Iraq](#), [India](#), [Indonesia](#) and the Philippines delighted in Obama's election. [Robert Spencer](#) of Jihad Watch generalizes that jihadists and Islamic supremacists worldwide showed "unalloyed joy." The *New York Times* finds [public reaction](#) in the Middle East mostly "euphoric." [John Esposito](#) of Georgetown University emphasizes the Muslim world's welcome to Obama as an "internationalist president."

But plenty of other Muslims have other views. Writing in Canada's *Edmonton Sun*, [Salim Mansur](#) found John McCain the "more worthy candidate." [Yusif al-Qaradawi](#), the Al-Jazeera sheikh, endorsed McCain for opposite reasons: "This is because I prefer the obvious enemy who does not hypocritically [conceal] his hostility toward you... to the enemy who wears a mask [of friendliness]." Al-Qaradawi also argued that twice as many Iraqis died during Bill Clinton's two administrations than during George W. Bush's.

Iran's hardliners also favored a McCain victory (according to Iran's former Vice President [Mohammad Ali Abtahi](#)) "because they benefit more from enmity with the U.S., which allows them to rally the Islamic world behind their policies and at the same time suppress dissent at home." The [Taliban](#) took note of Obama's election promise to increase U.S. troops in Afghanistan, warning that, should he fulfill this plan, "jihad and resistance will be continued."

[Iraqis](#) are intensively divided about Obama's plan quickly to withdraw U.S. troops from their country. That plan, plus promises to end U.S. dependence on Middle East oil and to negotiate with Iranian leaders, rattled the leaders of [Saudi Arabia](#) and other Persian Gulf governments.

Some commentators argue that Obama cannot make a real difference; an [Iranian newspaper](#) declares him unable to alter a system "established by capitalists, Zionists, and racists." Predictably, the appointment of [Rahm Emanuel](#) as Obama's chief of staff confirmed Palestinian perceptions of an omnipotent Israel lobby. A commentator in the [United Arab Emirates](#) went further, predicting Obama's replication of Jimmy Carter's trajectory of flamboyant emergence, failure in the Middle East, and electoral defeat.

In all, these mixed reactions from Muslims suggest puzzlement at the prospect of a U.S. president of Islamic origins who promises "change," yet whose foreign policy may buckle under the constraints of his office. In other words, Muslims confront the same question mark hanging over Obama as everyone else.

Never before have Americans voted into the White House a person so unknown and enigmatic. Emerging from a hard-left background, he ran, especially in the general election, mostly as a center-left candidate. Which of these positions will he adopt as president? More precisely, where along the spectrum from hard- to center-left will he land?

Looking at the Arab-Israeli conflict, for example, will Obama's policies reflect [Rashid Khalidi](#), the [ex-PLO flak](#) he befriended in the 1990s, or [Dennis Ross](#), his recent campaign advisor and member of [my board of editors](#)? No one can yet say.

Still, one can predict. Should Obama return to his hard left roots, Muslim euphoria will largely continue. Should he seek to make his presidency a success by moving to the center-left, many – but hardly all – Muslims will experience severe disillusionment.

Mr. Pipes ([www.DanielPipes.org](http://www.DanielPipes.org)) is director of the Middle East Forum and Taube distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University. © 2008 by Daniel Pipes. All rights reserved.

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Editor**

## China Sinks New Kyoto

by Dennis Avery

*Issue 121 - December 3, 2008*

China has now destroyed Western hopes for a new global warming agreement, just weeks before global talks in Poland aimed at writing a successor for the Kyoto Protocol— which expires in 2012. China has attached a ransom note to its Polish meeting RSVP: They might go along with a new warming pact if the rich countries agree to hand over 1 percent of their GDP—about \$300 billion per year—to finance the required non-fossil, higher-cost energy systems the West wants the developing countries to use.



**Dennis T. Avery**

Bad timing: The U.S. and Europe are trying to bail their financial systems out of Barney Frank's Fanny Mae/Freddy Mac sub-prime mortgage adventure. "Climate change policies need a lot of money to be invested. However, developed countries have not made any substantive promises about how much they are going to spend on this," said Gao Guangsheng, head of China's Climate Change Office on Oct. 28. And they did not fulfill some of the promises they made in the past very well either.

