Sent: Wed, 14 May 2014 06:13:02 -0400
From: Bulletin Intelligence <vp@bulletinintelligence.com>
To: "Cerda, Jose" <jose_cerda@ovp.eop.gov>, "Thompson, Kenny" <kenneth_d_thompson@ovp.eop.gov>, "Bianchi, Sarah" <sarah_a_bianchi@ovp.eop.gov>, "O'Brien, Sean" <sean_w_obrien@ovp.eop.gov>, "Feldman, Stefanie G." <stefanie_g_feldman@ovp.eop.gov>, "Spector, Stephen" <stephen_i_spector@ovp.eop.gov>, "O'Brien, Sean" <"/o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=obrien, sean w.93f">, "Thompson, Kenneth D." <"/o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=thompson, kenneth d.7a5">, "Bianchi, Sarah" <"/o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=sarah_a_bianchi">, "Spector, Stephen" <"/o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=spector, stephen i.b04">, "Cerda, Jose" <"/o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=jose_cerda">, "Feldman, Stefanie G." <"/o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=stefanie_g_feldman1">

FOIA-6

Cc: "Everett, Aaron" <aaron_r_everett@ovp.eop.gov>, [redacted] "Escudero, Adrian V." <adrian_v._escudero@ovp.eop.gov>, "Hornbrook, Alex" <alex_hornbrook@ovp.eop.gov>, "Kurren, Amy" <amy_m_kurren@ovp.eop.gov>, "Bernal, Anthony R." <anthony_r._bernal@ovp.eop.gov>, "Stackpole, Avra" <avra_w_stackpole@ovp.eop.gov>, "Woyak, Brian J." <brian_j._woyak@ovp.eop.gov>, "Lillard, Brooke" <brooke_m_lillard@ovp.eop.gov>, "Bolduc, Chad" <chad_m_bolduc@ovp.eop.gov>, "Fromstein, Charles" <charles_a_fromstein@ovp.eop.gov>, "Zeigler-Brown, Cortez" <cortez_r_zeigler-brown@ovp.eop.gov>, "Rosenzweig, Dana" <dana_e_rosenzweig@ovp.eop.gov>, "Lienemann, David C." <david_c._lienemann@who.eop.gov>, "Cloud, Donald" <donald_w_cloud@ovp.eop.gov>, "Lambros, Demetra" <demetra_d_lambros@ovp.eop.gov>, "Zikusoka, Dave" <david_n._zikusoka@ovp.eop.gov>, "Regoli, Elizabeth A" <whca_1323152@dsr.eop.gov>, "Hart, Elizabeth" <elizabeth_a_hart@ovp.eop.gov>, "Amin, Faisal" <faisal_amin@ovp.eop.gov>, "Picos, Francisco" <francisco_c_picos@ovp.eop.gov>, "Person, Fran" <fran_person@ovp.eop.gov>, "Freeman, Gary" <gary_d_freeman@ovp.eop.gov>, "Schultz, Greg" <gregory_c_schultz@ovp.eop.gov>, "Edwards, Hannah E." <hannah_e_edwards@ovp.eop.gov>, "Lyons, Jamie" <jamie_e_lyons@ovp.eop.gov>, "Joseph, Jeremy" <jeremy_joseph@ovp.eop.gov>, "Hertz, Jessica R." <jessica_r_hertz@ovp.eop.gov>, "Doody, Jillian" <jillian_doody@ovp.eop.gov>, "Montoya, Jordan" <jordan_r_montoya@ovp.eop.gov>, "Flynn, John S" <john.flynn@whmo.mil>, "Tejeda, Jose" <jose_tejeda@ovp.eop.gov>, "Prescott, Jeffrey" <jeffrey_m_prescott@ovp.eop.gov>, "Sullivan, Jacob" <jacob_j_sullivan@ovp.eop.gov>, "Donley, Julia M" <julia.donley@whmo.mil>, "Richards, Kitty" <katharine_r_richards@ovp.eop.gov>, "Berner, Kate" <katherine_k_berner@ovp.eop.gov>, "Trotter, Kingsley" <katherine_k_trotter@ovp.eop.gov>, "Clark, Katisha A" <katisha.clark@whmo.mil>, "Barkoff, Kendra" <kendra_a_barkoff@ovp.eop.gov>, "Chung, Kathy" <kathy_s_chung@ovp.eop.gov>, kcoconnor@whmo.mil, "Pietranton, Kelsey" <kelsey_l_pietranton@ovp.eop.gov>, "McNellis, Kerry" <kerry_j_mcnellis@ovp.eop.gov>, "Suber, Kellen" <kellen_c._suber@ovp.eop.gov>, "Aidinoff, Marc" <marc_f_aidinoff@ovp.eop.gov>, "Clavel, Lise" <marguerite_l_clavel@ovp.eop.gov>, "Carpenter, Michael" <mcarpenter@ovp.eop.gov>, membersovpvpmilaide@whmo.mil, "Kaye, Melanie" <melanie_a_kaye@ovp.eop.gov>, "Hill, Patty" <patricia_j_hill@ovp.eop.gov>, "Lysaght, Patrick J" <patrick.lysaght@whmo.mil>, "Timko, Rachel" <rachel_m_timko@ovp.eop.gov>, "Ruffner, Richard" <richard_b_ruffner@ovp.eop.gov>, "Eaton, Sarah" <sarah_a_eaton@ovp.eop.gov>, "Baker, Sarah" <sarah_e_baker@ovp.eop.gov>, sarah_fletcher@ovp.eop.gov, "Rosenthal, Lynn" <slrosenthal@ovp.eop.gov>, "Nix, Sheila" <sheila_m_nix@ovp.eop.gov>, "Lachman, Sherry" <sherry_e_lachman@ovp.eop.gov>, "Murray, Shailagh" <shailagh_murray@ovp.eop.gov>, "Myers, Sam A." <sam_a._myers@ovp.eop.gov>, "Ricchetti, Steven" <steven_j_ricchetti@ovp.eop.gov>, "Tennant, Thomas M" <thomas.tennant@whmo.mil>, "McNulty, Thomas P." <thomas_p._mcnulty@ovp.eop.gov>, "Williams, Tonya" <tonya_n_williams@ovp.eop.gov>, "Reddy, Vinay" <vinay_c_reddy@ovp.eop.gov>, "Dirksen, Ward" <ward_f._dirksen@ovp.eop.gov>, "Russo2, Bill" <william_m_russo@ovp.eop.gov>, "Clavel, Marguerite" <"/o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=clavel, marguerite l.b8f">, "Dirksen, Ward F." <"/o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=wardf.dirksen10472133">, "Timko, Rachel" <"/o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=timko, rachel m.350">, "Stackpole, Avra" <"/o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=stackpole, avra w.f8f">, "Rosenthal, Lynn" <"/o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=slrosenthal">, "Ricchetti, Steven" <"/o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=ricchetti, steven j.534">, "Amin, Faisal" <"/o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=amin, faisalc7c">, "Lienemann, David C." <"/o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group

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Subject: Vice Presidential News Clips for Wednesday, May 14, 2014
VPNewsClips140514.doc
VPNewsClips140514.pdf

TO: THE VICE PRESIDENT AND STAFF

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2014 -- 6:15 AM EDT

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+ Biden's Son Joins Board Of Ukraine Gas Company (USAT)
+ Joe Biden's Son Hunter To Head Legal Unit At Ukraine's Largest Private Gas Company (WT)
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+ Joe Biden's Son Is Now On The Board Of One Of Ukraine's Biggest Gas Conglomerates (BIZINDER)
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+ Biden Touts St. Louis Arch Renovation Project (AP)
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+ Presidential Checklist: Jockeying For Position (WAP)
+ Can Democrats Win When Obama's Not On The Ticket? (NATJO)
+ Second Lady Delivers OCTC Commencement Speech (WTVWTV)
+ Biden Challenges OCTC Grads (OWMIN)
+ Second Lady Speaks To Graduating Owensboro Students (WFIETV)

NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS:
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+ A Call For Justice For Syrians (NYT)
+ Common Sense At The Library (NYT)
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+ The Loyal Bunch (NYT)
+ China Isn't Overtaking America (NYT)
+ Rescuing The Kidnapped Girls Should Be Only A First Step For Nigeria To Counter Boko Haram (WP)

+ Virginia's Governor Moves To Protect Access To Abortion (WP)
+ This Time The Left Scuttles A Viable Alternative To Fannie And Freddie (WP)
+ By Serving Alcohol, Starbucks Risks Losing Key Customers: People In Recovery (WP)
+ GOP Should Give Grown-up Politics A Chance (WP)
+ Marco Rubio's Changing Climate (WP)
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+ Md., Del. Delegations Ask Pfizer For Job Assurances; Hostile Bid Possible (WILNJ)
+ Scout Channels Ire Into Campaign For A State Shell (WILNJ)
+ Two Sussex Council Members Oppose NAACP Grants (WILNJ)
+ Incumbents Retain Seats In School Voting (WILNJ)
+ Sussex Council May Say Lord's Prayer Again (WILNJ)
+ Proposed $60 Million Settlment Would Benefit Veterans (WILNJ)
+ UD Approves Room And Board Increase (WILNJ)
+ Smoking Ban Creates Area Of Shame For Smokers (WILNJ)
+ Appeal Targets DNREC Cleanup Plan For New Poultry Site (WILNJ)

WILMINGTON JOURNAL NEWS EDITORIALS:
+ Find Long-term Fix For Crime Evidence Outrage (WILNJ)
+ Why Just Being A Veteran Won't Get You Elected These Days (WILNJ)
+ Teaching Young People About Brown V. Board's Legacy (WILNJ)
+ Climate 'Sustainability' Is More Faith Than Science (WILNJ)

BIDEN IN THE NEWS:

BIDEN'S SON, KERRY FAMILY FRIEND JOIN UKRAINIAN GAS PRODUCER'S BOARD (WSJ)
Ukraine's Burisma Holdings Is Controlled by Former Energy Official Under Yanukovych
By Paul Sonne And James V. Grimaldi
Wall Street Journal, May 14, 2014
Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

BIDEN'S SON JOINS BOARD OF UKRAINE GAS COMPANY (USAT)
By David Jackson, Usa Today
USA Today, May 14, 2014
Vice President Biden's son Hunter is joining the board of a gas company that operates in Ukraine.
Burisma Holdings, Ukraine's largest private gas producer, said Hunter Biden - an attorney - will be in charge of its legal unit and help the company with other international organizations.
"I believe that my assistance in consulting the Company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine," the younger Biden said in a statement.
The Biden appointment comes as the United States and allied nations try to help Ukraine reduce its dependence on Russian energy by developing other sources.
Kendra Barkoff, spokesperson for Vice President Biden, said that "Hunter Biden is a private citizen and a lawyer. The Vice President does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

JOE BIDEN'S SON HUNTER TO HEAD LEGAL UNIT AT UKRAINE'S LARGEST PRIVATE GAS COMPANY (WT)
By Jessica Chasmar
Washington Times, May 14, 2014

Vice President Joseph R. Biden's youngest son, Hunter, has been appointed head of legal affairs at Ukraine's largest private gas producer.
Burisma Holdings said in a statement that Hunter Biden will be in charge of the company's legal unit and will provide support for the company among international organizations.
"Burisma's track record of innovations and industry leadership in the field of natural gas means that it can be a strong driver of a strong economy in Ukraine," Mr. Biden said.
"As a new member of the Board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the Company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine," he said.
White House press secretary Jay Carney said Tuesday that Mr. Biden's new position "does not reflect an endorsement by the administration," Time magazine's Zeke Miller reported.
The announcement comes just one day after Russia's state energy giant Gazprom threatened to halt natural gas shipments to Ukraine unless the country pays in advance for supplies.
The vice president has condemned Russia for its intervention in Ukraine and has pledged to support efforts to reduce its dependency on Russian energy, The Moscow Times reported.

VP BIDEN'S SON JOINS UKRAINE GAS COMPANY'S BOARD (AP)
Associated Press, May 14, 2014
WASHINGTON - Hunter Biden, the younger son of Vice President Joe Biden, is joining the board of a gas company operating in Ukraine, the company announced Tuesday, as the West seeks to help Ukraine wean itself off its dependence on Russian energy.
Burisma Holdings said Biden, an attorney and chairman of the board of the World Food Program USA, will head the Burisma's legal unit, and will also seek support for the company among international organizations.
"I believe that my assistance in consulting the company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine," Biden said in a statement released by the company.
The announcement comes as Ukraine and the U.S. are looking to decrease Ukraine's reliance on Russian energy amid threats from Moscow to cut Ukraine off if it doesn't pay massive debts.
Western countries believe Russia would have less leverage in the crisis with Ukraine if Europe was less dependent on Russian gas.
"Hunter Biden is a private citizen and a lawyer," said Biden spokeswoman Kendra Barkoff. "The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."
Still, Vice President Biden has spoken frequently about the need to increase Ukraine's energy independence, including during a recent visit to Kiev. He's also a key interlocutor for the Obama administration with Kiev and other anxious nations in the region as the crisis there has unfolded.
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UPDATE 1-WHITE HOUSE SAYS NO ISSUE WITH BIDEN'S SON, UKRAINE GAS COMPANY (REU)
Reuters, May 14, 2014
Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

BIDEN'S SON GETS UKRAINIAN OIL COMPANY GIG (ABCNEWS)
ABC News, May 14, 2014
Vice President Joe Biden's youngest son Hunter Biden has joined the board of directors of Ukraine's largest oil company at a time that the U.S. is urging Ukraine to develop energy independence from Russia and just days after the vice president visited Ukraine.
The vice president's office and the White House rejected any suggestion that there was a conflict of interest.
"Hunter Biden is a private citizen and a lawyer," Vice President Biden's spokeswoman Kendra Barkoff told ABC News. "The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

White House spokesman Jay Carney said, "Hunter Biden and other members of the Biden family are obviously private citizens and where they work … does not reflect an endorsement by the administration or by the vice president or president."
According to a press release from the oil company, Burisma Holdings, Biden will help the company manage its relationships with "international organizations," in addition to overseeing the company's legal unit.
"Burisma's track record of innovations and industry leadership in the field of natural gas means that it can be a strong driver of a strong economy in Ukraine," Hunter Biden said in a statement.
"As a new member of the Board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine," he said.
Biden, a graduate of Yale Law School, is a counsel to the New York-based law firm Boies, Schiller & Flexner LLP and serves as an adjunct professor at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

HUNTER BIDEN TO UKRAINE GAS BOARD (POLITICO)
By Lucy Mccalmont
Politico, May 13, 2014
Hunter Biden, the younger son of Vice President Joe Biden, will be joining Ukraine's largest private gas producer, the company announced in a statement
"The company's strategy is aimed at the strongest concentration of professional staff and the introduction of best corporate practices, and we're delighted that Mr. Biden is joining us to help us achieve these goals," Alan Apter, Burisma Holdings' chairman of the board of directors, said in a statement, which was reported by The Moscow Times on Tuesday.
Biden, joining the board, will be in charge of the legal unit, the company said and will provide support for Burisma Holdings "among international organizations."
Biden said the company will help strengthen Ukraine's economy.
"Burisma's track record of innovations and industry leadership in the field of natural gas means that it can be a strong driver of a strong economy in Ukraine," Biden said in a statement. "As a new member of the Board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the Company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine."
The country has faced rising tensions with Russia and on Monday, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney said the U.S. would not recognize a referendum held Sunday in Eastern Ukraine aiming for self-rule in the region, calling it "illegal" under Ukrainian law.
Vice President Biden also expressed support for Ukraine, when he visited the country in April and slammed Russia for its role in the annexation of Crimea.

WH: BIDEN'S SON TO UKRAINE GAS COMPANY ISN'T U.S. ENDORSEMENT (HILL)
By Justin Sink
The Hill, May 13, 2014
Ukraine's largest private gas producer has hired Vice President Biden's youngest son, but White House press secretary Jay Carney insisted on Tuesday the move shouldn't be read as an official endorsement by the U.S. government.
"Hunter Biden and other members of the Biden family are obviously private citizens, and where they work does not reflect an endorsement by the administration or by the vice president or president," Carney told reporters.
The vice president's office also defended the hire.
"Hunter Biden is a private citizen and a lawyer. The Vice President does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company. For any additional questions, I refer you to Hunter's office," said Kendra Barkoff, spokeswoman for Vice President Biden.
Burisma, which produces the equivalent of 10,500 barrels of oil daily, announced Biden's hire in a statement earlier Tuesday.
"The company's strategy is aimed at the strongest concentration of professional staff and the introduction of best corporate practices, and we're delighted that Mr. Biden is joining us to help us achieve these goals," said Alan Apter, Burisma Holdings' chairman of the board of directors.

The younger Biden, for his part, said he believed his legal and corporate advice would "contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine."
"Burisma's track record of innovations and industry leadership in the field of natural gas means that it can be a strong driver of a strong economy in Ukraine," Hunter Biden said.
But the hire could raise ethical questions - and diplomatic headaches - for the White House. During a visit to Kiev last month, the vice president discussed energy security with Ukraine's leaders, including ways the country could produce its own domestic production of natural gas.
"Imagine where you'd be today if you were able to tell Russia: keep your gas. It would be a very different world," the vice president told Ukrainian lawmakers.
The hire also came a day after Russian energy giant Gazprom threatened to halt natural gas shipments to Ukraine unless the country prepays for its energy. That announcement has sparked fears that energy costs could strain Ukraine's fragile economy.

JOE BIDEN'S SON GETS JOB WITH MAJOR UKRAINIAN NATURAL GAS COMPANY (WASHEX)
Washington Examiner, May 14, 2014
Vice President Joe Biden's son has a new job on the board of directors of Burisma Holdings, a major gas producer in Ukraine.
"Burisma's track record of innovations and industry leadership in the field of natural gas means that it can be a strong driver of a strong economy in Ukraine," R. Hunter Biden said of his new job in a statement released by Burisma. "As a new member of the Board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the Company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine."
The company noted that young Biden "has experience in public service and foreign policy." It only alludes to his father's job by noting that "Mr. Biden served as Honorary Co-Chair of the 2008 Obama-Biden Inaugural Committee."
A Pakistani reporter couldn't help but juxtapose this hire with Vice President Biden's public remarks in Ukraine during a visit to Kiev in April. Biden "stressed the need for the new authorities to tackle corruption," Agha Iqrar Haroon recalled at the Dispatch News Desk.
This wouldn't be the first time that Joe Biden's public work dovetails with his son's private job. As then-Sen. Joe Biden developed an "cozy relationship" with MBNA, a credit card company based in his home state of Delaware, MBNA hired Hunter Biden.
"[T]he company is not eager to talk," the Washington Examiner's Byron York (then a reporter for The American Spectator) wrote in 1998. "First, a spokesman declined to discuss [Hunter] Biden's salary. Then, when asked what young Biden is doing for the bank, the spokesman paused and said, 'That's not something we get into details on.' When pressed, the spokesman said, 'He's a talented young guy that we are grooming for a management position.' The spokesman said Hunter Biden has been 'moving around the bank' as part of his introduction into the business. Hunter Biden himself declined to discuss his salary or his job."

ANOTHER BIDEN HAS WADED INTO THE UKRAINE CRISIS (NATJO)
National Journal, May 14, 2014
Joe Biden has been the White House's go-to guy during the Ukraine crisis, touring former Soviet republics and reassuring their concerned leaders. And now, he's not the only Biden involved in the region.
The vice president's youngest son, Hunter Biden, has been appointed head of legal affairs at Burisma Holdings, Ukraine's largest private gas producer, The Moscow Times reported Tuesday. Hunter described his new role in a statement on the company's website:
As a new member of the board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion, and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine.
The new gig joins several others on Hunter's extensive resume. He currently serves as as managing partner at the Washington-based investment advisory company Rosemont Seneca Partners and counsel at the New York City-based law firm Boies Schiller Flexner. He is also an adjunct professor at Georgetown University's Foreign Service graduate program.

According to Bloomberg Businessweek, Burisma was founded in 2006 and "engages in oil-well drilling, production of liquefied natural gas, and undertaking geological studies." It is based in Cyprus. It owns several oil and gas companies in Ukraine, including in the southeastern city of Dnepropetrovsk.
Burisma hired another American-and another managing partner of Rosemont Seneca Partners-just last month. Devon Archer joined the company's board of directors to "focus on the interaction with current investors, as well as involving new investors from the United States," according to an April 22 press release from the company. Archer served as a senior adviser to John Kerry during his 2004 presidential campaign.
"Today Burisma Holdings reminds me of Exxon Mobil in its wake," Archer said in a recent interview posted on the company's website. "It has all the chances to be one of the biggest privately owned oil companies in the world."
Archer's work focuses heavily on energy independence for Ukraine, a topic that has received much attention in recent months. Ukraine is dependent on Russia for energy exports, and Moscow has pulled discount agreements during its ongoing standoff with Kiev. The addition of Hunter to the company masthead suggests Burisma is turning to U.S. talent-and money and name recognition-for protection against Russia. It also jibes with the Obama administration message that his father has been tasked with spreading.
The vice president's office released a statement Tuesday afternoon saying that the elder Biden "does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."
It's unclear whether the entry of another Biden into the fray was meant to send a message to Moscow. But Russian President Vladimir Putin, eternally leery of American hands in eastern European business, is bound to notice.

JOE BIDEN'S SON IS NOW ON THE BOARD OF ONE OF UKRAINE'S BIGGEST GAS CONGLOMERATES (BIZINDER)
Business Insider, May 14, 2014
Hunter Biden, the youngest son of Vice President Joe Biden, has been appointed to the board of directors of Ukraine's largest private-gas producer.
The company, Burisma Holdings, announced Biden's appointment on its website Tuesday. Burisma said Biden would be the new head of the company's legal unit.
The White House shot down any notion of a conflict of interest with Hunter Biden's appointment. In a statement provided to Business Insider, Joe Biden spokesperson Kendra Barkoff said Hunter's appointment did not constitute an endorsement by the vice president.
"Hunter Biden is a private citizen and a lawyer. The Vice President does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company," Barkoff said. "For any additional questions, I refer you to Hunter's office."
Boies, Schiller & Flexner LLP, the national law firm for which Hunter Biden serves as a counsel, did not respond to a request for comment on Tuesday.
During the daily White House press briefing on Tuesday, press secretary Jay Carney said where Hunter Biden works " does not reflect an endorsement by the administration, by the president or vice president."
Hunter Biden's appointment comes as the U.S. and much of the West has sought to help Ukraine wean off its dependence on Russia for oil and gas supplies. Last month during a trip to Kiev, the vice president pledged U.S. assistance in Ukraine's pursuit of energy independence from Russia. Ukraine and the West believe energy independence would serve as a major leverage point for Ukraine in its standoff with Russia.
In a statement released by Burisma, Hunter Biden said he believes the company will help strengthen Ukraine's floundering economy.
"Burisma's track record of innovations and industry leadership in the field of natural gas means that it can be a strong driver of a strong economy in Ukraine. As a new member of the Board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the Company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine," Hunter Biden said in the statement.

BIDEN'S SON JOINS UKRAINE GAS COMPANY'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS (CNBC)

CNBC, May 14, 2014
Earlier Tuesday, White House spokesman Jay Carney referred questions on the appointment to the vice president's office.
In response to an inquiry from CNBC, a spokesperson for the vice president said, "Hunter Biden is a private citizen and a lawyer. The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."
A representative at Rosemont Seneca told CNBC that Biden was traveling and not immediately available for comment.
Read MoreThink US natgas can threaten Russia? Think again
With Moscow threatening to cut gas supplies to the former Soviet satellite, some have called for the U.S. to deepen its ties to Ukraine by shipping its own natural gas bounty to Eastern Europe.
Burisma touted Biden's "public service and foreign policy," and is listed as a co-founder of Rosement Seneca Partners, an investment advisory company. He also served as executive director of E-Commerce Policy Coordination under former Commerce Secretary William Daley, and co-chaired the 2008 Obama-Biden Inaugural Committee.
-By CNBC's Javier E. David.

BIDEN'S SON JOINS UKRAINE'S TOP PRIVATE GAS COMPANY (INTLBIZ)
International Business Times, May 14, 2014
Burisma Holdings announced Tuesday that the younger Biden will join the company as the head of its legal unit.
"The company's strategy is aimed at the strongest concentration of professional staff and the introduction of best corporate practices, and we're delighted that Mr. Biden is joining us to help us achieve these goals," Alan Apter, chairman of Burisma's board of directors, said in a statement featured as a top story on the company's home page.
Burisma is a private oil and gas company founded in 2002, under joint activity agreements with Ukrainian state-owned producers, and quickly grew to become the largest private gas producer in Ukraine. The company's average daily output stood at 10.5 million cubic meters (66 million barrels of oil equivalent) per day in September 2013, and could double that figure within two years. All of the company's gas is sold to industrial customers in Ukraine.
Biden is not the only well-connected American to join the company. Just a few weeks ago, when the vice president made an official trip to Ukraine, Burisma appointed one Devon Archer to its board. Archer is a wealthy investor and Democratic campaign fundraiser with long ties to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry. Archer was an adviser to Kerry's presidential campaign in 2004 and co-chaired Kerry's National Finance Committee. Upon his appointment to Burisma, Archer said that the energy conglomerate reminded him of "Exxon in its early days."
The company's portfolio of licenses is well-diversified across all three of Ukraine's key hydrocarbon basins - Dnieper-Donets, Carpathian and Azov-Kuban, and its fields are fully connected to the major gas pipelines in the country, allowing Burisma to keep the cost of production relatively efficient.
Natural gas is the largest energy source in Ukraine, accounting for 38 percent of total primary energy production during 2011. The country relies on Russia's gas company Gazprom currently to satisfy most of its energy needs, but will aim to reduce that dependency in coming years, and Burisma is well-positioned to boost its share of the domestic market.
"As a new member of the board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine," Biden said regarding his new appointment.

BIDEN TOUTS ST. LOUIS ARCH RENOVATION PROJECT (AP)
Associated Press, May 14, 2014
ST. LOUIS - Vice President Joe Biden made a rain-shortened appearance beneath the Gateway Arch Tuesday to tout the economic benefits of a massive renovation project at the iconic tourist attraction.
The Democratic vice president was introduced by St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay and accompanied by Interior Secretary Sally Jewell and Sen. Dick Durbin, an Illinois Democrat who was scheduled

to later join Biden at a $1,000-a-plate fundraiser at the home of a lawyer in Alton, Illinois, just across the Mississippi River.
The Midwest trip came as the White House presses Congress to replenish the Federal Highway Trust Fund for road and bridge repairs. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx has said the fund could run out of money by August unless Congress acts. Obama is scheduled to speak Wednesday in front of the Tappan Zee Bridge in New York, while his vice president heads to Cleveland to promote a federally funded transit center project.
The $410 million Arch renovation project includes construction of a pedestrian bridge over Interstate 70 to connect downtown St. Louis with the National Park Service site. Project funding is expected to come from $250 million private donations, government grants and a portion of a local sales tax increase.
"Infrastructure is the back upon which this great nation has been built," Biden told an audience of several dozen local politicians, civic and business leaders. "We have to rebuild the infrastructure in this country. We've stalled."
In response to Biden's visit, the Missouri Republican Party issued a statement calling for White House and Democratic congressional support of the Keystone XL pipeline project.
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BIDEN HAILS INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT FROM UNDER GATEWAY ARCH (HILL)
By Justin Sink
The Hill, May 14, 2014
Vice President Joe Biden hailed the $380 million renovation of the St. Louis Gateway Arch grounds as a "metaphor for America never resting" during a speech at the iconic landmark Tuesday.
The vice president slammed congressional Republicans "who say we can't afford these kinds of investments."
Biden noted that Republican President Abraham Lincoln had supported building the transcontinental railroad, and argued federal infrastructure spending would lead to economic gains across the country.
The vice president's speech was the latest in a series of events the White House is hoping to use to build pressure on Congress to fund new infrastructure projects.
Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx appeared at the daily White House press briefing on Monday to argue that unless lawmakers reauthorize funding for the highway trust fund, some 700,000 jobs could be at stake. And on Wednesday, President Obama will appear at the Tappan Zee Bridge in New York for an event on infrastructure.
"This is about getting something done that has traditionally enjoyed bipartisan support, which is passing legislation that invests substantially in rebuilding our roads and bridges across the country and thereby putting people to work right away and investing in our economic foundation, in our future by enhancing our transportation networks," White House press secretary Jay Carney said Tuesday.
Following his appearance in St. Louis, the vice president is headed to Illinois for a pair of closed-press fundraisers benefitting Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) and the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.
According to the Chicago Sun-Times, attendees paid between $1,000 and $35,000 to attend the fundraisers. The events include a reception in Alton, Ill., followed by a dinner at the home of mesothelioma attorney John Simmons.
Republicans used the vice president's Gateway appearance to promote an infrastructure project of their own - the Keystone XL pipeline.
"If Vice President Joe Biden is looking for a shovel-ready project, we'd suggest that he and the Democrat Party green light the Keystone XL pipeline," said Republican National Committee spokesman Jahan Wilcox. "There's no better place for Mr. Biden to come out in support of Keystone than at the Gateway Arch, because this project would create good paying jobs for Americans who reside west of the Mississippi."

5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT VP BIDEN'S ST. LOUIS VISIT (KSDKTV)

KSDK-TV St. Louis, May 13, 2014
ST. LOUIS (KSDK) - Vice President Joe Biden will touch down in St. Louis for a number of public and private events Tuesday.
With a nationally top-ranking official coming to town, there's a lot to know and expect about the visit.
RELATED: Biden coming to St. Louis on Tuesday
Here's a breakdown of what you need to know:
NewsChannel 5 will have coverage throughout the day on Vice President Biden's visit.

PRESIDENTIAL CHECKLIST: JOCKEYING FOR POSITION (WAP)
Associated Press, May 14, 2014
WASHINGTON - In the latest prep work for a presidential campaign, Rand Paul is conspicuously courting moderate and establishment Republicans while Ted Cruz keeps up a travel schedule that has 2016 written all over it. Jeb Bush is stirring from something of a political snooze and a half-dozen other credible prospects are getting their voices heard in the din.
As for Democrats, a Hillary Rodham Clinton book coming out in June is about as exciting as it gets these days.
The suspense of a Democratic nomination race is in suspension until the party's dominant figure decides whether to run or someone goes for the prize without waiting for her to make up her mind. She sounds and acts a bit more like a candidate by the month, which doesn't necessarily mean she'll be one.
In both parties, potential contenders are best judged by what they do - and where they go, like Iowa and New Hampshire - not by what they say. Most are keeping up with the fiction that they are not really thinking about running for president even as they transparently position themselves to run for president.
Cruz has visited Iowa four times in the past eight months, and New Hampshire and South Carolina three times each, and claimed that's got nothing to do with presidential campaign politics, which no one believes. "I think it's too early to worry about 2016," the Texas senator said with a straight face.
For months, many prospective 2016 presidential candidates have been networking with party leaders, donors and activists. They've published or announced books. They're using TV appearances to become household names, at least in households tuned to the Sunday or cable news shows.
With a few notable exceptions, their preparations have accelerated since The Associated Press began broadly tracking their activities last summer. Yet even as most march through a pre-campaign checklist, they are keeping their options open should they decide to sit out the race.
Aside from Clinton, the former secretary of state, senator and first lady, potential Democratic contenders include Vice President Joe Biden, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley. Among Republicans in the mix: Bush, the former Florida governor; New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie; Cruz; Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal; Kentucky Sen. Paul; Texas Gov. Rick Perry; Florida Sen. Marco Rubio; Wisconsin Rep. Paul Ryan; former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum and Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker.
A look at who's doing what:
NONDENIAL DENIAL: Cagey words that cloak presidential ambitions, none too convincingly.
Democrats
Biden: "If I decide to run, believe me, this would be the first guy I talk to. But that decision hasn't been made, for real. And there's plenty of time to make that." April, CBS, in joint interview with President Barack Obama.
Clinton: "I haven't made up my mind. I really have not." - December, ABC.
Cuomo: "I'm sorry, I'm losing you. We have a technical difficulty. I'm running for governor of the state of New York." - Seeming not to hear a question about his presidential intentions. February, Fox Business Network.
O'Malley: "No one ever goes down this road, I would hope, without giving it a lot of consideration and a lot of preparation and a lot of thought work, and so that's what I'm doing." - February, speaking to reporters in Baltimore.
Republicans

Bush: "I can honestly tell you that I don't know what I'm going to do." - His standard disclaimer. Says he'll decide by end of year whether to run. One factor in his decision: Whether he can run an optimistic campaign and avoid the "mud fight" of politics.
Christie: "I am enormously flattered that folks would talk about me in my party as someone who they think could be a candidate for president. But I am absolutely in - nowhere near that consideration process." - Jan. 9 news conference addressing the scandal over Fort Lee, N.J., traffic tie-ups.
Cruz: "My focus is entirely on the U.S. Senate." - His standard disclaimer
Jindal: "My honest answer is I don't know what I'm going to be doing in 2016." - February, speaking to press while in Washington for governors meeting.
Paul: "We're definitely talking about it, my family is talking about it. I truly won't make my mind up until after the 2014 elections. But I haven't been shy in saying we're thinking about it." - March 9, Fox News.
Perry: "I don't know whether I'm going to run for the presidency. I'm going to spend the time in preparation." - April, in Ohio.
Rubio: "It's something I'll consider at the end of this year." - May, on ABC. Does he feel ready to be president? "I do, but I think we have other people as well."
Ryan: "Janna and I are going to sit down in 2015 and give it the serious ... conversation, consideration that are required for keeping our options open. But right now I have responsibilities in the majority in the House of Representatives that I feel I ought to attend to, and then I'll worry about those things." March, CBS.
Santorum: "I don't know if I can do this. It's just tough." - April, AP interview. Timing of decision? "A year at least, probably."
Walker: "I'm really focused on 2014, not getting ahead of the game. ... You guys can predict all you want." - January, CNN.

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WRITING A BOOK: The perfect stage-setter for a campaign season, just ask Barack Obama ("The Audacity of Hope," 2006; "Dreams from My Father," 2004)
Democrats
Biden: No, not since before 2008 election.
Clinton: Yes, "Hard Choices" due for release June 10.
Cuomo: Yes, coming in 2014.
O'Malley: No. "I'm not sure where I'd find the time for that." It's probably only a matter of time before he finds time.
Republicans
Bush: Yes, on immigration.
Christie: No.
Cruz: Yes, book deal disclosed by his agent in April.
Jindal: Not since before 2012 election.
Paul: No, not since just before the 2012 election.
Perry: Not since before 2012 election.
Rubio: Yes, coming in late 2014 from the publisher of his 2012 memoir.
Ryan: Yes, coming in 2014.
Santorum: Yes, "Blue Collar Conservatives" released in late April, says: "Do Republicans really care less about the person at the bottom of the ladder than Democrats do? To be painfully honest, I would have to say in some ways 'yes.'"
Walker: Yes, out in fall 2013.

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GO TO IOWA: Its caucuses are the opening act of the nomination contest.
Democrats
Biden: Yes, spoke at Sen. Tom Harkin's fall 2013 steak-fry fundraiser, a must-stop for many Democrats seeking to compete in the leadoff caucuses. Then in May, attended party for Iowans who came to Washington for annual lobbying trip. Raised money for Iowa congressional candidate Jim Mowrer. Schmoozed with Iowa power brokers during 2013 inauguration week in Washington.
Clinton: No, avoiding big primary/caucus states. But Ready for Hillary is mobilizing for her in the state.

Cuomo: No.
O'Malley: Yes, headlined Harkin's 2012 fundraiser.
Republicans
Bush: Has been holding off on splashy visits to early voting states but plans spring fundraiser in Florida for Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad. Attended 2012 economic development meeting in Iowa.
Christie: Yes, in 2012. More travel driven by politics in the cards now that he's chairman of Republican Governors Association for 2014 election year.
Cruz: Yes, four visits in eight months.
Jindal: Yes, summer 2013 visit, then flew with Iowa governor to governors association meeting in Milwaukee. In Iowa seven times in 2012.
Paul: Yes, three times in 2013. In March, snagged the state GOP chairman, who announced he was quitting to join Paul as an adviser.
Perry: Yes, third trip since November coming up: He's to campaign for Gov. Terry Branstad in late spring. Visited Des Moines suburbs and Davenport in February, meeting GOP activists and attending an event with business leaders sponsored by Koch brothers' Americans for Prosperity. Met Branstad and addressed Des Moines crowd of 400 in November.
Rubio: Yes, just days after 2012 election, but has been largely holding off on a new wave of trips to early voting states. That's changing.
Ryan: Yes, was keynote speaker for Iowa GOP's big fundraising dinner in Cedar Rapids in April. Main speaker at governor's annual birthday fundraiser in November 2013, in first visit since 2012 campaign.
Santorum: Yes, recent visit with strategists and media. August 2013 speech to conservative Christians in state where he won the 2012 caucuses. Screened his new Christmas movie in Iowa in November.
Walker: Yes, fundraiser last year.

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GO TO NEW HAMPSHIRE: Nation's first primary comes after Iowa and is just as important.
Democrats
Biden: Yes, raised money for three Democrats in March visit for job-training event. Quipped: "I'm here about jobs - not mine."
Clinton: No. But Ready for Hillary has sent people there this year.
Cuomo: No.
O'Malley: Yes, spoke at Democratic Party dinner in November. Also spoke at 2012 convention of New Hampshire Democrats.
Republicans
Bush: No.
Christie: Yes, three times in 2012.
Cruz: Yes, three times since August.
Jindal: Yes, keynote speech to local Republican organization in March, headlined state GOP fundraiser in 2013, visited twice in 2012.
Paul: Yes, addressed Freedom Summit in April. Won straw poll at March meeting of Northeast Republican Leadership Conference in Nashua. Several visits last year.
Perry: No.
Rubio: Yes, splashy debut in May, first visit of the 2016 season, headlining fundraisers, meeting local officials, giving interviews. Multiple visits before 2012 election.
Ryan: Yes, headlined Manchester fundraiser in February for former House colleague. Canceled October 2013 visit because of government shutdown.
Santorum: Yes, March speech to Northeast Republican Leadership Conference marked his return to a state where he performed weakly in 2012 campaign.
Walker: Yes, headlined a GOP state convention in October 2013, keynote at state party convention in September 2012.

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DON'T FORGET SOUTH CAROLINA: First Southern primary and big in its own right.
Democrats
Biden: Yes. In May, gave commencement speech at University of South Carolina and headlined Democratic fundraiser, first visit since he spoke at state party's annual fundraiser a year earlier.

Several earlier visits since 2009.
Clinton: No, but things are stirring. At a May meeting in Columbia partly sponsored by Ready for Hillary, Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine urged Democratic women to "think about pledging your support right now" to ensure she has "millions of us ready to take the field with her" if she runs.
Cuomo: No.
O'Malley: Yes, 2013 speech to party activists.
Republicans
Bush: Yes, 2012 speech.
Christie: Yes, helped Mitt Romney raise money in 2012.
Cruz: Yes, speech at The Citadel military college in April was third visit in a year, following event with religious conservatives in November and speech to annual state GOP dinner last May.
Jindal: Yes, third visit in a year coming in June, as keynote speaker at state GOP's biggest gathering, the Silver Elephant dinner.
Paul: Yes, foreign policy speech at The Citadel military college and small GOP fundraiser in Charleston in November 2013 visit; headlined several fundraisers earlier in year.
Perry: Yes, two-day visit in December 2013, addressed state GOP. In August, raised money for Gov. Nikki Haley's re-election campaign.
Rubio: Yes, headlined 2012 Silver Elephant dinner.
Ryan: Yes, in 2012 campaign.
Santorum: Yes, April GOP event at The Citadel military college, where two sons are cadets. Campaigned in April 2013 for Curtis Bostic in GOP House runoff race; Bostic lost.
Walker: Yes, attended August fundraiser for Haley, who came to Wisconsin to campaign for him in 2012 recall vote.

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GO ABROAD: Helps to give neophytes foreign policy cred, and Israel is a touchstone for U.S. politicians.
Democrats
Biden: You bet. Visited Ukrainian capital in April to symbolize U.S. commitment to new government in its struggle against pro-Russian insurgents and threatening signals from Moscow. Brazil coming up in June. Long at forefront of Obama administration's diplomatic maneuvers with Kiev. Sent to Poland and Lithuania in March to reassure NATO allies anxious about Russia's annexation of Crimea. December 2013 visits to China, Japan and South Korea. Countless trips to Iraq and Afghanistan during first term.
Clinton: Another globe-trotter, nearly 1 million miles as secretary of state. Limited overseas travel in 2013: honorary degree at St. Andrews University in Scotland in September; trip to London in October for a diplomacy award and a fundraising concert for the family's foundation. Attended memorial services for Nelson Mandela in South Africa in December. Two recent speeches in Canada.
Cuomo: Not much lately. Israel twice in 2002.
O'Malley: Yes. Israel in 2013 this year for a second time. Also Denmark, Ireland, France, Brazil and El Salvador in 2013. Asia in 2011, Iraq in 2010.
Republicans
Bush: Yes, usually several overseas trips a year. Three times to Israel since 1980s.
Christie: Yes, Israel and Jordan in 2012.
Cruz: Yes, first visit to Israel in December 2012, again in January 2013 as part of Senate Republican delegation that traveled to Afghanistan, too.
Jindal: January 2014 trade and investment mission to Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, first time overseas as governor. Canada in August 2013 to speak to oil industry about his support of the Keystone XL Pipeline.
Paul: Yes, Israel and Jordan in 2013.
Perry: Yes, has visited Israel numerous times including an October trip that included a photo op with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, meeting Cabinet members and a separate stop in London to see British officials and financial leaders.
Rubio: Yes, visited the Philippines, Japan and South Korea in January, foreign policy speech in London in early December and Israel, Jordan, Palestinian Authority, Afghanistan in February 2013. Also went to Israel after 2010 election to Senate.

Ryan: Yes, Middle East during congressional career; visited troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.
Santorum: Scant foreign travel while in the Senate drew notice in 2012 GOP campaign.
Walker: Yes, China in 2013 trade mission.

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MEET THE MONEY: To know donors now is to tap them later.
Democrats
Biden: Yes, actively fundraising for Democratic committees and candidates in 2014 midterms. Headlined fundraiser at home of Biden donor in Florida for House candidate Alex Sink in February; Sink lost the special election in March.
Clinton: Yes, can tap deep well of Democratic and activist money. Raises money for Clinton foundation. Bundlers such as Hollywood moguls Jeffrey Katzenberg and Haim Saban have signaled support. Ready for Hillary super PAC raised more than $4 million in 2013 and $1.7 million in first three months of 2014. Worked fundraising circuit to help Terry McAuliffe's campaign for governor in Virginia and Bill de Blasio's mayoral bid in New York City.
Cuomo: Flush coffers for 2014 governor's race.
O'Malley: Yes, in December ended his year as finance chairman for the Democratic Governors Association and is one of the party's top fundraisers.
Republicans
Bush: Yes, addressed well-heeled crowd at Manhattan Institute, led by GOP benefactor Paul Singer, in May. Flew to Las Vegas in March to meet GOP superdonor Sheldon Adelson and address Republican Jewish Coalition at Adelson's company airport hangar. In February, his short video for a GOP fundraiser at Donald Trump's Palm Beach, Florida, estate was a bigger hit than Cruz's keynote speech. Party in summer of 2013 for his immigration book at home of Woody Johnson, owner of the New York Jets and a leading Republican bundler. Has longtime Wall Street connections.
Christie: Yes, became GOP governors chairman in November, giving him regular access to the party's top national donors. In that capacity, has already met donors in Idaho, Vermont, Illinois, Texas, Massachusetts and Utah. Was one of a handful of high-profile Republicans to meet with Adelson in Las Vegas at his resort casino in late March. One of three prospective candidates who attended Mitt Romney's retreat with major party donors in Utah in June 2013.
Cruz: Yes, met in March with top California conservative donors and keynoted Trump fundraiser. Has list of potential donors that's still growing after he collected more than 1.5 million signatures for the online petition "Don'tFundObamaCare," which he began in 2013.
Jindal: Yes, met leading GOP donors in New York City, as most GOP prospects do over time. Among prospective candidates who visited Iowa GOP donor Bruce Rastetter's farm in August 2013 for annual fundraiser for the governor.
Paul: Yes, headlined luncheon in April at Boston-area equity firm led by Romney's former national finance chairman and Romney's oldest son, Tagg, an event that drew together the 2012 presidential candidate's inner circle. Also attended Romney's 2013 Utah retreat. Has met GOP donors in New York City.
Perry: Yes, has proven an effective fundraiser, both from grassroots activists and mainstream Republicans. Has led many job-poaching missions in big states with Democratic governors and met privately during those trips with key donors, especially in New York and California.
Rubio: Yes, aggressive national fundraising outreach, including trips to New York and California to meet potential donors. Raised more money last year than potential rivals Ted Cruz and Rand Paul. Among a handful of possible candidates to attend September 2013 event at home of Woody Johnson, New York Jets' owner and Mitt Romney's national finance chairman.
Ryan: Yes, attracts Wall Street interest. Addressed GOP donor Paul Singer's Manhattan Institute at same May event that heard from Bush. Had a follow-up reception with Singer and another big donor, Woody Johnson, owner of the New York Jets and a national finance chairman for Romney's last presidential bid. Attended Romney's 2013 Utah retreat, has money connections from 2012 campaign.
Santorum: 2012 shoestring campaign was largely fueled by a super political action committee to which Republican donor Foster Friess gave more than $2 million.
Walker: Yes. Addressed Republican Jewish Coalition at a Las Vegas gathering in March where main attraction was Adelson, who's looking where to place his bets in GOP field. Headlined 2013

fundraisers in New York and Connecticut.

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NETWORK LIKE MAD: Taking their case to ideologues, activists and party heavyweights who hold great sway in nomination race.

Democrats

Biden: And how. Says he plans to campaign in more than 100 races in the 2014 election. Meets regularly with former Senate colleagues and congressional Democrats. Gives keynote speeches at annual state Democratic Party dinners across the country. Making calls for House Democrats' campaign organization, assisting in recruitment of candidates. Campaigned for new Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, Massachusetts Sen. Ed Markey. Speaks regularly to special interests.

Clinton: Steady presence now on speaking circuit, delivering paid speeches to industry groups and conferences and appearing before a number of groups with ties to the Democratic coalition.

Cuomo: Sparingly. Rarely leaves New York.

O'Malley: Yes, busy spring, with speeches to California Democratic state convention in March, Wisconsin Democrats in April and Massachusetts Democrats in May. Was Democratic governors' chairman for two years until December 2012.

Republicans

Bush: Doing more this year politically after a long period of "a little self-restraint." Already a GOP establishment favorite; House Speaker John Boehner has been nudging him to run. Recent travels to Tennessee, New Mexico, Nevada and Texas. Endorsed GOP establishment favorites in North Carolina Senate and California governor primaries. Skipped Conservative Political Action Conference in March, after giving keynote speech to the influential group a year earlier.

Christie: Yes, vigorous outreach now as the new Republican Governors Association chairman. Also spoke in March to Conservative Political Action Conference, which snubbed him last year. Addressed Republican Jewish Coalition spring meeting in Las Vegas, spending a full day with top donors and GOP operatives.