China, India, Brazil, and Mexico had already demanded—in July— that the developed countries cut their own emissions by 80–95 percent by 2050. Very unlikely. The EU has loudly boasted of trying to set an 80-percent cut in its emissions, but that now looks impossible. Italy, Poland, Hungary, and Greece are part of a "blocking force" saying they can't afford to give up coal and oil during a financial crisis. Especially when the only alternative is imported Russian gas; Russia recently "invaded" Georgia, many think to stop Georgian efforts to build a gas pipeline that would have competed with Russia's.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who helped create the Kyoto Protocol, now says that drastic cuts in CO<sup>2</sup> emissions are "ill-advised climate policy." She's building 26 brown-coal power plants instead, and re-thinking the German promise to scuttle its nuclear power plants.

Don't spend much of your "worry time" on a new climate treaty however. Global temperatures are doing their best to tell us that CO<sup>2</sup> isn't very important after all.

- Global thermometers stubbornly refused to rise after 1998, and have plummeted in the past two years by more than 0.5 degree C. The world is now colder than in 1940, when the Post-WWII Industrial Revolution started spewing lots of man-made CO<sup>2</sup> in the first place.
- On October 29, the U.S. beat or tied 115 low-temperature records for the date. Alaska, which was unusually warm last year, recorded 25 degrees below zero Fahrenheit that night—beating the previous low by 4 degrees F.
- London had snow in October for the first time in more than 70 years.

The 2007–08 temperature drop wasn't predicted by the global climate models, but it had been predicted by the sunspots since 2000. Both the absent sunspots and the Pacific Decadal Oscillation now predict a 25–30-year global cooling. After that, the remaining enthusiasm for global warming agreements will presumably have vanished—without any big payoff to the Chinese government.

Meanwhile, India is about to rescue our Appalachian coal industry. India is already importing 50 million tons of coal per year, and sees our high-sulfur eastern coal as an under-priced energy resource. While New York and Philadelphia import low-sulfur coal from Wyoming's Powder River Basin, India wants to buy not just Appalachia's coal but the mines that produce it. They note, "It's a buyer's market."

*Dennis Avery is a senior fellow for the Hudson Institute in Washington, DC and is the Director for the Center for Global Food Issues. ([www.cgfi.org](http://www.cgfi.org)) He was formerly a senior analyst for the Department of State. He is co-author, with S. Fred Singer, of Unstoppable Global Warming Every 1500 Hundred Years.*

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Editor**

## Change in America

by Alan Caruba

Issue 121 - December 3, 2008

Many of those who helped elect Barack Obama as the next President represent a very different generation of Americans from earlier ones. They have passed through the politically correct indoctrination of government/union controlled schools and have little accurate knowledge of history, geography, or civics with which to make informed judgments. They are more the product of popular media and culture than any previous generation.



Alan Caruba

The struggle for civil rights dominated the 1960s. The Watergate scandal marked the 1970s and the nation experienced its first serious military defeat after a protracted war in Vietnam. The rise of the Islamic Revolution began in 1979 and continued through the 1980s and 1990s, until it led to the 9/11 attack in 2001. The nation has been engaged militarily in the Middle East ever since. Events alter perceptions.

Here are some of the ways that America has changed since the 1960s:

The nuclear family—mother, father and children—is no longer the most common household type. It was in 1960, but today the nuclear family ranks third among alternative types of households behind married couples without children at home (mostly older, empty-nesters) and people living alone (also among the growing demographic of older Americans.) Divorce and out-of-wedlock births have caused the number of single parents to increase dramatically. Abortion ends 24% of pregnancies these days.

Most children have working mothers. In America today, 69% of married mothers work. The result is that most pre-school children are in daycare programs being raised and cared for by people other than their parents.

Only 16% of Americans think that our nation's schools are doing a good job. To put it another way, 84% think schools are failing in their mission to educate today's children. There are ample statistics to demonstrate this. For example, only 39% of white students in fourth grade were reading at or above their grade level in 2005. Among black students, it was only 12%. Asian American students, however, scored at 40%. Educators tell me that today's schools are virtual zoos requiring all manner of monitoring of disruptive students. Fear rules the halls of too many schools, both inner city and suburban.

The median household income peaked in 1999 after some forty years of rising incomes. Between 1967 and 2006 the median household income grew by 32%, after adjusting for inflation, to \$48,201. The average American household makes \$1,000 less than it did a few years ago. The earning power of men peaked in 1989. Between 1967 and 2006, the median earnings of women who worked full-time grew by 53%. Together, those incomes allowed families to buy houses, SUVs, and other top dollar items. Americans have been on a credit spree, however. The median debt of average American households is \$55,300!

The Social Security Trust Fund will exhaust its surplus in 2041. Nine out of ten people aged 65 years or older receive a Social Security check each month. It accounts for 40% of their income.

In a recent issue of *Budget & Tax News*, published by The Heartland Institute, an article noted that "Federal regulations cost Americans almost as much as the income tax and more than 40 percent of *all* federal spending...Federal environmental, safety, health, and economic regulations cost more than \$1 trillion a year *in addition* to the costs of official federal spending." These costs are passed along to consumers.

Fully 63% of Americans believe in God and have no doubts about it, but 57% believe that it is not necessary to believe in God to be a moral person with good values.

According to the 2000 Census, America was home to 63 distinct racial groups, but it was the first census in which individuals could identify themselves as belonging to more than one such group, i.e., were multiracial. Whites constituted 211 million people. Blacks were 14% of the population and represented 25% of those living in poverty, but non-Hispanic whites represented 44%. Blacks constitute 41 million Americans and are outnumbered five to one by whites.

Despite the failure of some sub-prime mortgages, fully 68% of households own a home. The Great Depression caused such losses that the government created the Federal Housing Administration and a new system of financing, the 30-year, fixed rate mortgage. By 1950 home ownership rate had climbed to 55%. Allowing people to buy homes with no money down and a reasonable expectation of paying their monthly mortgage has proven to be a very bad idea.

If you were born in 1901 life expectancy was 47 years. By 2006, average life expectancy was 78! The leading cause of death in America is heart disease. More than two million Americans die of this cause every year.

Antonio Gramsci, a dedicated communist, wrote a book setting out a strategy for taking over strong Western democracies by infiltrating their churches and educational system, as well as a nation's media. Communism could be imposed by turning churches into ideologically-driven political clubs. Educational systems had to be dumbed down and offer a politically correct curriculum. Mass media had to discredit traditional institutions such as marriage and commonly shared moral values.

If any of this looks like America today, consider yourself warned.

*Alan Caruba writes a weekly column posted on the Internet site of The National Anxiety Center, [www.anxietycenter.com](http://www.anxietycenter.com). He blogs daily at <http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com>.*

**E-mail the  
Editor**

## What Do Republicans Do?

by David Keene

*Issue 121 - December 3, 2008*

Barry Goldwater said once that he much preferred the drubbing he got in 1964 at the hands of Lyndon Johnson to losing by a whisker because it allowed him to go to sleep at night without wondering if the outcome might have been different had he gone to one more rally or said something different or had different ads or ...

When a candidate and his party lose a close one, everybody blames everyone but themselves. Postelection hoopla aside, this year's presidential contest was close. As a result, those who believe their candidate walks on water are blaming the selection of Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, supposedly forced on Sen. John McCain by wrongheaded advisers. They are wondering why Mr. McCain did or didn't do one thing or another along the way to his defeat. Others are suggesting that Mr. McCain himself was the problem or blaming flaws in strategy that virtually guaranteed defeat.



David Keene

All these charges should be taken with a grain or two of salt given the simple fact that they originate with folks whose advice was not taken and who are convinced that had the candidate only listened things would have been different.

Maybe some of the criticism is valid, but when the smoke clears Republicans will realize that the Obama victory may have been inevitable given the environment in which the race was run and that they were largely responsible for creating that environment. Only then will the rebuilding begin.