Cruz: Yes, vigorously. Spoke by video to National Rifle Association's April leadership forum. Addressed Conservative Political Action Conference in March, after landing the group's coveted keynote role in 2013. Has engaged in persistent courting of religious and economic conservatives in Texas and beyond; pitched social conservative principles at Values Voter meeting in October, while also meeting privately beforehand with evangelical leaders. Addressed 2012 Republican National Convention before he was even elected to the Senate.

Jindal: Big time and small time, far and wide. Giving May commencement address at Liberty University in Virginia, a familiar stop for prospective candidates, then South Carolina speech in June. Addressed NRA annual leadership forum in April, Conservative Political Action Conference in March, also in 2013. Made time for fundraiser for local sheriff in Michigan. Altogether, has spent much of his time during six years as governor on the road, talking to GOP and activist groups, supporting Republican candidates and promoting achievements. Has close ties with social conservatives. Created political action committee to help conservative candidates running for Congress, giving him continued opportunities to network nationally.

Paul: Yes, and now roaming freely beyond tea party tent. Had private audience in April with Romney's 2012 campaign advisers, is helping Republicans across political spectrum, including moderate Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, and has pitched in with party leaders to heal divisions from last campaign. In April brought message of unity to state GOP convention in Maine, where a struggle over delegates created raw tensions between GOP establishment and libertarian or tea party supporters of his father in 2012 campaign. Generated buzz and won symbolic straw poll at Conservative Political Action Conference in March.

Perry: Yes, spoke at past two Conservative Political Action Conferences as well as its regional meeting in St. Louis in September. Addressed conservative activists at a RedState Gathering in New Orleans in August, mistakenly saying he was in Florida. Job-pitching tour in various states helps make connections.

Rubio: Yes, stepping it up. Private audience with Republican National Committee in Memphis in May, right after his New Hampshire trip. Earlier outreach to conservative and party activists focused on repairing tea party relationships strained over immigration. Well-received speech to Conservative Political Action Conference in March. In Virginia governor's race, campaigned for Republican Ken Cuccinelli, who lost. Speech to National Rifle Association in April; also foreign

policy speech at University of Texas, more.
Ryan: Yes, prime networker as 2012 vice presidential candidate; now helping fellow House members raise money.
Santorum: Addressed NRA convention in April; speeches to groups around the country, including Conservative Political Action Conference. His Christian-themed film company is his calling card with religious conservatives.
Walker: One of only a few 2016 prospects who spoke to Republican Jewish Coalition. Skipped the big Conservative Political Action Conference in March, appeared there last year. Campaigned for GOP in Virginia governor's race. Spoke to Michigan Republican Leadership Conference on Mackinac Island in September 2013.

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HOG THE TV: Achieving national recognition by sermonizing on the Sunday news shows, or going for soft questions and easy laughs on late-night TV.
Democrats
Biden: He's back. After being largely absent from the airwaves for more than a year, Biden has resumed frequent interviews, including joint TV appearance with Obama in April. He did a TV blitz the morning after the State of the Union, a CNN interview aboard an Amtrak train and dished on his skin care routine and his wife's oddball pranks during an interview with Rachael Ray. But not a Sunday news show fixture.
Clinton: No. But late-night TV host Jimmy Kimmel interviewed her in March. Appeared with Obama on CBS' "60 Minutes" in January to talk about tenure as secretary of state; gave interview to Barbara Walters late in 2013.
Cuomo: No. Prefers radio.
O'Malley: Getting back in the swing. January 2014 Sunday news show appearance on CNN was first in months, followed by CBS in February.
Republicans
Bush: Blanketed the five Sunday shows one day in March 2013 to plug his book on immigration, a few appearances other times.
Christie: Not so much since traffic scandal surfaced. Before that, liked to cut up on late-night TV. Four Sunday news shows after his 2013 re-election.
Cruz: Yes, several Sunday news show appearances already this year, plenty last year. Frequent guest on Fox News and CNN.
Jindal: No, only a couple of Sunday news show appearances since 2012 election.
Paul: Leader of the chattering pack with more than a dozen Sunday talk show appearances since 2012 election, including one in April from New Hampshire. Frequent guest on news networks, especially Fox.
Perry: Raising his profile lately, making several national TV appearances while starring in flood of media spots in California designed to persuade businesses based there to move to Texas. On NBC's "Meet the Press" in May: "I'm going to be across the country talking about red-state versus blue-state policies. Hopefully engaged in a good, thoughtful, winsome conversation about how do we make America more competitive."
Rubio: Staying on par with most rivals in Sunday news show appearances, did one from New Hampshire in May. Blanketed all five Sunday shows one day in April 2013 to talk about immigration, before he dropped the subject. Frequent guest on news networks.
Ryan: Many Sunday news show appearances since 2012 election. Occasional guest on network news.
Santorum: Yes, promoting his new book. Plugged his Christmas movie on "The Colbert Report," Fox News, MSNBC and more. Radio, too. Teamed up with Democrat Howard Dean as sparring partners for debates on the air and with audiences.
Walker: Already on the Sunday news show scoreboard for 2014. Half dozen or so Sunday news show appearances since 2012 election. Also, Piers Morgan, Lou Dobbs, more national TV interviews.

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ACTUALLY DO SOMETHING: For voters who want to support doers, not just talkers.
Democrats
Biden: Leading Obama's review of federal job-training programs, prime player in U.S. response to

Ukrainian crisis. His office co-chaired a White House task force to address sexual assault on campuses. Point man on gun control, which failed. Negotiated fiscal cliff deal.
Clinton: Record as secretary of state, senator and first lady. Recent initiatives to help children's health and education and status of women.
Cuomo: 2014 budget proposal calls for tax cuts for businesses, homeowners and renters. In 2013, pushed through nation's first gun-control law after the Newtown, Connecticut, school massacre. Led New York's effort to legalize same-sex marriage in 2011. Minimum wage boost, on-time budgets, teacher standards.
O'Malley: Toughened gun laws, repealed death penalty, saw voters approve gay marriage after he got behind legislation to approve it, set up a framework to develop offshore wind power, won legislative approval in April of minimum wage increase, a 2014 priority.
Republicans
Bush: As Florida governor, revamped state educational system, cut taxes, managed state through hurricanes.
Christie: Won November 2013 re-election, becoming first Republican to earn more than 50 percent of New Jersey vote in quarter-century. Led state's response to Superstorm Sandy. Agreed to expand state's Medicaid program under the new health law while some other Republican governors have refused to do so. Vetoed a bill that would have sanctioned gay marriage, but declined to appeal a court ruling that legalized it.
Cruz: Leading force in dispute that partly shut the government, 21-hour Senate speech against Obama's health law. Argued before U.S. Supreme Court nine times, with eight of those coming while he was Texas' longest-serving solicitor general, between 2003 and 2008.
Jindal: Privatized much of Louisiana's Medicaid program, shrank public hospital system, signed statewide voucher program that covers private school tuition for certain students. Signed abortion restrictions, fought liberalization of adoption law, making it impossible for gay couples to adopt jointly. Hurricane and Gulf oil spill disaster response.
Paul: One-man, nearly 13-hour Senate filibuster to protest drone policy put him at forefront of civil liberties debate.
Perry: "Texas Miracle" job-creation boom has seen state create a third of the net new jobs nationwide over last decade, although Texas has disproportionately high percentage of hourly workers earning minimum wage or less. Helped muscle through new abortion restrictions.
Rubio: Broker of Senate immigration overhaul, though he's gone quiet on the issue. Early leader of effort to link financing of health care law to government shutdown. Working with anti-abortion groups on Senate version of bill that would ban abortions after 20 weeks.
Ryan: Negotiated December 2013 bipartisan budget deal that scaled back across-the-board spending cuts, drawing contrast with potential rivals who opposed it. Budget-hawk record to be judged on. Emerging as influential moderate on immigration.
Santorum: Making Christian-themed, family-friendly movies at the moment; record from Senate days.
Walker: Curbs on public service unions became national flashpoint, but he won the effort - and the recall election that followed.

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TAKE A NATIONAL STAND: Effective state governance is nice but leaders must build national stature on issues of the day.
Democrats
Biden: Eclectic. Guns, violence against women, gay rights, veterans.
Clinton: Eclectic. 2013 speeches focused on the economy, housing, opportunities for women, voting rights.
Cuomo: Environmentalists nationally and the energy industry are closely watching his pending decision whether to allow fracking in upstate New York counties near the Pennsylvania line.
O'Malley: The liberal checklist: more spending on education, infrastructure, transportation; supports same-sex marriage, immigration reform, repealing death penalty, pushes environmental protections.
Republicans
Bush: Unapologetic proponent of Common Core education standards and immigration changes opposed by many in GOP.

Christie: Moderate on the reach and functions of government; bipartisanship.
Cruz: Anti-Obama's health care law, pushes broader tea party agenda.
Jindal: A record of privatization to show he means government should be trimmed, happy to carry a social conservative banner.
Paul: Tea-party plus, with a libertarian streak that places him to the left of rivals on some issues, to the right on others. Fiscal conservative, criticizes surveillance state. Says GOP should back off on pushing state voter ID laws offensive to blacks. Health law scold. Joining in 2014 with liberal lawmakers and others in effort to roll back some mandatory minimum sentences and give judges more flexibility in fitting punishment to crime.
Perry: Prominent voice on conservative issues since before the birth of the tea party. Wants to ban all abortion in Texas, relax environmental regulations, boost states' rights; opposes gay marriage.
Rubio: Proposes higher retirement age for Social Security benefits for younger workers and restraints on benefit increases to the wealthy. 2014 initiative on poverty calls for federal wage supplements for some low-wage workers instead of earned income tax credit. Economy, abortion, tea party fiscal conservatism; immigration liberalization if he decides to get back to it. Another voice against health care law. Has become a leading GOP voice in foreign policy, pressing for stronger U.S. action in geopolitical hot spots. On climate change: "I do not believe that human activity is causing these dramatic changes to our climate the way these scientists are portraying it."
Ryan: Cutting spending, taking on entitlements, rolling back Obama's health law. Anti-poverty initiative this year.
Santorum: Social conservative activism goes way back. Focus on blue-collar economic opportunity. Speaking against libertarian streak in GOP, a "strain of conservatism that has no basis in conservatism." Book calls climate change "hyped-up crisis."
Walker: Fiscal stewardship, from a GOP point of view. Tough guy against the unions and liberal defenders of the status quo. Says GOP in Congress is the party of no.

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BAGGAGE TO CHECK: It's never too early to deal with skeletons in the closet; rivals will be rattling them soon enough.
Democrats
Biden: Flubs, fibs, age. Deflection: "I am who I am." Saddled by Obama's low approval ratings.
Clinton: Benghazi, Libya; polarizing when political, age. GOP wants to pin blame on her for vulnerability of U.S. diplomatic mission in Libya that came under deadly attack in 2012. In long-confidential documents from Bill Clinton's administration, advisers urged her to "be real" and "humanize" herself, revealing concerns about her authenticity as a public figure.
Cuomo: New York economy is dragging, his poll numbers have sunk, went through public and bitter divorce with Kerry Kennedy, daughter of late Sen. Robert Kennedy, in 2005.
O'Malley: State-run health insurance exchange website was an expensive bust, prompting officials to make an embarrassing switch in April to one based on Connecticut's. Contraband- and drug-smuggling scheme at state-run Baltimore City Detention Center that resulted in 44 people being indicted has state lawmakers looking to make reforms. Has record of raising taxes that could be challenged by less liberal Democrats, never mind Republicans.
Republicans
Bush: The Bush factor. Does the country want a Bush dynasty after presidents George H. W. and George W.? Courting trouble with the right with positions on education and remarks in April that people who cross into the U.S. illegally are doing so as an "act of love" for their families.
Christie: If you have to declare "I am not a bully," you've got a problem. Apologized in January 2014 for highway lane closures apparently ordered by his aides as retribution against a mayor who did not endorse him for re-election. Also fired his deputy chief of staff and denied knowledge of the machinations. Episode deepened questions about what Christie, or those around him, will do to win, and contributed to a significant drop in his poll standings. Investigations continue.
Cruz: Reputation as a hotheaded upstart, also part of his appeal. Polarizing within his party. Also comes with birther baggage: Questions have been raised in some quarters about his constitutional standing to become president because of his birth in Canada, to a Cuban father and American mother. Deflection: Promised last summer to renounce Canadian citizenship but hasn't.
Jindal: Ambitious plan to replace state's personal and corporate taxes with higher sales taxes

flopped, delivered dud of a speech when given juicy platform of responding to Obama's first presidential address to Congress in 2009. Deflection: Poking fun at himself. Jindal administration's award of a $200 million Medicaid contract is under investigation by state and federal grand juries.
Paul: Dear old dad: Must move beyond Ron Paul's fringe reputation. Bridge-burning in Congress endears him to tea party, could bite him otherwise. Deflection: GOP outreach to minorities. The Washington Times canceled his column after he was found to have used passages from other people in his speeches and writings as if they were his own. Deflection: Promising proper citations and footnotes for his pronouncements "if it will make people leave me the hell alone."
Perry: "Oops!" Memories of his stumbling 2012 campaign, a quick progression from a front-runner to flameout. Deflection: Owns up to his "botched efforts" in last campaign. Also a potential drag: a grand jury investigation in Austin into whether he abused power by cutting off state financing for an office of public corruption prosecutors led by a Democrat who refused to resign after being convicted of drunken driving.
Rubio: Rift with tea party constituency on immigration, "a real trial for me." Deflection: Go aggressive on a matter of common ground, which he did in pledging to take apart the health law. And stop talking about immigration. Response to Obama's 2013 State of the Union speech was remembered only for his clumsy reach for water. Deflection: Made fun of himself.
Ryan: Budget axe cuts both ways - catnip to conservatives but people want their Medicare. Carries stigma of 2012 election loss as running mate. Tea party not happy with his late 2013 budget deal. Comments in March about cultural "tailspin" in inner cities struck some as veiled racism. Deflection: Called his remark "inarticulate."
Santorum: Overshadowed by newer conservative figures. Deflection: Being overshadowed means being an underdog, and he can thrive at that. Feisty 2012 campaign became the biggest threat to Romney's march to the nomination. New book contains provocative passages for future rivals to dredge up.
Walker: Some things that give him huge appeal with GOP conservatives - taking on unions, most notably - would whip up Democratic critics in general election. Wisconsin has lagged in job creation. Release of emails in February shed light on criminal investigation into whether Walker's aides were illegally doing campaign work for the 2010 governor's election while being paid as county employees. Walker, then a county executive, wasn't charged but the episode has proved a distraction.

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RUN SHADOW CAMPAIGN: One way to run without running is to have a political action committee to promote ideas or other candidates for office, or to hire advisers who can switch to a campaign when the time comes.
Democrats
Biden: Constrained by his current job, but tapped longtime adviser and former lobbyist Steve Ricchetti to be his new chief of staff; maintains close contact with political advisers past and present.
Clinton: Ready for Hillary super PAC set up by supporters is laying groundwork, so are others. Several old Clinton hands are advising the group, including Craig T. Smith and Harold Ickes.
Cuomo: Overshadowed by Clinton's shadow campaign. Considered a likely contender if Clinton ends up not running.
O'Malley: Set up a PAC called O'Say Can You See and hired two people for fundraising and communications.
Republicans
Bush: He's a Bush, so he's got connections. Sally Bradshaw, chief of staff when he was governor, is his go-to political person.
Christie: Republican Governors Association chairmanship allows him to grow his national profile with voters and party officials with regular travel and key appearances. Began building broad coalition of donors through his national fundraising tour in spring 2013. But the shadow of the traffic scandal still hangs over his shadow campaign.
Cruz: Has leadership PAC, Jobs Growth and Economic Freedom. Has been one of the largest beneficiaries of Jim DeMint's Senate Conservatives Fund and has gotten millions of dollars and grassroots logistical support from the Club for Growth, FreedomWorks and Ending Spending PAC. Heritage Action PAC helped sponsor Cruz's summer anti-health-law trip around Texas and

country.
Jindal: Created Washington-based nonprofit, America Next, in October 2013 to push policy ideas nationally. For executive director, tapped Jill Neunaber, who worked on Romney's presidential campaign in Iowa and New Hampshire. In March created PAC to help conservative candidates.
Paul: Has formidable leadership PAC called Rand PAC, has maintained ties to father's political network in early primary states and benefits from strong tea party support. Is starting to build teams on the ground in most states.
Perry: Created Americans for Economic Freedom PAC in fall 2013 to raise his profile again, help him test the waters and broadcast ads promoting Republican leadership around the country. Group used more than $200,000 left over from the PAC that raised millions for his 2012 campaign.
Rubio: Beginning more aggressive travel to early voting states; has lagged potential rivals on that front. Ramping up in other ways, too: Shuffled his staff and directed political resources of his Reclaim America PAC to three big Senate midterm races this year, one of them the GOP primary in Iowa.
Ryan: His Prosperity Action PAC. Questions remain about whether he will make a presidential bid given his rising influence in Congress.
Santorum: Keeps in touch with chief supporters of his winning 2012 Iowa caucus campaign, giving him a leg up on a campaign organization in that state.
Walker: Consults with top Republican governor strategists such as Phil Musser and Nick Ayers.

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GET WITH IT ON SOCIAL MEDIA: A must for spreading ideas, poking competitors, raising money, organizing events and showing a personal side, though often a very canned version.
Democrats
Biden: Launched Instagram account in April. Not active on Facebook, occasional contributor to his office's vigorous Twitter account.
Clinton: More than 1 million followers on Twitter, her preferred social media outlet.
Cuomo: Few if any personal tweets; Facebook also generated primarily by staff.
O'Malley: On Twitter, standard governor's fare but promotes rare appearances by his Celtic rock band, O'Malley's March, for which he sings and plays guitar, banjo and tin whistle. On Facebook, his PAC-generated page is more active than official governor's account.
Republicans
Bush: Tweets and posts many Wall Street Journal stories, education thoughts and some Bush family doings.
Christie: More engaged in Twitter ("It was great to be able to visit with the owners of Rossi's Rent-A-Rama in Ortley today.") than Facebook.
Cruz: Active on Facebook and Twitter, much content is pumped out by staff.
Jindal: Active on Twitter and on Facebook, where he lists among favorite books, "John Henry Newman: A Biography," about recently canonized British cardinal and sage. Also favors James Bond movies.
Paul: Aggressive. Bragged on Twitter in June that he'd attracted more than 1 million likes for his Facebook page, where he lists his own books as his favorites.
Perry: Active. One popular tweet was accidental - from his pocket, he said - and consisted of "I." Followers jumped in to complete his sentence. One offered: "I ... really like Obamacare." (He doesn't.) Facebook appears staff-generated.
Rubio: Aggressive, with large followings, appears to make personal use of Twitter more than staff-generated Facebook. Takes lots of shots at the health law. On Facebook, lists "Pulp Fiction" movie and "The Tudors" historical fiction TV series among favorites.
Ryan: King of Facebook among potential rivals in both parties, with nearly 4.9 million likes. Seeks $10 donations for "Team Ryan" bumper stickers for his PAC and kisses a fish. Posts photo of Obama with his feet up on Oval Office desk. Commanding presence on Twitter, too, via an account associated with his PAC and another as congressman.
Santorum: Active on Twitter and Facebook.
Walker: Posts vigorously on Facebook and on his Twitter accounts. Many exclamation points. "Glad USDA is keeping cranberries on school menus. I drink several bottles of cranberry juice each day!" And, "Green Bay Packers signing Julius Peppers to a 3-year deal is HUGE!" Promotes policy achievements and his TV appearances, reflects on sports, pokes Obama.

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CAN DEMOCRATS WIN WHEN OBAMA'S NOT ON THE TICKET? (NATJO)
National Journal, May 14, 2014
By now, it's accepted wisdom that Democrats perform better in presidential elections, when the electorate is more diverse and younger, while the GOP's strength is in midterm elections, when their core voters are likelier to turn out. But it's worth remembering that this is a recent phenomenon, thanks to the changing makeup of the Democratic Party under Barack Obama's presidency-and there's no guarantee it will continue unabated.
It wasn't the case in 2004, when George W. Bush effectively mobilized conservative voters to overcome growing public dissatisfaction toward his presidency. It wasn't the case in 2006, when the Democratic Party capitalized on increased support from older, white voters to retake the House and Senate. And it wasn't the case in the decades prior, when Democrats often recorded significant gains or outperformed expectations in midterm years (1982, 1986, 1998), while Republicans won five of seven presidential elections from 1980 to 2004.
What's changed is the makeup of both parties' coalitions. Seniors, who frequently voted Democratic over pocketbook issues like Social Security and Medicare, have migrated into the Republican column. White blue-collar voters, once a staple of Democratic coalitions past, have become estranged from their old political home over cultural issues. In their place are what my colleague Ron Brownstein labels "the coalition of the ascendant"-single women, minorities, and millennial voters. Voters within these groups turned out at high levels in the last two presidential elections to offset Democratic losses elsewhere.
The challenge for Democrats in this year's midterms is getting these "ascendant" voters enthusiastic about showing up to the polls when Obama isn't on the ballot-something that Democratic turnout specialists are working overtime to achieve. Even if they don't show up and Republicans retake the Senate in 2014, the assumption is they're bound to return at similar levels for the next presidential election. That's not necessarily the case.
To be sure, the growing diversity of the electorate presents Republicans with fundamental challenges, regardless of the turnout rates of the core Democratic groups. But it's also clear that the historic nature of President Obama's candidacy helped him rally African-American voters to the polls in record numbers and at record levels-a dynamic that's unlikely to repeat itself in the future. For the first time in history, African-Americans voted at a higher rate than whites in 2012, with 66.2 percent of eligible black voters casting ballots. That's up six points from 2004, the last presidential election in which Obama wasn't on the ballot. In many urban, heavily African-American precincts, support for Obama ran close to 100 percent. Without that same degree of support in the future, Democrats will need to make up lost ground with white voters, while maintaining the overwhelming advantages with Hispanic and Asian-American voters they enjoyed in 2012.
A postelection analysis from Brookings Institution demographer William Frey found that if turnout rates from all racial groups remained at the same levels as 2004, Mitt Romney would have won the presidency-by 9,000 votes. And if only minority turnout dipped to its 2004 levels (with white turnout at its lower 2012 rate), Obama would have barely defeated Romney. Given the growing share of Hispanic and Asian-American voters, that's far from encouraging news for Republicans, but it's also a cautionary tale for the party dependent on demographic destiny to win future presidential elections.
Indeed, Democrats could find themselves reliant on brand-name candidates to generate the same degree of enthusiasm that Obama offered like-minded voters over the last two presidential elections. Hillary Clinton fits the bill, given her unique appeal among women and potential to improve on Obama's performance among working-class voters. But would Joe Biden or any generic Democratic officeholder provide them with the same advantages? (Think Martin O'Malley versus Marco Rubio.)

Despite the diversifying Democratic coalition, the party's bench is virtually devoid of minority officeholders. There are only four Democratic governors or senators of color, compared to six Republicans. Obama hasn't brought along many other Democrats who present the same post-racial appeal he showcased in 2008. Even Obama campaign strategist David Axelrod acknowledged the Democratic Party "needs to do a better job" of recruiting more minority officeholders on an American Hospital Association panel in which we both participated. Without those landmark presidential candidates in the future, it's hard to see minority voter enthusiasm maintain its healthy rate.

"Although long-term demographic trends … are favorable for the Democrats, translating those trends into true political and electoral dominance will remain difficult so long as Democrats rely on simply turning out core Obama coalition voters. Their margins will be too thin and subject to backlash, especially below the presidential level," political scientists Ruy Teixeira and Andrew Levison wrote last spring in The New Republic. They later concluded: "If in 2016 white working-class support falls to or below the 33 percent it hit in 2012, a GOP president becomes a very real possibility."

Teixeira, who presciently anticipated that changing demographics would spur political realignment in the landmark book The Emerging Democratic Majority, is now suggesting the limits Democrats face depending entirely on the Obama-forged coalition. Meanwhile, Obama's job approval among noncollege whites hit 29 percent in this month's ABC News/Washington Post poll.

SECOND LADY DELIVERS OCTC COMMENCEMENT SPEECH (WTVWTV)
WTVW-TV Evansville (IN), May 14, 2014

It was a special night for college graduates in Owensboro, with a very prominent keynote speaker. Dr. Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, delivered the commencement speech for Owensboro Community and Technical College. The event was held at RiverPark Center Tuesday evening.

The Second Lady of the United States said she felt "right at home" speaking to the OCTC graduates. Dr. Biden teaches English full-time at a community college near The White House. She noted the challenges many students face while earning their degrees.

"No matter how hard it got, and I know there have been hard times. Even if you lost faith in yourself, you picked yourself up and continued on your path. Maybe you took a chance, maybe you learned something new. Maybe you discovered you had a strength you never knew you had," said Dr. Biden.

She challenged the new graduates to lift up others, go to their strengths and never stop learning. The Second Lady personally handed each graduate his or her diploma, making an already special night all the more memorable.

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BIDEN CHALLENGES OCTC GRADS (OWMIN)
Owensboro (KY) Messenger-Inquirer, May 14, 2014
By Steve Vied Messenger-Inquirer

Jill Biden, the wife of Vice President Joe Biden, heartily congratulated the graduates of Owensboro Community & Technical College Tuesday night during the school's spring commencement at the RiverPark Center.

But the 30-year educator, who continues to teach English full time at Northern Virginia Community College, also challenged them.

SECOND LADY SPEAKS TO GRADUATING OWENSBORO STUDENTS (WFIETV)
WFIE-TV Evansville (IN), May 14, 2014

OWENSBORO, KY (WFIE) -

The Second Lady of the United State, Jill Biden, made a stop in Owensboro Tuesday night to speak to the graduating class of Owensboro Community and Technical College.

Jill Biden left the RiverPark Center around 8:30 p.m. after speaking for about 20 minutes.

She is a community college professor herself. She teaches English at a college very close to the White House.

She's been a teacher for more than 30 years and stood on the stage handing diplomas to every student as their name was called.
This is the second time Biden had been invited to speak at Owensboro Community and Technical College.
This year, school officials say, they had some help from former Senator Wendell Ford in getting Biden there.
During her speech, she took time to praise the community college system and the leadership Owensboro has shown in preparing students for the future.
"I know that Owensboro has been on the forefront of many of these efforts and has been a leader both here in Kentucky and in other states as well," said Dr. Jill Biden. "You all have a lot to be proud of. You've heard my story, so you know that I feel right at home at a community college commencement."
Owensboro is only one of two cities that Biden chose to speak at this year.
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NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS:

ORDERING GOOGLE TO FORGET (NYT)
By The Editorial Board
New York Times, May 14, 2014
In a ruling that could undermine press freedoms and free speech, the highest court of the European Union said on Tuesday that Google must comply with requests from individuals to remove links on search results pages to newspaper articles and other web pages that might cause embarrassment.
The European Court of Justice ruled that an individual's "right to be forgotten" was so strong that Google and other Internet search companies could be forced to remove links even if the information in question was itself accurate and lawful.
The court said links could be removed if they were found to be "inadequate, irrelevant or no longer relevant." But the ruling provided little guidance to lower courts about how to decide when links should be removed. As a result, it could open the floodgates for people living in the 28 countries of the European Union to demand that Google and other search engines remove millions of links from search results. Such a purge would leave Europeans less well informed and make it harder for journalists and dissidents to have their voices heard.
The ruling was based on a case brought by a Spanish man against a newspaper and Google. He argued that searching for his name led to two pages originally published in 1998 on the website of the newspaper, La Vanguardia, about his debts and the forced sale of his home. The Spanish Data Protection Agency did not require the newspaper to take down the pages, but it ordered Google to remove links to them. Google appealed that decision and the National High Court of Spain sought advice from the European court. The case now goes back to the Spanish court for resolution.
In 1995, the European Union issued a directive to its members to protect the privacy of individuals. The directive did not explicitly establish a right to be forgotten. But the European court ruled that "after a certain time" individuals can argue that search links no longer comply with the directive and should be erased. The court, however, did not specify how much time has to pass for a request to be considered valid, presumably, leaving that question to Internet companies, privacy officials in European countries and lower courts to answer on a case-by-case basis.
European lawmakers and courts have a long history of protecting privacy. In March, the European Parliament approved a new data protection law that, among other things, includes an explicit right to be forgotten. European governments still need to sign off on that legislation before it can be finalized.
The desire to allow individuals to erase data that they no longer wish to disclose is understandable. For example, there are good reasons to let people remove embarrassing photos and posts they published on social media as children or young adults. But lawmakers should not create a right so powerful that it could limit press freedoms or allow individuals to demand that lawful information in a news archive be hidden.

A CALL FOR JUSTICE FOR SYRIANS (NYT)
New York Times, May 14, 2014
For three years, the United Nations Security Council has failed to end the violence in Syria, largely because Russia and China have stubbornly blocked constructive action and protected President Bashar al-Assad. A new French-led move to have the Council refer Syria to the International Criminal Court for possible prosecution of war crimes won't end the slaughter either. But it would underscore the world's revulsion at atrocities by both sides and its insistence that those responsible be brought to justice.
A vote on the referral resolution is expected soon. Syria never joined the Rome Statute, the treaty creating the court, so the court cannot prosecute crimes there without a Council vote.
The United States dropped its objections to a court referral after the text was written so that neither Israel, which occupies the Golan Heights taken from Syria in 1967, nor the United States could be ensnared in the unlikely event its soldiers get involved. The wording circumvents the problem by defining the conflict narrowly, as involving the Syrian government, its allied militias and armed opposition forces between March 2011 and now. It exempts "current or former officials or personnel" of countries that have not ratified the treaty, except Syria.
The case reflects America's conflicted relations with the court. President Bill Clinton signed the treaty, but President George W. Bush tried to subvert it, until officials found it useful to go after President Omar Hassan al-Bashir of Sudan, who was accused of genocide. President Obama has been somewhat more supportive; America voted for a 2011 resolution that opened an inquiry into the excesses of Muammar el-Qaddafi's regime in Libya.
There is ample justification for an investigation. More than 150,000 people are estimated to have been killed in the Syrian civil war, 2.5 million have fled abroad and 9 million are displaced within the country. Civilians have been subject to starvation, torture and punishing attacks by chemical weapons, jet fighters, barrel bombs and suicide bombers. Navi Pillay, the United Nations human rights chief, told the Security Council last month that human rights violations by government forces "far outweigh" those by armed opposition groups. But United Nations investigators have also documented torture and killings by rebel forces.
There is no reason to believe Russia, at odds with the West over Ukraine, or China will back the referral. On the other hand, do they really want to protect war criminals?

COMMON SENSE AT THE LIBRARY (NYT)
By The Editorial Board
New York Times, May 14, 2014
The New York Public Library has abandoned its plan to renovate its landmark building in Midtown. There will be no hybrid lending-and-research library behind those stone lions on Fifth Avenue, no towering glass atrium looking out on Bryant Park. The dumpy Mid-Manhattan Library, across the street, will not be sold. No books will be banished to New Jersey.
What will happen instead, according to the library: A more modest, cheaper, quicker and, by the looks of it, smarter plan. The Mid-Manhattan Library will stay put and be made beautiful, with computer labs and adult-education space. Closed rooms within the glorious Beaux-Arts main building will be opened to the public, and a new, permanent exhibition of treasured manuscripts and artifacts will be created. Book storage will be expanded into space under Bryant Park, where a 19th-century reservoir once sat. And, the library's officials say, this plan is affordable.
The library's reversal was motivated by the best of reasons - what its president, Anthony Marx, aptly called "the facts." They include a budget that had swollen to $300 million and beyond, a sagging economy, and unexpected difficulties in building a new circulating library in the stacks beneath the Rose Reading Room. Beyond those particulars lay the intense derision the project had inspired among some critics, a cluster of lawsuits, and the skepticism of Mayor Bill de Blasio, who was leery about the proposed sale of the Mid-Manhattan Library.
Though the now-abandoned plan was widely mocked, the library's earlier goals, its need to raise money and stay relevant in the digital age while doing something about its white-elephant buildings, the Mid-Manhattan Library and its neglected Science, Industry and Business Library on 34th Street made sense at the time. But circumstances changed and Mr. Marx is right not to dig in, even though the library had already paid $9 million to the architect Norman Foster to design the

new space.
It's nice to know that for a venerable institution like the New York Public Library, old doesn't mean inflexible.

AROUND A SARDINIAN TABLE, A FRACTIOUS DEBATE (NYT)
By Mira Kamdar
New York Times, May 14, 2014
LU FRAILI, Sardinia - April was lovely, as always, in Sardinia. The summer tourists had not yet arrived; the island was covered with wildflowers and the wild asparagus was pushing up among the cork trees. This spring felt especially healing after the death and destruction wrought by cyclone Cleopatra last November. The storm had damaged my 84-year-old father's house, and I had come to deal with the repairs.
Sardinia is a special autonomous region of Italy, with greater local control of legislation, administration and finance than in other Italian regions. It is the second-largest island in the Mediterranean after Sicily, with which it shares representation in the European Parliament. A hardscrabble life, shaped by the island's unique language, environment and history, has given Sardinians a strong sense of identity, which they struggle to defend against the forces of cultural and economic integration with Italy, Europe, and the rest of the world.
My Sardinian friends organized a special dinner for me featuring a traditional suckling pig roasted on myrtle branches, as well as Sardinian wines, including Cannonau. Eventually, the conversation veered into the contentious realm of Italian politics and the upcoming European parliamentary elections.
The men on either side of me locked into a debate in rapid-fire Italian that I, the lone American, strained to follow. One guest was a convert to the populist Five Star Movement of comedian-turned-political-activist Beppe Grillo. Both of Italy's main political parties, he argued, were beholden to the same powerful business and Mafia interests. Only the Five Star party had the courage to chart a path out of Italy's political quagmire and its enslavement to a European Union co-opted by international business interests.
The other guest argued just as passionately that Mr. Grillo was a dangerous populist and that Italy's best hope lay with the center-left Democratic Party, Italy's new prime minister, the 39-year-old go-getter, Matteo Renzi, and Renato Soru, Sardinia's own Internet billionaire and the Democratic Party's candidate to represent Sardinia and Sicily in the European Parliament. One of the other guests chimed in to say the real danger was Silvio Berlusconi and his conservative Forza Italia party, along with the extreme-right Northern League.
Sardinia has a rich history of invasion and exploitation by outsiders. Now the lack of jobs forces many of the island's sons and daughters to leave to seek employment on the Italian mainland and beyond. Per capita income in Sardinia is nearly 25 percent lower than the Italian average, and unemployment tops 18 percent. The traditional handicrafts industry has been eviscerated. Middle-class tourism has nose-dived.
At the same time, the superrich continue to flock to Sardinia's Costa Smeralda where Mr. Berlusconi owns a multimillion-dollar estate and Qatar Holding has announced plans to build new ultraluxury hotels and an aquatic amusement park. But a tourism-dependent economy has compounded the estrangement many Sardinians feel toward their homeland and culture. Some still dream of seceding from Italy entirely, and the recent vote, largely symbolic, by Venetians to do just that has inspired them.
Beyond Italy, many see global economic integration as the greatest threat Sardinian culture has ever faced. While the European Union's money is welcomed - Sardinia benefits from union designation as a region targeted for economic improvement - the additional layer of European rules imposed on the island's small business owners and agriculturalists is resented.
The United States is now lobbying hard in the proposed trans-Atlantic trade deal to crack European resistance to American agribusiness products, generally characterized by European news media as hormone-laden beef, bleach-rinsed chicken and genetically modified foods. This does not go over well in Italy, and many Sardinians fear the agreement, if approved, would create a supragovernmental set of rules dictated by powerful multinational corporations that would threaten a central part of Sardinian culture: local food. Similar fears are driving the rise of euro-skepticism and secession talk elsewhere in Europe in advance of the European parliamentary

elections next week.
At the end of the evening, I asked one of my Sardinian friends about the movement to have the island adopted by Switzerland. "Too much Cannonau can make everything seem possible," he said with a laugh.
Meet The New York Times's Editorial Board »

TO DREAM IN DIFFERENT CULTURES (NYT)
By T. M. Luhrmann
New York Times, May 14, 2014
WHEN Doug Hollan arrived on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi for his anthropology dissertation fieldwork in a rice farming village, his Toraja neighbors wanted to take turns sleeping with him and his wife.
The rural Toraja almost never sleep alone. They sleep in wood frame houses with little furniture and flimsy room dividers, and they sleep on the floor together in groups, sharing blankets and huddling close for warmth. And so the Toraja have "punctuated" sleep. They wake often as others turn and get up in the night, or when a child calls out or another adult can't sleep and starts to chat. Mr. Hollan never heard anyone complain about this.
Many years after he returned from Toraja, Mr. Hollan became a psychotherapist and opened a practice in Los Angeles. Most of his clients have voiced discomfort, at some point or another, with their sleep. They do so even though they have what you might imagine would be the perfect conditions to sleep soundly. They have private darkened rooms that they share with at most one person and, often, expensively manufactured beds that minimize disturbance to the other person when one gets up in the night. His clients want to make sure they get seven or eight hours of continuous sleep, and when they try to sleep but they can't, they get upset.
They are not alone. The National Sleep Foundation reports that more than one in five Americans has difficulty falling asleep almost every night, and a 2013 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study found that about 4 percent of adults in the United States had taken a prescription sleeping pill in the previous month. In 2012 Americans spent $32 billion in the sleep-assistance industry.
This obsession with eight hours of continuous sleep is largely a creation of the electrified age. Back when night fell for, on average, half of each 24 hours, people slept in phases. In "At Day's Close," a remarkable history of night in the early modern West, Roger Ekirch writes that people fell asleep not long after dark for the "first sleep." Then they awoke, somnolent but not asleep, often around midnight, when for a few hours they talked, read, prayed, had sex, brewed beer or burgled. Then they went back to sleep for a shorter period. Mr. Ekirch concludes, "There is every reason to believe that segmented sleep, such as many wild animals exhibit, had long been the natural pattern of our slumber before the modern age, with a provenance as old as humankind."
In an era when we are trying to cram as much into a day as we can, Americans think about sleep as a biological function that needs to be managed. Mr. Hollan's patients, he writes, think about sleep as a problem that interferes with more important things.
What have we lost with our dismissal of what the writer George Sturt called the "quiet depths of darkness"? In traditional non-Western societies like the Toraja, what happens at night really matters. People pay close attention to their dreams, and because they are awakened more often, they have more opportunity to remember them. When the anthropologist Eduardo Kohn arrived in a small village deep in the Amazon, people slept largely outdoors in an open thatch house, surrounded by other people. They would wake at night to drink tea, because it was cold, or because of the calls of animals. "Thanks to these continuous disruptions," he writes, "dreams spill into wakefulness and wakefulness into dreams in a way that entangles them both."
To my mind, the intriguing question is whether different sleep cultures encourage different patterns of spiritual and supernatural experience. That half-aware, drowsy state is a time when dreams commingle with awareness. People are more likely to have experiences of the impossible then. They hear their mother, many miles distant, speaking their name, or they see angels standing by the window, and then they look again and they are gone.
As an anthropologist, I set out to understand the way people experience the spirit. I've talked to many American evangelical Christians about the way they have experienced God. Recently, I spent time in similar evangelical churches in Accra, Ghana, and Chennai, India. One of the more

startling differences is that Christians in Accra and Chennai say that God talks to them when they sleep, and in their dreams. He wakes them up by calling their names. American subjects, asked about odd events in the night, were more likely to say things like this: "I see things, but it's just sleep deprivation." It seems likely that the way our culture invites us to pay attention to that delicate space in which one trembles on the edge of sleep changes what we remember of it.
Many years ago, I joined a group that decided that we would write down our dreams. And my dream life changed. I seemed to dream more. I remembered more detail. I sometimes had dreams of mythic intensity. In one, my bedraggled soul swam through a storm-clogged river to put its hand upon a muddy shore. To be clear, I was also reading Jung. But it did make me wonder about the way sleep's borderlands are textured by our social world.
T. M. Luhrmann is a contributing opinion writer and a professor of anthropology at Stanford.

THE SPEAKER'S SAND TRAP (NYT)
By Maureen Dowd
New York Times, May 14, 2014
The Speaker is hitting the links.
"This is a Tee Party I can live with," he grins, as he puts a tee emblazoned with "Speaker Boehner" into the turf.
The G.O.P.'s Dean Martin is on the road, making a ring-a-ding and ka-ching tour to rake in the moolah to ensure that Republicans keep the House in November and he keeps his job.
"That was a real humdinger this week when I told those folks in San Antonio that I'm living on borrowed time," he tells the other members of his foursome, who have ponied up big bucks to play 18 with the Speaker.
"The way I enjoy my Camels and cocktails, I guess I should have been happy to make it to 50, much less 65," he chuckles. "But I didn't expect such a big hubbub. Now that I've cheated death by Tea Party, I was taking a moment to ponder my mortality."
He gives his playing partners a sly look.
"As you know, I've taken steps to guarantee my position and the party's by teeing up that Benghazi committee, just like I teed up that Titleist. Talk about a sand trap.
"Every time I hear the word Benghazi, I think of Ben Gazzara, that great actor back in the '60s with the nice tan. He could play me in the movie. Is he still around?"
"And what kinda name is Trey Gowdy? Is he any relation to Curt Gowdy, that old sports announcer? He must be because he hasn't been off TV since I made him chairman of the House Select Committee to Keep Republicans in Power and Harass Hillary Clinton. The guy won't shut up about how we're not going to raise money off the four dead Americans, even while we're busy raising money off the four dead Americans.
"By the way, I'm no Hillary fan. But if Karl Rove thinks pushing the notion that Hillary's concussion made her cuckoo is a good idea, then he's the one with brain damage. How did he survive wasting all that donor money and not winning anything in the last election anyhow?"
As Boehner savors a 210-yard shot, his voice drops into a confidential growl.
"I was reluctant to set up this committee because I know how our wackos can cause a backlash, but I was starting to worry that health care wasn't gonna be enough to get us over the top in November," he confides.
"And I don't mind sticking it to Obama when he continues to be so insensitive about my skin color. His stupid joke at the White House Correspondents' Dinner about me, 'Orange is the new black.' Well, he's gonna be black and blue after we grill him and his team on what he was really doing in the White House that night during the attacks on the compound.
"If he was watching SportsCenter instead of sitting in the Command Center, that's not gonna look good. If he was buttering up Bibi to help him with the Jewish vote, that's not gonna look good. If he was catching some zzz's during Benghazzzi, that's bad. Of course, he already seems asleep at the switch most of the time. All he does is blame us because he can't get anything done.
"Does he think we're just gonna cuddle with him?"
After he and his group head down the fairway, Boehner takes a swig of merlot from his monogrammed silver "JAB" flask and climbs out of his cart.
Eyeing his approach, he muses: "I wouldn't mind working with the president on one thing - this damn immigration mess. If we don't do something to appeal to Hispanics, we are going to be

nowheresville as a party in a decade. But there's nothing I can say to make my guys do it.
"Maybe throwing a bone to the kooks on Benghazi will buy me some room to maneuver on immigration. Some of these goofballs will be so focused on Benghazi, we can just throw a bill on the floor and pass it before they even know what's happening. We faked them out that way on the Doc Fix Medicare legislation. Har, har. The ayes have it."
Hitting his second shot into a deep sand trap in front of the green, Boehner gives the same exaggerated grimace he did ridiculing his own members recently on immigration reform.
"Damn sand traps," he mutters. "At least if all these alarmist reports on climate change turn out to be true, the sand traps will just be water hazards. If Marco Rubio's wrong pooh-poohing climate change, he's gonna be playing a lot of Marco Polo when Miami's underwater."
The Speaker hits out of the trap and lands his ball about 20 feet from the cup.
"Marco is not even the best candidate from Florida," Boehner says. "I've been talking to my man Jeb about getting in. Enough with all these rabid fruitloops. Jeb's my kind of Republican - normal."
Boehner putts and misses his 20-footer for par.
"Did you notice that broke way too much to the right?" he sighs. "That's our problem."

THE SQUARE PEOPLE, PART 1 (NYT)
By Thomas L. Friedman
New York Times, May 14, 2014
HANOI, Vietnam - I think I'll plan to go from Kiev to Hanoi more often. It's only when you go to two seemingly disconnected places that you see the big trends, and one of the big ones I've noticed is the emergence of "The Square People."
In 2004, the Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington wrote about an emerging global "superclass" of "Davos Men" - alluding to attendees of the Davos World Economic Forum - a transnational, cosmopolitan elite drawn from high-tech, finance, multinationals, academics and NGOs. The Davos Men had "little need for national loyalty" and more in common with each other than their fellow citizens, Huntington argued. They also had the skills to disproportionately benefit from the new globalization of markets and information technologies.
Well, a decade later, as the I.T. revolution and globalization have been democratized and diffused - as we've gone from laptops for elites to smartphones for everyone, from networking for the lucky few at Davos to Facebook for all and from only the rich heard in the halls of power to everyone being able to talk back to their leaders on Twitter - a new global political force is aborning, bigger and more important than Davos Men. I call them The Square People.
They are mostly young, aspiring to a higher standard of living and more liberty, seeking either reform or revolution (depending on their existing government), connected to one another either by massing in squares or through virtual squares or both, and united less by a common program and more by a shared direction they want their societies to go. We've seen them now in the squares of Tunis, Cairo, Istanbul, New Delhi, Damascus, Tripoli, Beirut, Sana, Tehran, Moscow, Rio, Tel Aviv and Kiev, as well as in the virtual squares of Saudi Arabia, China and Vietnam.
The latter three countries all have unusually large numbers of Facebook, Twitter or YouTube users, or their Chinese equivalents, which together constitute a virtual square where they connect, promote change and challenge authority. The most popular Vietnamese blogger, Nguyen Quang Lap, has more followers than any government newspaper here. In Saudi Arabia, one of the most popular Twitter hash tags is #If I met the King I would tell him."
And The Square People are only getting more numerous and empowered. "Our goal is that, in three years, every Vietnamese will own a smartphone," Nguyen Manh Hung, who leads the Viettel Group, a Vietnamese telecom, told me. "We are now manufacturing a smartphone for less than $40 and our goal is $35. We charge $2 a month for Internet connection for a P.C. and $2.50 for voice from a smartphone." Because the Vietnamese media is tightly censored, it is no accident that 22 million of Vietnam's 90 million people are on Facebook. Just two years ago there were only 8 million. Vietnam has about 100,000 students studying abroad; a decade ago it was a tenth of that. All future Square People.
To be sure, The Square People represent a diverse politics, including the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and ultranationalists in Kiev. But the dominant trend running through them all is this: "We now have the tools to see how everyone is living, including opportunities abroad and corrupt leaders at home, and we will not tolerate indefinitely living in a context where we can't realize our

full potential. And also we now have the tools to collaborate to do something about it."
As a Vietnamese foreign policy expert put it, the Square People one way or another "are demanding a new social contract" with the old guards who've dominated politics. "The people want their voice to be heard in every major debate," not to mention better schools, roads and rule of law. And they are quick to compare with others: " 'Why do those Thai get to go demonstrate and we can't?' "
Ukraine's Square People want to associate with the European Union - not only because they think that's the key to prosperity, but because they think European rules, judicial norms, standards and transparency requirements will force the changes they want at home but cannot generate from above or below. Vietnamese reformers want to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership for the same reasons. Unlike Davos Men, The Square People want to use the global economy to reform their countries, not rise above them.
I gave a talk on globalization at the National University in Hanoi. Afterward I chatted with a young woman, Anh Nguyen, 19, a student who had asked several good questions. Her conversation was peppered with Square talk: "I feel empowered. ... I think Vietnam can change. ... Please tell the world about the big embezzlement case [at a state-owned shipping company] that was uncovered here. Before people would have been silent, but the verdict came out and they sentenced the [bosses] to death. ... It really surprised people. ... Now not every big boss is protected by the government. ... We get many different sources of information from the world. It opens eyes." She has a much greater chance to achieve her potential than her parents, she added, "but not as much as I want."
Move over Davos Man, the Square People are coming.

AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH ABOUT OUR FOOD (NYT)
By Mark Bittman
New York Times, May 14, 2014
"Fed Up" is probably the most important movie to be made since "An Inconvenient Truth," to which it's related in a couple of ways.
One of its producers is Laurie David, who also produced "An Inconvenient Truth." Climate change, diet and agriculture are inexorably intertwined; we can't tackle climate change without changing industrial agriculture, and we can't change industrial agriculture without tackling diet.
Like "An Inconvenient Truth," too, "Fed Up" can be seen as propaganda. (As can "Farmland," the beautifully shot movie that looks and feels like a Chevy commercial and seems to take as its underlying premise that most Americans mistrust, even hate, farmers. It's more than a little defensive.)
"Fed Up" says: "Here is a problem, a problem that vested interests have no interest in solving, and a problem that must be dealt with if we're interested in our survival. It's something worth fighting about."
The problem at hand, of course, is the standard American diet, especially in its current iteration, which took shape in the early 1980s after the commencement of the official "eat food lower in fat" recommendations. Those recommendations led to a 25 percent increase in the per-capita supply (and indeed consumption) of calories.
Many of those calories were from sugar, on which "Fed Up" focuses (oversimplifying matters a bit, as far as I can tell, but we can live with that), and the high consumption of which contributes or leads to obesity, metabolic syndrome, diabetes and worse. The vested interests profiting from this situation are Big Food and its allies, who will, it seems, go to any lengths to maintain the status quo - even at the cost of our collective public and financial health. (It's expensive to treat these chronic diseases, and we're all footing that bill.)
At some point I have to get to the disclaimers, so here goes: Laurie David is a friend of mine. I'm also acquainted with Katie Couric, the film's narrator, and half or more of the experts interviewed in the course of the movie. Even worse, I'm one of the interviewees. (A minor one; and at least I'm not an investor.)
I know these people in part because we agree on many if not most of the causes of the current food and health crisis, as well as on the directions we should take. There is little new in "Fed Up" for regular readers of this column, or to those who've read a selection of work by Marion Nestle, Michael Pollan, Gary Taubes, Rob Lustig, Michele Simon, Mark Hyman, David Ludwig, David

Kessler or any other member of what we might call the professional sane eating brigade.
What matters, what's exciting, is that "Fed Up" might reach some of the majority of Americans who've never heard of any of us but who adore Katie Couric, the former "Today" show co-host and one of the most recognizable women in the country.
The film has three components: a narration of bare facts and not-so-innocent questions by Couric, such as, "Is there a link between our ever expanding waistlines … and dietary guidelines?" and, "What if every can of soda came with a warning label from the surgeon general?" (I said it was propaganda; it's really a call to action.) There is a series of interviews with talking heads, which bring out the heavy-hitting facts about the dangers of the overconsumption of sugar and other hyperprocessed food. These, in turn, are interwoven with the stories of a few obese teenagers and their struggles to lose weight.
I was at first put off by these portraits, but was ultimately won over. The teens were given flip-cams and asked to keep video diaries, and these nonscripted video selfies, some apparently shot in private in their bedrooms, were sometimes almost unbearably touching. (For comic relief there is fantastic vintage footage, including a priceless clip of Homer Simpson shooting up a donut.)
The experts carry the ball. The journalist Gary Taubes calls the "energy balance" theory - the notion that all calories are the same, and that as long as you exercise enough, you'll avoid gaining or even lose weight no matter what you eat - "nonsense." One Coke, we learn, will take more than an hour to burn off. The pediatrician Rob Lustig, a leading anti-sugar campaigner, notes that "we have obese 6-month-olds. You wanna tell me that they're supposed to diet and exercise?" David Ludwig, another M.D., notes that there is no difference between many processed foods and sugar itself, saying you can eat a bowl of cornflakes with no added sugar or a bowl of sugar with no added cornflakes and "below the neck they're the same thing." Lustig reminds us that anyone can develop metabolic syndrome: "You can be sick without being fat; this is not just a problem of the obese."
And so on. Senator Tom Harkin says, "I don't know how they (the food industry) live with themselves," comparing them to the tobacco industry. Bill Clinton says, effectively, "We blew it," when it came to this struggle.
The movie has some splendid moments: A mother cries at the difficulty of the choice she must make between giving her child what she wants and giving her what's best. Her struggle is common, and she's fighting against an almost overwhelming tide of marketing and, yes, even addiction. A school lunch worker, speaking of the fact that few kids choose the healthy option at lunch, says, "You can't choose for them." But they are children; we must choose for them. Not only are their parents not present, but their parents often don't know what's best.
That "Fed Up" is imperfect - how could a movie that was more than three years in the making, with constant tumult all around it, be otherwise? - is irrelevant. That it suggests that the response of the Obama administration to this crisis - and particularly Mrs. Obama - has been inadequate is also far from paramount. Yes, it's fair to say, as Michael Pollan says in the movie, that "the government is subsidizing the obesity epidemic." It's also true that the Obama administration is the first one to try to do anything positive about this, and that it's being fought at every turn.
Here's what really matters: "Fed Up" is new in its bright, peppy, presumably crowd-pleasing presentation and in its target audience, many of whom, we assume, are not New York Times readers. The movie addresses what the former Food and Drug Administration commissioner David Kessler calls "one of the great public health epidemics of our time." The greater public needs to know that.
As of this writing, the movie is in 19 markets, and doing well. If it were in hundreds of theaters, it would probably change more lives than any movie released this year, because if people see the film, they will get the message. It's not a subtle one.

THOMAS PIKETTY AND HIS CRITICS (NYT)
By Thomas B. Edsall
New York Times, May 14, 2014
Many on the left see the popularity of Thomas Piketty's new book, "Capital in the Twenty-First Century," as a sign of hope, but both optimists and pessimists share a belief more telling than Piketty's success: the idea that the traditional Democratic economic agenda is dead.
Piketty's book reinforces the idea that the domestic policies liberals advocate for are palliative, not

curative - that, in essence, inequality is here to stay.
The problem of deepening inequality is enormous, Piketty writes: "Growth can of course be encouraged by investing in education, knowledge and nonpolluting technologies. But none of these will raise the rate of growth to 4 or 5 percent a year."
Instead, he writes, "for countries at the world technological frontier" - the United States, northern Europe and parts of Asia - and "ultimately for the planet as a whole - there is ample reason to believe that the growth rate will not exceed 1-1.5 percent in the long run, no matter what economic policies are adopted."
Piketty's analysis articulates what many people on the Democratic left feel intuitively, that a domestic tax, spending and regulatory agenda is ineffective in the face of the power of globalized capital to grind down wages and benefits.
In Piketty's view, the solution is a measure beyond the political reach of any individual nation or international body, as they are now constituted: a global wealth tax. Only such a tax "would contain the unlimited growth of global inequality of wealth, which is currently increasing at a rate that cannot be sustained in the long run and that ought to worry even the most fervent champions of the self-regulated market."
Piketty's proposed global tax would set rates of 0.1 to 0.5 percent on fortunes of less than 1 million euros ($1.37 million); 1 percent on assets of 1 to 5 million euros ($1.37 million to $6.87 million); 2 percent on holdings of 5 to 10 million euros ($6.87 million to $13.7 million); and a sliding scale ultimately reaching 10 percent on fortunes of "several hundred million or several billion euros."
It would be an understatement to say that a tax on wealth faces major implementation problems. James Wetzler, the tax commissioner of New York State during the administration of Mario Cuomo, wrote in an essay that "absent aggressive policy intervention, the Western world appears to be headed toward a plutocratic dystopia characterized by wealth inequality approaching that of ancien régime France."
Wetzler added in an email that "to make the U.S. tax system more progressive, we should focus on strengthening our existing income, estate and gift taxes, not on a new starter like a wealth tax. A federal tax on wealth would require a constitutional amendment, and we know a lot less about its economic impact than we know about our existing taxes."
Further complicating implementation of a wealth tax, according to Wetzler, is that it "must address complexities associated with the fact that so much wealth is owned by corporations and other legal entities with dispersed ownership."
And that's only part of the problem. Who would run a super-national tax collection agency? How would the taxes collected on assets owned by one person but held in multiple countries be distributed? How would global wealth tax supporters actually win the enactment of regulations that would require transparency of ownership of real estate, of bank holdings and of control of private corporations?
Is it fair to describe Piketty's analysis (as opposed to the upbeat man) as pessimistic? First, Piketty declares that traditional liberal remedies - education spending, worker protections, more progressive taxation, family stabilization assistance - may be helpful at the margins, but inequality will worsen "no matter what economic policies are." Second, Piketty does not offer a weapon other than a massively redistributive and politically unachievable tax with which to battle this intensifying inequality.
The unlikeliness of Piketty's policy prescription becoming reality has not placated the right. James Pethokoukis, the money and politics blogger for the American Enterprise Institute, exemplifies the aversion to Piketty now erupting among American conservatives. Pethokoukis warns that Piketty's "soft Marxism," if unchallenged, "will spread among the clerisy and reshape the political economic landscape on which all future policy battles will be waged. We've seen this movie before."
It's not only the right that is disturbed; there is also opposition among a number of progressive activists and liberal policy analysts who recognize the dangers Piketty's analysis poses to their agenda.
While Piketty notes that "there is widespread discontent with the extreme inequality and lack of opportunity and security," he simultaneously reinforces the "passivity and resignation" that comes out of "the failure of the state and of center-left parties to do much to change what's happening" Robert Kuttner, the founder and editor of The American Prospect, told me in an email. And so, Kuttner wrote, "working class people give up on it."

Dean Baker, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, a liberal economic think tank, took a harsher view of liberals' attraction to Piketty. In an email, Baker wrote that "a big part of the appeal is that it allows people to say capitalism is awful but there is nothing that we can do about it." Baker, who has formulated a detailed domestic agenda to fight inequality, worries "that many people will feel that they have done their part after struggling through a lengthy book on economics, and now they can go back to their vacation homes and say it's all a shame."

It may be that Piketty is right that traditional liberal policies are largely ineffective. There are, however, grounds to challenge this pessimism. Support for this challenge can be found not only on the left, but also on the center-right.

Kenneth Rogoff, a Harvard economist, contends in a review of Piketty's book that "the idea of a global wealth tax is replete with credibility and enforcement problems, aside from being politically implausible."

Rogoff views evidence of growing inequality presented by Piketty and others as "persuasive" and he proposes a number of alternative, smaller-scale remedies to control disproportionate wealth accumulation. He suggests a shift to a "relatively flat consumption tax, with a large deductible for progressivity." Consumption taxes apply to spending, as opposed to income taxes that are levied on wages, benefits, profits from sales, dividends and other gains. Why, Rogoff asks, should we "try to move to an improbable global wealth tax when alternatives are available that are growth friendly, raise significant revenue, and can be made progressive through a very high exemption"?

Rogoff cites a series of suggestions developed by Jeffrey Frankel, a professor at the Kennedy School at Harvard. These include "the elimination of payroll taxes for low-income workers, a cut in deductions for high-income workers, and higher inheritance taxes."

Despite the criticism of Piketty from right, left and center, he has, by shifting the focus from income to wealth, successfully transformed the debate over inequality.

His influence is reflected in two essays by Clive Crook, a financial columnist at Bloomberg View. The first was an unrelentingly negative review of Piketty's book, the headline of which gives you the flavor of the rest: "The Most Important Book Ever Is All Wrong."

"Every claim," Crook argues, "is either unsupported or contradicted by Piketty's own data and analysis."

On May 11th, however, Crook did an about face and wrote a very different essay, "Piketty's Wealth Tax Isn't a Joke."

"One idea that's been roundly dismissed by fans and critics alike deserves to be taken more seriously: the proposal for a global wealth tax," Crook writes, noting that "on equity and efficiency grounds, it makes sense to tax wealth."

Crook too sees insurmountable difficulties for any entity that might try to collect an annual wealth tax and argues instead for "moderate but effective taxation of capital income combined with moderate but effective taxation of inheritance, so that unrealized gains are brought back into the tax base, either during the course of an investor's life or at death."

In other words, centrists like Rogoff and Crook - in addition to liberals determined to assault bastions of privilege - are beginning to take proposals to restrain the growing concentration of wealth seriously.

Both the shift of attention to wealth and the seriousness with which a proposal to constrain the accumulation of wealth is being taken represent a major change in the contemporary debate over inequality. Few Americans appear to begrudge the multimillion dollar annual compensation of entrepreneurial executives like Steve Jobs or Bill Gates. But inherited and unearned wealth does not command the same legitimacy.

In fact, the emergence of what Piketty calls "patrimonial capitalism" - concentrated wealth and political power passed on from generation to generation in a class-based social order - runs directly counter to the longstanding American commitment to equality of opportunity. Piketty has laid the intellectual groundwork for a challenge to a social and political order based on socioeconomic ranking by wealth stratification.

Now we need effective politicians to articulate this challenge in ways that resonate with a striving electorate determined to achieve a higher standard of living through grit and hard work. Where is the level playing field? Politicians who seek to gain traction on these issues face high hurdles, but only those willing to risk confrontation can address the depth of public discontent, anger and resentment.

TEACHING LIBERATION TO PAKISTAN'S GIRLS (NYT)
By Bina Shah
New York Times, May 14, 2014
KARACHI, Pakistan - You can't go a day on the streets of Pakistan without hearing some spectacularly rude words and colorful insults taken in stride, whether thrown in anger at an errant motorist or in banter among friends at a tea shop. But the words "sex education" are different; they release a tirade of moral righteousness from many Pakistanis, who find this the dirtiest phrase of all. These people fear that it means "teaching children how to have sex," rather than educating them about their health and reproductive rights.
At least in some parts of Pakistan, though, that is beginning to change.
Most Pakistanis still profess conservatism and modesty about sexual relations and matters of the body. But Dr. Nafis Sadik, a United Nations population expert who led Pakistan's successful Family Planning Program in the 1960s, describes a deeper feeling of fear: that if girls are given access to information about sexual health and reproduction, they will become promiscuous. "Boys' and men's sexual behavior is condoned and appreciated," she has said, "but girls' and women's sexual behavior is seen as something that needs to be controlled."
Nevertheless, attitudes are evolving - not least because this prudishness has proved dangerous for the nation.
Today, Pakistanis face a major health care crisis of deadly communicable diseases like hepatitis C, which is rampant in rural areas, as well as a flood of health problems that women and girls experience because Pakistan has also retained the practice of early marriage. Many girls are married off by their families as soon as - or even shortly before - they have reached puberty in their early teens. A result: Pakistan ranks near the bottom among countries in maternal and child health care.
One anecdote captures the absurdity of the problem. Early this year, a village in rural Sindh summoned the boldness to instruct 700 girls from eight local schools on topics like menstruation, how to protect themselves from sexual assault, and even marital rape. The villagers had demanded the classes, and the students reacted enthusiastically to the revolutionary idea that they had the right to control their own bodies. But Mirza Kashif Ali, president of the All Pakistan Private Schools Federation, reacted angrily, reportedly saying: "What's the point of knowing about a thing you're not supposed to do? It should not be allowed at school level."
That "thing you're not supposed to do" is actually being done to young women and girls in child marriages all across Pakistan. Of Pakistan's 90 million women, 37 percent have married before the age of 18. And one of every 70 dies each year because of early pregnancy, not enough time between pregnancies, and other risks of teenage pregnancy. In 2002, a year assumed to be typical, some 900,000 abortions were performed, the great majority of them unsafe. Abortion is illegal, although rarely if ever prosecuted, and most women who need one must go to an underground doctor or, worse, untrained abortion providers.
Recognizing those facts, a groundbreaking "Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights" education program (the euphemism and its abbreviation - S.R.H.R. - were deemed necessary to avoid the label "sex education") was conducted in rural parts of two Pakistani provinces from 2010 to 2012.
The program was run by Rutgers WPF, a Netherlands-based organization, with two Pakistani partners, Bargad and Saifco; they went into 21 schools in the Sanghar district of Sindh and the Gujranwala district of Punjab to teach 220 female teachers how to speak to their female students about S.R.H.R. The sensitivities that had to be navigated were obvious: The curriculum guide's title was changed - from Comprehensive Sexuality Education to Life Skills Based Education - and the program avoided discussing contraception and sexual activity in the same context. It also included references to sexual and reproductive health and rights in the context of Islam.
The program reached 19,000 girls directly (and through them, an estimated 150,000 more), allowing them for the first time to talk openly to teachers about their health issues. The teachers also made connections with tens of thousands of parents, particularly mothers who had never spoken to their daughters about sexuality or what was expected of them in the marital relationship.
Child marriages are another question. Among Pakistan's rural poor, when girls are married off before full adulthood, the reasoning is usually about economics rather than sexual morality. Many

families think they cannot afford to keep their daughters in school; by tradition, the precious little money they have is spent on educating boys. And when parents take a daughter out of school, the next logical step is to get her married.
One theory among reformers is that giving girls the ability to make decisions about their sexual health and reproductive rights can teach them how to say no to child marriage, and no to unwanted pregnancies. But Dr. Sadik says parents have more power to make any education program a success: They are the ones with - or without - the economic wherewithal that determines whether their daughters will begin marriage and childbearing in their early teens.
To address this, girls in the Sanghar and Gujranwala program were taught negotiating skills to influence family financial decisions, like budgeting. According to the sponsoring organization, the girls were urged to prove themselves valuable contributors to the household's economic health, so that parents would not consider them a burden, and in the end, most of the parents appeared to have left their daughters in school rather than force them into child marriages.
Innovative programs like these need to be accompanied by stricter laws against child marriage, like the recently enacted Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act of 2013, which makes marriage under the age of 18 illegal, and punishable with jail or fines for bride, groom or parents. Such measures can help transform the idea of "sex education" from something dirty into a vital tool of economic empowerment and progress.
We need to show our people that a young girl's body broken by pregnancy after pregnancy is the real obscenity - and that a few more precious years of freedom can make the difference between health and illness or death for Pakistan's girls. If we can do that, we'll have achieved a real revolution.
Bina Shah is the author of several novels, including "Slum Child," and short-story collections.

DIRTY DANCING IN EGYPT (NYT)
By Alaa Al Aswany
New York Times, May 14, 2014
CAIRO - Egyptians are currently suffering from a grinding economic crisis, hefty inflation, a breakdown of security and widespread terrorist attacks. Despite these trying times, the most watched clips on YouTube are of Oriental dance (as raqs sharqi is often translated).
In just one recent month, a video by the Egyptian-Armenian dancer Safinaz was viewed by Egyptians more than four million times. The Lebanese star Haifa Wehbe's dance video got more than 10 million hits. Oriental dance evidently provides light relief from the general state of tension, but there is more to it.
Oriental dance has always been controversial in Egyptian culture. Egyptians love belly dancing, as it is commonly known in the West. Tahia Carioca, a legendary belly dancer, declared to the newspaper Al Hayat in 1994, "Go to any wedding party and once the music starts up, you'll see all the girls in the family suddenly get to their feet and dance like crazy."
But people do not hold Oriental dance in high regard because they equate its suggestiveness with vulgarity and loose living. To call someone the "son of a belly dancer" is an insult.
The tradition of disdaining Oriental dance has a long pedigree. In the "Description de l'Égypte," written by French scholars following Napoleon's invasion in 1798, dancers were described as "women with no training or decorum, and of their dance movements nothing more obscene can be imagined."
That prospect seemed less troubling to the writer Gustave Flaubert, who toured Egypt in 1849-50 and was enchanted by a dancer named Kuchuk-Hanem (a Turkish name meaning "the little lady"). He admired her as "a tall creature, more pale of complexion than the Arabs." The American writer George William Curtis, who visited Egypt at around the same time and also fell in love with her, described the dancer as "a bud no longer, yet a flower not too fully blown."
So what is the secret of this mythical allure? The Palestinian-American academic and author of "Orientalism" Edward Said, writing in Al Hayat, contrasted Western ballet, which "is all about elevation, lightness, the defiance of the body's weight," with Eastern dance, which "shows the dancer planting herself more and more solidly in the earth, digging into it almost." He noted how the latter suggested "a sequence of horizontal pleasures," but "also paradoxically conveyed the kind of elusiveness and grace that cannot be pinned down on a flat surface."
One suspects that few fans are so finely attuned to the aesthetic considerations, but is Oriental

dance more than mere titillation?
Andrea Deagon, an associate professor of classics at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, has practiced Oriental dance since she was 17. Oriental dance is liberating for women, Dr. Deagon argues: a form of self-expression in movement that voices what is, in Egyptian society, an otherwise unutterable truth about the pleasures of the body. And it is because Oriental dance poses a challenge to a religiosity that sees any form of display as an act of impurity that it has always been misunderstood and associated with dishonor.
That is precisely what makes it a subversive art: The dancer who shakes off the shackles of the patriarchal order strikes fear into the hearts of religious conservatives, and may even pose a threat to tyranny. Hence its periodic repression.
In 1834, Egypt's ruler, Muhammad Ali, took steps to preserve, as he saw it, Egypt's morals by ordering the arrest and exile to Upper Egypt of all belly dancers and prostitutes. He also imposed a punishment of 50 lashes on any woman who danced in the street.
In the 1960s, under the presidency of Gamal Abdel Nasser, the government department responsible for supervision and censorship of the arts ordered that "Oriental dance is not permitted to show the following: lying on the back, lying on the ground in a vulgar fashion so as to excite, or making rapid movements in such a way as to cause excitement. The thighs are not to be fully open while on the ground. There are to be no wobbling up and down movements." The dancers must have had a good laugh when they heard of the regulations, which, impossible to adhere to, would have entailed a career change.
The Nasserite state made great efforts to preserve Oriental dance as a sanitized form of folklore, removing it from the realm of the sensual. In 1961, Nasser placed the Reda Dance Troupe under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture. The Troupe, which included the aristocratic Farida Fahmy, danced all over the world, winning medals and prizes, but Egyptians - for all their admiration of the Reda Troupe - still clung to the earthier Oriental dance they knew and loved.
Even today, Oriental dance may be performed in Egypt only with a government permit. An officer of the "morality police" can arrest a dancer for wearing a costume that shows more of her body than the law allows, or because she has danced in a manner deemed too provocative.
A certain hypocrisy pertains. While the government has cracked down on dancers in the name of public morality, it has not hesitated to use them for its own political purposes. After the 1973 war between Egypt and Israel, the American secretary of state, Henry A. Kissinger, was engaged in the "shuttle diplomacy" that eventually led to the 1979 Camp David Accords. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry was always sure to book Mr. Kissinger's favorite dancer, Nagwa Fouad, for a private performance during his stays in Cairo.
Just as the Egyptian state has double standards when dealing with Oriental dance, so does the rest of society. The conservative Egyptian who looks down on dancers has no problem buying a costume for his wife so that she can dance for him. Provided belly dancing takes place within a conjugal setting, he considers such behavior licit.
Will Egyptians' attitudes toward dancers ever change? They have more pressing concerns for the moment: bringing about democracy, electing a government that respects human rights and providing a decent living for the millions living in poverty. But I look forward to a new Egypt where belly dancing will have evolved into an art form, without the connotations of immoral conduct that still surround it today.
In a real democracy, there is a place for every citizen, belly dancers included. Until then, Egyptians are sure to continue to be enthusiastic consumers of Oriental dance - but with scant respect for the dancers.
Alaa Al Aswany is the author of the novel "The Yacoubian Building" and other books. This article was translated by Russell Harris from the Arabic.

THE LOYAL BUNCH (NYT)
By Bongani Madondo
New York Times, May 14, 2014
JOHANNESBURG - Late last month, just as the dry winter weather started to bite, the political climate turned yellow, green and black, the colors of the African National Congress. Africa's oldest liberation party was girding itself for the fifth general elections since the end of apartheid and the most anticipated race since Nelson Mandela walked out of prison.

In the intervening years the A.N.C. has grown into something of a religion; it is the only thing that several generations, old and young, associate with the liberation of blacks from descendants of white settlers. Never mind that its current prophet-in-chief is President Jacob Zuma - middle name Gedleyihlekisa, which means "the one who kills you with a smile" in Zulu. Once again, the A.N.C. trounced the opposition.

The other players - the Democratic Alliance; a new, self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist party called the Economic Freedom Fighters; the dying horse that is Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party; and various other minor leaguers - made all the noises you'd expect from small opponents trying to dislodge a power-drunk giant. Some of us even rooted for those no-hopers; no one has street cred like the underdogs, and for a time there everything had seemed rickety.

Looking back over the last couple of years, I saw images redolent of apartheid-era uprisings: petrol bombs hurled at public amenities; striking miners massacred in Marikana, the platinum beltway; etc. A foreigner visiting South Africa might have wondered if ordinary people still believed in their liberators. I wondered myself.

A week before the voting, I went to downtown "Jozi," as its denizens call the city. Although not actually depressed economically, the area looks more and more like the District 9 of the dystopian movie, lined with makeshift Pakistani-owned mobile-phone shops and street hawkers selling cheap Made-in-China apparel. On one of these streets, outside Johannesburg Polytech Institute, I overheard this conversation among a group of teenage schoolgirls:

"That guy must go, and with him his looting friends," one said.

"That guy Jacob Zuma," another said. "Pity I don't qualify to vote, otherwise I would vote a hundred votes against him."

"No, you are only allowed one vote my friend. One man one vote," said a third.

In the end, the A.N.C. won with a commanding 62 percent of the total vote. The Democratic Alliance scored 22 percent, most of it apparently gained from the middle-classers among the "born frees," the generation of South Africans too young to have experienced apartheid directly. The newbie E.F.F. did well with the poorer born frees, and got 6 percent.

Oh well; we've been here before. In a 20-year cycle, you slowly make peace with the idea that some things don't change.

The night before the election I had dinner with my friend Tselane Tambo at an upscale Greek joint in an affluent northern suburb. "Of course these guys are all jokes," she said. Tselane is the youngest daughter of the A.N.C.'s longest-serving president, Oliver Reginald Tambo. A columnist and blogger, she often tweets off radical statements about her dislike for the current state of the party she was born into.

Picking up The Star, a daily rag, she jabbed a headline on the front page with a pinkie. "Look! Look at this." The article said the public works department had spent about $21 million on security upgrades to Mr. Zuma's home, including a new "fire-fighting" swimming pool. (He claimed to have felt unsafe since another house of his was burned down and one of his wives was raped.) Tselane rolled her eyes: "The country's in tatters, and leaders are lining their pockets."

Then she grew sullen. "But the A.N.C. is my home," she said. "I was born A.N.C., and that's all I know."

On election day I packed my family in a taxi, and headed to the local voting station. We live in Killarney, a suburb adjacent to Mandela's last neighborhood, Houghton. Polling here takes place at the golf club. This makes me, a freelance author in a country that hardly reads, what Mr. Zuma has called a "clever" black, a member of a professional elite that is out of touch, he says, with the poor blacks he claims to represent.

Soon I found myself in line with Tito Mboweni, a former governor of the Reserve Bank, and Trevor Manuel, a former finance minister - both veterans of the A.N.C., both biting critics of it. As we edged toward the makeshift ballot room, a white woman in her 50s strode out. She was dressed all in black with a clingy vest that read: "Remember Marikana's Fallen Soldiers. They Died for Us." A walking billboard for the ultra-left E.F.F.

She passed by me and said, sobbing, "This is way too much. This has been an emotional day. The workers will rule one day."

Maybe. For now, though, no matter how disenchanted we are with corruption and our clown of a president, South Africans remain a loyal bunch. As a car attendant outside the Killarney Country Club put it: "Even when my wife cheats on me, I can't 'unwife' her just like that. I am A.N.C. in my

blood. They are useless, they eat only with the rich, but hey, they are the party of my forefathers. It is like the church you were baptized in." Amen.
Bongani Madondo is a senior editor at the South African edition of Rolling Stone and the author of "Hot Type" and the upcoming "Sigh, the Beloved Country."

CHINA ISN'T OVERTAKING AMERICA (NYT)
By Michael A. Levi
New York Times, May 14, 2014
NEW YORK - A report last month that China's economy will soon become the world's largest has sparked worries. Normally calm observers are taking the news as a sign that China is overtaking America as an economic power.
But much as counting warships or troops often provides a misleading measure of military might, tallying up gross domestic product - the figure behind the latest headlines - yields a warped picture of China's economic rise.
By most meaningful yardsticks, China is still less economically powerful than the United States.
The problem with the new numbers starts with how they compare economies' sizes. The World Bank tables that show China passing the United States compare the two countries using "purchasing power parity," which measures national incomes in terms of what they can buy at home.
Because domestic spending is dominated by items such as food and housing that aren't traded internationally, and because most goods and services are cheaper in China than in the United States, this comparison boosts China's apparent economic strength.
Yet compared using market exchange rates, which measure incomes in terms of what they can buy on international markets (where every country pays the same price), the United States' economy remains nearly twice as big as China's. Indeed it is this latter measure that matters most when comparing economic power.
After all, one would never compare two countries' military strengths on the basis of how well each could suppress a domestic rebellion rather than fight a foreign war, and one should not compare countries' economic power on the basis of what a worker in each country can buy at home.
When American and Chinese companies bid against each other to acquire resources or companies abroad, what matters is their wealth as measured by the global market. Oil suppliers, for example, don't care if the $100 they get for a barrel sold to China can buy more rice in a Beijing market than at a shop in New York - they care about what their revenues are worth in the world market.
Similarly, the attractiveness of the Chinese and American markets to foreign firms depends on the profits to be made in international terms, not as measured by purchasing power.
The alarmism about China surpassing America also ignores the critical role of political and institutional strength and flexibility. One wouldn't compare countries' arsenals while ignoring their different states of disrepair - yet Chinese G.D.P. numbers ignore severe pollution problems that are driving successful Chinese abroad. Nor would one compare numbers of aircraft or troops without asking about the training, doctrine and organization necessary to mobilize them effectively in combat. China faces real challenges translating its economic resources into international influence.
The need to maintain political stability and the Communist Party's grip on power constrains what the Chinese government can do to capitalize on the country's economic heft. The difficulty of getting recalcitrant provincial and local governments to enforce Beijing's edicts can make it tough for China to take full advantage of its economic power. The Chinese government, for example, has tried to forge packages of infrastructure and resource investment in strategically attractive developing countries, only to have the Chinese companies that would need to implement the schemes refuse to participate.
Certainly, China has its advantages. There are some things that matter for international power - notably military personnel - that can be paid for domestically, making lower Chinese prices (and wages) a meaningful advantage.
The American market may be larger than China's, but China's is growing more rapidly, often creating more new opportunities for international firms. And Washington faces political and institutional constraints just like Beijing does. America's economy can't compete with a state-

dominated behemoth when it comes to rewarding favored partners with economic opportunities. And the United States is less able to direct its outward commerce toward political ends than China is: Beijing is more capable, for example, of persuading Sinopec to pursue geopolitically attractive investments than Washington is of mobilizing ExxonMobil.

Twenty-first century rivalry between the United States and China will be as much about economic might as military power. Judging the economic balance correctly will be as essential a foundation for effective international strategy as proper assessment of the military balance was during the Cold War. Avoiding overreaction in the face of the latest headlines about China's economic triumph would be a great place to start.

Michael A. Levi, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, is co-author of "By All Means Necessary: How China's Resource Quest is Changing the World."

RESCUING THE KIDNAPPED GIRLS SHOULD BE ONLY A FIRST STEP FOR NIGERIA TO COUNTER BOKO HARAM (WP)

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

THOUGH IT is easily derided as superficial, the social media campaign in support of about 300 girls who were abducted in Nigeria is producing results. The Ni-ger-ian government has been shamed into accepting intelligence and advisers from the United States, Britain and Israel, and a U.S. surveillance plane has joined the search for the girls. The fanatical leader of Boko Haram, the Islamic extremist group that carried out the kidnapping on April 15, has taken notice and shifted from a vow to sell off the girls as slaves to a proposal to trade them for prisoners. The Ni-ger-ian government appears open to negotiations.

Any rescue of the girls, who were abducted from a tiny village in northeastern Nigeria, where Boko Haram has waged a horrific war against schools and their students, would be welcome. Certainly it would vindicate the average Nigerians - most of them women - who launched the #BringBackOurGirls campaign on Twitter in outrage over the seeming indifference of the government of Goodluck Jonathan. That the campaign was joined by the likes of first lady Michelle Obama and House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) brought welcome attention to the threat posed by Boko Haram, which has killed thousands of civilians over five years, has links to al-Qaeda and forms part of a mosaic of Islamist extremist groups that plague northern Africa.

The larger aim of this campaign, however, should be to alter Nigeria's self-defeating response to Boko Haram. The government has mixed heavy-handed repression with a prickly refusal to accept advice or more than small-scale assistance from the United States and other governments. In response to vicious attacks on schools and civilians, Mr. Jonathan's government has dispatched poorly trained and equipped military forces that have too often conducted their own rampages. Human rights groups have documented secret detentions, extortion, burning of homes and extrajudicial killings. After Boko Haram attacked a barracks in March in an attempt to free detainees, a government counterattack killed hundreds, including many of the prisoners. If negotiations over the release of the girls move forward, the government could consider releasing some men and boys who were swept up in raids but not convicted of wrongdoing.

The Obama administration has tried pressing the government in private to adopt a broad strategy of counterterrorism, including social programs and better policing; it has tried public and private criticism of the military's abuses. Both have been brushed off by Mr. Jonathan. U.S. legal restrictions on aid to military units involved in human rights violations are also an obstacle. Consequently, aid has been limited to training special forces and sharing intelligence.

There is probably no cause for the United States to deploy its own forces in Nigeria. But the administration should use this moment to press Mr. Jonathan to accept more training assistance for Ni-ger-ian counterterrorism forces and police as part of a broader program to build governmental institutions in the impoverished and neglected areas where Boko Haram has flourished. A good starting point would be funding and protection for schools where girls can be educated.

VIRGINIA'S GOVERNOR MOVES TO PROTECT ACCESS TO ABORTION (WP)

By Editorial Board

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

AS A candidate last year, Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe (D) promised to do what he could to roll

back absurd, baldly political rules imposed on the state's abortion clinics with the transparent purpose of forcing many of them to close. Now Mr. McAuliffe, who took office in January, is taking a step toward fulfilling that promise. If he's successful, he will preserve access to abortions each year for some 10,000 Virginia women - many of them minorities - who otherwise would likely be unable to find nearby clinics to perform the procedure.

During the campaign, Mr. McAuliffe suggested that he might be able to challenge the regulations by issuing an "advisory opinion" meant to sway the state Board of Health. That had a superficial appeal; after all, the board had originally agreed that existing clinics should not be affected by new rules. Opinions from a ferociously antiabortion attorney general pushed the board to change its view.

But Mr. McAuliffe's "advisory opinion" option faded under the scrutiny of legal experts. So the governor is trying a new tack: appointing abortion rights advocates to the board in the explicit hope that they will initiate a "review" that will delay or water down the rules before they can take effect in the coming months.

The Republican speaker of the House of Delegates, William J. Howell (Stafford), reacted with predictable dyspepsia, calling Mr. McAuliffe's approach "an overtly political move." The unspoken irony was that no one could possibly outdo Mr. Howell and Republicans in their overtly political end-run around abortion rights that are the law of the land.

Their legislation, enacted in 2011, reclassified abortion clinics, which perform first-trimester procedures that take two or three hours, as the regulatory equivalent of full-service hospitals. As applied to existing clinics - a departure from past practice by which new codes generally applied only to new structures - the law imposed ludicrous requirements that would have no effect on the welfare of patients. Clinics would have to spend millions of dollars to widen hallways, add parking spaces, enlarge operating rooms and expand janitorial closets.

The truth is, first-trimester procedures, which account for nearly all the roughly 25,000 abortions performed annually in Virginia, are safe and relatively simple; mishaps in the state's clinics are exceedingly rare. There is no evidence that forcing clinics to install ventilation systems up to the standards of hospital operating rooms will improve outcomes in clinics that provide abortions, which do not require incisions.

For the state's surviving 18 abortion clinics - those that have not already closed under threat of the new rules - Mr. McAuliffe's maneuver may mean a reprieve for as many as half. Those clinics are the only convenient option for thousands of women who seek abortions each year. If the governor can preserve that option for those women, he will have served the cause of rights conferred by the Supreme Court.

THIS TIME THE LEFT SCUTTLES A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO FANNIE AND FREDDIE (WP)
By Editorial Board
Washington Post, May 14, 2014

CONTRARY TO what you may have heard, reducing the federal role in the housing market is not a radical free-market notion. In fact, after a $187 billion taxpayer bailout of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac exposed the misallocation of resources that those two institutions had fostered for decades, reform enjoyed high-level Obama administration support: "I think it's absolutely the case that the U.S. government provided too much support for housing, too strong incentives for investment in housing," then-Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner said in a Feb. 11, 2011, speech at the Brookings Institution. His department produced three options for a Fannie-free future.

Three years later, Mr. Geithner is on the former-official book tour, and the work he and many others poured into rethinking housing finance is looking increasingly like wasted effort. Mel Watt, the federal housing regulator who serves as Fannie and Freddie's de facto chief, mounted the podium at the Brookings Institution on Tuesday to declare that he will henceforth focus on keeping the two entities alive more or less as is. To help ease the flow of mortgage credit, which has been drying up absent a permanent Fannie-Freddie fix, Mr. Watt will forgo planned contraction of the "conforming" loan limit for securitized mortgages and relax the perfectionism with which Fannie and Freddie had previously treated the loans it purchases. Item One in his new strategic plan for the entities, Mr. Watt announced, is to "MAINTAIN" - all-caps in original - "foreclosure prevention activities and credit availability for new and refinanced mortgages."

You can call this a victory for defenders of the status quo who backed Mr. Watt to replace Edward DeMarco, an advocate of aggressively winding down Fannie and Freddie. Or, equally validly, you can see Mr. Watt's declaration as a recognition of reality - economic and political. The economic reality is that there is still no good private-sector alternative to the Fannie-Freddie duopoly. And the political reality is that Congress has failed to legislate one. The only bipartisan bill has foundered in the Senate Banking Committee. Though it's still likely to pass a scheduled committee vote on Thursday, six key liberal Democrats have declared themselves opposed, which probably dooms its chances on the Senate floor. The left objected that the bill's subsidies for low-income borrowers were insufficient - which sounds to us like a complaint that it lacked the kind of credit set-asides that created damaging conflicts of interest for Fannie and Freddie.

The big winners from this turn of events, ironically, may be not the poor and the "underserved," but a group of giant hedge funds that snapped up millions of beaten-down Fannie and Freddie shares after the government bailout, and are now lobbying Congress - as well as suing in federal court - for a return to private ownership, albeit with what the hedge funds say would be stronger protections against excessive risk-taking. Thus would a huge taxpayer investment in rescuing Fannie and Freddie pave the way for a colossal windfall for bottom-feeding Wall Street types. The longer interest-group squabbling prevents Congress from enacting a better approach, the more time the hedgies have to achieve the outcome that favors them.

Read more about this topic: The Post's View: Fannie and Freddie wind-down opponents wind up misleading ads The Post's View: Bid to replace Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac gets a needed push Charles Lane: It's time to fix Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac

BY SERVING ALCOHOL, STARBUCKS RISKS LOSING KEY CUSTOMERS: PEOPLE IN RECOVERY (WP)

By Greg Williams

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

Greg Williams, who has been in recovery from alcohol and drug use for more than 12 years, wrote and produced the documentary "The Anonymous People."

Recently Starbucks announced it would expand its offerings and start selling alcoholic drinks in the evening in thousands of its stores. The move was touted by chief executive Howard Schultz as a strategy for the company to grow profits by increasing the average sale per customer.

Schultz's shareholders no doubt exchanged a mental fist-bump. But the celebration may be short-lived once they realize that they are in danger of turning away a key coffee-consuming segment: more than 23 million Americans living in recovery from substance-use disorders.

Starbucks spokeswoman Lisa Passé called it "a natural progression for Starbucks as we seek to create a new occasion for customers to gather, relax and connect with each other in the evenings." What Passé did not mention was why a lot of customers already gather, relax and connect at Starbucks - helping to make it the largest coffee chain in the world.

Every day, people in recovery meet up in Starbucks cafes to support one another, to talk to their 12-step sponsors and, most of all, to be welcomed in one of the few lively, popular, alcohol-free gathering places in their community.

Starbucks should pay special attention to them.

One of the most useful concepts in business is the Pareto principle, or what is commonly known as the 80/20 rule. This widely adopted marketing principle - that 20 percent of input causes 80 percent of the result - suggests that 80 percent of all coffee consumed at Starbucks is derived from just 20 percent of their consumer base.

And who might be part of that base? The October 2008 issue of the journal Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research found that 88.5 percent of those studied who were in recovery from alcoholism drank coffee. Thirty-three percent of those coffee drinkers drank more than four cups a day.

That means millions of recovering people drink coffee, and a third of them drink a lot of it.

If you closed your eyes and pictured a 12-step meeting room, you'd probably picture a coffee urn and plastic foam cups stacked next to it. And you'd be right. After a typical meeting, you'd see groups of people leaving together to head for the local Starbucks.

In the short run, Schultz may be adding a new set of customers who bring in a $20-plus sale once a week. But if the evening culture of the cafes turns into a hybrid bar scene, Starbucks will be at

serious risk of forcing out a devoted set of high-volume existing customers. Many of them may already spend more than $20 a day on alcohol-free beverages.
If Starbucks executives studied this market demographic, perhaps they would think twice about this move. They don't have to be driven by the spirit of supporting people's journey of recovery from addiction. They could do it just for their shareholders.

GOP SHOULD GIVE GROWN-UP POLITICS A CHANCE (WP)
Washington Post, May 13, 2014
Eliot Cohen nails the Obama administration and many of its critics for deeply unserious behavior:
Indiana Gov. Mike Pence signs legislation on March 24 at the Indiana Career Council Meeting at the Indiana State Library. (Rob Goebel/The Indianapolis Star via Associated Press)
Often, members of the Obama administration speak and, worse, think and act, like a bunch of teenagers. When officials roll their eyes at Vladimir Putin's seizure of Crimea with the line that this is "19th-century behavior," the tone is not that different from a disdainful remark about a hairstyle being "so 1980s." When administration members find themselves judged not on utopian aspirations or the purity of their motives-from offering "hope and change" to stopping global warming-but on their actual accomplishments, they turn sulky. As teenagers will, they throw a few taunts (the president last month said the GOP was offering economic policies that amount to a "stinkburger" or a "meanwich") and stomp off, refusing to exchange a civil word with those of opposing views.
In a searing memoir published in January, former Defense Secretary Robert Gates describes with disdain the trash talk about the Bush administration that characterized meetings in the Obama White House. Like self-obsessed teenagers, the staffers and their superiors seemed to forget that there were other people in the room who might take offense, or merely see the world differently. Teenagers expect to be judged by intentions and promise instead of by accomplishment, and their style can be encouraged by irresponsible adults (see: the Nobel Prize committee) who give awards for perkiness and promise rather than achievement.
He does not spare Republicans. ("The teenage temperament infects our politics on both sides of the aisle, not to mention our great universities and leading corporations. The old, adult virtues-gravitas, sobriety, perseverance and constancy-are the virtues that enabled America to stabilize a shattered world in the 1940s, preserve a perilous order despite the Cold War and navigate the conclusion of that conflict.")
With regard to the Obama crew, no one should be surprised. He ran a campaign in 2008 designed by and for young people. Fortune-cookie phrases became the mantra of the man running to be leader of the Free World. Obama girls swooned. We also see teenage behavior from media organizations, many of which have been deeply unserious in their choice of topics, in their willingness merely to regurgitate White House spin, in their obsession with contrived personality fights (remember Majority Leader Eric Cantor vs. House Speaker John Boehner?) and in their refusal to diversify their ranks with reporters who don't subscribe to cool-kid liberalism.
Some blame the culture generally for this phenomenon. But while the culture has dumbed down the country, made language more coarse and people less polite, commerce still gets done, parents raise kids, soldiers fight magnificently well - all using a healthy mix of common sense and expertise. Compare the way pols talk and act with the tone and conduct of parents, co-workers, business owners, military men and women (not the Beltway-tamed pseudo politicians) and professionals you interact with outside of politics. Frankly, a disturbingly large number of politicians bear as much resemblance to working adults as sitcom TV parents do to real ones.
What else has been unserious of late?
* Appointing Chuck Hagel as defense secretary. Imagine a CEO of the company hiring someone so obviously in over his head and unable even to effectively work from a script. (Might the shareholders think the CEO has lost it?)
* Running around hollering that the sky is falling if the sequester goes through. Would you want to rely on a co-worker who at the first sign of trouble rolled out a parade of phony horribles? (Might you prefer to work alone in the future?)
* The Senate majority leader, like the wide-eyed grouch screaming for kids to get off the lawn, making a Senate election about two rich donors in a sea of rich donors. Imagine a doctor, instead of rendering germane medical advice, going on rants about Big Pharma's conspiracy to take over

medicine. (Might you get another doctor?)
* U.S. senators shutting down the government because "the important thing is to fight." Imagine a Marine with such a nonspecific and self-destructive mindset, blowing up his own facility just to show he can do it. (Might his commanding officer initiate court martial - or medical - proceedings?)
* The media fixating on a senator drinking from a water bottle in a response to the president's State of the Union address. Imagine a parent obsessed for weeks about a dropped fork at the dinner table. (Might the spouse inquire whether something is wrong?)
This gap between everyday experience and politics is one reason average citizens rate politicians so poorly. But the voice of conscience and maybe fear (for the country) still beckons. The interest in GOP governors or ex-governors to run in 2016 is in large part a search for maturity. Governors certainly are perceived as less politically infantile in large part because they have to do things (e.g. pass budgets, deal with Medicaid). The incentive for silly stunts is much lower at the state level while the consequences of gridlock, bad governance and extreme policies are acutely and swiftly felt.
And Republicans, no matter how much they dislike Hillary Clinton's politics and can accurately recite her policy flubs, should be aware that to most voters she comes across as serious and mature. Putting up a fire-breathing nominee with a bunch of silly ideas and little depth of knowledge would be like sending a Little Leaguer up to bat against the Detroit Tigers.
So where is the GOP grown-up? Former Florida governor Jeb Bush is impressing donors and conservative wonks in large part because he talks, doesn't scream; explains, doesn't regurgitate catch phrases; and seems comfortable in his own skin, rather than inhabiting a cartoon role. Other governors, including Indiana's Mike Pence and Wisconsin's Scott Walker, do the same.
Many Republicans seem to have recognized that they have been fed a steady diet of junk TV and cotton candy, and crave some substance, something more fulfilling. The noise from the teenage crowd is deafening, but one sign of maturity is the ability to ignore the racket and engage listeners in more important pursuits. But first, one or more Republicans has to decide to give grown-up politics and governance a shot.

MARCO RUBIO'S CHANGING CLIMATE (WP)
By Ruth Marcus
Washington Post, May 14, 2014
"I do not believe that human activity is causing these dramatic changes to our climate the way these scientists are portraying it," said Sen. Marco Rubio.
Thus did the Florida Republican undermine his other assertion, to ABC's Jonathan Karl: that he is prepared to be president.
"Our climate is always changing," Rubio further hole-dug. "And what they have chosen to do is take a handful of decades of research and say that this is now evidence of a longer-term trend that's directly and almost solely attributable to man-made activity. I do not agree with that."
Rubio certainly isn't alone among Republicans in dissing the scientific consensus - "these scientists," he said, flicking away reams of data as the fevered imaginings of climate true--believers.
And his phrasing is cleverly careful, with caveats and straw men that allow him to stop short of outright denialism while comforting the party's denialist base.
Consider Rubio on CNN last week: "I understand that there's a vast consensus of scientists that are saying that human activity is what's contributing to changes in our climate."
So far, so good, but does Rubio agree? He doesn't say, but in an interview last year with BuzzFeed - an interview Rubio's office flagged for me as emblematic of his views on climate change - Rubio suggested there was "reasonable debate" on the role of human activity.
With CNN, Rubio instead pivoted straight to the straw man: "I think it's an enormous stretch to say that every weather incident that we now read about or the majority of them are attributable to human activity." But of course, no reputable scientist is making that stretch.
Rubio has a more serious argument - that unilateral action will be unavailing, that the costs of responding to climate change exceed the benefits. But he undermines this point - and with it, his broader credibility - by refusing to acknowledge scientific reality.
Let's look at the data - or, as Rubio would call it, "a handful of decades of research."
The National Climate Assessment, this month: "Evidence from the top of the atmosphere to the

depths of the oceans . . . tells an unambiguous story: the planet is warming, and over the last half-century, this warming has been driven primarily by human activity - predominantly the burning of fossil fuels."
Just this week, two groups of scientists offered disturbing assessments about what they deemed the unstoppable melting of Antarctic ice sheets, driven in part by human-caused global warming and threatening catastrophic rises in sea levels.
But if Rubio doesn't believe the scientists, perhaps he might believe . . . himself. As the Miami Herald recounted, "As the leader of the Florida House in 2008, Rubio presided over a unanimous vote in favor of directing the state Department of Environmental Protection to develop ground rules for companies to limit their carbon emissions."
The following year, Rubio described a cap-and-trade system as "inevitable" and pronounced himself "in favor of giving the Department of Environmental Protection a mandate that they go out and design a cap-and-trade or a carbon tax program."
According to the Herald, Rubio "hired a leading climate change expert" - eek, a scientist! - "from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to advise lawmakers."
Rubio claimed the following year that he was actually engineering a plan to stop cap-and-trade, but that was hardly a credible explanation for a convenient flip-flop as he ran in the Republican primary against then-Gov. Charlie Crist, a cap-and-trade advocate.
Since then, Rubio has moved from disclaiming scientific expertise to deriding it.
"I'm not a scientist. I'm not qualified to make that decision," Rubio told the Herald in December 2009 when asked whether climate change was the result of human activity. Climate change, by the way, isn't the only issue on which Rubio punted to scientists: When GQ asked in 2012 how old the Earth is, Rubio demurred, "I'm not a scientist, man."
Which is it, senator? You don't know as much as these scientists or you don't believe them?
Rubio's shift sadly mirrors his party's. As Paul Waldman recounted on The Post's Plum Line blog, in 2012, the leading Republican presidential candidates had "embarrassing flirtations with climate realism."
The 2016 crowd, by contrast, ranges from skepticism to blanket denial. "The last 15 years, there has been no recorded warming," asserted Texas Sen. Ted Cruz. "The Earth's 4.5 billion years old, and you're going to say that we had four hurricanes and so that proves a theory?" offered Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul.
"Climate is always evolving," Rubio told ABC. Sadly, it's not the only thing.

BILL MAHER SPEAKS HIS MIND, UNFORTUNATELY (WP)
By Kathleen Parker
Washington Post, May 14, 2014
When my neighbor gleefully reported that Bill Maher had dedicated a searing monologue to me for a column I wrote about the Donald Sterling/Cliven Bundy rants, my first thought was, Nah . If I tussled with everybody who tossed a brick through the window, I'd never get the draperies hung.
My second thought was about something my father said to a drunk who was looking for a fight: "I'm too old to fight," my dad said, peering over his half-moon glasses. "But I'd be glad to step outside and kill you."
Dads.
I've decided to respond to Maher because I agree with him on his central point, that we should fight the scourge of privacy invasion.
But my point was a little different than Maher's characterization, if perhaps unclear to literal minds. One would think that someone who has so artfully mastered snark would recognize sarcasm, as when I wrote that "speaking one's mind isn't really all it's cracked up to be."
Assuring his audience that speaking his mind "is absolutely everything it's cracked up to be," to which I would only add "and much, much more," Maher said people would miss speaking their minds. Perhaps, but how would you know?
I think, Bill, that you and I are talking about different minds. As noted in my column, any uncertainty about the value of always speaking one's mind vanishes upon reading online comments. Have you read yours?
Maher further objected to my suggestion that the potential for exposure by being unwittingly recorded forces us to select our words and edit our thoughts more carefully. But don't all adults

edit their words and thoughts to some degree? Oh, wait, no.
Southerners are perhaps too obsessed with trying never to offend while entertaining the most dastardly thoughts. Everyone knows that "Bless your heart" means anything but, depending.
But Maher would rather be a Mormon than have to be "always editing," as he put it in his monologue. Listening to 100 horrific rants by Bundy, he added, would be better than being Mitt Romney.
Bill, Bill, Billy, honey. Obviously, the consequence of self-editing isn't to become a cliche. Sometimes it just means being a little bit clever.
Certainly, those un-clever fellows Sterling and Bundy would be better off had they kept their thoughts to themselves. Do they have the right to express them? Absolutely, but the obvious consequences make my point. This isn't a matter of government oppression of free speech but of private citizens condemning their neighbors for expressing thoughts that have been historically harmful.
Yes, Bill, people should be able to think what they want in the privacy of their living rooms, not that our thoughts are necessarily good company. Most of them percolate unbidden from the unconscious and intrude upon our sense of order. Self-aware people examine those thoughts and wrestle them into submission. The rest are on TV. (Kidding, kidding, sheesh.)
Urging people to think before they speak is hardly East Germany, as Maher said. This is what parents teach their children every day. Don't write something in an e-mail that you wouldn't want others to see. And while we're at it, don't post idiotic pictures on Facebook if you're looking for a job.
This is common-sense advice based on reality. It's too bad Sterling's "friend" recorded him saying offensive things. Too bad he thinks this way. Too bad he doesn't have better friends.
Maher wondered whether I ever get together with my girlfriends, drink too much wine and say things I wouldn't want broadcast elsewhere. Well, yeah, that's why I call them friends. Indeed, I would be shocked if either of them ever repeated (or remembered) a word.
Finally, my point wasn't that we should surrender to Big Brother. As I've written and spoken often, we have become a dangerously voyeuristic society driven by the narcissistic urge to know and be known.
Translated: Basically, we're borderline sociopaths with a spy factory in our pockets.
Barring legal action against thought thieves posing as "friends," the solution is not so easily imagined. Until we conceive of one, it seems minimally rational to recognize that any electronic interaction carries risks.
In the spirit of modern friendship, meaning we're not really friends, I leave you, Bill, with an open invitation to stop by the Olive Street stoop next time you're in D.C. We'll drink too much wine and speak our minds freely with an assortment of neighbors who definitively will not bore you.
And I promise, I won't tell a soul.

A NIGHTMARE GROUP IN SYRIA COULD TARGET THE US (WP)
By David Ignatius
Washington Post, May 14, 2014
The chamber of horrors of the Syrian civil war has spawned a terrorist group so extreme that it has been rejected even by al-Qaeda - and this toxic group is now establishing a safe haven in the city of Raqqah in northern Syria that could soon be used to attack foreign targets.
The hyper-militant terrorist group is known in the West as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS. Its efforts to establish a Muslim caliphate that spans the two countries, and to absorb another al-Qaeda offshoot known as the al-Nusra Front, brought a rebuke a year ago from al-Qaeda's chief, Ayman al-Zawahiri.
"I have to choose between the rule of God and the rule of Zawahiri, and I choose the rule of God," thundered Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the charismatic leader of ISIS. The group went its own fiery way after it was denounced by Zawahiri, leaving the al-Nusra Front as al-Qaeda's official Syrian affiliate.
The terrorist threat in Syria is germinating in the dark space between the weak moderate opposition movement, which has been pleading for more Western training and assistance, and the embattled regime of President Bashar al-Assad. For now, the main check on ISIS's growth is that it burns so hot, and operates so brutally, that it alienates people where it takes root.

U.S. intelligence agencies are working with counterparts in the Middle East and Europe to track ISIS and al-Nusra Front operatives and to monitor foreign fighters who have traveled to Syria to join the jihad. This effort to map the Sunni jihadist networks has drawn a useful portrait:

•Of the roughly 110,000 total opposition fighters in Syria, ISIS accounts for somewhere between 5,000 and 10,000; the al-Nusra Front has 5,000 to 6,000 committed fighters. A third militant Sunni group called Ahrar al-Sham has 10,000 to 15,000 members, some of whom have extremist leanings. The extremists in these groups are regarded as the toughest and most motivated warriors within the opposition.

•About 10,000 to 15,000 foreigners have joined the opposition, traveling from such diverse locations as Chechnya, Australia, Libya, Belgium and the United States. Intelligence analysts are said to be especially concerned about roughly 1,500 foreign fighters who hold European passports, which allow them to travel freely across the continent and to enter the United States with relative ease.

U.S. officials believe that ISIS is providing tactical expertise and training facilities to these foreign fighters - building the infrastructure for foreign terrorist operations. Moreover, Baghdadi and other top leaders are said to have issued multiple statements over the past two years threatening international attacks.

In the view of these officials, ISIS could attempt an attack outside the Middle East soon, and several plots have already been disrupted. But analysts believe that the group is focused now mostly on battles within Syria and Iraq.

The group has established a secure haven in Raqqah, a city of about 220,000. Its fighters control the roads in and out. They sell the region's oil and natural gas resources to finance their operations, supplementing revenues from kidnapping and other criminal activities. U.S. officials believe ISIS is now self-financing and no longer needs donations from wealthy supporters in the Gulf.

As its name implies, ISIS seeks to mobilize Sunnis in both Iraq and Syria. The Iraq branch is battle-hardened from its years of fighting under Abu Musab al-Zarqawi against U.S. military occupation. Their Iraq force is smaller than in Syria, probably numbering in the hundreds, but it has a tight command structure and has spearheaded Sunni attacks against government troops in Fallujah and other neighborhoods west of Baghdad.

U.S. officials view Baghdadi as a dynamic leader who mobilizes Iraqi Sunnis into what he promotes as a vanguard against the Shiite-led government. He offers "repentance" for those who allied with U.S. forces against al-Qaeda in Iraq. Though less an operational commander than Zarqawi, he's just as capable of inspiring followers. In a well-researched profile last December, Time magazine described Baghdadi as "Osama bin Laden's true heir."

A nightmare for U.S. counterterrorism analysts is that these al-Qaeda offshoots could recruit new followers among the millions of desperate Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Syria itself.

One veteran U.S. official views the terrorist threat coming out of Syria and Iraq as potentially the most worrying development in the Middle East since the late 1970s. The United States may be less focused on the jihadists than it was a decade ago, but they remain very much interested in the United States.

BIRTH OF A SCANDAL BLAMING HILLARY CLINTON FOR NI-GER-IAN KIDNAPPINGS (WP)
By Dana Milbank
Washington Post, May 14, 2014

Conservatives have reached the firm conclusion that Hillary Clinton is to blame for those Nigerian schoolgirls kidnapped by the terrorist group Boko Haram, 14 months after she left office.

All they have to do now is fill in the details.

On Fox News last week, Elisabeth Hasselbeck attributed the attack to Clinton's failure to put the group on a list of foreign terrorist organizations when she was secretary of state. That "perhaps could have saved these girls earlier," Hasselbeck declared.

Rush Limbaugh, on his radio show, suggested that Clinton didn't designate the group as terrorist because its members are black.

Fox's Megyn Kelly floated the idea that Clinton didn't put the group on the list because doing so

would have "angered them," and a guest on her show said Clinton gave Boko Haram a "green light."
House intelligence committee Chairman Mike Rogers (R-Mich.) and others argued that the Twitter campaign raising awareness of the kidnappings, #BringBackOurGirls, was evidence of the toothless foreign policy favored by Clinton and President Obama. Clinton, who along with first lady Michelle Obama participated in the campaign, was derided for trying "to fight Boko Haram with hashtags."
Former congressman Allen West, always a step ahead, asserted that focus on the kidnapping is a "wag the dog" conspiracy by the Obama administration to distract attention from the Benghazi, Libya, investigation (of which Clinton is also a target).
Former House speaker Newt Gingrich called for congressional hearings - which would also provide the opportunity to explore whether Clinton suffered a brain injury, as Karl Rove has alleged, and whether she orchestrated the Monica Lewinsky article in Vanity Fair, as Lynne Cheney suggested.
The nascent effort to pin blame for Boko Haram on Clinton is still far from a full-blown Benghazi conspiracy theory. But it's worth examining, because it shows how a scandal is born.
The abduction of hundreds of Nigerian girls by Boko Haram, the latest atrocity by the militant group claiming to be acting on Islamic principles, has little to do with the United States. But while the rest of humanity reacts with revulsion, American conservatives have searched for ways to blame the kidnappings on the favorite for the 2016 Democratic presidential nomination.
They found their opening in a decision by the State Department not to put the group on its list of foreign terrorist organizations after Boko Haram bombed U.N. headquarters in Abuja in 2011. The FBI, the CIA and various lawmakers argued for its inclusion, but Nigeria's government, which Boko Haram is trying to topple, argued against it, as did academic experts on Nigeria. John Campbell, U.S. ambassador to Nigeria during the George W. Bush administration, told Fox's Chris Wallace on Sunday that, "along with a good many other Nigerian experts at the time, we all opposed designation."
Opponents figured the designation would elevate the prestige of Boko Haram, which was essentially a domestic Nigerian organization. Instead, Clinton in 2012 put three of the group's leaders on a list of foreign terrorists. After Boko Haram killed more than 160 civilians in Benisheik, Nigeria, in September 2013, Clinton's successor, John Kerry, finally put the group on the terror list - and Boko Haram's brazen attacks continued unimpeded.
The blame-Hillary effort began, as these things often do, with a report by a mainstream journalist. After Clinton tweeted about the "unconscionable" abductions and said "we must stand up to terrorism," Josh Rogin posted an article May 7 in the Daily Beast quoting an anonymous "former senior U.S. official" accusing Clinton of "gross hypocrisy" because she hadn't put Boko Haram on the list.
From there, conservatives were off to the races. Glenn Beck's the Blaze picked up Rogin's report, highlighting the anonymous quote. The Daily Caller went with the headline "Secretary Hillary - Now Decrying 'Terrorism' - Refused to Call Boko Haram a Terror Group." National Review and others joined in.
"Now word is because we did not place them on the terror list," said Fox News's Steve Doocy the morning after Rogin's report appeared, "it's going to be harder to go after them. And who exactly made sure that they were not placed on the terror list? Hillary Clinton."
Inevitably, the accusations landed on the House floor, where Rep. Louie Goh-mert (R-Tex.) gave a long speech the next day, quoting Rogin's article, citing Fox News and asserting that Clinton "protected" the terrorists.
"What happened here is obvious, although the commentariat is loath to connect the dots," the lawmaker said. "Ms. Clinton, like the Obama administration more broadly, believes that appeasing Islamists . . . promotes peace and stability."
It was a textbook example of the anatomy of a smear.

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES:

MD., DEL. DELEGATIONS ASK PFIZER FOR JOB ASSURANCES; HOSTILE BID POSSIBLE

(WILNJ)
Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014
Pfizer hinted Tuesday it might sweeten its roughly $106 billion spurned bid for British pharma AstraZeneca, and said it wouldn't rule out a hostile takeover.
The New York-based drugmaker's update came as the congressional delegations of Delaware and Maryland filed letters to the drug giant asking for assurances that AZ's local workforce would remain intact in any merger.
The CEOs of both drugmakers testified before Parliament Tuesday, with lawmakers grilling Pfizer head Ian Read about his plans for the future of a combined company in the United Kingdom.
"There will be job cuts somewhere, that's part of being more efficient," Read told the committee. "Whereabouts in the world, I cannot say."
Story: AstraZeneca works to rally shareholders
Story:: AstraZeneca positions vulnerable amid merger discussion
Story: AstraZeneca profit misses estimates
However, he has made it clear that Pfizer is committed to England, where it would establish the corporate residence of a new company, thereby saving an estimated $1 billion in corporate taxes to the United States.
In their letters, the congressional delegations of Delaware and Maryland were following the lead of those states' governors, who also wrote to encourage Pfizer to retain AZ's headquarters for the Americas in Fairfax along with 2,600 Delaware jobs, and 3,100 employees at MedImmune in Gaithersburg, Maryland.
Read was more encouraging in his response to Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, saying, "MedImmune, a key biologics arm of AstraZeneca's R&D platform, demonstrates incredible value to patients by developing innovation-driven biopharmaceuticals.
"Leveraging biological advances to develop small and large molecule medicines, MedImmune's modality independent approach to research and development would be a good complement to Pfizer's research efforts in a potential combination with AstraZeneca, and could create an enhanced research portfolio in key areas such as Oncology, Immunology and Cardiovascular Disease."
Separately, Read has promised Prime Minister David Cameron that he would complete AstraZeneca's R&D innovation hub in Cambridge and locate "key scientific leadership" in the U.K., along with 20 percent of the combined company's total R&D workforce.
To Markell, Read wrote, "I recognize that Delaware has made a significant investment to the biopharmaceutical industry, and I understand your interest in the specific impact to your state. Pfizer values your investment and the important science that is being conducted there."
He said it was "premature to speculate on any specific impact this would have on jobs and facilities in any given state."
In their letter, sent Tuesday, U.S. Sens. Tom Carper and Chris Coons and Rep. John Carney told Pfizer it could expect to hear from other members of Congress "about how Pfizer's takeover of AstraZeneca will impact jobs, our states' healthcare system and national drug pipeline, and tax revenue. ... We strongly believe that any merger with Pfizer should include an advance commitment to maintain and grow its presence in Delaware."
They also acknowledged what they called "our country's outdated corporate tax system."
"As we continue to tackle the issue of tax reform in Congress, you will find the Delaware delegation engaged in and committed to revising the code to help American companies grow and profit here in the United States," they wrote.
The delegation also signaled that, as in England, Pfizer's proposal will be given a close look by U.S. lawmakers.
"Clearly, this potential merger will receive heightened scrutiny from lawmakers, regulators and the general public," they wrote.
Pfizer is the largest research-based pharmaceutical company in the United States, and AstraZeneca is England's second largest drugmaker. The deal would constitute one of the largest in the history of the pharmaceutical industry.
For their part, AstraZeneca executives have maintained that Pfizer has undervalued its drug pipeline.
In Parliament Tuesday, CEO Pascal Soriot said he worried about the "distraction" such a large

merger would pose for AstraZeneca.
"What will we tell the person whose father died from lung cancer because one of our medicines was delayed - and essentially was delayed because in the meantime our two companies were involved in saving tax and saving costs?" he asked.
Charles Elson, director of the University of Delaware's Weinberg Center for Corporate Governance, said Pfizer's response to Markell and O'Malley effectively said the same thing: "we haven't made up our minds." It's a political, public relations effort on Pfizer's part, he said.
There isn't much the United States government can do at this point, he said. "It's England that's the issue."
In an email, Markell responded to Read's letter: "I appreciate Chairman Read's response and will look forward to hearing more in the follow-up conversations he has offered. We will continue to press for Pfizer to provide at least the same amount of certainty to Americans employed by AstraZeneca they have for British workers. I remain committed to using every tool available and pursuing every avenue possible to fight for Delaware jobs."
Read told the Parliamentary committee in London that his company had various options for its next move, and did not rule out going directly to shareholders of AstraZeneca in a hostile takeover attempt.
In a written statement, Pfizer reported it was publishing a presentation to AstraZeneca shareholders about the "merits of a combination of the two companies."
Pfizer "believes there is a compelling rationale for a combination, and if AstraZeneca engages in conversations to provide Pfizer with a better understanding of its business and prospects, it may lead to a transaction that AstraZeneca can recommend. Pfizer continues to believe that engagement by the AstraZeneca board is in the best interest of all stakeholders of both companies."
Pfizer touted the "strategic, financial and operational benefits" of such an acquisition, as well as a "significant value creation opportunity for AstraZeneca shareholders."
Carper, Coons and Carney stressed the "tens of millions of dollars" Delaware has invested in retaining AstraZeneca.
In 1999, Delaware gave an incentive package to AstraZeneca of $18.7 million in land for expansion and a cash grant, and devoted $70 million in road improvements to the area around the Fairfax campus.
Amid patent expirations, AstraZeneca has cut its workforce there from 5,000 employees seven years ago to what is expected to be 2,000 by the time a current round of layoffs is finished.
AstraZeneca acquired MedImmune for $15 billion in 2007. MedImmune represents almost half of AstraZeneca's research and development pipeline.
In a recent memo to its shareholders, AstraZeneca management touted the future profitability of its drug pipeline, including oncology, immunology and diabetes drugs.
Under British takeover law, Pfizer has until May 26 to make an official offer to acquire AstraZeneca.
The Associated Press contributed to this report. Contact Aaron Nathans at 324-2786 or anathans@delawareonline.com.

SCOUT CHANNELS IRE INTO CAMPAIGN FOR A STATE SHELL (WILNJ)
Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014
You could call Delaware's newly crowned state shell a product of First State pride.
The channeled whelk, a conch-shaped shell several inches long and home to predatory sea snails, was officially made Delaware's state shell after Gov. Jack Markell signed legislation last week. But the quest to get the First State shell began in October 2012, when Allyson Willis, now 12, of Middletown, was researching the various symbols for each state.
Delaware already had a state bird, the blue hen, and a state bug, the ladybug. The state even has a state soil, the Greenwich loam, and a state dessert, peach pie. But it didn't have a state shell.
"I realized that a lot of the states around us, New Jersey and New York, had state shells even though we have more beaches than they do," she said Friday. "It kind of made me mad.
"It was almost like we weren't there," Allyson said.
So, the then-elementary schooler and now Redding Middle School student decided to do something. She adopted it as her cause as part of her Girl Scout Bronze Award project, the

highest honor a Girl Scout junior can earn. The award project, typically done by an entire troop, requires at least 20 hours of work and step-by-step documentation.
Story: Girl Scouts target math, science gender gap
She wrote to Delaware's Washington political contingent, Sens. Chris Coons and Tom Carper and U.S. Rep. John Carney.
Carney directed her to Rep. Quinn Johnson, D-Middletown. Meanwhile, Allyson collected signatures from 23 of her classmates at Silver Lake Elementary and other Girl Scouts, while working with Johnson, Sen. Bethany Hall-Long, D-Middletown, and the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control.
Allyson suggested the jingle shell as the state shell, but that was changed to the channeled whelk at Johnson's suggestion. The whelk was chosen because it is both a mainstay of Delaware and important to the ecology and economy of the state. Whelks are harvested every year along the East Coast, including thousands of pounds by Delaware watermen for exporting.
From there, the idea was crafted into legislation which unanimously passed through the House and Senate earlier this year. Senators gave Willis a standing ovation said her mother, Renee.
The shell signed by Markell and a copy of the bill will be included in a Delaware Museum of Natural History exhibit, which features themuseum's whelk collection and the journey to designate it as the state shell, Allyson said.
"It is so important to encourage civic engagement among young people and show them the value of advocating on behalf of issues that matter to them," Markell said in a release. "This piece of legislation is the result of Allyson's efforts and shows the impact one person can have on their community."
She also was presented with the Girl Scout Bronze Award in December after finishing her project last fall. She's now a Girl Scout Cadette.
Jennifer Powell Acord, communications and advocacy manager for the Girl Scouts of the Chesapeake Bay, said Willis is a role model for other Girl Scouts looking to craft a project around something they care about. The awards are given to Girl Scouts in elementary school. There are silver and gold award projects for members in middle and high schools.
"The quality of her project is really impressive and definitely well more than the average bronze award," she said. "Our council is really proud of her and the work that she did. She really took the initiative on this, and it is impressive for a girl her age to take on a project of this size."
It's all a little strange for Allyson.
"I never thought I would be in a museum," she said, adding that meeting the governor was both exciting and scary.
Her mom isn't surprised, though. Her daughter is a self-starter with an independent streak, she said.
"This is really big for her. Truthfully, it's really big for us too," Willis said. "What started out as a fun project and grew into something really big."
But Allyson never expected the quest for Delaware's state shell to go this far.
"I thought it was just a little girl's dream that would never come true," she said.
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TWO SUSSEX COUNCIL MEMBERS OPPOSE NAACP GRANTS (WILNJ)
Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014
GEORGETOWN - Two Sussex County Councilmen, Sam Wilson and Vance Phillips, declined Tuesday to give grants of $100 each to the Lower Sussex NAACP Youth Council, objecting to the phrase "colored people" in the group's name.
"Take my name off. I'm not going to give anything," Wilson said after county finance director Gina Jennings noted that in the past, each of the five council members had given $100 from their discretionary grant accounts to the local organization. "Unless you can describe what that says. What's NAACP stand for?"
The brief back-and-forth Wilson initiated broke up what is usually a humdrum end to Sussex County Council meetings. Council members approve small grants, usually $1,000 or less, to civic groups and charities that ask for money.
Council had already given to a group seeking to train middle and high school students how to use

defibrillators, the Delaware Police Chief's Council and the West Rehoboth Community Land Trust before it came to a request from the NAACP Youth Council.
Story: Council may say Lord's Prayer again
The Youth Council sent a letter noting it planned to host financial education workshops for young people, put on family-friendly fitness events and have some members attend an annual national convention in Las Vegas.
The letter described the NAACP as "an organization that was founded in 1909 by a multiracial group of citizens who were determined to confront the issues of racism and injustice."
After Jennings summarized the letter for the five council members, who are all white, Wilson asked Jennings to say what NAACP stood for. "Let me pull up their letter to give you an exact - hold on a second," Jennings responded.
"You don't know what it means?" Joan Deaver, the council's sole Democratic member, asked Wilson from the other side of the dais. Deaver and Wilson, who describes himself as one of the council's staunch conservatives, often cast clashing votes.
"That's what I asked," Wilson said. "What's it stand for, Joan?"
Jennings started to reply to Wilson's query, but Council President Michael Vincent broke in: "I know what it stands for. So do you. I hope you do."
"Not exactly," Wilson said.
"OK. OK. Mrs. Jennings?" Vincent said. Jennings recited the umbrella group's full name: "The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People."
At this point, Councilman Vance Phillips, a frequent ally of Wilson on votes, jumped in, saying: "What color?" There was a silence in the room for a beat or two.
"I'm with Mr. Wilson," Phillips went on. "This is an organization that obviously is directed at a certain race that strikes me as inappropriate in this day of racial equality, and..."
"Sounds like discrimination to me," Wilson chimed in.
"I'll pull mine from that as well," Phillips said.
The three-minute exchange prompted criticism.
"Those two councilmen seem to be racists and bigots," said Richard Smith, president of the Delaware chapter of the NAACP. "What he said, we really can't stand for it. He needs to come and debate me, myself, on if we are a racial group or not. Because we really aren't. We stand for all people... He's trying to race-bait us. And we're not going to play that game."
Jane Hovington of Georgetown, president of the NAACP's Lower Sussex Branch, said the comments showed Wilson and Phillips were "hesitant about representing all of the people" in their districts.
"The most amazing thing is, they have no idea of the fallout from this," Hovington said. "Maybe they need to see our faces in there more often so they can see we are human beings, just like they are."
In an interview after the meeting, Phillips said he knew race could be a sensitive topic, and stood by his comments.
"It is a shame in the 21st century, when we have made such great strides on racial equality, there are still organizations out there dividing people by race," Phillips said. "In the words of Rodney King, can't we all just get along?"
At the meeting, Councilman George Cole made a motion to give the Youth Council the same $500 grant it had gotten before, but to draw it from three council members' accounts: his own, Deaver's and Vincent's, leaving Wilson's and Phillips' accounts untouched. That motion passed, with Phillips voting yes and Wilson voting no.
Wilson wasn't done, though. "Where's the workshop and convention, do you know?" he wondered aloud. "What area? Is it in Philadelphia?"
"Not where the Klan meets," Deaver responded. And when the next grant request came up, a $1,500 request from the Mid-Atlantic Symphony Orchestra, she interjected: "Are they all white people there?" Cole, seated next to her, snorted with laughter.
Vincent ended the back-and-forth after that.
"I think we need to keep some of these comments to ourselves," he said sternly.
Many conservatives disagree with the NAACP's views on public policy. Talk show host Rush Limbaugh, during the 2012 presidential election, called the organization an "average leftist extremist group" and said "nobody cares what the NAACP thinks because none of it is a surprise."

The letter from the local chapter's youth council to the council had the same measured tone of most letters from groups appealing to council members for grants.
"Our organization is nonpartisan, seeking to help make the American Dream a reality for all citizens," youth adviser Manuel R. Davis wrote. "Thanks for serving our communities in Sussex County, and know that you are appreciated."
Contact James Fisher at 983-6772, on Twitter @JamesFisherTNJ or jfisher@delawareonline.com.

INCUMBENTS RETAIN SEATS IN SCHOOL VOTING (WILNJ)
Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014
Delaware filled 21 seats on local school boards across the state Tuesday with typically small turnouts and little drama.
Every school district had at least one seat up for grabs.
More than a third of the seats were filled without an election because there was only one candidate. All but five of the races that went to a vote included an incumbent, and all of those incumbents won re-election, according to unofficial figures from each county's department of elections.
As usual, turnout was tiny.
Caesar Rodney candidate Jessica Marelli took home the most votes in the state with 659, in one of only two races that garnered a total of more than 1,000 votes. Some elections garnered fewer than 500.
Most of the elections were relatively lopsided - only two winners saw a challenger come within 10 percentage points of their winning total.
The most contested race was the six-person field for a seat in the Capital School District.
John Martin Jr. was elected with 39 percent of the vote, outpacing Sharese Paylor with 26 percent, Curtis Raymond with 23 percent. Three other candidates received less than 10 percent of votes.
There also was a close contest in the District 5 race in the Indian River School District. Incumbent Douglas Hudson (48 percent) bested challengers W. Scott Collins (40 percent) and Bobbi Barends (10 percent).
School boards control each district's budget, hire and fire top district leaders, and negotiate major partnerships with state and federal agencies like the Race to the Top grant. They also are responsible for asking voters for property tax increases, something several school boards have done in recent years as state and federal budgets tightened.
Contact Matthew Albright at malbright@delawareonline.com or at 324-2428. Follow him on Twitter @TNJ_malbright.
Election results
Below are complete, but unofficial election results from the departments of elections for each county. Winners are in bold. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.
NEW CASTLE COUNTY
APPOQUINIMINK
Norman Abrams*…364 (65%)
Debbie Harrington…188 (35%)
BRANDYWINE
Cheryl Siskin…Elected without an opponent
CHRISTINA
DISTRICT D
Martin Nicholson…133 (40%)
John Young*…207 (60%)
DISTRICT F
Elizabeth Paige*…Elected without an opponent
COLONIAL
John Megahan Sr.…40 (17%)
Melodie Spotts*…197 (83%)
RED CLAY
Dennis Cini Sr.…198 (35%)
Michael Piccio*…372 (65%)
KENT COUNTY

CAESAR RODNEY
Jessica Marelli…639 (55%)
Flavous Statham…520 (45%)
CAPITAL
Howard Earle…3 (.36%)
Dennis Hallock Sr.…82 (9%)
John Martin Jr.…329 (39%)
Sharese Paylor…220 (26%)
Curtis Raymond…196 (23%)
Muriel Thomas…13 (1%)
LAKE FOREST
AT-LARGE SEAT (Two-year term)
Gwendolyn Scott-Jones…177 (43%)
Lisa Williams*…230 (56%)
AT-LARGE SEAT (Five-year term)
Ronda Swenson*…263 (72%)
Robert Vogel, Sr.…101 (27%)
MILFORD
Marvin Schelhouse*…Elected without an opponent
SMYRNA
Scot McClymont…385 (75%)
Jody Wilson…127 (25%)
SUSSEX COUNTY
Cape Henlopen
AREA C
Andrew Lewis*…Elected without an opponent
AT-LARGE SEAT
Juan Antonio Saez…391 (22%)
Alison Myers…659 (37%)
Robert Bennett…154 (8%)
Meyer Persow…161 (9%)
Teresa Carey…373 (21%)
DELMAR
Jason Coco*…Elected without an opponent
INDIAN RIVER
DISTRICT 3
Nina Bunting*…Elected without an opponent
DISTRICT 4
Donald Hattier*…Elected without an opponent
DISTRICT 5
Douglas Hudson*…183 (48%)
W. Scott Collins…151 (40%)
Bobbi Barends…40 (10%)
LAUREL
Brad Lee…302 (56%)
Terrance Hooper…236 (43%)
SEAFORD
Rebecca Adams*…Elected without an opponent
WOODBRIDGE
Steve McCarron…324 (83%)
Jan Bunting…66 (17%)

SUSSEX COUNCIL MAY SAY LORD'S PRAYER AGAIN (WILNJ)
Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014
GEORGETOWN - The Lord's Prayer hasn't been uttered aloud at the start of a Sussex County Council meeting for nearly two years. But some of its members want to bring it back.

Until June 2012, the Council had led off meetings with The Lord's Prayer - "Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" - for more than 30 years. But then a lawsuit filed by four Sussex County residents convinced a federal judge, Leonard P. Stark, that Council's habit came too close to establishing Christianity as the legislative body's favored religion.
So County Council now starts each meeting by having its members stand and recite the less-sectarian 23rd Psalm - "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" - followed by the pledge of allegiance. A settlement agreement the county and the plaintiffs consented to, which was approved by the judge, forbids the Council from going back to using The Lord's Prayer.
On Tuesday, Council grappled with whether to resume saying its old prayer, now that a recent Supreme Court ruling has said legislatures are freer to include public prayer than past high court rulings have held.
"The Supreme Court made a ruling here. Why should we bow down to the lower court?" Republican Councilman Sam Wilson said Tuesday during a 25-minute discussion of legislative prayer. "What's wrong with The Lord's Prayer?"
STORY: Two council members oppose NAACP grants
On May 5, the U.S. Supreme Court, in a 5-4 ruling, upheld a legally challenged prayer practice in Greece, N.Y. Plaintiffs in a lawsuit there had contended the town government almost exclusively hosted Christian religious leaders to lead them in different prayers at the start of meetings.
But the court ruled Greece's pattern of prayer did not violate the First Amendment because it "did not coerce participation by non-adherents," and said the town wasn't obligated far afield for non-Christians to pray for it.
The ruling was seen by many as refuting a previous Supreme Court opinion on prayer that set forth a stricter 'endorsement test,' which tended to rule out prayer habits like Greece's.
J. Everett Moore, the county attorney, wrote a memo to County Council highlighting the differences between its prayer tradition and the custom the Supreme Court upheld in New York. The tradition in Greece, Moore noted, had different church leaders come to meetings and say a changing list of prayers, but in Sussex County, council members themselves lead the recitation of the same prayer each time.
If council wanted to change course and stop saying only the 23rd Psalm, Moore said, it would have to ask permission from Stark, the federal judge. In an interview last week, a secular group that assisted the plaintiffs who had sued Sussex to stop The Lord's Prayer, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, said returning to that prayer would be "problematic."
Councilman George Cole said he wasn't interested in reopening the prayer issue. "I'm comfortable with what we're doing," he said. "I don't know if I want to go back into this chasing the tail."
Councilman Vance Phillips, though, asked for the matter to be put on the council's agenda for its next executive closed-door session, so it could get confidential legal advice about the issue.
"I believe there is sentiment on the council to at least consider asking relief," Phillips said.
Moore said it would be permissible to discuss the matter behind closed doors, but advised the council to hold any votes about whether to relitigate the issue in an open session.
At the end of the meeting, Seaford resident Robert Harrison told the council members he was unhappy the council recites any prayer at all.
"It gives the impression that good Sussex County citizens are religious," said Harrison.
"If the council intends to spite nonbelievers," he said, "it would only be just for nonbelievers to respond to those prayers."
Contact James Fisher at 983-6772, on Twitter @JamesFisherTNJ or jfisher@delawareonline.com.
Staff writer Molly Murray contributed to this story.

PROPOSED $60 MILLION SETTLMENT WOULD BENEFIT VETERANS (WILNJ)
Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014
A $60 million payment has been proposed by the Department of Justice and a company formerly known as Sallie Mae to settle allegations that the student loan provider violated the rights of members of the military.
The company, which is now called Navient, was charged in U.S. District Court in Delaware on May 13. The Department of Justice alleges the company failed to give veterans a 6 percent interest rate and special treatment in regards to default judgement that are required under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, according to court records.

A proposed settlement was filed the same day as the charges against the Sallie Mae spin-off company. The $60 million settlement would go toward paying members of the military who would have been impacted by the alleged failure to provide required benefits, according to court documents. An independent consultant, which was approved by the department of justice, will also review the company's entire loan portfolio for a set period of time to help identify those who are entitled to money.

The Department of Justice estimates that 60,000 people will benefit from the settlement. Some cases reach back to nearly 10 years ago, the department said.

In addition to the $60 million set aside to pay military members, the company would pay a $55,000 civil penalty to the government, according to court records.

The agreement would need approval from a judge, which has not happened yet.

In a statement, Navient said the "large majority" of the money will go to service members who the Department of Justice believes are entitled to a benefit, but the company "believes is inconsistent with prior regulatory requirements and guidance." The company said it decided to settle the case "in order to put the matter behind it," the statement said.

"We offer our sincere apologies to the servicemen and servicewomen who were affected by our processing errors and thus did not receive the full benefits they deserve," John F. Remondi, president and CEO, Navient, said in a statement released by the company. "Over the past several years we have implemented changes in our procedures and training programs to prevent these mistakes from happening again. We also appreciate that the regulators agreed on consistent guidance that provides clarity and thereby enables us to offer SCRA benefits to even more service members back to as early as
2005 as well as going forward."

The company said it has taken steps since 2009 to help assist borrowers who are in the military or are veterans. There is a special number, (855) 284-4879 with staff trained to handle these cases, and a website, navient.com/military, also has information.

UD APPROVES ROOM AND BOARD INCREASE (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

NEWARK - The average cost of the University of Delaware's student dining plan will increase by 3 percent and residence hall room charges by 3.5 percent starting with the fall semester, according to changes approved Tuesday by the UD Board of Trustees.

The new student orientation fee will increase from $120 to $145 to cover the cost of a math-placement exam required for all students. The comprehensive fee for full-time students and the student health services fee are set to decrease by 5 percent and 10 percent, respectively, also starting in the fall.

At its meeting Tuesday, the trustees approved a new PhD program in Financial Analytics and a new five-year combined bachelor's/master's program in Economics.

The Trustees eliminated the master's program in higher education administration, in part because the School of Education no longer employs faculty with such expertise.

The incoming freshmen class will be among UD's largest and most diverse with nearly 4,250 students committed to date, officials said.

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SMOKING BAN CREATES AREA OF SHAME FOR SMOKERS (WILNJ)
Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014
If you're a smoker hanging out on the beach in Rehoboth Beach, smoke 'em if you got 'em.
That is, up until Thursday.
That's when the resort town's ban on smoking on the beach, except in a few designated areas, goes into effect.
And don't think you can just hop up onto the boardwalk and light up. Smoking will also be banned there.
If you want to satisfy a nicotine craving, you'll have to find one of the designated smoking areas spread out along the beach.
These smoking areas - marked with signs and equipped with urns to dispose of cigarette butts - will be at least 40 feet from beach access areas, near the edge of the sand dunes and will be small - about the size of four beach towels.
There is no word in the ordinance on whether these areas will be surrounded by a cage made of chicken wire to protect the smokers from thrown objects - or how far away gawkers and other shamers will be required to stay.
Story: Smoking ban set to begin
Story: After smoking, what's the next target?
I can see it. Families walking down to the beach, loaded down with their supplies for the day. The kids, at that age of not knowing when something is rude, point at the people huddled in the smoking area.
"What are they doing?" they'll ask. Whispers of "it's rude to point" and "keep walking" would be followed by brief explanations later of the dirty habit and to stay away from those people and that area.
Why even subject smokers to this? Why subject non-smokers to this?
If we are going to ban smoking on most of the beach, just do everyone a favor, even the smokers, and ban smoking on the beach altogether.
Poll: Should there be designated spots for smokers?
I don't say this as someone who is anti-smoker or anti-smoking. I am a former smoker and am glad I quit. But I don't preach that to anyone. My reasoning here is based on showing respect for each other and civility.
These partial bans just set up the potential for an ugly situation, even if it's just one in which one group is made to feel looked down upon in a very public way.
Share in the Only in Delaware conversation 24/7 on delawareonline. Contact Jeffrey Gentry at jgentry@delawareonline.com. Follow him on Twitter: @jeffreygentry

APPEAL TARGETS DNREC CLEANUP PLAN FOR NEW POULTRY SITE (WILNJ)
Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014
Citizen, regulator and business interests clashed anew Tuesday over plans to convert a shuttered pickle plant near Millsboro into a new kind of poultry factory, with neighbors and environmental groups urging an appeals board to block a needed cleanup deal for the site.
Protect Our Indian River and the Inland Bays Foundation asked the state Environmental Appeals Board to order reconsideration of a "brownfields" development plan for the Pinnacle Foods Group LLC site south of Millsboro. Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control officials approved a cleanup agreement in December, potentially clearing the way for Allen Harim Foods to move ahead with a purchase and redevelopment.
Allen Harim wants the 107-acre site - which once operated as a Vlasic Pickle factory - to process up to 2 million small "ginseng" chickens a week for buyers in South Korea and Korean and Asian markets in the United States.
The operation could eventually employ about 700, handling a new, locally raised 2-pound breed of stewing chicken and ushering in the first big change in decades for the Delmarva Peninsula poultry industry, where the broiler hen has ruled the factory farming roost for decades.
Residents in neighborhoods nearby have objected to the potential new, heavy traffic at the site, as well as the prospect for local disposal of millions of gallons of treated slaughter and food-processing wastewater each day. Critics have argued that a reopened plant would pour huge amounts of pollution into tributaries of the already-polluted inland bays.

"What you're going to hear is that there's a lot of evidence to suggests that there is contamination offsite" associated with past plant activities, said Kenneth T. Kristl, who directs the Environmental and Natural Resources Law Clinic at Widener University School of Law.
"The plan is wholly inadequate," Kristl said, arguing that the agreement fails to "deal with the contamination offsite," and fails to fully consider all concerns about pollution around the plant itself.
Protecting Our Indian River has separately asked Superior Court to overturn a Sussex County Board of Adjustment approval for a "potentially hazardous" activity on the site, arguing that the panel failed to consult with all relevant agencies on the proposal.
DNREC and representatives of Allen Harim argued before the environmental panel on Tuesday that state and company investigators thoroughly examined potential hazards.
Jeremy W. Homer, an attorney representing Allen Harim, said that environmental investigations had found the Pinnacle plant "is not a really very dirty site" to begin with.
"I want to make it clear that, although Allen Harim would not be responsible for contamination that's already there before the purchase, Pinnacle remains responsible," Homer said. The brownfield agreement "doesn't do away with the prior owner's responsibility."
Jay Meyer, a resident of neighborhood along an Indian River tributary opposite the plant, said that opponents plan to continue and widen the battle, including opposition to a needed wastewater treatment plant discharge permit.
"If they go through with approval on this, they're going to be dumping 12 million gallons of wastewater from cleaning chickens into the Indian River every week for the next 30 years," Meyer said. Our concern is what this is going to do to the environment."
Allen Harim has yet to file any application involving its wastewater needs. The Environmental Protection Agency and DNREC have listed Pinnacle's permit as one of the state's top three priorities for permit renewal this year.
Testimony continued this afternoon. Nancy Shevock, the board's chair, said the proceeding could be continued of arguments are unfinished before the end of the day. The board has 90 days to reach a decision.
Contact Jeff Montgomery at (302) 463-3344 or jmontgomery@delawareonline.com

WILMINGTON JOURNAL NEWS EDITORIALS:

FIND LONG-TERM FIX FOR CRIME EVIDENCE OUTRAGE (WILNJ)
Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014
Each headline about the incompetence and carelessness in the state Medical Examiner's Office brings shudders to the public as well as a sinking feeling about the Delaware justice system's reliability.
The state faces a massive cleanup job, one that could lead to reopening more than 420 cases.
In turn, those cases could open the jail doors for some put there with the help of evidence that is now questioned.
The scandal involves lapses in security and thefts of drug evidence in the medical examiner's office.
The Delaware Public Defender's Office has filed hundreds of motions in the last two weeks seeking to overturn old drug convictions. The first reaction is that of outrage. Yet we have to face a simple fact about the guarantees of our legal system. If people were convicted because of bad evidence, they were improperly convicted and should be set free.
However, that process is not automatic. It is the public defender's job to test all of those claims of improper evidence. It is unlikely that every prisoner named in the public defender's motions will walk away free. It is the court's job to weigh those claims against what can be proven and what cannot be proven.
Story: Public defender seeks 9,500 drug conviction reversals
It will be a long, hard and expensive route, but it is one the state is compelled to follow.
The public will rightly be outraged by this development; however, that outrage should not interfere with the process.
Public outrage, though, should be channeled toward a solution.
Despite all of the television shows about the near magic of crime laboratories in this country, the

reality is far less impressive. The crime lab industry, if you will, has been hit time after time by scandals of incompetence, bureaucratic blundering and outright corruption.
State after state has been hit scandals of lost evidence, corrupt practices and outright incompetency. In 2009, a federal study commission called the situation a disgrace.
When the report came out, there was no national certification or standardization of what labs do and how they should handle evidence. None exists today.
Delaware, for example, splits drug and blood testing duties among a number of agencies, including the Medical Examiner's Office and the State Police. Outside labs are used in some cases, but there is no uniform system of evaluating and guarding evidence.
Putting all of these functions under one agency would streamline the process and make it more effective. At the same time, Delaware should adopt the top-tier standards and practices so that this state's evidence chain is considered beyond question.
This will disrupt current practices and upset some organization charts. Change is always difficult. But the process should be thought through and a good plan should be developed. Then the right amount of political will should be applied to get the job done.