Any conservative honest enough to look at his or her party has to realize that we had it coming. The party of Reagan degenerated in the years since his death. The party of individual freedom and limited government morphed into something unrecognizable. Its leaders, in a perhaps sincere attempt to protect the U.S. homeland and prop up her economy, came to treat the Constitution as just a piece of paper to be circumvented or ignored at will. Men and women elected to restrain government became addicted to pork, earmarks and the use of public funds to buy votes. While piously lecturing us on family values and morality, many stood by as colleagues made a mockery of their words and fools of the voters who elected them.

President Bush presided over a domestic-spending orgy not seen since the days of the Great Society, and his aides rolled their eyes when conservatives wondered at the wisdom of jettisoning the very principles that brought Mr. Bush to power. By 2006, the chickens were coming home to roost. By 2008, voters were as disgusted with Republican hot air and incompetence as they had been with the Democrats in the '70s after a few years of Jimmy Carter and in the '90s when House and Senate Democrats seemed to be emulating the excesses of the final years of the Roman Empire with House bank scandals and stamps being traded for pocketed cash.

This year's voters wanted to fire the Republicans and try something new. President-elect Barack Obama benefited greatly from voter outrage and rode it into the White House.

In the final analysis, there may have been little any Republican could have done to avoid the firing. Since Nov. 4, many analysts have been arguing that we have entered a new era; that Mr. Obama's victory came in a transformational election that has permanently altered the nation's politics. Washington Post columnist E.J. Dionne, for example, argued that the victory means we live in a "left of center" nation not the "right of center" nation we thought we knew. These analyses comfort Obama partisans but simply don't square with what happened.

First, Mr. Obama didn't run as the radical conservatives believe him to be. He ran as a centrist with voters in battleground states subjected to his commercials favoring tax cuts and opposing nationalized health care. He told audiences he supported the Second Amendment and wouldn't expand the availability of abortions. He came across as a centrist in the mold of the so-called "Blue Dog" Democrat centrists who successfully exploited voter antipathy to incumbent Republican congressmen in 2006 in Republican-leaning districts.

This strategy worked and is an indication that Mr. Obama and his managers realized that voters wanted to send Republicans packing because of their performance, not their values or principles.

Second, the hype about massive voter turnout turned out to be just that. Exit polls and turnout figures suggest that Mr. Obama won for precisely the reasons outlined above. Democratic turnout increased slightly more than 2 percent, and Mr. Obama drew slightly more support from voter groups across the board than Sen. John Kerry in 2004 or Vice President Al Gore in 2000. What Mr. Obama did was excite, organize and deliver a Democratic base.

At the same time, the Republican turnout dropped by nearly 1.5 percent. Some Republicans abandoned their candidates and more stayed home. Mr. Kerry lost with 40,000 more Ohio votes in 2004 than Mr. Obama got this year. States such as Ohio were winnable had elected Republicans lived up to their expectations in office and had the McCain campaign identified and gotten their voters to the polls.

None of this is meant to denigrate the campaign Mr. Obama ran. He raised more money than any candidate in history and spent it well, mastering the new technology Mr. McCain's folks were barely able to understand. He performed flawlessly as a candidate and is only the third Democrat in more than 50 years to win more than 50 percent of the vote.

Once Republicans stop blaming their candidate and the media and stop whining, they can and will rebuild their party around common principles delivered by in-touch, dynamic conservative leaders. Four years from now, conservatives won't be outorganized and outspent if they get back to basics and begin the hard work that needs to be done in the interim.

*David A. Keene is the chairman of the American Conservative Union, the nation's oldest and largest grass-roots conservative lobbying organization. This originally appeared in The Washington Times.*

**E-mail the  
Editor**

## Overturn Prop 8?

by Jennifer Morse

*Issue 121 - December 3, 2008*

All friends of democracy should be troubled that the same court whose decision to nullify a law passed by the state legislature that was overruled by a majority of California voters in the last election is now being asked to override the decision of the people. Gay rights activists are asking the state's Supreme Court to overturn voter-approved Proposition 8 that limited marriage to one man and one woman on a technicality. The judiciary should decline this invitation to lawlessness.