WHY JUST BEING A VETERAN WON'T GET YOU ELECTED THESE DAYS (WILNJ)
Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014
Sen. Mark Pryor, the embattled Democratic incumbent in Arkansas, made a serious gaffe in March when he questioned Republican opponent Tom Cotton's reliance on military service as a campaign theme.
While praising the congressman for serving, Pryor told a TV interviewer that he didn't consider Cotton's military record in Iraq and Afghanistan a special credential. "I think that's part of that sense of entitlement that he gives off," Pryor said. "Almost like, 'I served my country, let me into the Senate.'"
For Cotton, who turned 37 on Tuesday, it was a gimme: He filmed a playful ad with his Army drill sergeant responding to the "entitlement" charge. "Did I say 'At ease,' Cotton?" the sergeant barks. The ad went viral. But, surprisingly, it seems not to have helped Cotton's campaign.
A New York Times Upshot/Kaiser Family Foundation poll last month before the ad was released showed Pryor with a 10-point lead over Cotton. An NBC News-Marist poll, released Monday, shows Pryor with an 11-point lead. A Pryor win is by no means certain, but the fact that the Democrat is even in contention in a state where President Obama's approval rating is just 33 percent suggests that Cotton's military record is no magic bullet.
In a series of ads done by and for Cotton, the former Army Ranger's military career is the centerpiece of his Senate candidacy - and yet that doesn't seem to be helping him, even though his opponent may be the most vulnerable Senate Democrat in the country.
It's not just Arkansas: America loves its 2.8 million "heroes" who served in uniform since 9/11, but only 17 veterans of Iraq or Afghanistan are in Congress, according to Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. That includes John Walsh, a Montana Democrat who was appointed to his Senate seat and will have difficulty winning election in the fall.
Of the 17 (14 Republicans and three Democrats), few have campaigned primarily on their service. "These are just not issues that are dominating in the polls right now, on either side," said Jon Soltz, the head of VoteVets, which promotes the election of progressive veterans.
In 2006 and 2008, Democrats had some success running anti-war vets such as Patrick Murphy, Chris Carney and Joe Sestak, but they later lost races. And, of the Republicans elected, many have been guardsmen and reservists who had held or run for lower offices before; they tend to have strong political connections and aren't campaigning primarily on their war records.
Military service has never been a guarantee of electoral success, of course. Bill Clinton, who didn't serve, defeated two celebrated combat veterans. George W. Bush beat two opponents who, unlike him, had served in Vietnam.
But now the wars that dominated the national dialogue for a decade have faded in relevance. A Gallup poll in February found that 49 percent of Americans thought U.S. involvement in Afghanistan was a mistake (48 percent said it was not). A majority of Americans long ago decided that the war in Iraq was a mistake. Also, a Pew poll last year found isolationist sentiment running at a 50-year high, with Americans, by 52 percent to 38 percent, saying the United States should "mind its own business internationally."

Cotton, a product of Harvard and its Law School, used his military service to distinguish himself in 2012 and win a GOP House primary. He followed the same script this time but support for his military-themed campaign seems to have hit a ceiling.
In November, he released an ad showing photos of him in Army fatigues posing with military hardware while his mother gave the voice-over: "After Harvard, he gave up a great career to volunteer for the Army. They offered to make him a military lawyer but Tom insisted on the infantry."
Last month, there was the drill sergeant ad. Now, a group called the Government Integrity Fund is blanketing Arkansas with more martial imagery and photos of Cotton in camouflage. "A tour in Baghdad, another north of Tora Bora," says one. "For his combat service, Cotton was awarded the Bronze Star. Now, Tom Cotton's ready to serve his country again, to fight Obamacare, bailouts and runaway spending."
Cotton keeps up the theme, going to the House floor last week to discuss a "couple of lessons I learned in the Army," including the admonition to "move to the sound of gunfire."
But Arkansans, it appears, are already well aware of Cotton's Army career. Now they want to know what he has done as a civilian.
Dana Milbank's email address is danamilbank@washpost.com
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TEACHING YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT BROWN V. BOARD'S LEGACY (WILNJ)
Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014
Whenever an anniversary of a major milestone is celebrated, some might ask what changed since the last one. So it is with the 60th anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education case, decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1954, which turns 60 Saturday.
Unfortunately, recent events call for more awareness of the nation's racist past but likewise furnish an opportunity for education and for training the current generation on Brown's legacy.
One of the important lessons of the Brown v. Board case and its successor is that people matter. Not only were the attorneys like Thurgood Marshall, Charles Hamilton Houston, Robert Carter, and Jack Greenberg critical for the national strategy of attacking school segregation, but so too were those lawyers and plaintiffs fighting segregation in individual states.
In Delaware, Louis Redding led the fight to desegregate schools through the Brown rulings and the state's own court battle in the same area, Evans v. Buchanan.
Another point emanating from the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in the Brown v. Board of Education case is that the theory of how American national
government works is often at odds with the reality, especially when it comes to the checks-and-balances
system. For example, Article VI of the Constitution contains the supremacy clause, and along with the procedure of judicial review one might assume that the Supreme Court's holding on a major legal matter is the last word. Perhaps more than any other area in the 20th century, the post-Brown experience vividly demonstrated the folly of that assumption.
For if the original Brown v. Board of Education case possessed the independent influence it is often credited with, there would have been no need for a Brown v. Board of Education II case nor the executive branch actions taken to enforce desegregation efforts.
The departmentalist view of government authority has similarly fostered contemporary challenges to court rulings dealing with abortion and health care among other areas.
Defined in broad terms, desegregation has taken a step back due to recent court rulings.
First, the 2013 Supreme Court decision in Shelby County v. Holder struck down a key provision of the Voting Rights Act despite clear evidence that some state voting laws continue to require federal scrutiny to prevent discrimination.
Second, the Supreme Court's 2014 ruling in the Michigan affirmative action case means that states can ban diversity plans from higher education admission formulas.
Third, a plethora of states have attempted to unreasonably tighten voter identification procedures in order to negatively affect turnout, a tactic thankfully rejected by a court in Pennsylvania.
Taking steps to ensure the positive legacy of the Brown v. Board of Education ruling involves individuals, groups and government itself.
The local school board is the place to begin in that parents should make sure schools fully practice

integration and resources are equal for all within the district. When there is disparity between school districts in terms of resources, there must be recognition and state action to alleviate the condition. Citizens must be aware who they elect to statewide positions will help mold the approach to education for the next generation.
Finally, local and state government must support efforts to equalize educational opportunities for persons of all races and ethnic backgrounds, not only because it is the law but because it is the best approach for students.
Making Brown v. Board of Education relevant to the current generation of youth will not only remind us of the historical principle it rejected - separate but equal - but will imbue students with the tools to scrutinize efforts to dismantle the gains which Brown wrought.
Dr. Samuel B. Hoff is George Washington Distinguished Professor of History and Political Science and Law Studies Director at Delaware State University. He served as Chair of the Dover Human Relations Commission for five years.

CLIMATE 'SUSTAINABILITY' IS MORE FAITH THAN SCIENCE (WILNJ)
Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014
Those who adhere to the notion that it is incumbent on the current generation to "conserve" resources believe only they can divine the needs and wants of future generations. Divine is the proper word to use because the green movement is religious in its fever to promote sustainability. The word sustainability means whatever the user wishes it to mean. Thus, it is a word without any meaning at all. It is exactly the sort of word needed to achieve Orwellian control of people; in order to coerce them to believe 2 + 2, really does equal 5.
To enforce compliance with the ideology, anyone who fails to adhere to sustainability doctrine is immediately labeled a denier, a skeptic, a "flat-earther" or worse. Public ridicule follows, with attempts to demonize and marginalize opposition, to what amounts to a Green God.
Companies are so frightened by the specter of protests; they now have "sustainability officers," who genuflect at the altar of the deity, without understanding they are worshipping, not promoting science.
The intermediate goal of sustainability proponents is a reduction in the use of energy, but reality will soon catch up with the notion most people want to consume less energy. Shockingly, most people want plentiful, reliable, affordable energy, and the jobs that accompany it. They certainly do not want the promise of subsidized "green jobs" that never materialize, or the destruction of unsubsidized jobs elsewhere in the economy due to the rising cost of reliable energy.
On April 10, at a Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing on grid reliability, U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski made the statement, "Eighty-nine percent of the coal electricity capacity that is due to go offline was utilized as backup to meet the demand this winter." The premature closure of these coal-fired power plants because of questionable EPA air quality regulations will cause electricity prices to "skyrocket," as predicted by candidate Barack Obama before he became president.
As a consequence, available supply will not meet demand. This will lead to brownouts, intermittent electricity supply and potentially catastrophic grid failure. These are the inevitable consequences of a deeply flawed energy policy and an EPA responsive to those who tout sustainability. The real question is how much will citizens needlessly suffer before they elect new leadership to chart a course leading to real energy independence?
At its core, the goal of sustainability proponents is not about less energy consumption; it is about reducing the number of people on planet Earth. This is due to their belief the resources of the Earth are scarce, and therefore access to them must be limited, and their use equalized.
Limitations on the amount of carbon dioxide produced, the use of water, the amount of particulate matter in the atmosphere, which in the U.S. is less than nature intended, are just the first steps in the process toward total control of individuals.
If any society wants less people (a questionable goal on the surface), its populace needs access to affordable energy to create affluence. The greater the likelihood a child survives to adulthood and the more mechanized becomes agriculture, the fewer children born.
Japan, the U.S. and Western Europe are barely replacing their population. Except for immigration, the U.S. and Western Europe's populations are shrinking. The nation of Japan, with little immigration, is hosting parties where young adults can meet each other, in an effort to encourage

marriage and childbirth, because the population is in decline.
Society does not need a word without meaning. It needs a robust economy in order to promote peace and prosperity. Sooner or later this reality is going to hit home, and the tyranny of the minority will come to an abrupt end. For those who are unemployed or underemployed, it cannot happen soon enough.
John Nichols, a Middletown resident, advocates for science-based solutions to meet complex energy needs.

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Online Version

BIDEN IN THE NEWS

Biden's Son, Kerry Family Friend Join Ukrainian Gas Producer's Board

Ukraine's Burisma Holdings Is Controlled by Former Energy Official Under Yanukovych

By Paul Sonne And James V. Grimaldi

Wall Street Journal, May 14, 2014

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Biden's Son Joins Board Of Ukraine Gas Company

By David Jackson, Usa Today

USA Today, May 14, 2014

Vice President **Biden**'s son Hunter is joining the board of a gas company that operates in Ukraine.

Burisma Holdings, Ukraine's largest private gas producer, said Hunter **Biden** – an attorney – will be in charge of its legal unit and help the company with other international organizations.

"I believe that my assistance in consulting the Company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine," the younger **Biden** said in a statement.

The **Biden** appointment comes as the United States and allied nations try to help Ukraine reduce its dependence on Russian energy by developing other sources.

Kendra Barkoff, spokesperson for Vice President **Biden**, said that "Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer. The Vice President does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

Joe Biden's Son Hunter To Head Legal Unit At Ukraine's Largest Private Gas Company

By Jessica Chasmar

Washington Times, May 14, 2014

Vice President Joseph R. **Biden**'s youngest son, Hunter, has been appointed head of legal affairs at Ukraine's largest private gas producer.

Burisma Holdings said in a statement that Hunter **Biden** will be in charge of the company's legal unit and will provide support for the company among international organizations.

"Burisma's track record of innovations and industry leadership in the field of natural gas means that it can be a strong driver of a strong economy in Ukraine," Mr. **Biden** said.

"As a new member of the Board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the Company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine," he said.

White House press secretary Jay Carney said Tuesday that Mr. **Biden**'s new position "does not reflect an endorsement by the administration," Time magazine's Zeke Miller reported.

The announcement comes just one day after Russia's state energy giant Gazprom threatened to halt natural gas shipments to Ukraine unless the country pays in advance for supplies.

The vice president has condemned Russia for its intervention in Ukraine and has pledged to support efforts to reduce its dependency on Russian energy, The Moscow Times reported.

VP Biden's Son Joins Ukraine Gas Company's Board

Associated Press, May 14, 2014

WASHINGTON — Hunter **Biden**, the younger son of Vice President Joe **Biden**, is joining the board of a gas company operating in Ukraine, the company announced Tuesday, as the West seeks to help Ukraine wean itself off its dependence on Russian energy.

Burisma Holdings said **Biden**, an attorney and chairman of the board of the World Food Program USA, will head the Burisma's legal unit, and will also seek support for the company among international organizations.

"I believe that my assistance in consulting the company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine," **Biden** said in a statement released by the company.

The announcement comes as Ukraine and the U.S. are looking to decrease Ukraine's reliance on Russian energy amid threats from Moscow to cut Ukraine off if it doesn't pay massive debts. Western countries believe Russia would have less leverage in the crisis with Ukraine if Europe was less dependent on Russian gas.

"Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer," said **Biden** spokeswoman Kendra Barkoff. "The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

Still, Vice President **Biden** has spoken frequently about the need to increase Ukraine's energy independence, including during a recent visit to Kiev. He's also a key interlocutor for the Obama administration with Kiev and other anxious nations in the region as the crisis there has unfolded.

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UPDATE 1-White House Says No Issue With Biden's Son, Ukraine Gas Company

Reuters, May 14, 2014

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Biden's Son Gets Ukrainian Oil Company Gig

ABC News, May 14, 2014

Vice President Joe **Biden**'s youngest son Hunter **Biden** has joined the board of directors of Ukraine's largest oil company at a time that the U.S. is urging Ukraine to develop energy independence from Russia and just days after the vice president visited Ukraine.

The vice president's office and the White House rejected any suggestion that there was a conflict of interest.

"Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer," Vice President **Biden**'s spokeswoman Kendra Barkoff told ABC News. "The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

White House spokesman Jay Carney said, "Hunter **Biden** and other members of the **Biden** family are obviously private citizens and where they work … does not reflect an endorsement by the administration or by the vice president or president."

According to a press release from the oil company, Burisma Holdings, **Biden** will help the company manage its relationships with "international organizations," in addition to overseeing the company's legal unit.

"Burisma's track record of innovations and industry leadership in the field of natural gas means that it can be a strong driver of a strong economy in Ukraine," Hunter **Biden** said in a statement.

"As a new member of the Board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine," he said.

Biden, a graduate of Yale Law School, is a counsel to the New York-based law firm Boies, Schiller & Flexner LLP and serves as an adjunct professor at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

Hunter Biden To Ukraine Gas Board

By Lucy Mccalmont

Politico, May 13, 2014

Hunter **Biden**, the younger son of Vice President Joe **Biden**, will be joining Ukraine's largest private gas producer, the company announced in a statement

"The company's strategy is aimed at the strongest concentration of professional staff and the introduction of best corporate practices, and we're delighted that Mr. **Biden** is joining us to help us achieve these goals," Alan Apter, Burisma Holdings' chairman of the board of directors, said in a statement, which was reported by The Moscow Times on Tuesday.

Biden, joining the board, will be in charge of the legal unit, the company said and will provide support for Burisma Holdings "among international organizations."

Biden said the company will help strengthen Ukraine's economy.

"Burisma's track record of innovations and industry leadership in the field of natural gas means that it can be a strong driver of a strong economy in Ukraine," **Biden** said in a statement. "As a new member of the Board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the Company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine."

The country has faced rising tensions with Russia and on Monday, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney said the U.S. would not recognize a referendum held Sunday in Eastern Ukraine aiming for self-rule in the region, calling it "illegal" under Ukrainian law.

Vice President **Biden** also expressed support for Ukraine, when he visited the country in April and slammed Russia for its role in the annexation of Crimea.

WH: Biden's Son To Ukraine Gas Company Isn't U.S. Endorsement

By Justin Sink

The Hill, May 13, 2014

Ukraine's largest private gas producer has hired Vice President **Biden**'s youngest son, but White House press secretary Jay Carney insisted on Tuesday the move shouldn't be read as an official endorsement by the U.S. government.

"Hunter **Biden** and other members of the **Biden** family are obviously private citizens, and where they work does not reflect an endorsement by the administration or by the vice president or president," Carney told reporters.

The vice president's office also defended the hire.

"Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer. The Vice President does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company. For any additional questions, I refer you to Hunter's office," said Kendra Barkoff, spokeswoman for Vice President **Biden**.

Burisma, which produces the equivalent of 10,500 barrels of oil daily, announced **Biden**'s hire in a statement earlier Tuesday.

"The company's strategy is aimed at the strongest concentration of professional staff and the introduction of best corporate practices, and we're delighted that Mr. **Biden** is joining us to help us achieve these goals," said Alan Apter, Burisma Holdings' chairman of the board of directors.

The younger **Biden**, for his part, said he believed his legal and corporate advice would "contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine."

"Burisma's track record of innovations and industry leadership in the field of natural gas means that it can be a strong driver of a strong economy in Ukraine," Hunter **Biden** said.

But the hire could raise ethical questions — and diplomatic headaches — for the White House. During a visit to Kiev last month, the vice president discussed energy security with Ukraine's leaders, including ways the country could produce its own domestic production of natural gas.

"Imagine where you'd be today if you were able to tell Russia: keep your gas. It would be a very different world," the vice president told Ukrainian lawmakers.

The hire also came a day after Russian energy giant Gazprom threatened to halt natural gas shipments to Ukraine unless the country prepays for its energy. That announcement has sparked fears that energy costs could strain Ukraine's fragile economy.

Joe Biden's Son Gets Job With Major Ukrainian Natural Gas Company

Washington Examiner, May 14, 2014

Vice President Joe **Biden**'s son has a new job on the board of directors of Burisma Holdings, a major gas producer in Ukraine.

"Burisma's track record of innovations and industry leadership in the field of natural gas means that it can be a strong driver of a strong economy in Ukraine," R. Hunter **Biden** said of his new job in a statement released by Burisma. "As a new member of the Board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the Company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine."

The company noted that young **Biden** "has experience in public service and foreign policy." It only alludes to his father's job by noting that "Mr. **Biden** served as Honorary Co-Chair of the 2008 Obama-**Biden** Inaugural Committee."

A Pakistani reporter couldn't help but juxtapose this hire with Vice President **Biden**'s public remarks in Ukraine during a visit to Kiev in April. **Biden** "stressed the need for the new authorities to tackle corruption," Agha Iqrar Haroon recalled at the Dispatch News Desk.

This wouldn't be the first time that Joe **Biden**'s public work dovetails with his son's private job. As then-Sen. Joe **Biden** developed an "cozy relationship" with MBNA, a credit card company based in his home state of Delaware, MBNA hired Hunter **Biden**.

"[T]he company is not eager to talk," the Washington Examiner's Byron York (then a reporter for The American Spectator) wrote in 1998. "First, a spokesman declined to discuss [Hunter] **Biden**'s salary. Then, when asked what young **Biden** is doing for the bank, the spokesman paused and said, 'That's not something we get into details on.' When pressed, the spokesman said, 'He's a talented young guy that

we are grooming for a management position.' The spokesman said Hunter **Biden** has been 'moving around the bank' as part of his introduction into the business. Hunter **Biden** himself declined to discuss his salary or his job."

Another Biden Has Waded Into The Ukraine Crisis

National Journal, May 14, 2014

Joe **Biden** has been the White House's go-to guy during the Ukraine crisis, touring former Soviet republics and reassuring their concerned leaders. And now, he's not the only **Biden** involved in the region.

The vice president's youngest son, Hunter **Biden**, has been appointed head of legal affairs at Burisma Holdings, Ukraine's largest private gas producer, The Moscow Times reported Tuesday. Hunter described his new role in a statement on the company's website:

As a new member of the board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion, and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine.

The new gig joins several others on Hunter's extensive resume. He currently serves as as managing partner at the Washington-based investment advisory company Rosemont Seneca Partners and counsel at the New York City-based law firm Boies Schiller Flexner. He is also an adjunct professor at Georgetown University's Foreign Service graduate program.

According to Bloomberg Businessweek, Burisma was founded in 2006 and "engages in oil-well drilling, production of liquefied natural gas, and undertaking geological studies." It is based in Cyprus. It owns several oil and gas companies in Ukraine, including in the southeastern city of Dnepropetrovsk.

Burisma hired another American—and another managing partner of Rosemont Seneca Partners—just last month. Devon Archer joined the company's board of directors to "focus on the interaction with current investors, as well as involving new investors from the United States," according to an April 22 press release from the company. Archer served as a senior adviser to John Kerry during his 2004 presidential campaign.

"Today Burisma Holdings reminds me of Exxon Mobil in its wake," Archer said in a recent interview posted on the company's website. "It has all the chances to be one of the biggest privately owned oil companies in the world."

Archer's work focuses heavily on energy independence for Ukraine, a topic that has received much attention in recent months. Ukraine is dependent on Russia for energy exports, and Moscow has pulled discount agreements during its ongoing standoff with Kiev. The addition of Hunter to the company masthead suggests Burisma is turning to U.S. talent—and money and name recognition—for protection against Russia. It also jibes with the Obama administration message that his father has been tasked with spreading.

The vice president's office released a statement Tuesday afternoon saying that the elder **Biden** "does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

It's unclear whether the entry of another **Biden** into the fray was meant to send a message to Moscow. But Russian President Vladimir Putin, eternally leery of American hands in eastern European business, is bound to notice.

Joe Biden's Son Is Now On The Board Of One Of Ukraine's Biggest Gas Conglomerates

Business Insider, May 14, 2014

Hunter **Biden**, the youngest son of Vice President Joe **Biden**, has been appointed to the board of directors of Ukraine's largest private-gas producer.

The company, Burisma Holdings, announced **Biden**'s appointment on its website Tuesday. Burisma said **Biden** would be the new head of the company's legal unit.

The White House shot down any notion of a conflict of interest with Hunter **Biden**'s appointment. In a statement provided to Business Insider, Joe **Biden** spokesperson Kendra Barkoff said Hunter's appointment did not constitute an endorsement by the vice president.

"Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer. The Vice President does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company," Barkoff said. "For any additional questions, I refer you to Hunter's office."

Boies, Schiller & Flexner LLP, the national law firm for which Hunter **Biden** serves as a counsel, did not respond to a request for comment on Tuesday.

During the daily White House press briefing on Tuesday, press secretary Jay Carney said where Hunter **Biden** works " does not reflect an endorsement by the administration, by the president or vice president."

Hunter **Biden**'s appointment comes as the U.S. and much of the West has sought to help Ukraine wean off its dependence on Russia for oil and gas supplies. Last month during a trip to Kiev, the vice president pledged U.S. assistance in Ukraine's pursuit of energy independence from Russia. Ukraine and the West believe energy independence would serve as a major leverage point for Ukraine in its standoff with Russia.

In a statement released by Burisma, Hunter **Biden** said he believes the company will help strengthen Ukraine's floundering economy.

"Burisma's track record of innovations and industry leadership in the field of natural gas means that it can be a strong driver of a strong economy in Ukraine. As a new member of the Board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the Company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine," Hunter **Biden** said in the statement.

Biden's Son Joins Ukraine Gas Company's Board Of Directors

CNBC, May 14, 2014

Earlier Tuesday, White House spokesman Jay Carney referred questions on the appointment to the vice president's office.

In response to an inquiry from CNBC, a spokesperson for the vice president said, "Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer. The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

A representative at Rosemont Seneca told CNBC that **Biden** was traveling and not immediately available for comment.

Read MoreThink US natgas can threaten Russia? Think again

With Moscow threatening to cut gas supplies to the former Soviet satellite, some have called for the U.S. to deepen its ties to Ukraine by shipping its own natural gas bounty to Eastern Europe.

Burisma touted **Biden**'s "public service and foreign policy," and is listed as a co-founder of Rosement Seneca Partners, an investment advisory company. He also served as executive director of E-Commerce Policy Coordination under former Commerce Secretary William Daley, and co-chaired the 2008 Obama-**Biden** Inaugural Committee.

—By CNBC's Javier E. David.

Biden's Son Joins Ukraine's Top Private Gas Company

International Business Times, May 14, 2014

Burisma Holdings announced Tuesday that the younger **Biden** will join the company as the head of its legal unit.

"The company's strategy is aimed at the strongest concentration of professional staff and the introduction of best corporate practices, and we're delighted that Mr. **Biden** is joining us to help us achieve these goals," Alan Apter, chairman of Burisma's board of directors, said in a statement featured as a top story on the company's home page.

Burisma is a private oil and gas company founded in 2002, under joint activity agreements with Ukrainian state-owned producers, and quickly grew to become the largest private gas producer in Ukraine. The company's average daily output stood at 10.5 million cubic meters (66 million barrels of oil equivalent) per day in September 2013, and could double that figure within two years. All of the company's gas is sold to industrial customers in Ukraine.

Biden is not the only well-connected American to join the company. Just a few weeks ago, when the vice president made an official trip to Ukraine, Burisma appointed one Devon Archer to its board. Archer is a wealthy investor and Democratic campaign fundraiser with long ties to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry. Archer was an adviser to Kerry's presidential campaign in 2004 and co-chaired Kerry's National Finance Committee. Upon his appointment to Burisma, Archer said that the energy conglomerate reminded him of "Exxon in its early days."

The company's portfolio of licenses is well-diversified across all three of Ukraine's key hydrocarbon basins – Dnieper-Donets, Carpathian and Azov-Kuban, and its fields are fully connected to the major gas pipelines in the country, allowing Burisma to keep the cost of production relatively efficient.

Natural gas is the largest energy source in Ukraine, accounting for 38 percent of total primary energy production during 2011. The country relies on Russia's gas company Gazprom currently to satisfy most of its energy needs, but will aim to reduce that dependency in coming years, and Burisma is well-positioned to boost its share of the domestic market.

"As a new member of the board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine," **Biden** said regarding his new appointment.

Biden Touts St. Louis Arch Renovation Project

Associated Press, May 14, 2014

ST. LOUIS — Vice President Joe **Biden** made a rain-shortened appearance beneath the Gateway Arch Tuesday to tout the economic benefits of a massive renovation project at the iconic tourist attraction.

The Democratic vice president was introduced by St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay and accompanied by Interior Secretary Sally Jewell and Sen. Dick Durbin, an Illinois Democrat who was scheduled to later join **Biden** at a $1,000-a-plate fundraiser at the home of a lawyer in Alton, Illinois, just across the Mississippi River.

The Midwest trip came as the White House presses Congress to replenish the Federal Highway Trust Fund for road and bridge repairs. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx has said the fund could run out of money by August unless Congress acts. Obama is scheduled to speak Wednesday in front of the Tappan Zee Bridge in New York, while his vice president heads to Cleveland to promote a federally funded transit center project.

The $410 million Arch renovation project includes construction of a pedestrian bridge over Interstate 70 to connect downtown St. Louis with the National Park Service site. Project funding is expected to come from $250 million private donations, government grants and a portion of a local sales tax increase.

"Infrastructure is the back upon which this great nation has been built," **Biden** told an audience of several dozen local politicians, civic and business leaders. "We have to rebuild the infrastructure in this country. We've stalled."

In response to **Biden**'s visit, the Missouri Republican Party issued a statement calling for White House and Democratic congressional support of the Keystone XL pipeline project.

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Biden Hails Infrastructure Investment From Under Gateway Arch

By Justin Sink

The Hill, May 14, 2014

Vice President Joe **Biden** hailed the $380 million renovation of the St. Louis Gateway Arch grounds as a "metaphor for America never resting" during a speech at the iconic landmark Tuesday.

The vice president slammed congressional Republicans "who say we can't afford these kinds of investments."

Biden noted that Republican President Abraham Lincoln had supported building the transcontinental railroad, and argued federal infrastructure spending would lead to economic gains across the country.

The vice president's speech was the latest in a series of events the White House is hoping to use to build pressure on Congress to fund new infrastructure projects.

Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx appeared at the daily White House press briefing on Monday to argue that unless lawmakers reauthorize funding for the highway trust fund, some 700,000 jobs could be at stake. And on Wednesday, President Obama will appear at the Tappan Zee Bridge in New York for an event on infrastructure.

"This is about getting something done that has traditionally enjoyed bipartisan support, which is passing legislation that invests substantially in rebuilding our roads and bridges across the country and thereby putting people to work right away and investing in our economic foundation, in our future by enhancing our transportation networks," White House press secretary Jay Carney said Tuesday.

Following his appearance in St. Louis, the vice president is headed to Illinois for a pair of closed-press fundraisers benefitting Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) and the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

According to the Chicago Sun-Times, attendees paid between $1,000 and $35,000 to attend the fundraisers. The events include a reception in Alton, Ill., followed by a dinner at the home of mesothelioma attorney John Simmons.

Republicans used the vice president's Gateway appearance to promote an infrastructure project of their own — the Keystone XL pipeline.

"If Vice President Joe **Biden** is looking for a shovel-ready project, we'd suggest that he and the Democrat Party green light the Keystone XL pipeline," said Republican National Committee spokesman Jahan Wilcox. "There's no better place for Mr. **Biden** to come out in support of Keystone than at the Gateway Arch, because this project would create good paying jobs for Americans who reside west of the Mississippi."

5 Things To Know About VP Biden's St. Louis Visit

KSDK-TV St. Louis, May 13, 2014

ST. LOUIS (KSDK) – Vice President Joe **Biden** will touch down in St. Louis for a number of public and private events Tuesday.

With a nationally top-ranking official coming to town, there's a lot to know and expect about the visit.

RELATED: **Biden** coming to St. Louis on Tuesday

Here's a breakdown of what you need to know:

NewsChannel 5 will have coverage throughout the day on Vice President **Biden**'s visit.

Presidential Checklist: Jockeying For Position

Associated Press, May 14, 2014

WASHINGTON — In the latest prep work for a presidential campaign, Rand Paul is conspicuously courting moderate and establishment Republicans while Ted Cruz keeps up a travel schedule that has 2016 written all over it. Jeb Bush is stirring from something of a political snooze and a half-dozen other credible prospects are getting their voices heard in the din.

As for Democrats, a Hillary Rodham Clinton book coming out in June is about as exciting as it gets these days.

The suspense of a Democratic nomination race is in suspension until the party's dominant figure decides whether to run or someone goes for the prize without waiting for her to make up her mind. She sounds and acts a bit more like a candidate by the month, which doesn't necessarily mean she'll be one.

In both parties, potential contenders are best judged by what they do — and where they go, like Iowa and New Hampshire — not by what they say. Most are keeping up with the fiction that they are not really thinking about running for president even as they transparently position themselves to run for president.

Cruz has visited Iowa four times in the past eight months, and New Hampshire and South Carolina three times each, and claimed that's got nothing to do with presidential campaign politics, which no one believes. "I think it's too early to worry about 2016," the Texas senator said with a straight face.

For months, many prospective 2016 presidential candidates have been networking with party leaders, donors and activists. They've published or announced books. They're using TV appearances to become household names, at least in households tuned to the Sunday or cable news shows.

With a few notable exceptions, their preparations have accelerated since The Associated Press began broadly tracking their activities last summer. Yet even as most march through a pre-campaign checklist, they are keeping their options open should they decide to sit out the race.

Aside from Clinton, the former secretary of state, senator and first lady, potential Democratic contenders include Vice President Joe **Biden**, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley. Among Republicans in the mix: Bush, the former Florida governor; New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie; Cruz; Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal; Kentucky Sen. Paul; Texas Gov. Rick Perry; Florida Sen. Marco Rubio; Wisconsin Rep. Paul Ryan; former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum and Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker.

A look at who's doing what:

NONDENIAL DENIAL: Cagey words that cloak presidential ambitions, none too convincingly.

Democrats

Biden: "If I decide to run, believe me, this would be the first guy I talk to. But that decision hasn't been made, for real. And there's plenty of time to make that." April, CBS, in joint interview with President Barack Obama.

Clinton: "I haven't made up my mind. I really have not." — December, ABC.

Cuomo: "I'm sorry, I'm losing you. We have a technical difficulty. I'm running for governor of the state of New York." — Seeming not to hear a question about his presidential intentions. February, Fox Business Network.

O'Malley: "No one ever goes down this road, I would hope, without giving it a lot of consideration and a lot of preparation and a lot of thought work, and so that's what I'm doing." — February, speaking to reporters in Baltimore.

Republicans

Bush: "I can honestly tell you that I don't know what I'm going to do." — His standard disclaimer. Says he'll decide by end of year whether to run. One factor in his decision: Whether he can run an optimistic campaign and avoid the "mud fight" of politics.

Christie: "I am enormously flattered that folks would talk about me in my party as someone who they think could be a candidate for president. But I am absolutely in — nowhere near that consideration process." — Jan. 9 news conference addressing the scandal over Fort Lee, N.J., traffic tie-ups.

Cruz: "My focus is entirely on the U.S. Senate." — His standard disclaimer

Jindal: "My honest answer is I don't know what I'm going to be doing in 2016." — February, speaking to press while in Washington for governors meeting.

Paul: "We're definitely talking about it, my family is talking about it. I truly won't make my mind up until after the 2014 elections. But I haven't been shy in saying we're thinking about it." — March 9, Fox News.

Perry: "I don't know whether I'm going to run for the presidency. I'm going to spend the time in preparation." — April, in Ohio.

Rubio: "It's something I'll consider at the end of this year." — May, on ABC. Does he feel ready to be president? "I do, but I think we have other people as well."

Ryan: "Janna and I are going to sit down in 2015 and give it the serious ... conversation, consideration that are required for keeping our options open. But right now I have responsibilities in the majority in the House of Representatives that I feel I ought to attend to, and then I'll worry about those things." March, CBS.

Santorum: "I don't know if I can do this. It's just tough." — April, AP interview. Timing of decision? "A year at least, probably."

Walker: "I'm really focused on 2014, not getting ahead of the game. ... You guys can predict all you want." — January, CNN.

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WRITING A BOOK: The perfect stage-setter for a campaign season, just ask Barack Obama ("The Audacity of Hope," 2006; "Dreams from My Father," 2004)

Democrats

Biden: No, not since before 2008 election.

Clinton: Yes, "Hard Choices" due for release June 10.

Cuomo: Yes, coming in 2014.

O'Malley: No. "I'm not sure where I'd find the time for that." It's probably only a matter of time before he finds time.

Republicans

Bush: Yes, on immigration.

Christie: No.

Cruz: Yes, book deal disclosed by his agent in April.

Jindal: Not since before 2012 election.

Paul: No, not since just before the 2012 election.

Perry: Not since before 2012 election.

Rubio: Yes, coming in late 2014 from the publisher of his 2012 memoir.

Ryan: Yes, coming in 2014.

Santorum: Yes, "Blue Collar Conservatives" released in late April, says: "Do Republicans really care less about the person at the bottom of the ladder than Democrats do? To be painfully honest, I would have to say in some ways 'yes.'"

Walker: Yes, out in fall 2013.

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GO TO IOWA: Its caucuses are the opening act of the nomination contest.

Democrats

Biden: Yes, spoke at Sen. Tom Harkin's fall 2013 steak-fry fundraiser, a must-stop for many Democrats seeking to compete in the leadoff caucuses. Then in May, attended party for Iowans who came to Washington for annual lobbying trip. Raised money for Iowa congressional candidate Jim Mowrer. Schmoozed with Iowa power brokers during 2013 inauguration week in Washington.

Clinton: No, avoiding big primary/caucus states. But Ready for Hillary is mobilizing for her in the state.

Cuomo: No.

O'Malley: Yes, headlined Harkin's 2012 fundraiser.

Republicans

Bush: Has been holding off on splashy visits to early voting states but plans spring fundraiser in Florida for Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad. Attended 2012 economic development meeting in Iowa.

Christie: Yes, in 2012. More travel driven by politics in the cards now that he's chairman of Republican Governors Association for 2014 election year.

Cruz: Yes, four visits in eight months.

Jindal: Yes, summer 2013 visit, then flew with Iowa governor to governors association meeting in Milwaukee. In Iowa seven times in 2012.

Paul: Yes, three times in 2013. In March, snagged the state GOP chairman, who announced he was quitting to join Paul as an adviser.

Perry: Yes, third trip since November coming up: He's to campaign for Gov. Terry Branstad in late spring. Visited Des Moines suburbs and Davenport in February, meeting GOP activists and attending an event with business leaders sponsored by Koch brothers' Americans for Prosperity. Met Branstad and addressed Des Moines crowd of 400 in November.

Rubio: Yes, just days after 2012 election, but has been largely holding off on a new wave of trips to early voting states. That's changing.

Ryan: Yes, was keynote speaker for Iowa GOP's big fundraising dinner in Cedar Rapids in April. Main speaker at governor's annual birthday fundraiser in November 2013, in first visit since 2012 campaign.

Santorum: Yes, recent visit with strategists and media. August 2013 speech to conservative Christians in state where he won the 2012 caucuses. Screened his new Christmas movie in Iowa in November.

Walker: Yes, fundraiser last year.

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GO TO NEW HAMPSHIRE: Nation's first primary comes after Iowa and is just as important.

Democrats

Biden: Yes, raised money for three Democrats in March visit for job-training event. Quipped: "I'm here about jobs — not mine."

Clinton: No. But Ready for Hillary has sent people there this year.

Cuomo: No.

O'Malley: Yes, spoke at Democratic Party dinner in November. Also spoke at 2012 convention of New Hampshire Democrats.

Republicans

Bush: No.

Christie: Yes, three times in 2012.

Cruz: Yes, three times since August.

Jindal: Yes, keynote speech to local Republican organization in March, headlined state GOP fundraiser in 2013, visited twice in 2012.

Paul: Yes, addressed Freedom Summit in April. Won straw poll at March meeting of Northeast Republican Leadership Conference in Nashua. Several visits last year.

Perry: No.

Rubio: Yes, splashy debut in May, first visit of the 2016 season, headlining fundraisers, meeting local officials, giving interviews. Multiple visits before 2012 election.

Ryan: Yes, headlined Manchester fundraiser in February for former House colleague. Canceled October 2013 visit because of government shutdown.

Santorum: Yes, March speech to Northeast Republican Leadership Conference marked his return to a state where he performed weakly in 2012 campaign.

Walker: Yes, headlined a GOP state convention in October 2013, keynote at state party convention in September 2012.

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DON'T FORGET SOUTH CAROLINA: First Southern primary and big in its own right.

Democrats

Biden: Yes. In May, gave commencement speech at University of South Carolina and headlined Democratic fundraiser, first visit since he spoke at state party's annual fundraiser a year earlier. Several earlier visits since 2009.

Clinton: No, but things are stirring. At a May meeting in Columbia partly sponsored by Ready for Hillary, Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine urged Democratic women to "think about pledging your support right now" to ensure she has "millions of us ready to take the field with her" if she runs.

Cuomo: No.

O'Malley: Yes, 2013 speech to party activists.

Republicans

Bush: Yes, 2012 speech.

Christie: Yes, helped Mitt Romney raise money in 2012.

Cruz: Yes, speech at The Citadel military college in April was third visit in a year, following event with religious conservatives in November and speech to annual state GOP dinner last May.

Jindal: Yes, third visit in a year coming in June, as keynote speaker at state GOP's biggest gathering, the Silver Elephant dinner.

Paul: Yes, foreign policy speech at The Citadel military college and small GOP fundraiser in Charleston in November 2013 visit; headlined several fundraisers earlier in year.

Perry: Yes, two-day visit in December 2013, addressed state GOP. In August, raised money for Gov. Nikki Haley's re-election campaign.

Rubio: Yes, headlined 2012 Silver Elephant dinner.

Ryan: Yes, in 2012 campaign.

Santorum: Yes, April GOP event at The Citadel military college, where two sons are cadets. Campaigned in April 2013 for Curtis Bostic in GOP House runoff race; Bostic lost.

Walker: Yes, attended August fundraiser for Haley, who came to Wisconsin to campaign for him in 2012 recall vote.

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GO ABROAD: Helps to give neophytes foreign policy cred, and Israel is a touchstone for U.S. politicians.

Democrats

Biden: You bet. Visited Ukrainian capital in April to symbolize U.S. commitment to new government in its struggle against pro-Russian insurgents and threatening signals from Moscow. Brazil coming up in June. Long at forefront of Obama administration's diplomatic maneuvers with Kiev. Sent to Poland and Lithuania in March to reassure NATO allies anxious about Russia's annexation of Crimea. December 2013 visits to China, Japan and South Korea. Countless trips to Iraq and Afghanistan during first term.

Clinton: Another globe-trotter, nearly 1 million miles as secretary of state. Limited overseas travel in 2013: honorary degree at St. Andrews University in Scotland in September; trip to London in October for a diplomacy award and a fundraising concert for the family's foundation. Attended memorial services for Nelson Mandela in South Africa in December. Two recent speeches in Canada.

Cuomo: Not much lately. Israel twice in 2002.

O'Malley: Yes. Israel in 2013 this year for a second time. Also Denmark, Ireland, France, Brazil and El Salvador in 2013. Asia in 2011, Iraq in 2010.

Republicans

Bush: Yes, usually several overseas trips a year. Three times to Israel since 1980s.

Christie: Yes, Israel and Jordan in 2012.

Cruz: Yes, first visit to Israel in December 2012, again in January 2013 as part of Senate Republican delegation that traveled to Afghanistan, too.

Jindal: January 2014 trade and investment mission to Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, first time overseas as governor. Canada in August 2013 to speak to oil industry about his support of the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Paul: Yes, Israel and Jordan in 2013.

Perry: Yes, has visited Israel numerous times including an October trip that included a photo op with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, meeting Cabinet members and a separate stop in London to see British officials and financial leaders.

Rubio: Yes, visited the Philippines, Japan and South Korea in January, foreign policy speech in London in early December and Israel, Jordan, Palestinian Authority, Afghanistan in February 2013. Also went to Israel after 2010 election to Senate.

Ryan: Yes, Middle East during congressional career; visited troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Santorum: Scant foreign travel while in the Senate drew notice in 2012 GOP campaign.

Walker: Yes, China in 2013 trade mission.

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MEET THE MONEY: To know donors now is to tap them later.

Democrats

Biden: Yes, actively fundraising for Democratic committees and candidates in 2014 midterms. Headlined fundraiser at home of **Biden** donor in Florida for House candidate Alex Sink in February; Sink lost the special election in March.

Clinton: Yes, can tap deep well of Democratic and activist money. Raises money for Clinton foundation. Bundlers such as Hollywood moguls Jeffrey Katzenberg and Haim Saban have signaled support. Ready for Hillary super PAC raised more than $4 million in 2013 and $1.7 million in first three months of 2014. Worked fundraising circuit to help Terry McAuliffe's campaign for governor in Virginia and Bill de Blasio's mayoral bid in New York City.

Cuomo: Flush coffers for 2014 governor's race.

O'Malley: Yes, in December ended his year as finance chairman for the Democratic Governors Association and is one of the party's top fundraisers.

Republicans

Bush: Yes, addressed well-heeled crowd at Manhattan Institute, led by GOP benefactor Paul Singer, in May. Flew to Las Vegas in March to meet GOP superdonor Sheldon Adelson and address Republican Jewish Coalition at Adelson's company airport hangar. In February, his short video for a GOP fundraiser at Donald Trump's Palm Beach, Florida, estate was a bigger hit than Cruz's keynote speech. Party in summer of 2013 for his immigration book at home of Woody Johnson, owner of the New York Jets and a leading Republican bundler. Has longtime Wall Street connections.

Christie: Yes, became GOP governors chairman in November, giving him regular access to the party's top national donors. In that capacity, has already met donors in Idaho, Vermont, Illinois, Texas, Massachusetts and Utah. Was one of a handful of high-profile Republicans to meet with Adelson in Las Vegas at his resort casino in late March. One of three prospective candidates who attended Mitt Romney's retreat with major party donors in Utah in June 2013.

Cruz: Yes, met in March with top California conservative donors and keynoted Trump fundraiser. Has list of potential donors that's still growing after he collected more than 1.5 million signatures for the online petition "Don'tFundObamaCare," which he began in 2013.

Jindal: Yes, met leading GOP donors in New York City, as most GOP prospects do over time. Among prospective candidates who visited Iowa GOP donor Bruce Rastetter's farm in August 2013 for annual fundraiser for the governor.

Paul: Yes, headlined luncheon in April at Boston-area equity firm led by Romney's former national finance chairman and Romney's oldest son, Tagg, an event that drew together the 2012 presidential candidate's inner circle. Also attended Romney's 2013 Utah retreat. Has met GOP donors in New York City.

Perry: Yes, has proven an effective fundraiser, both from grassroots activists and mainstream Republicans. Has led many job-poaching missions in big states with Democratic governors and met privately during those trips with key donors, especially in New York and California.

Rubio: Yes, aggressive national fundraising outreach, including trips to New York and California to meet potential donors. Raised more money last year than potential rivals Ted Cruz and Rand Paul. Among a handful of possible candidates to attend September 2013 event at home of Woody Johnson, New York Jets' owner and Mitt Romney's national finance chairman.

Ryan: Yes, attracts Wall Street interest. Addressed GOP donor Paul Singer's Manhattan Institute at same May event that heard from Bush. Had a follow-up reception with Singer and another big donor, Woody Johnson, owner of the New York Jets and a national finance chairman for Romney's last presidential bid. Attended Romney's 2013 Utah retreat, has money connections from 2012 campaign.

Santorum: 2012 shoestring campaign was largely fueled by a super political action committee to which Republican donor Foster Friess gave more than $2 million.

Walker: Yes. Addressed Republican Jewish Coalition at a Las Vegas gathering in March where main attraction was Adelson, who's looking where to place his bets in GOP field. Headlined 2013 fundraisers in New York and Connecticut.

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NETWORK LIKE MAD: Taking their case to ideologues, activists and party heavyweights who hold great sway in nomination race.

Democrats

Biden: And how. Says he plans to campaign in more than 100 races in the 2014 election. Meets regularly with former Senate colleagues and congressional Democrats. Gives keynote speeches at annual state Democratic Party dinners across the country. Making calls for House Democrats' campaign organization, assisting in recruitment of candidates. Campaigned for new Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, Massachusetts Sen. Ed Markey. Speaks regularly to special interests.

Clinton: Steady presence now on speaking circuit, delivering paid speeches to industry groups and conferences and appearing before a number of groups with ties to the Democratic coalition.

Cuomo: Sparingly. Rarely leaves New York.

O'Malley: Yes, busy spring, with speeches to California Democratic state convention in March, Wisconsin Democrats in April and Massachusetts Democrats in May. Was Democratic governors' chairman for two years until December 2012.

Republicans

Bush: Doing more this year politically after a long period of "a little self-restraint." Already a GOP establishment favorite; House Speaker John Boehner has been nudging him to run. Recent travels to Tennessee, New Mexico, Nevada and Texas. Endorsed GOP establishment favorites in North Carolina Senate and California governor primaries. Skipped Conservative Political Action Conference in March, after giving keynote speech to the influential group a year earlier.

Christie: Yes, vigorous outreach now as the new Republican Governors Association chairman. Also spoke in March to Conservative Political Action Conference, which snubbed him last year. Addressed Republican Jewish Coalition spring meeting in Las Vegas, spending a full day with top donors and GOP operatives.

Cruz: Yes, vigorously. Spoke by video to National Rifle Association's April leadership forum. Addressed Conservative Political Action Conference in March, after landing the group's coveted keynote role in 2013. Has engaged in persistent courting of religious and economic conservatives in Texas and beyond; pitched social conservative principles at Values Voter meeting in October, while also meeting privately beforehand with evangelical leaders. Addressed 2012 Republican National Convention before he was even elected to the Senate.

Jindal: Big time and small time, far and wide. Giving May commencement address at Liberty University in Virginia, a familiar stop for prospective candidates, then South Carolina speech in June. Addressed NRA annual leadership forum in April, Conservative Political Action Conference in March, also in 2013. Made time for fundraiser for local sheriff in Michigan. Altogether, has spent much of his time

during six years as governor on the road, talking to GOP and activist groups, supporting Republican candidates and promoting achievements. Has close ties with social conservatives. Created political action committee to help conservative candidates running for Congress, giving him continued opportunities to network nationally.

Paul: Yes, and now roaming freely beyond tea party tent. Had private audience in April with Romney's 2012 campaign advisers, is helping Republicans across political spectrum, including moderate Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, and has pitched in with party leaders to heal divisions from last campaign. In April brought message of unity to state GOP convention in Maine, where a struggle over delegates created raw tensions between GOP establishment and libertarian or tea party supporters of his father in 2012 campaign. Generated buzz and won symbolic straw poll at Conservative Political Action Conference in March.

Perry: Yes, spoke at past two Conservative Political Action Conferences as well as its regional meeting in St. Louis in September. Addressed conservative activists at a RedState Gathering in New Orleans in August, mistakenly saying he was in Florida. Job-pitching tour in various states helps make connections.

Rubio: Yes, stepping it up. Private audience with Republican National Committee in Memphis in May, right after his New Hampshire trip. Earlier outreach to conservative and party activists focused on repairing tea party relationships strained over immigration. Well-received speech to Conservative Political Action Conference in March. In Virginia governor's race, campaigned for Republican Ken Cuccinelli, who lost. Speech to National Rifle Association in April; also foreign policy speech at University of Texas, more.

Ryan: Yes, prime networker as 2012 vice presidential candidate; now helping fellow House members raise money.

Santorum: Addressed NRA convention in April; speeches to groups around the country, including Conservative Political Action Conference. His Christian-themed film company is his calling card with religious conservatives.

Walker: One of only a few 2016 prospects who spoke to Republican Jewish Coalition. Skipped the big Conservative Political Action Conference in March, appeared there last year. Campaigned for GOP in Virginia governor's race. Spoke to Michigan Republican Leadership Conference on Mackinac Island in September 2013.

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HOG THE TV: Achieving national recognition by sermonizing on the Sunday news shows, or going for soft questions and easy laughs on late-night TV.

Democrats

Biden: He's back. After being largely absent from the airwaves for more than a year, **Biden** has resumed frequent interviews, including joint TV appearance with Obama in April. He did a TV blitz the morning after the State of the Union, a CNN interview aboard an Amtrak train and dished on his skin care routine and his wife's oddball pranks during an interview with Rachael Ray. But not a Sunday news show fixture.

Clinton: No. But late-night TV host Jimmy Kimmel interviewed her in March. Appeared with Obama on CBS' "60 Minutes" in January to talk about tenure as secretary of state; gave interview to Barbara Walters late in 2013.

Cuomo: No. Prefers radio.

O'Malley: Getting back in the swing. January 2014 Sunday news show appearance on CNN was first in months, followed by CBS in February.

Republicans

Bush: Blanketed the five Sunday shows one day in March 2013 to plug his book on immigration, a few appearances other times.

Christie: Not so much since traffic scandal surfaced. Before that, liked to cut up on late-night TV. Four Sunday news shows after his 2013 re-election.

Cruz: Yes, several Sunday news show appearances already this year, plenty last year. Frequent guest on Fox News and CNN.

Jindal: No, only a couple of Sunday news show appearances since 2012 election.

Paul: Leader of the chattering pack with more than a dozen Sunday talk show appearances since 2012 election, including one in April from New Hampshire. Frequent guest on news networks, especially Fox.

Perry: Raising his profile lately, making several national TV appearances while starring in flood of media spots in California designed to persuade businesses based there to move to Texas. On NBC's "Meet the Press" in May: "I'm going to be across the country talking about red-state versus blue-state policies. Hopefully engaged in a good, thoughtful, winsome conversation about how do we make America more competitive."

Rubio: Staying on par with most rivals in Sunday news show appearances, did one from New Hampshire in May. Blanketed all five Sunday shows one day in April 2013 to talk about immigration, before he dropped the subject. Frequent guest on news networks.

Ryan: Many Sunday news show appearances since 2012 election. Occasional guest on network news.

Santorum: Yes, promoting his new book. Plugged his Christmas movie on "The Colbert Report," Fox News, MSNBC and more. Radio, too. Teamed up with Democrat Howard Dean as sparring partners for debates on the air and with audiences.

Walker: Already on the Sunday news show scoreboard for 2014. Half dozen or so Sunday news show appearances since 2012 election. Also, Piers Morgan, Lou Dobbs, more national TV interviews.

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ACTUALLY DO SOMETHING: For voters who want to support doers, not just talkers.

Democrats

Biden: Leading Obama's review of federal job-training programs, prime player in U.S. response to Ukrainian crisis. His office co-chaired a White House task force to address sexual assault on campuses. Point man on gun control, which failed. Negotiated fiscal cliff deal.

Clinton: Record as secretary of state, senator and first lady. Recent initiatives to help children's health and education and status of women.

Cuomo: 2014 budget proposal calls for tax cuts for businesses, homeowners and renters. In 2013, pushed through nation's first gun-control law after the Newtown, Connecticut, school massacre. Led New York's effort to legalize same-sex marriage in 2011. Minimum wage boost, on-time budgets, teacher standards.

O'Malley: Toughened gun laws, repealed death penalty, saw voters approve gay marriage after he got behind legislation to approve it, set up a framework to develop offshore wind power, won legislative approval in April of minimum wage increase, a 2014 priority.

Republicans

Bush: As Florida governor, revamped state educational system, cut taxes, managed state through hurricanes.

Christie: Won November 2013 re-election, becoming first Republican to earn more than 50 percent of New Jersey vote in quarter-century. Led state's response to Superstorm Sandy. Agreed to expand state's Medicaid program under the new health law while some other Republican governors have refused to do so. Vetoed a bill that would have sanctioned gay marriage, but declined to appeal a court ruling that legalized it.

Cruz: Leading force in dispute that partly shut the government, 21-hour Senate speech against Obama's health law. Argued before U.S. Supreme Court nine times, with eight of those coming while he was Texas' longest-serving solicitor general, between 2003 and 2008.

Jindal: Privatized much of Louisiana's Medicaid program, shrank public hospital system, signed statewide voucher program that covers private school tuition for certain students. Signed abortion restrictions, fought liberalization of adoption law, making it impossible for gay couples to adopt jointly. Hurricane and Gulf oil spill disaster response.

Paul: One-man, nearly 13-hour Senate filibuster to protest drone policy put him at forefront of civil liberties debate.

Perry: "Texas Miracle" job-creation boom has seen state create a third of the net new jobs nationwide over last decade, although Texas has disproportionately high percentage of hourly workers earning minimum wage or less. Helped muscle through new abortion restrictions.

Rubio: Broker of Senate immigration overhaul, though he's gone quiet on the issue. Early leader of effort to link financing of health care law to government shutdown. Working with anti-abortion groups on Senate version of bill that would ban abortions after 20 weeks.

Ryan: Negotiated December 2013 bipartisan budget deal that scaled back across-the-board spending cuts, drawing contrast with potential rivals who opposed it. Budget-hawk record to be judged on. Emerging as influential moderate on immigration.

Santorum: Making Christian-themed, family-friendly movies at the moment; record from Senate days.

Walker: Curbs on public service unions became national flashpoint, but he won the effort — and the recall election that followed.

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TAKE A NATIONAL STAND: Effective state governance is nice but leaders must build national stature on issues of the day.

Democrats

Biden: Eclectic. Guns, violence against women, gay rights, veterans.

Clinton: Eclectic. 2013 speeches focused on the economy, housing, opportunities for women, voting rights.

Cuomo: Environmentalists nationally and the energy industry are closely watching his pending decision whether to allow fracking in upstate New York counties near the Pennsylvania line.

O'Malley: The liberal checklist: more spending on education, infrastructure, transportation; supports same-sex marriage, immigration reform, repealing death penalty, pushes environmental protections.

Republicans

Bush: Unapologetic proponent of Common Core education standards and immigration changes opposed by many in GOP.

Christie: Moderate on the reach and functions of government; bipartisanship.

Cruz: Anti-Obama's health care law, pushes broader tea party agenda.

Jindal: A record of privatization to show he means government should be trimmed, happy to carry a social conservative banner.

Paul: Tea-party plus, with a libertarian streak that places him to the left of rivals on some issues, to the right on others. Fiscal conservative, criticizes surveillance state. Says GOP should back off on pushing state voter ID laws offensive to blacks. Health law scold. Joining in 2014 with liberal lawmakers and others in effort to roll back some mandatory minimum sentences and give judges more flexibility in fitting punishment to crime.

Perry: Prominent voice on conservative issues since before the birth of the tea party. Wants to ban all abortion in Texas, relax environmental regulations, boost states' rights; opposes gay marriage.

Rubio: Proposes higher retirement age for Social Security benefits for younger workers and restraints on benefit increases to the wealthy. 2014 initiative on poverty calls for federal wage supplements for some low-wage workers instead of earned income tax credit. Economy, abortion, tea party fiscal conservatism; immigration liberalization if he decides to get back to it. Another voice against health care law. Has become a leading GOP voice in foreign policy, pressing for stronger U.S. action in geopolitical hot spots. On climate change: "I do not believe that human activity is causing these dramatic changes to our climate the way these scientists are portraying it."

Ryan: Cutting spending, taking on entitlements, rolling back Obama's health law. Anti-poverty initiative this year.

Santorum: Social conservative activism goes way back. Focus on blue-collar economic opportunity. Speaking against libertarian streak in GOP, a "strain of conservatism that has no basis in conservatism." Book calls climate change "hyped-up crisis."

Walker: Fiscal stewardship, from a GOP point of view. Tough guy against the unions and liberal defenders of the status quo. Says GOP in Congress is the party of no.

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BAGGAGE TO CHECK: It's never too early to deal with skeletons in the closet; rivals will be rattling them soon enough.

Democrats

Biden: Flubs, fibs, age. Deflection: "I am who I am." Saddled by Obama's low approval ratings.

Clinton: Benghazi, Libya; polarizing when political, age. GOP wants to pin blame on her for vulnerability of U.S. diplomatic mission in Libya that came under deadly attack in 2012. In long-confidential documents from Bill Clinton's administration, advisers urged her to "be real" and "humanize" herself, revealing concerns about her authenticity as a public figure.

Cuomo: New York economy is dragging, his poll numbers have sunk, went through public and bitter divorce with Kerry Kennedy, daughter of late Sen. Robert Kennedy, in 2005.

O'Malley: State-run health insurance exchange website was an expensive bust, prompting officials to make an embarrassing switch in April to one based on Connecticut's. Contraband- and drug-smuggling scheme at state-run Baltimore City Detention Center that resulted in 44 people being indicted has state lawmakers looking to make reforms. Has record of raising taxes that could be challenged by less liberal Democrats, never mind Republicans.

Republicans

Bush: The Bush factor. Does the country want a Bush dynasty after presidents George H. W. and George W.? Courting trouble with the right with positions on education and remarks in April that people who cross into the U.S. illegally are doing so as an "act of love" for their families.

Christie: If you have to declare "I am not a bully," you've got a problem. Apologized in January 2014 for highway lane closures apparently ordered by his aides as retribution against a mayor who did not endorse him for re-election. Also fired his deputy chief of staff and denied knowledge of the machinations. Episode deepened questions about what Christie, or those around him, will do to win, and contributed to a significant drop in his poll standings. Investigations continue.

Cruz: Reputation as a hotheaded upstart, also part of his appeal. Polarizing within his party. Also comes with birther baggage: Questions have been raised in some quarters about his constitutional standing to become president because of his birth in Canada, to a Cuban father and American mother. Deflection: Promised last summer to renounce Canadian citizenship but hasn't.

Jindal: Ambitious plan to replace state's personal and corporate taxes with higher sales taxes flopped, delivered dud of a speech when given juicy platform of responding to Obama's first presidential address to Congress in 2009. Deflection: Poking fun at himself. Jindal administration's award of a $200 million Medicaid contract is under investigation by state and federal grand juries.

Paul: Dear old dad: Must move beyond Ron Paul's fringe reputation. Bridge-burning in Congress endears him to tea party, could bite him otherwise. Deflection: GOP outreach to minorities. The Washington Times canceled his column after he was found to have used passages from other people in his speeches and writings as if they were his own. Deflection: Promising proper citations and footnotes for his pronouncements "if it will make people leave me the hell alone."

Perry: "Oops!" Memories of his stumbling 2012 campaign, a quick progression from a front-runner to flameout. Deflection: Owns up to his "botched efforts" in last campaign. Also a potential drag: a grand jury investigation in Austin into whether he abused power by cutting off state financing for an office of public corruption prosecutors led by a Democrat who refused to resign after being convicted of drunken driving.

Rubio: Rift with tea party constituency on immigration, "a real trial for me." Deflection: Go aggressive on a matter of common ground, which he did in pledging to take apart the health law. And stop talking about immigration. Response to Obama's 2013 State of the Union speech was remembered only for his clumsy reach for water. Deflection: Made fun of himself.

Ryan: Budget axe cuts both ways — catnip to conservatives but people want their Medicare. Carries stigma of 2012 election loss as running mate. Tea party not happy with his late 2013 budget deal. Comments in March about cultural "tailspin" in inner cities struck some as veiled racism. Deflection: Called his remark "inarticulate."

Santorum: Overshadowed by newer conservative figures. Deflection: Being overshadowed means being an underdog, and he can thrive at that. Feisty 2012 campaign became the biggest threat to Romney's march to the nomination. New book contains provocative passages for future rivals to dredge up.

Walker: Some things that give him huge appeal with GOP conservatives — taking on unions, most notably — would whip up Democratic critics in general election. Wisconsin has lagged in job creation. Release of emails in February shed light on criminal investigation into whether Walker's aides were illegally doing campaign work for the 2010 governor's election while being paid as county employees. Walker, then a county executive, wasn't charged but the episode has proved a distraction.

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RUN SHADOW CAMPAIGN: One way to run without running is to have a political action committee to promote ideas or other candidates for office, or to hire advisers who can switch to a campaign when the time comes.

Democrats

Biden: Constrained by his current job, but tapped longtime adviser and former lobbyist Steve Ricchetti to be his new chief of staff; maintains close contact with political advisers past and present.

Clinton: Ready for Hillary super PAC set up by supporters is laying groundwork, so are others. Several old Clinton hands are advising the group, including Craig T. Smith and Harold Ickes.

Cuomo: Overshadowed by Clinton's shadow campaign. Considered a likely contender if Clinton ends up not running.

O'Malley: Set up a PAC called O'Say Can You See and hired two people for fundraising and communications.

Republicans

Bush: He's a Bush, so he's got connections. Sally Bradshaw, chief of staff when he was governor, is his go-to political person.

Christie: Republican Governors Association chairmanship allows him to grow his national profile with voters and party officials with regular travel and key appearances. Began building broad coalition of donors through his national fundraising tour in spring 2013. But the shadow of the traffic scandal still hangs over his shadow campaign.

Cruz: Has leadership PAC, Jobs Growth and Economic Freedom. Has been one of the largest beneficiaries of Jim DeMint's Senate Conservatives Fund and has gotten millions of dollars and grassroots logistical support from the Club for Growth, FreedomWorks and Ending Spending PAC. Heritage Action PAC helped sponsor Cruz's summer anti-health-law trip around Texas and country.

Jindal: Created Washington-based nonprofit, America Next, in October 2013 to push policy ideas nationally. For executive director, tapped Jill Neunaber, who worked on Romney's presidential campaign in Iowa and New Hampshire. In March created PAC to help conservative candidates.

Paul: Has formidable leadership PAC called Rand PAC, has maintained ties to father's political network in early primary states and benefits from strong tea party support. Is starting to build teams on the ground in most states.

Perry: Created Americans for Economic Freedom PAC in fall 2013 to raise his profile again, help him test the waters and broadcast ads promoting Republican leadership around the country. Group used more than $200,000 left over from the PAC that raised millions for his 2012 campaign.

Rubio: Beginning more aggressive travel to early voting states; has lagged potential rivals on that front. Ramping up in other ways, too: Shuffled his staff and directed political resources of his Reclaim America PAC to three big Senate midterm races this year, one of them the GOP primary in Iowa.

Ryan: His Prosperity Action PAC. Questions remain about whether he will make a presidential bid given his rising influence in Congress.

Santorum: Keeps in touch with chief supporters of his winning 2012 Iowa caucus campaign, giving him a leg up on a campaign organization in that state.

Walker: Consults with top Republican governor strategists such as Phil Musser and Nick Ayers.

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GET WITH IT ON SOCIAL MEDIA: A must for spreading ideas, poking competitors, raising money, organizing events and showing a personal side, though often a very canned version.

Democrats

Biden: Launched Instagram account in April. Not active on Facebook, occasional contributor to his office's vigorous Twitter account.

Clinton: More than 1 million followers on Twitter, her preferred social media outlet.

Cuomo: Few if any personal tweets; Facebook also generated primarily by staff.

O'Malley: On Twitter, standard governor's fare but promotes rare appearances by his Celtic rock band, O'Malley's March, for which he sings and plays guitar, banjo and tin whistle. On Facebook, his PAC-generated page is more active than official governor's account.

Republicans

Bush: Tweets and posts many Wall Street Journal stories, education thoughts and some Bush family doings.

Christie: More engaged in Twitter ("It was great to be able to visit with the owners of Rossi's Rent-A-Rama in Ortley today.") than Facebook.

Cruz: Active on Facebook and Twitter, much content is pumped out by staff.

Jindal: Active on Twitter and on Facebook, where he lists among favorite books, "John Henry Newman: A Biography," about recently canonized British cardinal and sage. Also favors James Bond movies.

Paul: Aggressive. Bragged on Twitter in June that he'd attracted more than 1 million likes for his Facebook page, where he lists his own books as his favorites.

Perry: Active. One popular tweet was accidental — from his pocket, he said — and consisted of "I." Followers jumped in to complete his sentence. One offered: "I ... really like Obamacare." (He doesn't.) Facebook appears staff-generated.

Rubio: Aggressive, with large followings, appears to make personal use of Twitter more than staff-generated Facebook. Takes lots of shots at the health law. On Facebook, lists "Pulp Fiction" movie and "The Tudors" historical fiction TV series among favorites.

Ryan: King of Facebook among potential rivals in both parties, with nearly 4.9 million likes. Seeks $10 donations for "Team Ryan" bumper stickers for his PAC and kisses a fish. Posts photo of Obama with his feet up on Oval Office desk. Commanding presence on Twitter, too, via an account associated with his PAC and another as congressman.

Santorum: Active on Twitter and Facebook.

Walker: Posts vigorously on Facebook and on his Twitter accounts. Many exclamation points. "Glad USDA is keeping cranberries on school menus. I drink several bottles of cranberry juice each day!" And, "Green Bay Packers signing Julius Peppers to a 3-year deal is HUGE!" Promotes policy achievements and his TV appearances, reflects on sports, pokes Obama.

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Can Democrats Win When Obama's Not On The Ticket?

National Journal, May 14, 2014

By now, it's accepted wisdom that Democrats perform better in presidential elections, when the electorate is more diverse and younger, while the GOP's strength is in midterm elections, when their core voters are likelier to turn out. But it's worth remembering that this is a recent phenomenon, thanks to the changing makeup of the Democratic Party under Barack Obama's presidency—and there's no guarantee it will continue unabated.

It wasn't the case in 2004, when George W. Bush effectively mobilized conservative voters to overcome growing public dissatisfaction toward his presidency. It wasn't the case in 2006, when the Democratic Party capitalized on increased support from older, white voters to retake the House and Senate. And it wasn't the case in the decades prior, when Democrats often recorded significant gains or outperformed expectations in midterm years (1982, 1986, 1998), while Republicans won five of seven presidential elections from 1980 to 2004.

What's changed is the makeup of both parties' coalitions. Seniors, who frequently voted Democratic over pocketbook issues like Social Security and Medicare, have migrated into the Republican column. White blue-collar voters, once a staple of Democratic coalitions past, have become estranged from their old political home over cultural issues. In their place are what my colleague Ron Brownstein labels "the coalition of the ascendant"—single women, minorities, and millennial voters. Voters within these groups turned out at high levels in the last two presidential elections to offset Democratic losses elsewhere.

The challenge for Democrats in this year's midterms is getting these "ascendant" voters enthusiastic about showing up to the polls when Obama isn't on the ballot—something that Democratic turnout specialists are working overtime to achieve. Even if they don't show up and Republicans retake the Senate in 2014, the assumption is they're bound to return at similar levels for the next presidential election. That's not necessarily the case.

To be sure, the growing diversity of the electorate presents Republicans with fundamental challenges, regardless of the turnout rates of the core Democratic groups. But it's also clear that the historic nature of President Obama's candidacy helped him rally African-American voters to the polls in record numbers and at record levels—a dynamic that's unlikely to repeat itself in the future. For the first time in history, African-Americans voted at a higher rate than whites in 2012, with 66.2 percent of eligible black voters casting ballots. That's up six points from 2004, the last presidential election in which Obama wasn't on the ballot. In many urban, heavily African-American precincts, support for Obama ran close to 100 percent. Without that same degree of support in the future, Democrats will need to make up lost ground with white voters, while maintaining the overwhelming advantages with Hispanic and Asian-American voters they enjoyed in 2012.

A postelection analysis from Brookings Institution demographer William Frey found that if turnout rates from all racial groups remained at the same levels as 2004, Mitt Romney would have won the presidency—by 9,000 votes. And if only minority turnout dipped to its 2004 levels (with white turnout at its lower 2012 rate), Obama would have barely defeated Romney. Given the growing share of Hispanic and Asian-American voters, that's far from encouraging news for Republicans, but it's also a cautionary tale for the party dependent on demographic destiny to win future presidential elections.

Indeed, Democrats could find themselves reliant on brand-name candidates to generate the same degree of enthusiasm that Obama offered like-minded voters over the last two presidential elections. Hillary Clinton fits the bill, given her unique appeal among women and potential to improve on Obama's performance among working-class voters. But would Joe **Biden** or any generic Democratic officeholder provide them with the same advantages? (Think Martin O'Malley versus Marco Rubio.)

Despite the diversifying Democratic coalition, the party's bench is virtually devoid of minority officeholders. There are only four Democratic governors or senators of color, compared to six Republicans. Obama hasn't brought along many other Democrats who present the same post-racial appeal he showcased in 2008. Even Obama campaign strategist David Axelrod acknowledged the Democratic Party "needs to do a better job" of recruiting more minority officeholders on an American

Hospital Association panel in which we both participated. Without those landmark presidential candidates in the future, it's hard to see minority voter enthusiasm maintain its healthy rate.

"Although long-term demographic trends … are favorable for the Democrats, translating those trends into true political and electoral dominance will remain difficult so long as Democrats rely on simply turning out core Obama coalition voters. Their margins will be too thin and subject to backlash, especially below the presidential level," political scientists Ruy Teixeira and Andrew Levison wrote last spring in The New Republic. They later concluded: "If in 2016 white working-class support falls to or below the 33 percent it hit in 2012, a GOP president becomes a very real possibility."

Teixeira, who presciently anticipated that changing demographics would spur political realignment in the landmark book The Emerging Democratic Majority, is now suggesting the limits Democrats face depending entirely on the Obama-forged coalition. Meanwhile, Obama's job approval among noncollege whites hit 29 percent in this month's ABC News/Washington Post poll.

Second Lady Delivers OCTC Commencement Speech

WTVW-TV Evansville (IN), May 14, 2014

It was a special night for college graduates in Owensboro, with a very prominent keynote speaker. Dr. Jill **Biden**, wife of Vice President Joe **Biden**, delivered the commencement speech for Owensboro Community and Technical College. The event was held at RiverPark Center Tuesday evening.

The Second Lady of the United States said she felt "right at home" speaking to the OCTC graduates. Dr. **Biden** teaches English full-time at a community college near The White House. She noted the challenges many students face while earning their degrees.

"No matter how hard it got, and I know there have been hard times. Even if you lost faith in yourself, you picked yourself up and continued on your path. Maybe you took a chance, maybe you learned something new. Maybe you discovered you had a strength you never knew you had," said Dr. **Biden**.

She challenged the new graduates to lift up others, go to their strengths and never stop learning. The Second Lady personally handed each graduate his or her diploma, making an already special night all the more memorable.

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Biden Challenges OCTC Grads

Owensboro (KY) Messenger-Inquirer, May 14, 2014

By Steve Vied Messenger-Inquirer

Jill **Biden**, the wife of Vice President Joe **Biden**, heartily congratulated the graduates of Owensboro Community & Technical College Tuesday night during the school's spring commencement at the RiverPark Center.

But the 30-year educator, who continues to teach English full time at Northern Virginia Community College, also challenged them.

Second Lady Speaks To Graduating Owensboro Students

WFIE-TV Evansville (IN), May 14, 2014

OWENSBORO, KY (WFIE) –

The Second Lady of the United State, Jill **Biden**, made a stop in Owensboro Tuesday night to speak to the graduating class of Owensboro Community and Technical College.

Jill **Biden** left the RiverPark Center around 8:30 p.m. after speaking for about 20 minutes.

She is a community college professor herself. She teaches English at a college very close to the White House.

She's been a teacher for more than 30 years and stood on the stage handing diplomas to every student as their name was called.

This is the second time **Biden** had been invited to speak at Owensboro Community and Technical College.

This year, school officials say, they had some help from former Senator Wendell Ford in getting **Biden** there.

During her speech, she took time to praise the community college system and the leadership Owensboro has shown in preparing students for the future.

"I know that Owensboro has been on the forefront of many of these efforts and has been a leader both here in Kentucky and in other states as well," said Dr. Jill **Biden**. "You all have a lot to be proud of. You've heard my story, so you know that I feel right at home at a community college commencement."

Owensboro is only one of two cities that **Biden** chose to speak at this year.

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NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS

Ordering Google To Forget

By The Editorial Board

New York Times, May 14, 2014

In a ruling that could undermine press freedoms and free speech, the highest court of the European Union said on Tuesday that Google must comply with requests from individuals to remove links on search results pages to newspaper articles and other web pages that might cause embarrassment.

The European Court of Justice ruled that an individual's "right to be forgotten" was so strong that Google and other Internet search companies could be forced to remove links even if the information in question was itself accurate and lawful.

The court said links could be removed if they were found to be "inadequate, irrelevant or no longer relevant." But the ruling provided little guidance to lower courts about how to decide when links should be removed. As a result, it could open the floodgates for people living in the 28 countries of the European Union to demand that Google and other search engines remove millions of links from search results. Such a purge would leave Europeans less well informed and make it harder for journalists and dissidents to have their voices heard.

The ruling was based on a case brought by a Spanish man against a newspaper and Google. He argued that searching for his name led to two pages originally published in 1998 on the website of the newspaper, La Vanguardia, about his debts and the forced sale of his home. The Spanish Data Protection Agency did not require the newspaper to take down the pages, but it ordered Google to remove links to them. Google appealed that decision and the National High Court of Spain sought advice from the European court. The case now goes back to the Spanish court for resolution.

In 1995, the European Union issued a directive to its members to protect the privacy of individuals. The directive did not explicitly establish a right to be forgotten. But the European court ruled that "after a certain time" individuals can argue that search links no longer comply with the directive and should be erased. The court, however, did not specify how much time has to pass for a request to be considered valid, presumably, leaving that question to Internet companies, privacy officials in European countries and lower courts to answer on a case-by-case basis.

European lawmakers and courts have a long history of protecting privacy. In March, the European Parliament approved a new data protection law that, among other things, includes an explicit right to be forgotten. European governments still need to sign off on that legislation before it can be finalized.

The desire to allow individuals to erase data that they no longer wish to disclose is understandable. For example, there are good reasons to let people remove embarrassing photos and posts they published on social media as children or young adults. But lawmakers should not create a right so powerful that it could limit press freedoms or allow individuals to demand that lawful information in a news archive be hidden.

A Call For Justice For Syrians

New York Times, May 14, 2014

For three years, the United Nations Security Council has failed to end the violence in Syria, largely because Russia and China have stubbornly blocked constructive action and protected President Bashar al-Assad. A new French-led move to have the Council refer Syria to the International Criminal Court for possible prosecution of war crimes won't end the slaughter either. But it would underscore the world's revulsion at atrocities by both sides and its insistence that those responsible be brought to justice.

A vote on the referral resolution is expected soon. Syria never joined the Rome Statute, the treaty creating the court, so the court cannot prosecute crimes there without a Council vote.

The United States dropped its objections to a court referral after the text was written so that neither Israel, which occupies the Golan Heights taken from Syria in 1967, nor the United States could be ensnared in the unlikely event its soldiers get involved. The wording circumvents the problem by defining the conflict narrowly, as involving the Syrian government, its allied militias and armed opposition forces between March 2011 and now. It exempts "current or former officials or personnel" of countries that have not ratified the treaty, except Syria.

The case reflects America's conflicted relations with the court. President Bill Clinton signed the treaty, but President George W. Bush tried to subvert it, until officials found it useful to go after President Omar Hassan al-Bashir of Sudan, who was accused of genocide. President Obama has been somewhat more supportive; America voted for a 2011 resolution that opened an inquiry into the excesses of Muammar el-Qaddafi's regime in Libya.

There is ample justification for an investigation. More than 150,000 people are estimated to have been killed in the Syrian civil war, 2.5 million have fled abroad and 9 million are displaced within the country. Civilians have been subject to starvation, torture and punishing attacks by chemical weapons, jet fighters, barrel bombs and suicide bombers. Navi Pillay, the United Nations human rights chief, told the Security Council last month that human rights violations by government forces "far outweigh" those by armed opposition groups. But United Nations investigators have also documented torture and killings by rebel forces.

There is no reason to believe Russia, at odds with the West over Ukraine, or China will back the referral. On the other hand, do they really want to protect war criminals?

Common Sense At The Library

By The Editorial Board

New York Times, May 14, 2014

The New York Public Library has abandoned its plan to renovate its landmark building in Midtown. There will be no hybrid lending-and-research library behind those stone lions on Fifth Avenue, no

towering glass atrium looking out on Bryant Park. The dumpy Mid-Manhattan Library, across the street, will not be sold. No books will be banished to New Jersey.

What will happen instead, according to the library: A more modest, cheaper, quicker and, by the looks of it, smarter plan. The Mid-Manhattan Library will stay put and be made beautiful, with computer labs and adult-education space. Closed rooms within the glorious Beaux-Arts main building will be opened to the public, and a new, permanent exhibition of treasured manuscripts and artifacts will be created. Book storage will be expanded into space under Bryant Park, where a 19th-century reservoir once sat. And, the library's officials say, this plan is affordable.

The library's reversal was motivated by the best of reasons — what its president, Anthony Marx, aptly called "the facts." They include a budget that had swollen to $300 million and beyond, a sagging economy, and unexpected difficulties in building a new circulating library in the stacks beneath the Rose Reading Room. Beyond those particulars lay the intense derision the project had inspired among some critics, a cluster of lawsuits, and the skepticism of Mayor Bill de Blasio, who was leery about the proposed sale of the Mid-Manhattan Library.

Though the now-abandoned plan was widely mocked, the library's earlier goals, its need to raise money and stay relevant in the digital age while doing something about its white-elephant buildings, the Mid-Manhattan Library and its neglected Science, Industry and Business Library on 34th Street made sense at the time. But circumstances changed and Mr. Marx is right not to dig in, even though the library had already paid $9 million to the architect Norman Foster to design the new space.

It's nice to know that for a venerable institution like the New York Public Library, old doesn't mean inflexible.

Around A Sardinian Table, A Fractious Debate

By Mira Kamdar

New York Times, May 14, 2014

LU FRAILI, Sardinia — April was lovely, as always, in Sardinia. The summer tourists had not yet arrived; the island was covered with wildflowers and the wild asparagus was pushing up among the cork trees. This spring felt especially healing after the death and destruction wrought by cyclone Cleopatra last November. The storm had damaged my 84-year-old father's house, and I had come to deal with the repairs.

Sardinia is a special autonomous region of Italy, with greater local control of legislation, administration and finance than in other Italian regions. It is the second-largest island in the Mediterranean after Sicily, with which it shares representation in the European Parliament. A hardscrabble life, shaped by the island's unique language, environment and history, has given Sardinians a strong sense of identity, which they struggle to defend against the forces of cultural and economic integration with Italy, Europe, and the rest of the world.

My Sardinian friends organized a special dinner for me featuring a traditional suckling pig roasted on myrtle branches, as well as Sardinian wines, including Cannonau. Eventually, the conversation veered into the contentious realm of Italian politics and the upcoming European parliamentary elections.

The men on either side of me locked into a debate in rapid-fire Italian that I, the lone American, strained to follow. One guest was a convert to the populist Five Star Movement of comedian-turned-political-activist Beppe Grillo. Both of Italy's main political parties, he argued, were beholden to the same powerful business and Mafia interests. Only the Five Star party had the courage to chart a path out of Italy's political quagmire and its enslavement to a European Union co-opted by international business interests.

The other guest argued just as passionately that Mr. Grillo was a dangerous populist and that Italy's best hope lay with the center-left Democratic Party, Italy's new prime minister, the 39-year-old go-getter, Matteo Renzi, and Renato Soru, Sardinia's own Internet billionaire and the Democratic Party's candidate to represent Sardinia and Sicily in the European Parliament. One of the other guests chimed in to say the real danger was Silvio Berlusconi and his conservative Forza Italia party, along with the extreme-right Northern League.

Sardinia has a rich history of invasion and exploitation by outsiders. Now the lack of jobs forces many of the island's sons and daughters to leave to seek employment on the Italian mainland and beyond. Per capita income in Sardinia is nearly 25 percent lower than the Italian average, and unemployment tops 18 percent. The traditional handicrafts industry has been eviscerated. Middle-class tourism has nose-dived.

At the same time, the superrich continue to flock to Sardinia's Costa Smeralda where Mr. Berlusconi owns a multimillion-dollar estate and Qatar Holding has announced plans to build new ultraluxury hotels and an aquatic amusement park. But a tourism-dependent economy has compounded the estrangement many Sardinians feel toward their homeland and culture. Some still dream of seceding from Italy entirely, and the recent vote, largely symbolic, by Venetians to do just that has inspired them.

Beyond Italy, many see global economic integration as the greatest threat Sardinian culture has ever faced. While the European Union's money is welcomed — Sardinia benefits from union designation as a region targeted for economic improvement — the additional layer of European rules imposed on the island's small business owners and agriculturalists is resented.

The United States is now lobbying hard in the proposed trans-Atlantic trade deal to crack European resistance to American agribusiness products, generally characterized by European news media as hormone-laden beef, bleach-rinsed chicken and genetically modified foods. This does not go over well in Italy, and many Sardinians fear the agreement, if approved, would create a supragovernmental set of rules dictated by powerful multinational corporations that would threaten a central part of Sardinian culture: local food. Similar fears are driving the rise of euro-skepticism and secession talk elsewhere in Europe in advance of the European parliamentary elections next week.

At the end of the evening, I asked one of my Sardinian friends about the movement to have the island adopted by Switzerland. "Too much Cannonau can make everything seem possible," he said with a laugh.

Meet The New York Times's Editorial Board »

To Dream In Different Cultures

By T. M. Luhrmann

New York Times, May 14, 2014

WHEN Doug Hollan arrived on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi for his anthropology dissertation fieldwork in a rice farming village, his Toraja neighbors wanted to take turns sleeping with him and his wife.

The rural Toraja almost never sleep alone. They sleep in wood frame houses with little furniture and flimsy room dividers, and they sleep on the floor together in groups, sharing blankets and huddling close for warmth. And so the Toraja have "punctuated" sleep. They wake often as others turn and get up in the night, or when a child calls out or another adult can't sleep and starts to chat. Mr. Hollan never heard anyone complain about this.

Many years after he returned from Toraja, Mr. Hollan became a psychotherapist and opened a practice in Los Angeles. Most of his clients have voiced discomfort, at some point or another, with their sleep. They do so even though they have what you might imagine would be the perfect conditions to sleep soundly. They have private darkened rooms that they share with at most one person and, often, expensively manufactured beds that minimize disturbance to the other person when one gets up in the night. His clients want to make sure they get seven or eight hours of continuous sleep, and when they try to sleep but they can't, they get upset.

They are not alone. The National Sleep Foundation reports that more than one in five Americans has difficulty falling asleep almost every night, and a 2013 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study found that about 4 percent of adults in the United States had taken a prescription sleeping pill in the previous month. In 2012 Americans spent $32 billion in the sleep-assistance industry.

This obsession with eight hours of continuous sleep is largely a creation of the electrified age. Back when night fell for, on average, half of each 24 hours, people slept in phases. In "At Day's Close," a remarkable history of night in the early modern West, Roger Ekirch writes that people fell asleep not long after dark for the "first sleep." Then they awoke, somnolent but not asleep, often around midnight, when for a few hours they talked, read, prayed, had sex, brewed beer or burgled. Then they went back to sleep for a shorter period. Mr. Ekirch concludes, "There is every reason to believe that segmented sleep, such as many wild animals exhibit, had long been the natural pattern of our slumber before the modern age, with a provenance as old as humankind."

In an era when we are trying to cram as much into a day as we can, Americans think about sleep as a biological function that needs to be managed. Mr. Hollan's patients, he writes, think about sleep as a problem that interferes with more important things.

What have we lost with our dismissal of what the writer George Sturt called the "quiet depths of darkness"? In traditional non-Western societies like the Toraja, what happens at night really matters. People pay close attention to their dreams, and because they are awakened more often, they have more opportunity to remember them. When the anthropologist Eduardo Kohn arrived in a small village deep in the Amazon, people slept largely outdoors in an open thatch house, surrounded by other people. They would wake at night to drink tea, because it was cold, or because of the calls of animals. "Thanks to these continuous disruptions," he writes, "dreams spill into wakefulness and wakefulness into dreams in a way that entangles them both."

To my mind, the intriguing question is whether different sleep cultures encourage different patterns of spiritual and supernatural experience. That half-aware, drowsy state is a time when dreams commingle with awareness. People are more likely to have experiences of the impossible then. They hear their mother, many miles distant, speaking their name, or they see angels standing by the window, and then they look again and they are gone.

As an anthropologist, I set out to understand the way people experience the spirit. I've talked to many American evangelical Christians about the way they have experienced God. Recently, I spent time in similar evangelical churches in Accra, Ghana, and Chennai, India. One of the more startling differences is that Christians in Accra and Chennai say that God talks to them when they sleep, and in their dreams. He wakes them up by calling their names. American subjects, asked about odd events in the night, were more likely to say things like this: "I see things, but it's just sleep deprivation." It seems likely that the way our culture invites us to pay attention to that delicate space in which one trembles on the edge of sleep changes what we remember of it.

Many years ago, I joined a group that decided that we would write down our dreams. And my dream life changed. I seemed to dream more. I remembered more detail. I sometimes had dreams of mythic intensity. In one, my bedraggled soul swam through a storm-clogged river to put its hand upon a muddy shore. To be clear, I was also reading Jung. But it did make me wonder about the way sleep's borderlands are textured by our social world.

T. M. Luhrmann is a contributing opinion writer and a professor of anthropology at Stanford.

The Speaker's Sand Trap

By Maureen Dowd

New York Times, May 14, 2014

The Speaker is hitting the links.

"This is a Tee Party I can live with," he grins, as he puts a tee emblazoned with "Speaker Boehner" into the turf.

The G.O.P.'s Dean Martin is on the road, making a ring-a-ding and ka-ching tour to rake in the moolah to ensure that Republicans keep the House in November and he keeps his job.

"That was a real humdinger this week when I told those folks in San Antonio that I'm living on borrowed time," he tells the other members of his foursome, who have ponied up big bucks to play 18 with the Speaker.

"The way I enjoy my Camels and cocktails, I guess I should have been happy to make it to 50, much less 65," he chuckles. "But I didn't expect such a big hubbub. Now that I've cheated death by Tea Party, I was taking a moment to ponder my mortality."

He gives his playing partners a sly look.

"As you know, I've taken steps to guarantee my position and the party's by teeing up that Benghazi committee, just like I teed up that Titleist. Talk about a sand trap.

"Every time I hear the word Benghazi, I think of Ben Gazzara, that great actor back in the '60s with the nice tan. He could play me in the movie. Is he still around?"

"And what kinda name is Trey Gowdy? Is he any relation to Curt Gowdy, that old sports announcer? He must be because he hasn't been off TV since I made him chairman of the House Select Committee to Keep Republicans in Power and Harass Hillary Clinton. The guy won't shut up about how we're not going to raise money off the four dead Americans, even while we're busy raising money off the four dead Americans.

"By the way, I'm no Hillary fan. But if Karl Rove thinks pushing the notion that Hillary's concussion made her cuckoo is a good idea, then he's the one with brain damage. How did he survive wasting all that donor money and not winning anything in the last election anyhow?"

As Boehner savors a 210-yard shot, his voice drops into a confidential growl.

"I was reluctant to set up this committee because I know how our wackos can cause a backlash, but I was starting to worry that health care wasn't gonna be enough to get us over the top in November," he confides.

"And I don't mind sticking it to Obama when he continues to be so insensitive about my skin color. His stupid joke at the White House Correspondents' Dinner about me, 'Orange is the new black.' Well, he's gonna be black and blue after we grill him and his team on what he was really doing in the White House that night during the attacks on the compound.

"If he was watching SportsCenter instead of sitting in the Command Center, that's not gonna look good. If he was buttering up Bibi to help him with the Jewish vote, that's not gonna look good. If he was

catching some zzz's during Benghazzzi, that's bad. Of course, he already seems asleep at the switch most of the time. All he does is blame us because he can't get anything done.

"Does he think we're just gonna cuddle with him?"

After he and his group head down the fairway, Boehner takes a swig of merlot from his monogrammed silver "JAB" flask and climbs out of his cart.

Eyeing his approach, he muses: "I wouldn't mind working with the president on one thing — this damn immigration mess. If we don't do something to appeal to Hispanics, we are going to be nowheresville as a party in a decade. But there's nothing I can say to make my guys do it.

"Maybe throwing a bone to the kooks on Benghazi will buy me some room to maneuver on immigration. Some of these goofballs will be so focused on Benghazi, we can just throw a bill on the floor and pass it before they even know what's happening. We faked them out that way on the Doc Fix Medicare legislation. Har, har. The ayes have it."

Hitting his second shot into a deep sand trap in front of the green, Boehner gives the same exaggerated grimace he did ridiculing his own members recently on immigration reform.

"Damn sand traps," he mutters. "At least if all these alarmist reports on climate change turn out to be true, the sand traps will just be water hazards. If Marco Rubio's wrong pooh-poohing climate change, he's gonna be playing a lot of Marco Polo when Miami's underwater."

The Speaker hits out of the trap and lands his ball about 20 feet from the cup.

"Marco is not even the best candidate from Florida," Boehner says. "I've been talking to my man Jeb about getting in. Enough with all these rabid fruitloops. Jeb's my kind of Republican — normal."

Boehner putts and misses his 20-footer for par.

"Did you notice that broke way too much to the right?" he sighs. "That's our problem."

The Square People, Part 1

By Thomas L. Friedman

New York Times, May 14, 2014

HANOI, Vietnam — I think I'll plan to go from Kiev to Hanoi more often. It's only when you go to two seemingly disconnected places that you see the big trends, and one of the big ones I've noticed is the emergence of "The Square People."

In 2004, the Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington wrote about an emerging global "superclass" of "Davos Men" — alluding to attendees of the Davos World Economic Forum — a transnational, cosmopolitan elite drawn from high-tech, finance, multinationals, academics and NGOs. The Davos Men had "little need for national loyalty" and more in common with each other than their fellow citizens, Huntington argued. They also had the skills to disproportionately benefit from the new globalization of markets and information technologies.

Well, a decade later, as the I.T. revolution and globalization have been democratized and diffused — as we've gone from laptops for elites to smartphones for everyone, from networking for the lucky few at Davos to Facebook for all and from only the rich heard in the halls of power to everyone being able to talk back to their leaders on Twitter — a new global political force is aborning, bigger and more important than Davos Men. I call them The Square People.

They are mostly young, aspiring to a higher standard of living and more liberty, seeking either reform or revolution (depending on their existing government), connected to one another either by massing in squares or through virtual squares or both, and united less by a common program and more by a shared direction they want their societies to go. We've seen them now in the squares of Tunis, Cairo, Istanbul,

New Delhi, Damascus, Tripoli, Beirut, Sana, Tehran, Moscow, Rio, Tel Aviv and Kiev, as well as in the virtual squares of Saudi Arabia, China and Vietnam.

The latter three countries all have unusually large numbers of Facebook, Twitter or YouTube users, or their Chinese equivalents, which together constitute a virtual square where they connect, promote change and challenge authority. The most popular Vietnamese blogger, Nguyen Quang Lap, has more followers than any government newspaper here. In Saudi Arabia, one of the most popular Twitter hash tags is #If I met the King I would tell him."

And The Square People are only getting more numerous and empowered. "Our goal is that, in three years, every Vietnamese will own a smartphone," Nguyen Manh Hung, who leads the Viettel Group, a Vietnamese telecom, told me. "We are now manufacturing a smartphone for less than $40 and our goal is $35. We charge $2 a month for Internet connection for a P.C. and $2.50 for voice from a smartphone." Because the Vietnamese media is tightly censored, it is no accident that 22 million of Vietnam's 90 million people are on Facebook. Just two years ago there were only 8 million. Vietnam has about 100,000 students studying abroad; a decade ago it was a tenth of that. All future Square People.

To be sure, The Square People represent a diverse politics, including the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and ultranationalists in Kiev. But the dominant trend running through them all is this: "We now have the tools to see how everyone is living, including opportunities abroad and corrupt leaders at home, and we will not tolerate indefinitely living in a context where we can't realize our full potential. And also we now have the tools to collaborate to do something about it."

As a Vietnamese foreign policy expert put it, the Square People one way or another "are demanding a new social contract" with the old guards who've dominated politics. "The people want their voice to be heard in every major debate," not to mention better schools, roads and rule of law. And they are quick to compare with others: " 'Why do those Thai get to go demonstrate and we can't?' "

Ukraine's Square People want to associate with the European Union — not only because they think that's the key to prosperity, but because they think European rules, judicial norms, standards and transparency requirements will force the changes they want at home but cannot generate from above or below. Vietnamese reformers want to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership for the same reasons. Unlike Davos Men, The Square People want to use the global economy to reform their countries, not rise above them.