The whole point of having a ballot initiative process is to allow voters the opportunity to take matters into their own hands when they feel ill-served by their public officials.



Proposition 8 originated in San Diego, in the aftermath of the City Council's fall 2007 decision to join the amicus briefs in the cases that ultimately imposed same sex marriage. The San Diego City Council went through the motions of holding public hearings. After several hours of public testimony on both sides, City Council members pulled out and read statements in support of joining the amicus briefs, statements that were obviously prepared well in advance of any public testimony.

Citizens realized that the hearings were a sham.

That episode of being ignored and indeed, insulted by elected officials stimulated the movement that became Proposition 8. A group of San Diego citizens realized that they had to take matters into their own hands to protect their values.

The Proposition 8 campaign was a genuine grass roots effort, with an estimated 100,000 volunteers. This was an outpouring of citizen participation, precisely what the Progressive Era founders of the initiative process hoped for. "Yes on 8" was supported largely by small contributions: over 70,000 individuals contributed.

The opponents of Proposition 8 claim that it is a revision, not an amendment, to the constitution. Now is a fine time to tell us! This measure faced litigation before it was even put on the ballot. The two sides argued over the voter information guide, differing over what the initiative would actually do. That language was amended as a result of that process.

The Attorney General changed the language of the title of the amendment itself. The initiative was originally called simply, "Limit on Marriage Constitutional Amendment." After Jerry Brown got finished, the ballot language read, "Eliminates the rights of same sex couples to marry." That change in wording probably cost several percentage points of voters, as Brown surely anticipated. If the gay lobby seriously believed that initiative was a "revision" instead of an "amendment," they should have said so in July, before both sides spent over \$70 million fighting it out in the electoral process.

It is impossible to escape the conclusion that this is a desperate, last-ditch effort, by sore losers. The plain fact of the matter is that the "Yes on Proposition 8" campaign won, in a David and Goliath type fight. The entire political Establishment, the Judiciary, the legislature, and the governor opposed the amendment. All the daily newspapers opposed it. The gay lobby was also backed by academia and

Hollywood. In spite of all that, the public sided with traditional man woman marriage, by approximately the same margin as President-elect Barack Obama: 52% to 48%.

Anyone who dislikes the outcome is free to put another amendment on the ballot. That is, as long as the Supreme Court does not debase the initiative process by overturning the results of a fair election.

California's citizen-driven initiative process is one of the jewels of direct democracy. The Court should not emasculate that process.

*Jennifer Roback Morse, Ph.D. can be reached at <http://jennifer-robak-morse.blogspot.com/>*

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**E-mail the  
Editor**

## Obama Voter Knowledge

by John Ziegler

Issue 121 - December 3, 2008

As part of a forthcoming documentary, "Media Malpractice: How Obama Got Elected," I commissioned a nationwide Zogby poll of Obama voters (512 Obama Voters 11/13/08-11/15/08 MOE +/- 4.4 points; 97.1% High School Graduate or higher, 55% College Graduates). The results follow.



### Results to 12 simple Multiple Choice Questions

57.4% could NOT correctly say which party controls congress (50/50 shot just by guessing)

81.8% could NOT correctly say Joe Biden quit a previous campaign because of plagiarism (25% chance by guessing)

82.6% could NOT correctly say that Barack Obama won his first election by getting opponents kicked off the ballot (25% chance by guessing)

88.4% could NOT correctly say that Obama said his policies would likely bankrupt the coal industry and make energy rates skyrocket (25% chance by guessing)

56.1% could NOT correctly say Obama started his political career at the home of two former members of the Weather Underground (25% chance by guessing).

### And yet.....

Only 13.7% failed to identify Sarah Palin as the person on which their party spent \$150,000 in clothes

Only 6.2% failed to identify Palin as the one with a pregnant teenage daughter

And 86.9 % thought that Palin said that she could see Russia from her "house," even though that was Tina Fey who said that!!

Only 2.4% got at least 11 correct.

Only .5% got all of them correct. (And we "gave" one answer that was technically not Palin, but actually Tina Fey)

*John Ziegler is a talk show host, commentator and producer based in Los Angeles.*

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Editor**

## Reader Comments

Issue 121 - December 3, 2008

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**CONSERVATIVE  
BATTLELINE  
ONLINE**

Editor: I loved your article, "Conservative Counter Attack" and wish everyone would read it and take heart...quickly! A couple points: 1)"If Obama and Dem. Congress pursue leftist programs they will fail." I agree but the country will fail and collapse first. 2) "There will be no money." Yes, but that won't stop the liberal Congress. They will keep spending and print more. Scott Yaw

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Editor: Regarding your "Conservative Counter Attack", I am getting confused on what, exactly, are considered conservative values. I want to support conservative values regardless of which party supports them. What I need today is to know exactly what constitutes conservative values. There seems to be a variance these days. We have a group that ranges between the steadfast conservatives and the radical conservatives. What is a good reference for conservative values and where can it be found? I do not want to hear anymore radical conservatism from the media. I want a core on which I can make good, educated decisions. Regards, Peter R. Burg, PMP, Atlanta, GA  
[Editor responds: Try <http://www.acuf.org/principles/index.asp>]

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Editor: Regarding your "Conservative Counter Attack", the Republican Party let me down and many others that call themselves conservatives. I don't feel like I want to be part of this party any longer. I will always be a conservative but not the same kind that the Republican Party appears to be. Really when it comes down to it, Republicans are very close to being Democrats. They are just as corrupt and I see very little difference if any. I feel the same about churches. I will no longer hitch my wagon to a team of horses that pull in the wrong direction. The truth being if I could sell my home and move to some other country I would. I am a 76 year old Korean vet and totally disgusted with this country. If you wonder why just read the news paper and watch the news on TV. Walter E. Klinka

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Editor: Your "Conservative Counter Attack", is very well written. As a registered independent who has conservative views, yet struggled to accept the leadership chosen by the Republican Party I find your article right on point. What needs to be done is the same grassroots campaign the looney liberal lefties did. The conservative party needs to become more inclusive of all races, social groups, genders and age. I am a white male who is proud of his country and has friends of all races, yet I hear from most of them they feel more welcome by the Democratic Party. Yet when I listen to what is important to them, they have conservative views. Paul Bookman

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Editor: Contrary to your "Conservative Counter Attack", comrade Obama, if he was an intelligent man, would not be a neo-Marxist and therefore, he will not allow pragmatism to interfere with his radical agenda. He may swing a little – very little – to the right on foreign policy issues but all of his currently announced selections for domestic policy are dedicated to the leftist cause. True, there won't be enough money to enact all of the left's agenda but they have a way out: mandate the changes be financed by the private sector. The new administration will definitely want to increase taxes in a number of areas to fund some of their loonier ambitions, despite current economic

conditions. The House may be leery of this regardless of pressure from Pelosi. After all, they all come up for reelection in less than two years. However, the Dems have made many unpopular decisions in the past and imploded often. It's up to conservatives to finally take advantage of the situation, silence the RINOs and the 'reaching across the aisle' business, and win back the confidence of the nation and the GOP base with a restatement of our core principles and a commitment to uphold them. James C. McAlister, Tampa, FL

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Editor: Regarding "Conservative Counter Attack", I think we should articulate the policy that America should have. I think we should articulate what the world would be like without the Department of Ed, HUD or many, many programs that shouldn't exist on a Federal level. I think we should go after the State and Local government, sharpening our teeth as we go. If we can get school choice and limit entitlements then conservatism and Republican control will emerge from the leadership that develops from commerce, charity (faith) and individuals who successfully apply their rights and responsibilities. We need to cultivate this leadership and hence we encourage folks to speak, using every opportunity to teach and convert. We all win in the end when you don't care who gets credit. Lisa Miller