I gave a talk on globalization at the National University in Hanoi. Afterward I chatted with a young woman, Anh Nguyen, 19, a student who had asked several good questions. Her conversation was peppered with Square talk: "I feel empowered. ... I think Vietnam can change. ... Please tell the world about the big embezzlement case [at a state-owned shipping company] that was uncovered here. Before people would have been silent, but the verdict came out and they sentenced the [bosses] to death. ... It really surprised people. ... Now not every big boss is protected by the government. ... We get many different sources of information from the world. It opens eyes." She has a much greater chance to achieve her potential than her parents, she added, "but not as much as I want."

Move over Davos Man, the Square People are coming.

An Inconvenient Truth About Our Food

By Mark Bittman

New York Times, May 14, 2014

"Fed Up" is probably the most important movie to be made since "An Inconvenient Truth," to which it's related in a couple of ways.

One of its producers is Laurie David, who also produced "An Inconvenient Truth." Climate change, diet and agriculture are inexorably intertwined; we can't tackle climate change without changing industrial agriculture, and we can't change industrial agriculture without tackling diet.

Like "An Inconvenient Truth," too, "Fed Up" can be seen as propaganda. (As can "Farmland," the beautifully shot movie that looks and feels like a Chevy commercial and seems to take as its underlying premise that most Americans mistrust, even hate, farmers. It's more than a little defensive.)

"Fed Up" says: "Here is a problem, a problem that vested interests have no interest in solving, and a problem that must be dealt with if we're interested in our survival. It's something worth fighting about."

The problem at hand, of course, is the standard American diet, especially in its current iteration, which took shape in the early 1980s after the commencement of the official "eat food lower in fat" recommendations. Those recommendations led to a 25 percent increase in the per-capita supply (and indeed consumption) of calories.

Many of those calories were from sugar, on which "Fed Up" focuses (oversimplifying matters a bit, as far as I can tell, but we can live with that), and the high consumption of which contributes or leads to obesity, metabolic syndrome, diabetes and worse. The vested interests profiting from this situation are Big Food and its allies, who will, it seems, go to any lengths to maintain the status quo — even at the cost of our collective public and financial health. (It's expensive to treat these chronic diseases, and we're all footing that bill.)

At some point I have to get to the disclaimers, so here goes: Laurie David is a friend of mine. I'm also acquainted with Katie Couric, the film's narrator, and half or more of the experts interviewed in the course of the movie. Even worse, I'm one of the interviewees. (A minor one; and at least I'm not an investor.)

I know these people in part because we agree on many if not most of the causes of the current food and health crisis, as well as on the directions we should take. There is little new in "Fed Up" for regular readers of this column, or to those who've read a selection of work by Marion Nestle, Michael Pollan, Gary Taubes, Rob Lustig, Michele Simon, Mark Hyman, David Ludwig, David Kessler or any other member of what we might call the professional sane eating brigade.

What matters, what's exciting, is that "Fed Up" might reach some of the majority of Americans who've never heard of any of us but who adore Katie Couric, the former "Today" show co-host and one of the most recognizable women in the country.

The film has three components: a narration of bare facts and not-so-innocent questions by Couric, such as, "Is there a link between our ever expanding waistlines … and dietary guidelines?" and, "What if every can of soda came with a warning label from the surgeon general?" (I said it was propaganda; it's really a call to action.) There is a series of interviews with talking heads, which bring out the heavy-hitting facts about the dangers of the overconsumption of sugar and other hyperprocessed food. These, in turn, are interwoven with the stories of a few obese teenagers and their struggles to lose weight.

I was at first put off by these portraits, but was ultimately won over. The teens were given flip-cams and asked to keep video diaries, and these nonscripted video selfies, some apparently shot in private in their bedrooms, were sometimes almost unbearably touching. (For comic relief there is fantastic vintage footage, including a priceless clip of Homer Simpson shooting up a donut.)

The experts carry the ball. The journalist Gary Taubes calls the "energy balance" theory — the notion that all calories are the same, and that as long as you exercise enough, you'll avoid gaining or even lose weight no matter what you eat — "nonsense." One Coke, we learn, will take more than an hour to burn off. The pediatrician Rob Lustig, a leading anti-sugar campaigner, notes that "we have obese 6-

month-olds. You wanna tell me that they're supposed to diet and exercise?" David Ludwig, another M.D., notes that there is no difference between many processed foods and sugar itself, saying you can eat a bowl of cornflakes with no added sugar or a bowl of sugar with no added cornflakes and "below the neck they're the same thing." Lustig reminds us that anyone can develop metabolic syndrome: "You can be sick without being fat; this is not just a problem of the obese."

And so on. Senator Tom Harkin says, "I don't know how they (the food industry) live with themselves," comparing them to the tobacco industry. Bill Clinton says, effectively, "We blew it," when it came to this struggle.

The movie has some splendid moments: A mother cries at the difficulty of the choice she must make between giving her child what she wants and giving her what's best. Her struggle is common, and she's fighting against an almost overwhelming tide of marketing and, yes, even addiction. A school lunch worker, speaking of the fact that few kids choose the healthy option at lunch, says, "You can't choose for them." But they are children; we must choose for them. Not only are their parents not present, but their parents often don't know what's best.

That "Fed Up" is imperfect — how could a movie that was more than three years in the making, with constant tumult all around it, be otherwise? — is irrelevant. That it suggests that the response of the Obama administration to this crisis — and particularly Mrs. Obama — has been inadequate is also far from paramount. Yes, it's fair to say, as Michael Pollan says in the movie, that "the government is subsidizing the obesity epidemic." It's also true that the Obama administration is the first one to try to do anything positive about this, and that it's being fought at every turn.

Here's what really matters: "Fed Up" is new in its bright, peppy, presumably crowd-pleasing presentation and in its target audience, many of whom, we assume, are not New York Times readers. The movie addresses what the former Food and Drug Administration commissioner David Kessler calls "one of the great public health epidemics of our time." The greater public needs to know that.

As of this writing, the movie is in 19 markets, and doing well. If it were in hundreds of theaters, it would probably change more lives than any movie released this year, because if people see the film, they will get the message. It's not a subtle one.

Thomas Piketty And His Critics

By Thomas B. Edsall

New York Times, May 14, 2014

Many on the left see the popularity of Thomas Piketty's new book, "Capital in the Twenty-First Century," as a sign of hope, but both optimists and pessimists share a belief more telling than Piketty's success: the idea that the traditional Democratic economic agenda is dead.

Piketty's book reinforces the idea that the domestic policies liberals advocate for are palliative, not curative — that, in essence, inequality is here to stay.

The problem of deepening inequality is enormous, Piketty writes: "Growth can of course be encouraged by investing in education, knowledge and nonpolluting technologies. But none of these will raise the rate of growth to 4 or 5 percent a year."

Instead, he writes, "for countries at the world technological frontier" — the United States, northern Europe and parts of Asia — and "ultimately for the planet as a whole – there is ample reason to believe that the growth rate will not exceed 1-1.5 percent in the long run, no matter what economic policies are adopted."

Piketty's analysis articulates what many people on the Democratic left feel intuitively, that a domestic tax, spending and regulatory agenda is ineffective in the face of the power of globalized capital to grind down wages and benefits.

In Piketty's view, the solution is a measure beyond the political reach of any individual nation or international body, as they are now constituted: a global wealth tax. Only such a tax "would contain the unlimited growth of global inequality of wealth, which is currently increasing at a rate that cannot be sustained in the long run and that ought to worry even the most fervent champions of the self-regulated market."

Piketty's proposed global tax would set rates of 0.1 to 0.5 percent on fortunes of less than 1 million euros ($1.37 million); 1 percent on assets of 1 to 5 million euros ($1.37 million to $6.87 million); 2 percent on holdings of 5 to 10 million euros ($6.87 million to $13.7 million); and a sliding scale ultimately reaching 10 percent on fortunes of "several hundred million or several billion euros."

It would be an understatement to say that a tax on wealth faces major implementation problems. James Wetzler, the tax commissioner of New York State during the administration of Mario Cuomo, wrote in an essay that "absent aggressive policy intervention, the Western world appears to be headed toward a plutocratic dystopia characterized by wealth inequality approaching that of ancien régime France."

Wetzler added in an email that "to make the U.S. tax system more progressive, we should focus on strengthening our existing income, estate and gift taxes, not on a new starter like a wealth tax. A federal tax on wealth would require a constitutional amendment, and we know a lot less about its economic impact than we know about our existing taxes."

Further complicating implementation of a wealth tax, according to Wetzler, is that it "must address complexities associated with the fact that so much wealth is owned by corporations and other legal entities with dispersed ownership."

And that's only part of the problem. Who would run a super-national tax collection agency? How would the taxes collected on assets owned by one person but held in multiple countries be distributed? How would global wealth tax supporters actually win the enactment of regulations that would require transparency of ownership of real estate, of bank holdings and of control of private corporations?

Is it fair to describe Piketty's analysis (as opposed to the upbeat man) as pessimistic? First, Piketty declares that traditional liberal remedies – education spending, worker protections, more progressive taxation, family stabilization assistance – may be helpful at the margins, but inequality will worsen "no matter what economic policies are." Second, Piketty does not offer a weapon other than a massively redistributive and politically unachievable tax with which to battle this intensifying inequality.

The unlikeliness of Piketty's policy prescription becoming reality has not placated the right. James Pethokoukis, the money and politics blogger for the American Enterprise Institute, exemplifies the aversion to Piketty now erupting among American conservatives. Pethokoukis warns that Piketty's "soft Marxism," if unchallenged, "will spread among the clerisy and reshape the political economic landscape on which all future policy battles will be waged. We've seen this movie before."

It's not only the right that is disturbed; there is also opposition among a number of progressive activists and liberal policy analysts who recognize the dangers Piketty's analysis poses to their agenda.

While Piketty notes that "there is widespread discontent with the extreme inequality and lack of opportunity and security," he simultaneously reinforces the "passivity and resignation" that comes out of "the failure of the state and of center-left parties to do much to change what's happening" Robert Kuttner, the founder and editor of The American Prospect, told me in an email. And so, Kuttner wrote, "working class people give up on it."

Dean Baker, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, a liberal economic think tank, took a harsher view of liberals' attraction to Piketty. In an email, Baker wrote that "a big part of the appeal is that it allows people to say capitalism is awful but there is nothing that we can do about it." Baker, who has formulated a detailed domestic agenda to fight inequality, worries "that many people will feel that they have done their part after struggling through a lengthy book on economics, and now they can go back to their vacation homes and say it's all a shame."

It may be that Piketty is right that traditional liberal policies are largely ineffective. There are, however, grounds to challenge this pessimism. Support for this challenge can be found not only on the left, but also on the center-right.

Kenneth Rogoff, a Harvard economist, contends in a review of Piketty's book that "the idea of a global wealth tax is replete with credibility and enforcement problems, aside from being politically implausible."

Rogoff views evidence of growing inequality presented by Piketty and others as "persuasive" and he proposes a number of alternative, smaller-scale remedies to control disproportionate wealth accumulation. He suggests a shift to a "relatively flat consumption tax, with a large deductible for progressivity." Consumption taxes apply to spending, as opposed to income taxes that are levied on wages, benefits, profits from sales, dividends and other gains. Why, Rogoff asks, should we "try to move to an improbable global wealth tax when alternatives are available that are growth friendly, raise significant revenue, and can be made progressive through a very high exemption"?

Rogoff cites a series of suggestions developed by Jeffrey Frankel, a professor at the Kennedy School at Harvard. These include "the elimination of payroll taxes for low-income workers, a cut in deductions for high-income workers, and higher inheritance taxes."

Despite the criticism of Piketty from right, left and center, he has, by shifting the focus from income to wealth, successfully transformed the debate over inequality.

His influence is reflected in two essays by Clive Crook, a financial columnist at Bloomberg View. The first was an unrelentingly negative review of Piketty's book, the headline of which gives you the flavor of the rest: "The Most Important Book Ever Is All Wrong."

"Every claim," Crook argues, "is either unsupported or contradicted by Piketty's own data and analysis."

On May 11th, however, Crook did an about face and wrote a very different essay, "Piketty's Wealth Tax Isn't a Joke."

"One idea that's been roundly dismissed by fans and critics alike deserves to be taken more seriously: the proposal for a global wealth tax," Crook writes, noting that "on equity and efficiency grounds, it makes sense to tax wealth."

Crook too sees insurmountable difficulties for any entity that might try to collect an annual wealth tax and argues instead for "moderate but effective taxation of capital income combined with moderate but effective taxation of inheritance, so that unrealized gains are brought back into the tax base, either during the course of an investor's life or at death."

In other words, centrists like Rogoff and Crook – in addition to liberals determined to assault bastions of privilege — are beginning to take proposals to restrain the growing concentration of wealth seriously.

Both the shift of attention to wealth and the seriousness with which a proposal to constrain the accumulation of wealth is being taken represent a major change in the contemporary debate over inequality. Few Americans appear to begrudge the multimillion dollar annual compensation of

entrepreneurial executives like Steve Jobs or Bill Gates. But inherited and unearned wealth does not command the same legitimacy.

In fact, the emergence of what Piketty calls "patrimonial capitalism" — concentrated wealth and political power passed on from generation to generation in a class-based social order — runs directly counter to the longstanding American commitment to equality of opportunity. Piketty has laid the intellectual groundwork for a challenge to a social and political order based on socioeconomic ranking by wealth stratification.

Now we need effective politicians to articulate this challenge in ways that resonate with a striving electorate determined to achieve a higher standard of living through grit and hard work. Where is the level playing field? Politicians who seek to gain traction on these issues face high hurdles, but only those willing to risk confrontation can address the depth of public discontent, anger and resentment.

Teaching Liberation To Pakistan's Girls

By Bina Shah

New York Times, May 14, 2014

KARACHI, Pakistan — You can't go a day on the streets of Pakistan without hearing some spectacularly rude words and colorful insults taken in stride, whether thrown in anger at an errant motorist or in banter among friends at a tea shop. But the words "sex education" are different; they release a tirade of moral righteousness from many Pakistanis, who find this the dirtiest phrase of all. These people fear that it means "teaching children how to have sex," rather than educating them about their health and reproductive rights.

At least in some parts of Pakistan, though, that is beginning to change.

Most Pakistanis still profess conservatism and modesty about sexual relations and matters of the body. But Dr. Nafis Sadik, a United Nations population expert who led Pakistan's successful Family Planning Program in the 1960s, describes a deeper feeling of fear: that if girls are given access to information about sexual health and reproduction, they will become promiscuous. "Boys' and men's sexual behavior is condoned and appreciated," she has said, "but girls' and women's sexual behavior is seen as something that needs to be controlled."

Nevertheless, attitudes are evolving — not least because this prudishness has proved dangerous for the nation.

Today, Pakistanis face a major health care crisis of deadly communicable diseases like hepatitis C, which is rampant in rural areas, as well as a flood of health problems that women and girls experience because Pakistan has also retained the practice of early marriage. Many girls are married off by their families as soon as — or even shortly before — they have reached puberty in their early teens. A result: Pakistan ranks near the bottom among countries in maternal and child health care.

One anecdote captures the absurdity of the problem. Early this year, a village in rural Sindh summoned the boldness to instruct 700 girls from eight local schools on topics like menstruation, how to protect themselves from sexual assault, and even marital rape. The villagers had demanded the classes, and the students reacted enthusiastically to the revolutionary idea that they had the right to control their own bodies. But Mirza Kashif Ali, president of the All Pakistan Private Schools Federation, reacted angrily, reportedly saying: "What's the point of knowing about a thing you're not supposed to do? It should not be allowed at school level."

That "thing you're not supposed to do" is actually being done to young women and girls in child marriages all across Pakistan. Of Pakistan's 90 million women, 37 percent have married before the age

of 18. And one of every 70 dies each year because of early pregnancy, not enough time between pregnancies, and other risks of teenage pregnancy. In 2002, a year assumed to be typical, some 900,000 abortions were performed, the great majority of them unsafe. Abortion is illegal, although rarely if ever prosecuted, and most women who need one must go to an underground doctor or, worse, untrained abortion providers.

Recognizing those facts, a groundbreaking "Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights" education program (the euphemism and its abbreviation — S.R.H.R. — were deemed necessary to avoid the label "sex education") was conducted in rural parts of two Pakistani provinces from 2010 to 2012.

The program was run by Rutgers WPF, a Netherlands-based organization, with two Pakistani partners, Bargad and Saifco; they went into 21 schools in the Sanghar district of Sindh and the Gujranwala district of Punjab to teach 220 female teachers how to speak to their female students about S.R.H.R. The sensitivities that had to be navigated were obvious: The curriculum guide's title was changed — from Comprehensive Sexuality Education to Life Skills Based Education — and the program avoided discussing contraception and sexual activity in the same context. It also included references to sexual and reproductive health and rights in the context of Islam.

The program reached 19,000 girls directly (and through them, an estimated 150,000 more), allowing them for the first time to talk openly to teachers about their health issues. The teachers also made connections with tens of thousands of parents, particularly mothers who had never spoken to their daughters about sexuality or what was expected of them in the marital relationship.

Child marriages are another question. Among Pakistan's rural poor, when girls are married off before full adulthood, the reasoning is usually about economics rather than sexual morality. Many families think they cannot afford to keep their daughters in school; by tradition, the precious little money they have is spent on educating boys. And when parents take a daughter out of school, the next logical step is to get her married.

One theory among reformers is that giving girls the ability to make decisions about their sexual health and reproductive rights can teach them how to say no to child marriage, and no to unwanted pregnancies. But Dr. Sadik says parents have more power to make any education program a success: They are the ones with — or without — the economic wherewithal that determines whether their daughters will begin marriage and childbearing in their early teens.

To address this, girls in the Sanghar and Gujranwala program were taught negotiating skills to influence family financial decisions, like budgeting. According to the sponsoring organization, the girls were urged to prove themselves valuable contributors to the household's economic health, so that parents would not consider them a burden, and in the end, most of the parents appeared to have left their daughters in school rather than force them into child marriages.

Innovative programs like these need to be accompanied by stricter laws against child marriage, like the recently enacted Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act of 2013, which makes marriage under the age of 18 illegal, and punishable with jail or fines for bride, groom or parents. Such measures can help transform the idea of "sex education" from something dirty into a vital tool of economic empowerment and progress.

We need to show our people that a young girl's body broken by pregnancy after pregnancy is the real obscenity — and that a few more precious years of freedom can make the difference between health and illness or death for Pakistan's girls. If we can do that, we'll have achieved a real revolution.

Bina Shah is the author of several novels, including "Slum Child," and short-story collections.

Dirty Dancing In Egypt

By Alaa Al Aswany

New York Times, May 14, 2014

CAIRO — Egyptians are currently suffering from a grinding economic crisis, hefty inflation, a breakdown of security and widespread terrorist attacks. Despite these trying times, the most watched clips on YouTube are of Oriental dance (as raqs sharqi is often translated).

In just one recent month, a video by the Egyptian-Armenian dancer Safinaz was viewed by Egyptians more than four million times. The Lebanese star Haifa Wehbe's dance video got more than 10 million hits. Oriental dance evidently provides light relief from the general state of tension, but there is more to it.

Oriental dance has always been controversial in Egyptian culture. Egyptians love belly dancing, as it is commonly known in the West. Tahia Carioca, a legendary belly dancer, declared to the newspaper Al Hayat in 1994, "Go to any wedding party and once the music starts up, you'll see all the girls in the family suddenly get to their feet and dance like crazy."

But people do not hold Oriental dance in high regard because they equate its suggestiveness with vulgarity and loose living. To call someone the "son of a belly dancer" is an insult.

The tradition of disdaining Oriental dance has a long pedigree. In the "Description de l'Égypte," written by French scholars following Napoleon's invasion in 1798, dancers were described as "women with no training or decorum, and of their dance movements nothing more obscene can be imagined."

That prospect seemed less troubling to the writer Gustave Flaubert, who toured Egypt in 1849-50 and was enchanted by a dancer named Kuchuk-Hanem (a Turkish name meaning "the little lady"). He admired her as "a tall creature, more pale of complexion than the Arabs." The American writer George William Curtis, who visited Egypt at around the same time and also fell in love with her, described the dancer as "a bud no longer, yet a flower not too fully blown."

So what is the secret of this mythical allure? The Palestinian-American academic and author of "Orientalism" Edward Said, writing in Al Hayat, contrasted Western ballet, which "is all about elevation, lightness, the defiance of the body's weight," with Eastern dance, which "shows the dancer planting herself more and more solidly in the earth, digging into it almost." He noted how the latter suggested "a sequence of horizontal pleasures," but "also paradoxically conveyed the kind of elusiveness and grace that cannot be pinned down on a flat surface."

One suspects that few fans are so finely attuned to the aesthetic considerations, but is Oriental dance more than mere titillation?

Andrea Deagon, an associate professor of classics at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, has practiced Oriental dance since she was 17. Oriental dance is liberating for women, Dr. Deagon argues: a form of self-expression in movement that voices what is, in Egyptian society, an otherwise unutterable truth about the pleasures of the body. And it is because Oriental dance poses a challenge to a religiosity that sees any form of display as an act of impurity that it has always been misunderstood and associated with dishonor.

That is precisely what makes it a subversive art: The dancer who shakes off the shackles of the patriarchal order strikes fear into the hearts of religious conservatives, and may even pose a threat to tyranny. Hence its periodic repression.

In 1834, Egypt's ruler, Muhammad Ali, took steps to preserve, as he saw it, Egypt's morals by ordering the arrest and exile to Upper Egypt of all belly dancers and prostitutes. He also imposed a punishment of 50 lashes on any woman who danced in the street.

In the 1960s, under the presidency of Gamal Abdel Nasser, the government department responsible for supervision and censorship of the arts ordered that "Oriental dance is not permitted to show the following: lying on the back, lying on the ground in a vulgar fashion so as to excite, or making rapid movements in such a way as to cause excitement. The thighs are not to be fully open while on the ground. There are to be no wobbling up and down movements." The dancers must have had a good laugh when they heard of the regulations, which, impossible to adhere to, would have entailed a career change.

The Nasserite state made great efforts to preserve Oriental dance as a sanitized form of folklore, removing it from the realm of the sensual. In 1961, Nasser placed the Reda Dance Troupe under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture. The Troupe, which included the aristocratic Farida Fahmy, danced all over the world, winning medals and prizes, but Egyptians — for all their admiration of the Reda Troupe — still clung to the earthier Oriental dance they knew and loved.

Even today, Oriental dance may be performed in Egypt only with a government permit. An officer of the "morality police" can arrest a dancer for wearing a costume that shows more of her body than the law allows, or because she has danced in a manner deemed too provocative.

A certain hypocrisy pertains. While the government has cracked down on dancers in the name of public morality, it has not hesitated to use them for its own political purposes. After the 1973 war between Egypt and Israel, the American secretary of state, Henry A. Kissinger, was engaged in the "shuttle diplomacy" that eventually led to the 1979 Camp David Accords. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry was always sure to book Mr. Kissinger's favorite dancer, Nagwa Fouad, for a private performance during his stays in Cairo.

Just as the Egyptian state has double standards when dealing with Oriental dance, so does the rest of society. The conservative Egyptian who looks down on dancers has no problem buying a costume for his wife so that she can dance for him. Provided belly dancing takes place within a conjugal setting, he considers such behavior licit.

Will Egyptians' attitudes toward dancers ever change? They have more pressing concerns for the moment: bringing about democracy, electing a government that respects human rights and providing a decent living for the millions living in poverty. But I look forward to a new Egypt where belly dancing will have evolved into an art form, without the connotations of immoral conduct that still surround it today.

In a real democracy, there is a place for every citizen, belly dancers included. Until then, Egyptians are sure to continue to be enthusiastic consumers of Oriental dance — but with scant respect for the dancers.

Alaa Al Aswany is the author of the novel "The Yacoubian Building" and other books. This article was translated by Russell Harris from the Arabic.

The Loyal Bunch

By Bongani Madondo

New York Times, May 14, 2014

JOHANNESBURG — Late last month, just as the dry winter weather started to bite, the political climate turned yellow, green and black, the colors of the African National Congress. Africa's oldest liberation party was girding itself for the fifth general elections since the end of apartheid and the most anticipated race since Nelson Mandela walked out of prison.

In the intervening years the A.N.C. has grown into something of a religion; it is the only thing that several generations, old and young, associate with the liberation of blacks from descendants of white

settlers. Never mind that its current prophet-in-chief is President Jacob Zuma — middle name Gedleyihlekisa, which means "the one who kills you with a smile" in Zulu. Once again, the A.N.C. trounced the opposition.

The other players — the Democratic Alliance; a new, self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist party called the Economic Freedom Fighters; the dying horse that is Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party; and various other minor leaguers — made all the noises you'd expect from small opponents trying to dislodge a power-drunk giant. Some of us even rooted for those no-hopers; no one has street cred like the underdogs, and for a time there everything had seemed rickety.

Looking back over the last couple of years, I saw images redolent of apartheid-era uprisings: petrol bombs hurled at public amenities; striking miners massacred in Marikana, the platinum beltway; etc. A foreigner visiting South Africa might have wondered if ordinary people still believed in their liberators. I wondered myself.

A week before the voting, I went to downtown "Jozi," as its denizens call the city. Although not actually depressed economically, the area looks more and more like the District 9 of the dystopian movie, lined with makeshift Pakistani-owned mobile-phone shops and street hawkers selling cheap Made-in-China apparel. On one of these streets, outside Johannesburg Polytech Institute, I overheard this conversation among a group of teenage schoolgirls:

"That guy must go, and with him his looting friends," one said.

"That guy Jacob Zuma," another said. "Pity I don't qualify to vote, otherwise I would vote a hundred votes against him."

"No, you are only allowed one vote my friend. One man one vote," said a third.

In the end, the A.N.C. won with a commanding 62 percent of the total vote. The Democratic Alliance scored 22 percent, most of it apparently gained from the middle-classers among the "born frees," the generation of South Africans too young to have experienced apartheid directly. The newbie E.F.F. did well with the poorer born frees, and got 6 percent.

Oh well; we've been here before. In a 20-year cycle, you slowly make peace with the idea that some things don't change.

The night before the election I had dinner with my friend Tselane Tambo at an upscale Greek joint in an affluent northern suburb. "Of course these guys are all jokes," she said. Tselane is the youngest daughter of the A.N.C.'s longest-serving president, Oliver Reginald Tambo. A columnist and blogger, she often tweets off radical statements about her dislike for the current state of the party she was born into.

Picking up The Star, a daily rag, she jabbed a headline on the front page with a pinkie. "Look! Look at this." The article said the public works department had spent about $21 million on security upgrades to Mr. Zuma's home, including a new "fire-fighting" swimming pool. (He claimed to have felt unsafe since another house of his was burned down and one of his wives was raped.) Tselane rolled her eyes: "The country's in tatters, and leaders are lining their pockets."

Then she grew sullen. "But the A.N.C. is my home," she said. "I was born A.N.C., and that's all I know."

On election day I packed my family in a taxi, and headed to the local voting station. We live in Killarney, a suburb adjacent to Mandela's last neighborhood, Houghton. Polling here takes place at the golf club. This makes me, a freelance author in a country that hardly reads, what Mr. Zuma has called a "clever" black, a member of a professional elite that is out of touch, he says, with the poor blacks he claims to represent.

Soon I found myself in line with Tito Mboweni, a former governor of the Reserve Bank, and Trevor Manuel, a former finance minister — both veterans of the A.N.C., both biting critics of it. As we edged toward the makeshift ballot room, a white woman in her 50s strode out. She was dressed all in black with a clingy vest that read: "Remember Marikana's Fallen Soldiers. They Died for Us." A walking billboard for the ultra-left E.F.F.

She passed by me and said, sobbing, "This is way too much. This has been an emotional day. The workers will rule one day."

Maybe. For now, though, no matter how disenchanted we are with corruption and our clown of a president, South Africans remain a loyal bunch. As a car attendant outside the Killarney Country Club put it: "Even when my wife cheats on me, I can't 'unwife' her just like that. I am A.N.C. in my blood. They are useless, they eat only with the rich, but hey, they are the party of my forefathers. It is like the church you were baptized in." Amen.

Bongani Madondo is a senior editor at the South African edition of Rolling Stone and the author of "Hot Type" and the upcoming "Sigh, the Beloved Country."

China Isn't Overtaking America

By Michael A. Levi

New York Times, May 14, 2014

NEW YORK — A report last month that China's economy will soon become the world's largest has sparked worries. Normally calm observers are taking the news as a sign that China is overtaking America as an economic power.

But much as counting warships or troops often provides a misleading measure of military might, tallying up gross domestic product — the figure behind the latest headlines — yields a warped picture of China's economic rise.

By most meaningful yardsticks, China is still less economically powerful than the United States. The problem with the new numbers starts with how they compare economies' sizes. The World Bank tables that show China passing the United States compare the two countries using "purchasing power parity," which measures national incomes in terms of what they can buy at home.

Because domestic spending is dominated by items such as food and housing that aren't traded internationally, and because most goods and services are cheaper in China than in the United States, this comparison boosts China's apparent economic strength.

Yet compared using market exchange rates, which measure incomes in terms of what they can buy on international markets (where every country pays the same price), the United States' economy remains nearly twice as big as China's. Indeed it is this latter measure that matters most when comparing economic power.

After all, one would never compare two countries' military strengths on the basis of how well each could suppress a domestic rebellion rather than fight a foreign war, and one should not compare countries' economic power on the basis of what a worker in each country can buy at home.

When American and Chinese companies bid against each other to acquire resources or companies abroad, what matters is their wealth as measured by the global market. Oil suppliers, for example, don't care if the $100 they get for a barrel sold to China can buy more rice in a Beijing market than at a shop in New York — they care about what their revenues are worth in the world market.

Similarly, the attractiveness of the Chinese and American markets to foreign firms depends on the profits to be made in international terms, not as measured by purchasing power.

The alarmism about China surpassing America also ignores the critical role of political and institutional strength and flexibility. One wouldn't compare countries' arsenals while ignoring their different states of disrepair — yet Chinese G.D.P. numbers ignore severe pollution problems that are driving successful Chinese abroad. Nor would one compare numbers of aircraft or troops without asking about the training, doctrine and organization necessary to mobilize them effectively in combat. China faces real challenges translating its economic resources into international influence.

The need to maintain political stability and the Communist Party's grip on power constrains what the Chinese government can do to capitalize on the country's economic heft. The difficulty of getting recalcitrant provincial and local governments to enforce Beijing's edicts can make it tough for China to take full advantage of its economic power. The Chinese government, for example, has tried to forge packages of infrastructure and resource investment in strategically attractive developing countries, only to have the Chinese companies that would need to implement the schemes refuse to participate.

Certainly, China has its advantages. There are some things that matter for international power — notably military personnel — that can be paid for domestically, making lower Chinese prices (and wages) a meaningful advantage.

The American market may be larger than China's, but China's is growing more rapidly, often creating more new opportunities for international firms. And Washington faces political and institutional constraints just like Beijing does. America's economy can't compete with a state-dominated behemoth when it comes to rewarding favored partners with economic opportunities. And the United States is less able to direct its outward commerce toward political ends than China is: Beijing is more capable, for example, of persuading Sinopec to pursue geopolitically attractive investments than Washington is of mobilizing ExxonMobil.

Twenty-first century rivalry between the United States and China will be as much about economic might as military power. Judging the economic balance correctly will be as essential a foundation for effective international strategy as proper assessment of the military balance was during the Cold War. Avoiding overreaction in the face of the latest headlines about China's economic triumph would be a great place to start.

Michael A. Levi, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, is co-author of "By All Means Necessary: How China's Resource Quest is Changing the World."

Rescuing The Kidnapped Girls Should Be Only A First Step For Nigeria To Counter Boko Haram

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

THOUGH IT is easily derided as superficial, the social media campaign in support of about 300 girls who were abducted in Nigeria is producing results. The Ni-ger-ian government has been shamed into accepting intelligence and advisers from the United States, Britain and Israel, and a U.S. surveillance plane has joined the search for the girls. The fanatical leader of Boko Haram, the Islamic extremist group that carried out the kidnapping on April 15, has taken notice and shifted from a vow to sell off the girls as slaves to a proposal to trade them for prisoners. The Ni-ger-ian government appears open to negotiations.

Any rescue of the girls, who were abducted from a tiny village in northeastern Nigeria, where Boko Haram has waged a horrific war against schools and their students, would be welcome. Certainly it would vindicate the average Nigerians — most of them women — who launched the #BringBackOurGirls campaign on Twitter in outrage over the seeming indifference of the government of Goodluck Jonathan. That the campaign was joined by the likes of first lady Michelle Obama and House Speaker John

Boehner (R-Ohio) brought welcome attention to the threat posed by Boko Haram, which has killed thousands of civilians over five years, has links to al-Qaeda and forms part of a mosaic of Islamist extremist groups that plague northern Africa.

The larger aim of this campaign, however, should be to alter Nigeria's self-defeating response to Boko Haram. The government has mixed heavy-handed repression with a prickly refusal to accept advice or more than small-scale assistance from the United States and other governments. In response to vicious attacks on schools and civilians, Mr. Jonathan's government has dispatched poorly trained and equipped military forces that have too often conducted their own rampages.

Human rights groups have documented secret detentions, extortion, burning of homes and extrajudicial killings. After Boko Haram attacked a barracks in March in an attempt to free detainees, a government counterattack killed hundreds, including many of the prisoners. If negotiations over the release of the girls move forward, the government could consider releasing some men and boys who were swept up in raids but not convicted of wrongdoing.

The Obama administration has tried pressing the government in private to adopt a broad strategy of counterterrorism, including social programs and better policing; it has tried public and private criticism of the military's abuses. Both have been brushed off by Mr. Jonathan. U.S. legal restrictions on aid to military units involved in human rights violations are also an obstacle. Consequently, aid has been limited to training special forces and sharing intelligence.

There is probably no cause for the United States to deploy its own forces in Nigeria. But the administration should use this moment to press Mr. Jonathan to accept more training assistance for Ni-ger-ian counterterrorism forces and police as part of a broader program to build governmental institutions in the impoverished and neglected areas where Boko Haram has flourished. A good starting point would be funding and protection for schools where girls can be educated.

Virginia's Governor Moves To Protect Access To Abortion

By Editorial Board

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

AS A candidate last year, Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe (D) promised to do what he could to roll back absurd, baldly political rules imposed on the state's abortion clinics with the transparent purpose of forcing many of them to close. Now Mr. McAuliffe, who took office in January, is taking a step toward fulfilling that promise. If he's successful, he will preserve access to abortions each year for some 10,000 Virginia women — many of them minorities — who otherwise would likely be unable to find nearby clinics to perform the procedure.

During the campaign, Mr. McAuliffe suggested that he might be able to challenge the regulations by issuing an "advisory opinion" meant to sway the state Board of Health. That had a superficial appeal; after all, the board had originally agreed that existing clinics should not be affected by new rules. Opinions from a ferociously antiabortion attorney general pushed the board to change its view.

But Mr. McAuliffe's "advisory opinion" option faded under the scrutiny of legal experts. So the governor is trying a new tack: appointing abortion rights advocates to the board in the explicit hope that they will initiate a "review" that will delay or water down the rules before they can take effect in the coming months.

The Republican speaker of the House of Delegates, William J. Howell (Stafford), reacted with predictable dyspepsia, calling Mr. McAuliffe's approach "an overtly political move." The unspoken irony was that no one could possibly outdo Mr. Howell and Republicans in their overtly political end-run around abortion rights that are the law of the land.

Their legislation, enacted in 2011, reclassified abortion clinics, which perform first-trimester procedures that take two or three hours, as the regulatory equivalent of full-service hospitals. As applied to existing clinics — a departure from past practice by which new codes generally applied only to new structures — the law imposed ludicrous requirements that would have no effect on the welfare of patients. Clinics would have to spend millions of dollars to widen hallways, add parking spaces, enlarge operating rooms and expand janitorial closets.

The truth is, first-trimester procedures, which account for nearly all the roughly 25,000 abortions performed annually in Virginia, are safe and relatively simple; mishaps in the state's clinics are exceedingly rare. There is no evidence that forcing clinics to install ventilation systems up to the standards of hospital operating rooms will improve outcomes in clinics that provide abortions, which do not require incisions.

For the state's surviving 18 abortion clinics — those that have not already closed under threat of the new rules — Mr. McAuliffe's maneuver may mean a reprieve for as many as half. Those clinics are the only convenient option for thousands of women who seek abortions each year. If the governor can preserve that option for those women, he will have served the cause of rights conferred by the Supreme Court.

This Time The Left Scuttles A Viable Alternative To Fannie And Freddie

By Editorial Board

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

CONTRARY TO what you may have heard, reducing the federal role in the housing market is not a radical free-market notion. In fact, after a $187 billion taxpayer bailout of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac exposed the misallocation of resources that those two institutions had fostered for decades, reform enjoyed high-level Obama administration support: "I think it's absolutely the case that the U.S. government provided too much support for housing, too strong incentives for investment in housing," then-Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner said in a Feb. 11, 2011, speech at the Brookings Institution. His department produced three options for a Fannie-free future.

Three years later, Mr. Geithner is on the former-official book tour, and the work he and many others poured into rethinking housing finance is looking increasingly like wasted effort. Mel Watt, the federal housing regulator who serves as Fannie and Freddie's de facto chief, mounted the podium at the Brookings Institution on Tuesday to declare that he will henceforth focus on keeping the two entities alive more or less as is. To help ease the flow of mortgage credit, which has been drying up absent a permanent Fannie-Freddie fix, Mr. Watt will forgo planned contraction of the "conforming" loan limit for securitized mortgages and relax the perfectionism with which Fannie and Freddie had previously treated the loans it purchases. Item One in his new strategic plan for the entities, Mr. Watt announced, is to "MAINTAIN" — all-caps in original — "foreclosure prevention activities and credit availability for new and refinanced mortgages."

You can call this a victory for defenders of the status quo who backed Mr. Watt to replace Edward DeMarco, an advocate of aggressively winding down Fannie and Freddie. Or, equally validly, you can see Mr. Watt's declaration as a recognition of reality — economic and political. The economic reality is that there is still no good private-sector alternative to the Fannie-Freddie duopoly. And the political reality is that Congress has failed to legislate one. The only bipartisan bill has foundered in the Senate Banking Committee. Though it's still likely to pass a scheduled committee vote on Thursday, six key liberal Democrats have declared themselves opposed, which probably dooms its chances on the Senate floor.

The left objected that the bill's subsidies for low-income borrowers were insufficient — which sounds to us like a complaint that it lacked the kind of credit set-asides that created damaging conflicts of interest for Fannie and Freddie.

The big winners from this turn of events, ironically, may be not the poor and the "underserved," but a group of giant hedge funds that snapped up millions of beaten-down Fannie and Freddie shares after the government bailout, and are now lobbying Congress — as well as suing in federal court — for a return to private ownership, albeit with what the hedge funds say would be stronger protections against excessive risk-taking. Thus would a huge taxpayer investment in rescuing Fannie and Freddie pave the way for a colossal windfall for bottom-feeding Wall Street types. The longer interest-group squabbling prevents Congress from enacting a better approach, the more time the hedgies have to achieve the outcome that favors them.

Read more about this topic: The Post's View: Fannie and Freddie wind-down opponents wind up misleading ads The Post's View: Bid to replace Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac gets a needed push Charles Lane: It's time to fix Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac

By Serving Alcohol, Starbucks Risks Losing Key Customers: People In Recovery

By Greg Williams

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

Greg Williams, who has been in recovery from alcohol and drug use for more than 12 years, wrote and produced the documentary "The Anonymous People."

Recently Starbucks announced it would expand its offerings and start selling alcoholic drinks in the evening in thousands of its stores. The move was touted by chief executive Howard Schultz as a strategy for the company to grow profits by increasing the average sale per customer.

Schultz's shareholders no doubt exchanged a mental fist-bump. But the celebration may be short-lived once they realize that they are in danger of turning away a key coffee-consuming segment: more than 23 million Americans living in recovery from substance-use disorders.

Starbucks spokeswoman Lisa Passé called it "a natural progression for Starbucks as we seek to create a new occasion for customers to gather, relax and connect with each other in the evenings." What Passé did not mention was why a lot of customers already gather, relax and connect at Starbucks — helping to make it the largest coffee chain in the world.

Every day, people in recovery meet up in Starbucks cafes to support one another, to talk to their 12-step sponsors and, most of all, to be welcomed in one of the few lively, popular, alcohol-free gathering places in their community.

Starbucks should pay special attention to them.

One of the most useful concepts in business is the Pareto principle, or what is commonly known as the 80/20 rule. This widely adopted marketing principle — that 20 percent of input causes 80 percent of the result — suggests that 80 percent of all coffee consumed at Starbucks is derived from just 20 percent of their consumer base.

And who might be part of that base? The October 2008 issue of the journal Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research found that 88.5 percent of those studied who were in recovery from alcoholism drank coffee. Thirty-three percent of those coffee drinkers drank more than four cups a day.

That means millions of recovering people drink coffee, and a third of them drink a lot of it.

If you closed your eyes and pictured a 12-step meeting room, you'd probably picture a coffee urn and plastic foam cups stacked next to it. And you'd be right. After a typical meeting, you'd see groups of people leaving together to head for the local Starbucks.

In the short run, Schultz may be adding a new set of customers who bring in a $20-plus sale once a week. But if the evening culture of the cafes turns into a hybrid bar scene, Starbucks will be at serious risk of forcing out a devoted set of high-volume existing customers. Many of them may already spend more than $20 a day on alcohol-free beverages.

If Starbucks executives studied this market demographic, perhaps they would think twice about this move. They don't have to be driven by the spirit of supporting people's journey of recovery from addiction. They could do it just for their shareholders.

GOP Should Give Grown-up Politics A Chance

Washington Post, May 13, 2014

Eliot Cohen nails the Obama administration and many of its critics for deeply unserious behavior:

Indiana Gov. Mike Pence signs legislation on March 24 at the Indiana Career Council Meeting at the Indiana State Library. (Rob Goebel/The Indianapolis Star via Associated Press)

Often, members of the Obama administration speak and, worse, think and act, like a bunch of teenagers. When officials roll their eyes at Vladimir Putin's seizure of Crimea with the line that this is "19th-century behavior," the tone is not that different from a disdainful remark about a hairstyle being "so 1980s." When administration members find themselves judged not on utopian aspirations or the purity of their motives—from offering "hope and change" to stopping global warming—but on their actual accomplishments, they turn sulky. As teenagers will, they throw a few taunts (the president last month said the GOP was offering economic policies that amount to a "stinkburger" or a "meanwich") and stomp off, refusing to exchange a civil word with those of opposing views.

In a searing memoir published in January, former Defense Secretary Robert Gates describes with disdain the trash talk about the Bush administration that characterized meetings in the Obama White House. Like self-obsessed teenagers, the staffers and their superiors seemed to forget that there were other people in the room who might take offense, or merely see the world differently. Teenagers expect to be judged by intentions and promise instead of by accomplishment, and their style can be encouraged by irresponsible adults (see: the Nobel Prize committee) who give awards for perkiness and promise rather than achievement.

He does not spare Republicans. ("The teenage temperament infects our politics on both sides of the aisle, not to mention our great universities and leading corporations. The old, adult virtues—gravitas, sobriety, perseverance and constancy—are the virtues that enabled America to stabilize a shattered world in the 1940s, preserve a perilous order despite the Cold War and navigate the conclusion of that conflict.")

With regard to the Obama crew, no one should be surprised. He ran a campaign in 2008 designed by and for young people. Fortune-cookie phrases became the mantra of the man running to be leader of the Free World. Obama girls swooned. We also see teenage behavior from media organizations, many of which have been deeply unserious in their choice of topics, in their willingness merely to regurgitate White House spin, in their obsession with contrived personality fights (remember Majority Leader Eric Cantor vs. House Speaker John Boehner?) and in their refusal to diversify their ranks with reporters who don't subscribe to cool-kid liberalism.

Some blame the culture generally for this phenomenon. But while the culture has dumbed down the country, made language more coarse and people less polite, commerce still gets done, parents raise kids, soldiers fight magnificently well — all using a healthy mix of common sense and expertise. Compare the way pols talk and act with the tone and conduct of parents, co-workers, business owners, military

men and women (not the Beltway-tamed pseudo politicians) and professionals you interact with outside of politics. Frankly, a disturbingly large number of politicians bear as much resemblance to working adults as sitcom TV parents do to real ones.

What else has been unserious of late?

* Appointing Chuck Hagel as defense secretary. Imagine a CEO of the company hiring someone so obviously in over his head and unable even to effectively work from a script. (Might the shareholders think the CEO has lost it?)

* Running around hollering that the sky is falling if the sequester goes through. Would you want to rely on a co-worker who at the first sign of trouble rolled out a parade of phony horribles? (Might you prefer to work alone in the future?)

* The Senate majority leader, like the wide-eyed grouch screaming for kids to get off the lawn, making a Senate election about two rich donors in a sea of rich donors. Imagine a doctor, instead of rendering germane medical advice, going on rants about Big Pharma's conspiracy to take over medicine. (Might you get another doctor?)

* U.S. senators shutting down the government because "the important thing is to fight." Imagine a Marine with such a nonspecific and self-destructive mindset, blowing up his own facility just to show he can do it. (Might his commanding officer initiate court martial — or medical — proceedings?)

* The media fixating on a senator drinking from a water bottle in a response to the president's State of the Union address. Imagine a parent obsessed for weeks about a dropped fork at the dinner table. (Might the spouse inquire whether something is wrong?)

This gap between everyday experience and politics is one reason average citizens rate politicians so poorly. But the voice of conscience and maybe fear (for the country) still beckons. The interest in GOP governors or ex-governors to run in 2016 is in large part a search for maturity. Governors certainly are perceived as less politically infantile in large part because they have to do things (e.g. pass budgets, deal with Medicaid). The incentive for silly stunts is much lower at the state level while the consequences of gridlock, bad governance and extreme policies are acutely and swiftly felt.

And Republicans, no matter how much they dislike Hillary Clinton's politics and can accurately recite her policy flubs, should be aware that to most voters she comes across as serious and mature. Putting up a fire-breathing nominee with a bunch of silly ideas and little depth of knowledge would be like sending a Little Leaguer up to bat against the Detroit Tigers.

So where is the GOP grown-up? Former Florida governor Jeb Bush is impressing donors and conservative wonks in large part because he talks, doesn't scream; explains, doesn't regurgitate catch phrases; and seems comfortable in his own skin, rather than inhabiting a cartoon role. Other governors, including Indiana's Mike Pence and Wisconsin's Scott Walker, do the same.

Many Republicans seem to have recognized that they have been fed a steady diet of junk TV and cotton candy, and crave some substance, something more fulfilling. The noise from the teenage crowd is deafening, but one sign of maturity is the ability to ignore the racket and engage listeners in more important pursuits. But first, one or more Republicans has to decide to give grown-up politics and governance a shot.

Marco Rubio's Changing Climate

By Ruth Marcus

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

"I do not believe that human activity is causing these dramatic changes to our climate the way these scientists are portraying it," said Sen. Marco Rubio.

Thus did the Florida Republican undermine his other assertion, to ABC's Jonathan Karl: that he is prepared to be president.