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Editor: I was delighted to see someone so clearly nail both McCain and Bush for what they are as did William Haum in his article, "Young Counter-Revolution." I will have to think about his perspective on Palin. I believe there is a good deal more to her than he may be giving her credit for. My take is she was overmanaged and we never really had the opportunity to see the real Palin. He said he noticed Sarah Palin came to represent the current and growing chasm between the intellectual establishment of Conservatives who are desperately needed to chart new ideas for 21st century problems, and the Conservative grassroots, who are needed to bring those ideas into political office. He went on to say conservatives today, have mistaken the anti-elitism inherent to Conservatism to mean anti-intellectualism. I have lived in or traveled through some forty countries during my career, teaching and working in areas of agricultural research. While I have a substantial education both academically and practically my education is not who am. While it has contributed to the sum of the whole I draw on much more. I believe what many I interact with might say is far too many of the educated in this country are snobs who treat those with less very much like second class citizens. Mark Twain once commented money was like manure if it wasn't spread around nothing would grow. I would say something similar could be said of education if such were available in this country. The fact is however much of what is passed off as education in this country is little more than indoctrination. Until that changes I submit the chasm will continue to grow. Roger Thompson, New Plymouth, Idaho

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Editor: I think William Haum did excellent work in his article, "Young Counter-Revolution." I totally agree with him that conservatives must stand up for what we believe and get rid of trying to muddy things up by always reaching across and trying to appease the liberals. Such tactics do not work in business or politics. I feel, from what I see and hear, we need a big change in the Republican leadership; they have lost their way. I'm a home town boy and believe in what is right is what is right, in fairness and that does not mean bowing to every whim for someone's rights either. I believe justice is what it is supposed to be; not necessarily what some Justice on the bench thinks he or she would like to see done. I'm tired of some groups trying to get away from our basics and trying to throw good sense out the window. Let's get back to conservative basics, back to the way our founding fathers made God Almighty and His Word part of our lives. Instead can't we see that by throwing God out of our communities and our lives we are bringing on our problems so quickly? He no doubt has lifted His hand of protection from our country judging from all the perils we recently are enjoying. Let's get back to teaching (learning) what schools are intended to teach, not what

small groups want to impose on us. Feed the tiger and he will grow, so we better wake up and quit feeding the tiger, don't you think so too? H. B. Campbell, Nashville, IL. USA

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Editor: William Haun's "Young Counter-Revolution" was a thought provoking article, and I must agree with much of it. However, when you besmirch the likes of Sarah Palin I must get a bit defensive. I agree that we must have intellectuals at the top of the party. Newt Gingrich has always been in the top tier of my list as a desirable leader of conservatism, I hesitate to say Republicanism. However, the last time I saw him he had made a television ad with Nancy Pelosi talking about the need to work against that ogre "global warming". I lost a lot of respect for Newt at that time and I really don't know where he stands now. Politically, he appears to me to be more interested in self promotion than anything else. George H.W. Bush was forced upon us as Republicans, he always was a political wimp, even if he displayed extreme courage in WWII as a pilot, and had no real political philosophy except to get reelected, and he certainly was no intellectual. Bob Dole was forced upon us, a good man but certainly not of presidential timber (neither intellectual nor conservative. George W. Bush was forced upon us, a "compassionate conservative" whatever the heck that means. I tried my best to support G.W. Bush, but every time I could about work up some support for him he stuck his thumb in my eye. So you now "pick on" Sarah Palin. I agree she is not an intellectual, but between G.H.W. Bush, Bob Dole, G.W. Bush, and John McCain and Sarah Palin I'll take Sarah Palin any day, Any Day. She is the only one of the bunch who has shown true Conservative principals. And she is the only one of the bunch who showed any political courage. any. If I were back in the Army, she is the one I would want to share my foxhole with. In a fire fight I want her on my side rather than any of the others, including Bob Dole and John McCain, they would try to negotiate and "reach across the aisle" with the guy trying to kill us. Thanks for a good article, though. It was thought provoking. Please write another, write about where we go from here, who are the conservative intellectuals who need to be promoted, how do we get these people promoted. To paraphrase Joe Biden, I think the key word here is "conservative intellectuals". Don't say "conservative" without saying "intellectual", and vice versa. Thanks again, Dave Richie

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Editor: William Haun is generally correct in his analysis of the problems with the GOP and I agree with his remedies, for the most part. But, his denigration of Sarah Palin because he doesn't consider her an intellectual and, therefore blaming her in part for defeat, is just wrong. She ignited the base and single handedly caused those 57 million voters to come to the Republican side. Prior to her selection, McCain was in a downward spiral and would have suffered ignominious defeat unlike anything in recent memory. What is more, Sarah is innately highly intelligent, contrary to the opinion of those on the left. She certainly has conservative ideals and lives by them every day. That is where Haun is correct. Conservative ideals win every time they are tried. Republicans must relearn that lesson. Sincerely, Kerry J. Kreutz

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Editor: Regarding Mark Rhoads' "National Review RIP" how can the public pressure National Review to humble itself and embrace all conservatives nationwide? "We have the right, as individuals, to give away as much of our own money as we please in charity; but as members of Congress we have no right to so appropriate a dollar of the public money." --Congressman Davy Crockett, 1830. Speech before the U.S. House of Representatives Cordially, Brian K. Welch, Nashville, TN.  
<http://jeremysarber.com/2008/09/17/the-great-social-injustice-of-welfare/>

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Editor: Right on to Paul Weyrich in his "Target Talk Radio." Thanks for the inspiration to FIGHT FOR FREEDOM! The fight may not be in the trenches of physical battle, nevertheless, it is to DO or DIE! John Herman, Summerfield, FL

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Editor: Regarding Paul Weyrich's "Target Talk Radio," wouldn't the Fairness Doctrine also apply to such TV shows as Oprah, The View, etc.? If so, Oprah probably has enough clout with Obama to stop re-imposition of the Fairness Doctrine. Jack Buzbee

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Editor: Regarding Paul Weyrich's "Target Talk Radio," the media is liberal and dead as far as I'm concerned. I am 68 yrs. old and have never seen it this bad. Thank God for Fox News and talk radio.....it is the only truth and thoughtful truthful discussion that we get!! Fight for them....protect them for all of our sakes! Jean Sadler, Stockton, CA

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Editor: I suspect Mitch McConnell may be right BUT I also believe people like Paul Weyrich and other like-minded conservatives need to be better prepared than we are to deal with this issue when the Dem's bring it to us. First, I would argue a war chest needs to be created now to provide needed funds for the legal battle that lies ahead. Second, we need an email/internet network ready to go at a moments notice. Third, we need to be able to run ads in major newspapers to get OUR viewpoint out to the public. Who is going to do this? Sincerely, Edward Perkins, Milwaukee, WI

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Editor: Paul Weyrich is right in his "Target Talk Radio." But if you censor or take off the air talk radio then you have to take off talk TV also - like Letterman, Oprah, the View, etc. Oprah spent so much time praising Obama and run down Palin and McCain. Also you still can't cut on Letterman without his jokes about Palin and McCain. To me they went beyond funny and you can't tell me it did not influence the audience. I could go on citing examples but you know what I am talking about. Talk radio is the only way we really know what is going on out there. All for now. Thanks for letting me vent and giving you MY VIEW. TL

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Editor: Keep up the good work. Coming from Jersey City N. J. I always admired Roy Innis Sr. for being truthful. I am glad to see his son Roy following in his footsteps in your article "Nuclear Works." I would love to see Mr. Innis get together with other conservatives to form a strong coalition and get our country on the right track. Mr. A. Panetta, Palm Coast FL.

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Editor: Regarding Maggie Gallagher's "California Votes Marriage" if civil unions in California give all the same rights and responsibilities to same sex and childless couples as did marriage, then fine, but I am skeptical. These rights and responsibilities by what ever name you give the law that bestows them are important for the protection of children but are also important for unions without children. I am simply not able to make any sense of Ms. Gallagher's statement that "If Californians had voted no on Proposition 8, the great historical cross-cultural meaning of marriage would have been replaced by a new government dogma on which gay marriage is based: There is no difference between same-sex unions and opposite-sex unions; anyone who thinks otherwise is just a bigot." So what? Such a changed understanding would not change or diminish in any way the protections and

benefits to children or anyone else of traditional marriage between a man and women. But it would extend important benefits and protections to same sex unions there by contributing to the stability and well being of the community at large. Warren Coats

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**E-mail the  
Editor**