"Our climate is always changing," Rubio further hole-dug. "And what they have chosen to do is take a handful of decades of research and say that this is now evidence of a longer-term trend that's directly and almost solely attributable to man-made activity. I do not agree with that."

Rubio certainly isn't alone among Republicans in dissing the scientific consensus — "these scientists," he said, flicking away reams of data as the fevered imaginings of climate true--believers.

And his phrasing is cleverly careful, with caveats and straw men that allow him to stop short of outright denialism while comforting the party's denialist base.

Consider Rubio on CNN last week: "I understand that there's a vast consensus of scientists that are saying that human activity is what's contributing to changes in our climate."

So far, so good, but does Rubio agree? He doesn't say, but in an interview last year with BuzzFeed — an interview Rubio's office flagged for me as emblematic of his views on climate change — Rubio suggested there was "reasonable debate" on the role of human activity.

With CNN, Rubio instead pivoted straight to the straw man: "I think it's an enormous stretch to say that every weather incident that we now read about or the majority of them are attributable to human activity." But of course, no reputable scientist is making that stretch.

Rubio has a more serious argument — that unilateral action will be unavailing, that the costs of responding to climate change exceed the benefits. But he undermines this point — and with it, his broader credibility — by refusing to acknowledge scientific reality.

Let's look at the data — or, as Rubio would call it, "a handful of decades of research."

The National Climate Assessment, this month: "Evidence from the top of the atmosphere to the depths of the oceans . . . tells an unambiguous story: the planet is warming, and over the last half-century, this warming has been driven primarily by human activity — predominantly the burning of fossil fuels."

Just this week, two groups of scientists offered disturbing assessments about what they deemed the unstoppable melting of Antarctic ice sheets, driven in part by human-caused global warming and threatening catastrophic rises in sea levels.

But if Rubio doesn't believe the scientists, perhaps he might believe . . . himself. As the Miami Herald recounted, "As the leader of the Florida House in 2008, Rubio presided over a unanimous vote in favor of directing the state Department of Environmental Protection to develop ground rules for companies to limit their carbon emissions."

The following year, Rubio described a cap-and-trade system as "inevitable" and pronounced himself "in favor of giving the Department of Environmental Protection a mandate that they go out and design a cap-and-trade or a carbon tax program."

According to the Herald, Rubio "hired a leading climate change expert" — eek, a scientist! — "from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to advise lawmakers."

Rubio claimed the following year that he was actually engineering a plan to stop cap-and-trade, but that was hardly a credible explanation for a convenient flip-flop as he ran in the Republican primary against then-Gov. Charlie Crist, a cap-and-trade advocate.

Since then, Rubio has moved from disclaiming scientific expertise to deriding it.

"I'm not a scientist. I'm not qualified to make that decision," Rubio told the Herald in December 2009 when asked whether climate change was the result of human activity. Climate change, by the way, isn't

the only issue on which Rubio punted to scientists: When GQ asked in 2012 how old the Earth is, Rubio demurred, "I'm not a scientist, man."

Which is it, senator? You don't know as much as these scientists or you don't believe them?

Rubio's shift sadly mirrors his party's. As Paul Waldman recounted on The Post's Plum Line blog, in 2012, the leading Republican presidential candidates had "embarrassing flirtations with climate realism."

The 2016 crowd, by contrast, ranges from skepticism to blanket denial. "The last 15 years, there has been no recorded warming," asserted Texas Sen. Ted Cruz. "The Earth's 4.5 billion years old, and you're going to say that we had four hurricanes and so that proves a theory?" offered Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul.

"Climate is always evolving," Rubio told ABC. Sadly, it's not the only thing.

Bill Maher Speaks His Mind, Unfortunately

By Kathleen Parker

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

When my neighbor gleefully reported that Bill Maher had dedicated a searing monologue to me for a column I wrote about the Donald Sterling/Cliven Bundy rants, my first thought was, Nah . If I tussled with everybody who tossed a brick through the window, I'd never get the draperies hung.

My second thought was about something my father said to a drunk who was looking for a fight: "I'm too old to fight," my dad said, peering over his half-moon glasses. "But I'd be glad to step outside and kill you."

Dads.

I've decided to respond to Maher because I agree with him on his central point, that we should fight the scourge of privacy invasion.

But my point was a little different than Maher's characterization, if perhaps unclear to literal minds. One would think that someone who has so artfully mastered snark would recognize sarcasm, as when I wrote that "speaking one's mind isn't really all it's cracked up to be."

Assuring his audience that speaking his mind "is absolutely everything it's cracked up to be," to which I would only add "and much, much more," Maher said people would miss speaking their minds. Perhaps, but how would you know?

I think, Bill, that you and I are talking about different minds. As noted in my column, any uncertainty about the value of always speaking one's mind vanishes upon reading online comments. Have you read yours?

Maher further objected to my suggestion that the potential for exposure by being unwittingly recorded forces us to select our words and edit our thoughts more carefully. But don't all adults edit their words and thoughts to some degree? Oh, wait, no.

Southerners are perhaps too obsessed with trying never to offend while entertaining the most dastardly thoughts. Everyone knows that "Bless your heart" means anything but, depending.

But Maher would rather be a Mormon than have to be "always editing," as he put it in his monologue. Listening to 100 horrific rants by Bundy, he added, would be better than being Mitt Romney.

Bill, Bill, Billy, honey. Obviously, the consequence of self-editing isn't to become a cliche. Sometimes it just means being a little bit clever.

Certainly, those un-clever fellows Sterling and Bundy would be better off had they kept their thoughts to themselves. Do they have the right to express them? Absolutely, but the obvious consequences make my point. This isn't a matter of government oppression of free speech but of private citizens condemning their neighbors for expressing thoughts that have been historically harmful.

Yes, Bill, people should be able to think what they want in the privacy of their living rooms, not that our thoughts are necessarily good company. Most of them percolate unbidden from the unconscious and intrude upon our sense of order. Self-aware people examine those thoughts and wrestle them into submission. The rest are on TV. (Kidding, kidding, sheesh.)

Urging people to think before they speak is hardly East Germany, as Maher said. This is what parents teach their children every day. Don't write something in an e-mail that you wouldn't want others to see. And while we're at it, don't post idiotic pictures on Facebook if you're looking for a job.

This is common-sense advice based on reality. It's too bad Sterling's "friend" recorded him saying offensive things. Too bad he thinks this way. Too bad he doesn't have better friends.

Maher wondered whether I ever get together with my girlfriends, drink too much wine and say things I wouldn't want broadcast elsewhere. Well, yeah, that's why I call them friends. Indeed, I would be shocked if either of them ever repeated (or remembered) a word.

Finally, my point wasn't that we should surrender to Big Brother. As I've written and spoken often, we have become a dangerously voyeuristic society driven by the narcissistic urge to know and be known.

Translated: Basically, we're borderline sociopaths with a spy factory in our pockets.

Barring legal action against thought thieves posing as "friends," the solution is not so easily imagined. Until we conceive of one, it seems minimally rational to recognize that any electronic interaction carries risks.

In the spirit of modern friendship, meaning we're not really friends, I leave you, Bill, with an open invitation to stop by the Olive Street stoop next time you're in D.C. We'll drink too much wine and speak our minds freely with an assortment of neighbors who definitively will not bore you.

And I promise, I won't tell a soul.

A Nightmare Group In Syria Could Target The US

By David Ignatius

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

The chamber of horrors of the Syrian civil war has spawned a terrorist group so extreme that it has been rejected even by al-Qaeda — and this toxic group is now establishing a safe haven in the city of Raqqah in northern Syria that could soon be used to attack foreign targets.

The hyper-militant terrorist group is known in the West as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS. Its efforts to establish a Muslim caliphate that spans the two countries, and to absorb another al-Qaeda offshoot known as the al-Nusra Front, brought a rebuke a year ago from al-Qaeda's chief, Ayman al-Zawahiri.

"I have to choose between the rule of God and the rule of Zawahiri, and I choose the rule of God," thundered Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the charismatic leader of ISIS. The group went its own fiery way after it was denounced by Zawahiri, leaving the al-Nusra Front as al-Qaeda's official Syrian affiliate.

The terrorist threat in Syria is germinating in the dark space between the weak moderate opposition movement, which has been pleading for more Western training and assistance, and the embattled regime of President Bashar al-Assad. For now, the main check on ISIS's growth is that it burns so hot, and operates so brutally, that it alienates people where it takes root.

U.S. intelligence agencies are working with counterparts in the Middle East and Europe to track ISIS and al-Nusra Front operatives and to monitor foreign fighters who have traveled to Syria to join the jihad. This effort to map the Sunni jihadist networks has drawn a useful portrait:

●Of the roughly 110,000 total opposition fighters in Syria, ISIS accounts for somewhere between 5,000 and 10,000; the al-Nusra Front has 5,000 to 6,000 committed fighters. A third militant Sunni group called Ahrar al-Sham has 10,000 to 15,000 members, some of whom have extremist leanings. The extremists in these groups are regarded as the toughest and most motivated warriors within the opposition.

●About 10,000 to 15,000 foreigners have joined the opposition, traveling from such diverse locations as Chechnya, Australia, Libya, Belgium and the United States. Intelligence analysts are said to be especially concerned about roughly 1,500 foreign fighters who hold European passports, which allow them to travel freely across the continent and to enter the United States with relative ease.

U.S. officials believe that ISIS is providing tactical expertise and training facilities to these foreign fighters — building the infrastructure for foreign terrorist operations. Moreover, Baghdadi and other top leaders are said to have issued multiple statements over the past two years threatening international attacks.

In the view of these officials, ISIS could attempt an attack outside the Middle East soon, and several plots have already been disrupted. But analysts believe that the group is focused now mostly on battles within Syria and Iraq.

The group has established a secure haven in Raqqah, a city of about 220,000. Its fighters control the roads in and out. They sell the region's oil and natural gas resources to finance their operations, supplementing revenues from kidnapping and other criminal activities. U.S. officials believe ISIS is now self-financing and no longer needs donations from wealthy supporters in the Gulf.

As its name implies, ISIS seeks to mobilize Sunnis in both Iraq and Syria. The Iraq branch is battle-hardened from its years of fighting under Abu Musab al-Zarqawi against U.S. military occupation. Their Iraq force is smaller than in Syria, probably numbering in the hundreds, but it has a tight command structure and has spearheaded Sunni attacks against government troops in Fallujah and other neighborhoods west of Baghdad.

U.S. officials view Baghdadi as a dynamic leader who mobilizes Iraqi Sunnis into what he promotes as a vanguard against the Shiite-led government. He offers "repentance" for those who allied with U.S. forces against al-Qaeda in Iraq. Though less an operational commander than Zarqawi, he's just as capable of inspiring followers. In a well-researched profile last December, Time magazine described Baghdadi as "Osama bin Laden's true heir."

A nightmare for U.S. counterterrorism analysts is that these al-Qaeda offshoots could recruit new followers among the millions of desperate Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Syria itself.

One veteran U.S. official views the terrorist threat coming out of Syria and Iraq as potentially the most worrying development in the Middle East since the late 1970s. The United States may be less focused on the jihadists than it was a decade ago, but they remain very much interested in the United States.

Birth Of A Scandal Blaming Hillary Clinton For Ni-ger-ian Kidnappings

By Dana Milbank

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

Conservatives have reached the firm conclusion that Hillary Clinton is to blame for those Nigerian schoolgirls kidnapped by the terrorist group Boko Haram, 14 months after she left office.

All they have to do now is fill in the details.

On Fox News last week, Elisabeth Hasselbeck attributed the attack to Clinton's failure to put the group on a list of foreign terrorist organizations when she was secretary of state. That "perhaps could have saved these girls earlier," Hasselbeck declared.

Rush Limbaugh, on his radio show, suggested that Clinton didn't designate the group as terrorist because its members are black.

Fox's Megyn Kelly floated the idea that Clinton didn't put the group on the list because doing so would have "angered them," and a guest on her show said Clinton gave Boko Haram a "green light."

House intelligence committee Chairman Mike Rogers (R-Mich.) and others argued that the Twitter campaign raising awareness of the kidnappings, #BringBackOurGirls, was evidence of the toothless foreign policy favored by Clinton and President Obama. Clinton, who along with first lady Michelle Obama participated in the campaign, was derided for trying "to fight Boko Haram with hashtags."

Former congressman Allen West, always a step ahead, asserted that focus on the kidnapping is a "wag the dog" conspiracy by the Obama administration to distract attention from the Benghazi, Libya, investigation (of which Clinton is also a target).

Former House speaker Newt Gingrich called for congressional hearings — which would also provide the opportunity to explore whether Clinton suffered a brain injury, as Karl Rove has alleged, and whether she orchestrated the Monica Lewinsky article in Vanity Fair, as Lynne Cheney suggested.

The nascent effort to pin blame for Boko Haram on Clinton is still far from a full-blown Benghazi conspiracy theory. But it's worth examining, because it shows how a scandal is born.

The abduction of hundreds of Nigerian girls by Boko Haram, the latest atrocity by the militant group claiming to be acting on Islamic principles, has little to do with the United States. But while the rest of humanity reacts with revulsion, American conservatives have searched for ways to blame the kidnappings on the favorite for the 2016 Democratic presidential nomination.

They found their opening in a decision by the State Department not to put the group on its list of foreign terrorist organizations after Boko Haram bombed U.N. headquarters in Abuja in 2011. The FBI, the CIA and various lawmakers argued for its inclusion, but Nigeria's government, which Boko Haram is trying to topple, argued against it, as did academic experts on Nigeria. John Campbell, U.S. ambassador to Nigeria during the George W. Bush administration, told Fox's Chris Wallace on Sunday that, "along with a good many other Nigerian experts at the time, we all opposed designation."

Opponents figured the designation would elevate the prestige of Boko Haram, which was essentially a domestic Nigerian organization. Instead, Clinton in 2012 put three of the group's leaders on a list of foreign terrorists. After Boko Haram killed more than 160 civilians in Benisheik, Nigeria, in September 2013, Clinton's successor, John Kerry, finally put the group on the terror list — and Boko Haram's brazen attacks continued unimpeded.

The blame-Hillary effort began, as these things often do, with a report by a mainstream journalist. After Clinton tweeted about the "unconscionable" abductions and said "we must stand up to terrorism," Josh Rogin posted an article May 7 in the Daily Beast quoting an anonymous "former senior U.S. official" accusing Clinton of "gross hypocrisy" because she hadn't put Boko Haram on the list.

From there, conservatives were off to the races. Glenn Beck's the Blaze picked up Rogin's report, highlighting the anonymous quote. The Daily Caller went with the headline "Secretary Hillary — Now Decrying 'Terrorism' — Refused to Call Boko Haram a Terror Group." National Review and others joined in.

"Now word is because we did not place them on the terror list," said Fox News's Steve Doocy the morning after Rogin's report appeared, "it's going to be harder to go after them. And who exactly made sure that they were not placed on the terror list? Hillary Clinton."

Inevitably, the accusations landed on the House floor, where Rep. Louie Goh-mert (R-Tex.) gave a long speech the next day, quoting Rogin's article, citing Fox News and asserting that Clinton "protected" the terrorists.

"What happened here is obvious, although the commentariat is loath to connect the dots," the lawmaker said. "Ms. Clinton, like the Obama administration more broadly, believes that appeasing Islamists . . . promotes peace and stability."

It was a textbook example of the anatomy of a smear.

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES

Md., Del. Delegations Ask Pfizer For Job Assurances; Hostile Bid Possible

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

Pfizer hinted Tuesday it might sweeten its roughly $106 billion spurned bid for British pharma AstraZeneca, and said it wouldn't rule out a hostile takeover.

The New York-based drugmaker's update came as the congressional delegations of Delaware and Maryland filed letters to the drug giant asking for assurances that AZ's local workforce would remain intact in any merger.

The CEOs of both drugmakers testified before Parliament Tuesday, with lawmakers grilling Pfizer head Ian Read about his plans for the future of a combined company in the United Kingdom.

"There will be job cuts somewhere, that's part of being more efficient," Read told the committee. "Whereabouts in the world, I cannot say."

Story: AstraZeneca works to rally shareholders

Story:: AstraZeneca positions vulnerable amid merger discussion

Story: AstraZeneca profit misses estimates

However, he has made it clear that Pfizer is committed to England, where it would establish the corporate residence of a new company, thereby saving an estimated $1 billion in corporate taxes to the United States.

In their letters, the congressional delegations of Delaware and Maryland were following the lead of those states' governors, who also wrote to encourage Pfizer to retain AZ's headquarters for the Americas in Fairfax along with 2,600 Delaware jobs, and 3,100 employees at MedImmune in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

Read was more encouraging in his response to Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, saying, "MedImmune, a key biologics arm of AstraZeneca's R&D platform, demonstrates incredible value to patients by developing innovation-driven biopharmaceuticals.

"Leveraging biological advances to develop small and large molecule medicines, MedImmune's modality independent approach to research and development would be a good complement to Pfizer's research efforts in a potential combination with AstraZeneca, and could create an enhanced research portfolio in key areas such as Oncology, Immunology and Cardiovascular Disease."

Separately, Read has promised Prime Minister David Cameron that he would complete AstraZeneca's R&D innovation hub in Cambridge and locate "key scientific leadership" in the U.K., along with 20 percent of the combined company's total R&D workforce.

To Markell, Read wrote, "I recognize that Delaware has made a significant investment to the biopharmaceutical industry, and I understand your interest in the specific impact to your state. Pfizer values your investment and the important science that is being conducted there."

He said it was "premature to speculate on any specific impact this would have on jobs and facilities in any given state."

In their letter, sent Tuesday, U.S. Sens. Tom Carper and Chris Coons and Rep. John Carney told Pfizer it could expect to hear from other members of Congress "about how Pfizer's takeover of AstraZeneca will impact jobs, our states' healthcare system and national drug pipeline, and tax revenue. ... We strongly believe that any merger with Pfizer should include an advance commitment to maintain and grow its presence in Delaware."

They also acknowledged what they called "our country's outdated corporate tax system."

"As we continue to tackle the issue of tax reform in Congress, you will find the Delaware delegation engaged in and committed to revising the code to help American companies grow and profit here in the United States," they wrote.

The delegation also signaled that, as in England, Pfizer's proposal will be given a close look by U.S. lawmakers.

"Clearly, this potential merger will receive heightened scrutiny from lawmakers, regulators and the general public," they wrote.

Pfizer is the largest research-based pharmaceutical company in the United States, and AstraZeneca is England's second largest drugmaker. The deal would constitute one of the largest in the history of the pharmaceutical industry.

For their part, AstraZeneca executives have maintained that Pfizer has undervalued its drug pipeline.

In Parliament Tuesday, CEO Pascal Soriot said he worried about the "distraction" such a large merger would pose for AstraZeneca.

"What will we tell the person whose father died from lung cancer because one of our medicines was delayed – and essentially was delayed because in the meantime our two companies were involved in saving tax and saving costs?" he asked.

Charles Elson, director of the University of Delaware's Weinberg Center for Corporate Governance, said Pfizer's response to Markell and O'Malley effectively said the same thing: "we haven't made up our minds." It's a political, public relations effort on Pfizer's part, he said.

There isn't much the United States government can do at this point, he said. "It's England that's the issue."

In an email, Markell responded to Read's letter: "I appreciate Chairman Read's response and will look forward to hearing more in the follow-up conversations he has offered. We will continue to press for Pfizer to provide at least the same amount of certainty to Americans employed by AstraZeneca they have for British workers. I remain committed to using every tool available and pursuing every avenue possible to fight for Delaware jobs."

Read told the Parliamentary committee in London that his company had various options for its next move, and did not rule out going directly to shareholders of AstraZeneca in a hostile takeover attempt.

In a written statement, Pfizer reported it was publishing a presentation to AstraZeneca shareholders about the "merits of a combination of the two companies."

Pfizer "believes there is a compelling rationale for a combination, and if AstraZeneca engages in conversations to provide Pfizer with a better understanding of its business and prospects, it may lead to a

transaction that AstraZeneca can recommend. Pfizer continues to believe that engagement by the AstraZeneca board is in the best interest of all stakeholders of both companies."

Pfizer touted the "strategic, financial and operational benefits" of such an acquisition, as well as a "significant value creation opportunity for AstraZeneca shareholders."

Carper, Coons and Carney stressed the "tens of millions of dollars" Delaware has invested in retaining AstraZeneca.

In 1999, Delaware gave an incentive package to AstraZeneca of $18.7 million in land for expansion and a cash grant, and devoted $70 million in road improvements to the area around the Fairfax campus.

Amid patent expirations, AstraZeneca has cut its workforce there from 5,000 employees seven years ago to what is expected to be 2,000 by the time a current round of layoffs is finished.

AstraZeneca acquired MedImmune for $15 billion in 2007. MedImmune represents almost half of AstraZeneca's research and development pipeline.

In a recent memo to its shareholders, AstraZeneca management touted the future profitability of its drug pipeline, including oncology, immunology and diabetes drugs.

Under British takeover law, Pfizer has until May 26 to make an official offer to acquire AstraZeneca.

The Associated Press contributed to this report. Contact Aaron Nathans at 324-2786 or anathans@delawareonline.com.

Scout Channels Ire Into Campaign For A State Shell

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

You could call Delaware's newly crowned state shell a product of First State pride.

The channeled whelk, a conch-shaped shell several inches long and home to predatory sea snails, was officially made Delaware's state shell after Gov. Jack Markell signed legislation last week. But the quest to get the First State shell began in October 2012, when Allyson Willis, now 12, of Middletown, was researching the various symbols for each state.

Delaware already had a state bird, the blue hen, and a state bug, the ladybug. The state even has a state soil, the Greenwich loam, and a state dessert, peach pie. But it didn't have a state shell.

"I realized that a lot of the states around us, New Jersey and New York, had state shells even though we have more beaches than they do," she said Friday. "It kind of made me mad.

"It was almost like we weren't there," Allyson said.

So, the then-elementary schooler and now Redding Middle School student decided to do something. She adopted it as her cause as part of her Girl Scout Bronze Award project, the highest honor a Girl Scout junior can earn. The award project, typically done by an entire troop, requires at least 20 hours of work and step-by-step documentation.

Story: Girl Scouts target math, science gender gap

She wrote to Delaware's Washington political contingent, Sens. Chris Coons and Tom Carper and U.S. Rep. John Carney.

Carney directed her to Rep. Quinn Johnson, D-Middletown. Meanwhile, Allyson collected signatures from 23 of her classmates at Silver Lake Elementary and other Girl Scouts, while working with Johnson, Sen. Bethany Hall-Long, D-Middletown, and the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control.

Allyson suggested the jingle shell as the state shell, but that was changed to the channeled whelk at Johnson's suggestion. The whelk was chosen because it is both a mainstay of Delaware and important to the ecology and economy of the state. Whelks are harvested every year along the East Coast, including thousands of pounds by Delaware watermen for exporting.

From there, the idea was crafted into legislation which unanimously passed through the House and Senate earlier this year. Senators gave Willis a standing ovation said her mother, Renee.

The shell signed by Markell and a copy of the bill will be included in a Delaware Museum of Natural History exhibit, which features themuseum's whelk collection and the journey to designate it as the state shell, Allyson said.

"It is so important to encourage civic engagement among young people and show them the value of advocating on behalf of issues that matter to them," Markell said in a release. "This piece of legislation is the result of Allyson's efforts and shows the impact one person can have on their community."

She also was presented with the Girl Scout Bronze Award in December after finishing her project last fall. She's now a Girl Scout Cadette.

Jennifer Powell Acord, communications and advocacy manager for the Girl Scouts of the Chesapeake Bay, said Willis is a role model for other Girl Scouts looking to craft a project around something they care about. The awards are given to Girl Scouts in elementary school. There are silver and gold award projects for members in middle and high schools.

"The quality of her project is really impressive and definitely well more than the average bronze award," she said. "Our council is really proud of her and the work that she did. She really took the initiative on this, and it is impressive for a girl her age to take on a project of this size."

It's all a little strange for Allyson.

"I never thought I would be in a museum," she said, adding that meeting the governor was both exciting and scary.

Her mom isn't surprised, though. Her daughter is a self-starter with an independent streak, she said.

"This is really big for her. Truthfully, it's really big for us too," Willis said. "What started out as a fun project and grew into something really big."

But Allyson never expected the quest for Delaware's state shell to go this far.

"I thought it was just a little girl's dream that would never come true," she said.

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Two Sussex Council Members Oppose NAACP Grants

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

GEORGETOWN – Two Sussex County Councilmen, Sam Wilson and Vance Phillips, declined Tuesday to give grants of $100 each to the Lower Sussex NAACP Youth Council, objecting to the phrase "colored people" in the group's name.

"Take my name off. I'm not going to give anything," Wilson said after county finance director Gina Jennings noted that in the past, each of the five council members had given $100 from their discretionary grant accounts to the local organization. "Unless you can describe what that says. What's NAACP stand for?"

The brief back-and-forth Wilson initiated broke up what is usually a humdrum end to Sussex County Council meetings. Council members approve small grants, usually $1,000 or less, to civic groups and charities that ask for money.

Council had already given to a group seeking to train middle and high school students how to use defibrillators, the Delaware Police Chief's Council and the West Rehoboth Community Land Trust before it came to a request from the NAACP Youth Council.

Story: Council may say Lord's Prayer again

The Youth Council sent a letter noting it planned to host financial education workshops for young people, put on family-friendly fitness events and have some members attend an annual national convention in Las Vegas.

The letter described the NAACP as "an organization that was founded in 1909 by a multiracial group of citizens who were determined to confront the issues of racism and injustice."

After Jennings summarized the letter for the five council members, who are all white, Wilson asked Jennings to say what NAACP stood for. "Let me pull up their letter to give you an exact – hold on a second," Jennings responded.

"You don't know what it means?" Joan Deaver, the council's sole Democratic member, asked Wilson from the other side of the dais. Deaver and Wilson, who describes himself as one of the council's staunch conservatives, often cast clashing votes.

"That's what I asked," Wilson said. "What's it stand for, Joan?"

Jennings started to reply to Wilson's query, but Council President Michael Vincent broke in: "I know what it stands for. So do you. I hope you do."

"Not exactly," Wilson said.

"OK. OK. Mrs. Jennings?" Vincent said. Jennings recited the umbrella group's full name: "The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People."

At this point, Councilman Vance Phillips, a frequent ally of Wilson on votes, jumped in, saying: "What color?" There was a silence in the room for a beat or two.

"I'm with Mr. Wilson," Phillips went on. "This is an organization that obviously is directed at a certain race that strikes me as inappropriate in this day of racial equality, and..."

"Sounds like discrimination to me," Wilson chimed in.

"I'll pull mine from that as well," Phillips said.

The three-minute exchange prompted criticism.

"Those two councilmen seem to be racists and bigots," said Richard Smith, president of the Delaware chapter of the NAACP. "What he said, we really can't stand for it. He needs to come and debate me, myself, on if we are a racial group or not. Because we really aren't. We stand for all people... He's trying to race-bait us. And we're not going to play that game."

Jane Hovington of Georgetown, president of the NAACP's Lower Sussex Branch, said the comments showed Wilson and Phillips were "hesitant about representing all of the people" in their districts.

"The most amazing thing is, they have no idea of the fallout from this," Hovington said. "Maybe they need to see our faces in there more often so they can see we are human beings, just like they are."

In an interview after the meeting, Phillips said he knew race could be a sensitive topic, and stood by his comments.

"It is a shame in the 21st century, when we have made such great strides on racial equality, there are still organizations out there dividing people by race," Phillips said. "In the words of Rodney King, can't we all just get along?"

At the meeting, Councilman George Cole made a motion to give the Youth Council the same $500 grant it had gotten before, but to draw it from three council members' accounts: his own, Deaver's and Vincent's, leaving Wilson's and Phillips' accounts untouched. That motion passed, with Phillips voting yes and Wilson voting no.

Wilson wasn't done, though. "Where's the workshop and convention, do you know?" he wondered aloud. "What area? Is it in Philadelphia?"

"Not where the Klan meets," Deaver responded. And when the next grant request came up, a $1,500 request from the Mid-Atlantic Symphony Orchestra, she interjected: "Are they all white people there?" Cole, seated next to her, snorted with laughter.

Vincent ended the back-and-forth after that.

"I think we need to keep some of these comments to ourselves," he said sternly.

Many conservatives disagree with the NAACP's views on public policy. Talk show host Rush Limbaugh, during the 2012 presidential election, called the organization an "average leftist extremist group" and said "nobody cares what the NAACP thinks because none of it is a surprise."

The letter from the local chapter's youth council to the council had the same measured tone of most letters from groups appealing to council members for grants.

"Our organization is nonpartisan, seeking to help make the American Dream a reality for all citizens," youth adviser Manuel R. Davis wrote. "Thanks for serving our communities in Sussex County, and know that you are appreciated."

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Incumbents Retain Seats In School Voting

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

Delaware filled 21 seats on local school boards across the state Tuesday with typically small turnouts and little drama.

Every school district had at least one seat up for grabs.

More than a third of the seats were filled without an election because there was only one candidate. All but five of the races that went to a vote included an incumbent, and all of those incumbents won re-election, according to unofficial figures from each county's department of elections.

As usual, turnout was tiny.

Caesar Rodney candidate Jessica Marelli took home the most votes in the state with 659, in one of only two races that garnered a total of more than 1,000 votes. Some elections garnered fewer than 500.

Most of the elections were relatively lopsided – only two winners saw a challenger come within 10 percentage points of their winning total.

The most contested race was the six-person field for a seat in the Capital School District.

John Martin Jr. was elected with 39 percent of the vote, outpacing Sharese Paylor with 26 percent, Curtis Raymond with 23 percent. Three other candidates received less than 10 percent of votes.

There also was a close contest in the District 5 race in the Indian River School District. Incumbent Douglas Hudson (48 percent) bested challengers W. Scott Collins (40 percent) and Bobbi Barends (10 percent).

School boards control each district's budget, hire and fire top district leaders, and negotiate major partnerships with state and federal agencies like the Race to the Top grant. They also are responsible for asking voters for property tax increases, something several school boards have done in recent years as state and federal budgets tightened.

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Election results

Below are complete, but unofficial election results from the departments of elections for each county. Winners are in bold. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

NEW CASTLE COUNTY

APPOQUINIMINK

Norman Abrams*…364 (65%)
Debbie Harrington…188 (35%)
BRANDYWINE
Cheryl Siskin…Elected without an opponent
CHRISTINA
DISTRICT D
Martin Nicholson…133 (40%)
John Young*…207 (60%)
DISTRICT F
Elizabeth Paige*…Elected without an opponent
COLONIAL
John Megahan Sr.…40 (17%)
Melodie Spotts*…197 (83%)
RED CLAY
Dennis Cini Sr.…198 (35%)
Michael Piccio*…372 (65%)
KENT COUNTY
CAESAR RODNEY
Jessica Marelli…639 (55%)
Flavous Statham…520 (45%)
CAPITAL
Howard Earle…3 (.36%)
Dennis Hallock Sr.…82 (9%)
John Martin Jr.…329 (39%)
Sharese Paylor…220 (26%)
Curtis Raymond…196 (23%)
Muriel Thomas…13 (1%)
LAKE FOREST
AT-LARGE SEAT (Two-year term)
Gwendolyn Scott-Jones…177 (43%)
Lisa Williams*…230 (56%)
AT-LARGE SEAT (Five-year term)
Ronda Swenson*…263 (72%)
Robert Vogel, Sr.…101 (27%)
MILFORD
Marvin Schelhouse*…Elected without an opponent
SMYRNA
Scot McClymont…385 (75%)
Jody Wilson…127 (25%)
SUSSEX COUNTY
Cape Henlopen
AREA C
Andrew Lewis*…Elected without an opponent
AT-LARGE SEAT

Juan Antonio Saez…391 (22%)
Alison Myers…659 (37%)
Robert Bennett…154 (8%)
Meyer Persow…161 (9%)
Teresa Carey…373 (21%)
DELMAR
Jason Coco*…Elected without an opponent
INDIAN RIVER
DISTRICT 3
Nina Bunting*…Elected without an opponent
DISTRICT 4
Donald Hattier*…Elected without an opponent
DISTRICT 5
Douglas Hudson*…183 (48%)
W. Scott Collins…151 (40%)
Bobbi Barends…40 (10%)
LAUREL
Brad Lee…302 (56%)
Terrance Hooper…236 (43%)
SEAFORD
Rebecca Adams*…Elected without an opponent
WOODBRIDGE
Steve McCarron…324 (83%)
Jan Bunting…66 (17%)

Sussex Council May Say Lord's Prayer Again

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

GEORGETOWN – The Lord's Prayer hasn't been uttered aloud at the start of a Sussex County Council meeting for nearly two years. But some of its members want to bring it back.

Until June 2012, the Council had led off meetings with The Lord's Prayer – "Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" – for more than 30 years. But then a lawsuit filed by four Sussex County residents convinced a federal judge, Leonard P. Stark, that Council's habit came too close to establishing Christianity as the legislative body's favored religion.

So County Council now starts each meeting by having its members stand and recite the less-sectarian 23rd Psalm – "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" – followed by the pledge of allegiance. A settlement agreement the county and the plaintiffs consented to, which was approved by the judge, forbids the Council from going back to using The Lord's Prayer.

On Tuesday, Council grappled with whether to resume saying its old prayer, now that a recent Supreme Court ruling has said legislatures are freer to include public prayer than past high court rulings have held.

"The Supreme Court made a ruling here. Why should we bow down to the lower court?" Republican Councilman Sam Wilson said Tuesday during a 25-minute discussion of legislative prayer. "What's wrong with The Lord's Prayer?"

STORY: Two council members oppose NAACP grants

On May 5, the U.S. Supreme Court, in a 5-4 ruling, upheld a legally challenged prayer practice in Greece, N.Y. Plaintiffs in a lawsuit there had contended the town government almost exclusively hosted Christian religious leaders to lead them in different prayers at the start of meetings.

But the court ruled Greece's pattern of prayer did not violate the First Amendment because it "did not coerce participation by non-adherents," and said the town wasn't obligated far afield for non-Christians to pray for it.

The ruling was seen by many as refuting a previous Supreme Court opinion on prayer that set forth a stricter 'endorsement test,' which tended to rule out prayer habits like Greece's.

J. Everett Moore, the county attorney, wrote a memo to County Council highlighting the differences between its prayer tradition and the custom the Supreme Court upheld in New York. The tradition in Greece, Moore noted, had different church leaders come to meetings and say a changing list of prayers, but in Sussex County, council members themselves lead the recitation of the same prayer each time.

If council wanted to change course and stop saying only the 23rd Psalm, Moore said, it would have to ask permission from Stark, the federal judge. In an interview last week, a secular group that assisted the plaintiffs who had sued Sussex to stop The Lord's Prayer, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, said returning to that prayer would be "problematic."

Councilman George Cole said he wasn't interested in reopening the prayer issue. "I'm comfortable with what we're doing," he said. "I don't know if I want to go back into this chasing the tail."

Councilman Vance Phillips, though, asked for the matter to be put on the council's agenda for its next executive closed-door session, so it could get confidential legal advice about the issue.

"I believe there is sentiment on the council to at least consider asking relief," Phillips said.

Moore said it would be permissible to discuss the matter behind closed doors, but advised the council to hold any votes about whether to relitigate the issue in an open session.

At the end of the meeting, Seaford resident Robert Harrison told the council members he was unhappy the council recites any prayer at all.

"It gives the impression that good Sussex County citizens are religious," said Harrison.

"If the council intends to spite nonbelievers," he said, "it would only be just for nonbelievers to respond to those prayers."

Contact James Fisher at 983-6772, on Twitter @JamesFisherTNJ or jfisher@delawareonline.com. Staff writer Molly Murray contributed to this story.

Proposed $60 Million Settlment Would Benefit Veterans

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

A $60 million payment has been proposed by the Department of Justice and a company formerly known as Sallie Mae to settle allegations that the student loan provider violated the rights of members of the military.

The company, which is now called Navient, was charged in U.S. District Court in Delaware on May 13. The Department of Justice alleges the company failed to give veterans a 6 percent interest rate and special treatment in regards to default judgement that are required under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, according to court records.

A proposed settlement was filed the same day as the charges against the Sallie Mae spin-off company. The $60 million settlement would go toward paying members of the military who would have been impacted by the alleged failure to provide required benefits, according to court documents. An independent consultant, which was approved by the department of justice, will also review the company's entire loan portfolio for a set period of time to help identify those who are entitled to money.

The Department of Justice estimates that 60,000 people will benefit from the settlement. Some cases reach back to nearly 10 years ago, the department said.

In addition to the $60 million set aside to pay military members, the company would pay a $55,000 civil penalty to the government, according to court records.

The agreement would need approval from a judge, which has not happened yet.

In a statement, Navient said the "large majority" of the money will go to service members who the Department of Justice believes are entitled to a benefit, but the company "believes is inconsistent with prior regulatory requirements and guidance." The company said it decided to settle the case "in order to put the matter behind it," the statement said.

"We offer our sincere apologies to the servicemen and servicewomen who were affected by our processing errors and thus did not receive the full benefits they deserve," John F. Remondi, president and CEO, Navient, said in a statement released by the company. "Over the past several years we have implemented changes in our procedures and training programs to prevent these mistakes from happening again. We also appreciate that the regulators agreed on consistent guidance that provides clarity and thereby enables us to offer SCRA benefits to even more service members back to as early as 2005 as well as going forward."

The company said it has taken steps since 2009 to help assist borrowers who are in the military or are veterans. There is a special number, (855) 284-4879 with staff trained to handle these cases, and a website, navient.com/military, also has information.

UD Approves Room And Board Increase

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

NEWARK – The average cost of the University of Delaware's student dining plan will increase by 3 percent and residence hall room charges by 3.5 percent starting with the fall semester, according to changes approved Tuesday by the UD Board of Trustees.

The new student orientation fee will increase from $120 to $145 to cover the cost of a math-placement exam required for all students. The comprehensive fee for full-time students and the student health services fee are set to decrease by 5 percent and 10 percent, respectively, also starting in the fall.

At its meeting Tuesday, the trustees approved a new PhD program in Financial Analytics and a new five-year combined bachelor's/master's program in Economics.

The Trustees eliminated the master's program in higher education administration, in part because the School of Education no longer employs faculty with such expertise.

The incoming freshmen class will be among UD's largest and most diverse with nearly 4,250 students committed to date, officials said.

More Stories

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May 14, 2014, 2:08 a.m.

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May 13, 2014, 11:39 p.m.

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May 13, 2014, 11:47 p.m.

Motorcyclist critically injured in Bear crash

May 13, 2014, 11:12 p.m.

Starter Dziedzic strong for Blue Rocks
May 14, 2014, 12:28 a.m.

Smoking Ban Creates Area Of Shame For Smokers

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

If you're a smoker hanging out on the beach in Rehoboth Beach, smoke 'em if you got 'em.

That is, up until Thursday.

That's when the resort town's ban on smoking on the beach, except in a few designated areas, goes into effect.

And don't think you can just hop up onto the boardwalk and light up. Smoking will also be banned there.

If you want to satisfy a nicotine craving, you'll have to find one of the designated smoking areas spread out along the beach.

These smoking areas – marked with signs and equipped with urns to dispose of cigarette butts – will be at least 40 feet from beach access areas, near the edge of the sand dunes and will be small – about the size of four beach towels.

There is no word in the ordinance on whether these areas will be surrounded by a cage made of chicken wire to protect the smokers from thrown objects – or how far away gawkers and other shamers will be required to stay.

Story: Smoking ban set to begin

Story: After smoking, what's the next target?

I can see it. Families walking down to the beach, loaded down with their supplies for the day. The kids, at that age of not knowing when something is rude, point at the people huddled in the smoking area.

"What are they doing?" they'll ask. Whispers of "it's rude to point" and "keep walking" would be followed by brief explanations later of the dirty habit and to stay away from those people and that area.

Why even subject smokers to this? Why subject non-smokers to this?

If we are going to ban smoking on most of the beach, just do everyone a favor, even the smokers, and ban smoking on the beach altogether.

Poll: Should there be designated spots for smokers?

I don't say this as someone who is anti-smoker or anti-smoking. I am a former smoker and am glad I quit. But I don't preach that to anyone. My reasoning here is based on showing respect for each other and civility.

These partial bans just set up the potential for an ugly situation, even if it's just one in which one group is made to feel looked down upon in a very public way.

Share in the Only in Delaware conversation 24/7 on delawareonline. Contact Jeffrey Gentry at jgentry@delawareonline.com. Follow him on Twitter: @jeffreygentry

Appeal Targets DNREC Cleanup Plan For New Poultry Site

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

Citizen, regulator and business interests clashed anew Tuesday over plans to convert a shuttered pickle plant near Millsboro into a new kind of poultry factory, with neighbors and environmental groups urging an appeals board to block a needed cleanup deal for the site.

Protect Our Indian River and the Inland Bays Foundation asked the state Environmental Appeals Board to order reconsideration of a "brownfields" development plan for the Pinnacle Foods Group LLC site south of Millsboro. Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control officials approved a

cleanup agreement in December, potentially clearing the way for Allen Harim Foods to move ahead with a purchase and redevelopment.

Allen Harim wants the 107-acre site – which once operated as a Vlasic Pickle factory – to process up to 2 million small "ginseng" chickens a week for buyers in South Korea and Korean and Asian markets in the United States.

The operation could eventually employ about 700, handling a new, locally raised 2-pound breed of stewing chicken and ushering in the first big change in decades for the Delmarva Peninsula poultry industry, where the broiler hen has ruled the factory farming roost for decades.

Residents in neighborhoods nearby have objected to the potential new, heavy traffic at the site, as well as the prospect for local disposal of millions of gallons of treated slaughter and food-processing wastewater each day. Critics have argued that a reopened plant would pour huge amounts of pollution into tributaries of the already-polluted inland bays.

"What you're going to hear is that there's a lot of evidence to suggests that there is contamination offsite" associated with past plant activities, said Kenneth T. Kristl, who directs the Environmental and Natural Resources Law Clinic at Widener University School of Law.

"The plan is wholly inadequate," Kristl said, arguing that the agreement fails to "deal with the contamination offsite," and fails to fully consider all concerns about pollution around the plant itself.

Protecting Our Indian River has separately asked Superior Court to overturn a Sussex County Board of Adjustment approval for a "potentially hazardous" activity on the site, arguing that the panel failed to consult with all relevant agencies on the proposal.

DNREC and representatives of Allen Harim argued before the environmental panel on Tuesday that state and company investigators thoroughly examined potential hazards.

Jeremy W. Homer, an attorney representing Allen Harim, said that environmental investigations had found the Pinnacle plant "is not a really very dirty site" to begin with.

"I want to make it clear that, although Allen Harim would not be responsible for contamination that's already there before the purchase, Pinnacle remains responsible," Homer said. The brownfield agreement "doesn't do away with the prior owner's responsibility."

Jay Meyer, a resident of neighborhood along an Indian River tributary opposite the plant, said that opponents plan to continue and widen the battle, including opposition to a needed wastewater treatment plant discharge permit.

"If they go through with approval on this, they're going to be dumping 12 million gallons of wastewater from cleaning chickens into the Indian River every week for the next 30 years," Meyer said. Our concern is what this is going to do to the environment."

Allen Harim has yet to file any application involving its wastewater needs. The Environmental Protection Agency and DNREC have listed Pinnacle's permit as one of the state's top three priorities for permit renewal this year.

Testimony continued this afternoon. Nancy Shevock, the board's chair, said the proceeding could be continued of arguments are unfinished before the end of the day. The board has 90 days to reach a decision.

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WILMINGTON JOURNAL NEWS EDITORIALS

Find Long-term Fix For Crime Evidence Outrage

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

Each headline about the incompetence and carelessness in the state Medical Examiner's Office brings shudders to the public as well as a sinking feeling about the Delaware justice system's reliability.

The state faces a massive cleanup job, one that could lead to reopening more than 420 cases.

In turn, those cases could open the jail doors for some put there with the help of evidence that is now questioned.

The scandal involves lapses in security and thefts of drug evidence in the medical examiner's office.

The Delaware Public Defender's Office has filed hundreds of motions in the last two weeks seeking to overturn old drug convictions. The first reaction is that of outrage. Yet we have to face a simple fact about the guarantees of our legal system. If people were convicted because of bad evidence, they were improperly convicted and should be set free.

However, that process is not automatic. It is the public defender's job to test all of those claims of improper evidence. It is unlikely that every prisoner named in the public defender's motions will walk away free. It is the court's job to weigh those claims against what can be proven and what cannot be proven.

Story: Public defender seeks 9,500 drug conviction reversals

It will be a long, hard and expensive route, but it is one the state is compelled to follow.

The public will rightly be outraged by this development; however, that outrage should not interfere with the process.

Public outrage, though, should be channeled toward a solution.

Despite all of the television shows about the near magic of crime laboratories in this country, the reality is far less impressive. The crime lab industry, if you will, has been hit time after time by scandals of incompetence, bureaucratic blundering and outright corruption.

State after state has been hit scandals of lost evidence, corrupt practices and outright incompetency. In 2009, a federal study commission called the situation a disgrace.

When the report came out, there was no national certification or standardization of what labs do and how they should handle evidence. None exists today.

Delaware, for example, splits drug and blood testing duties among a number of agencies, including the Medical Examiner's Office and the State Police. Outside labs are used in some cases, but there is no uniform system of evaluating and guarding evidence.

Putting all of these functions under one agency would streamline the process and make it more effective. At the same time, Delaware should adopt the top-tier standards and practices so that this state's evidence chain is considered beyond question.

This will disrupt current practices and upset some organization charts. Change is always difficult. But the process should be thought through and a good plan should be developed. Then the right amount of political will should be applied to get the job done.

Why Just Being A Veteran Won't Get You Elected These Days

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

Sen. Mark Pryor, the embattled Democratic incumbent in Arkansas, made a serious gaffe in March when he questioned Republican opponent Tom Cotton's reliance on military service as a campaign theme.

While praising the congressman for serving, Pryor told a TV interviewer that he didn't consider Cotton's military record in Iraq and Afghanistan a special credential. "I think that's part of that sense of entitlement that he gives off," Pryor said. "Almost like, 'I served my country, let me into the Senate.'"

For Cotton, who turned 37 on Tuesday, it was a gimme: He filmed a playful ad with his Army drill sergeant responding to the "entitlement" charge. "Did I say 'At ease,' Cotton?" the sergeant barks.

The ad went viral. But, surprisingly, it seems not to have helped Cotton's campaign.

A New York Times Upshot/Kaiser Family Foundation poll last month before the ad was released showed Pryor with a 10-point lead over Cotton. An NBC News-Marist poll, released Monday, shows Pryor with an 11-point lead. A Pryor win is by no means certain, but the fact that the Democrat is even in contention in a state where President Obama's approval rating is just 33 percent suggests that Cotton's military record is no magic bullet.

In a series of ads done by and for Cotton, the former Army Ranger's military career is the centerpiece of his Senate candidacy – and yet that doesn't seem to be helping him, even though his opponent may be the most vulnerable Senate Democrat in the country.

It's not just Arkansas: America loves its 2.8 million "heroes" who served in uniform since 9/11, but only 17 veterans of Iraq or Afghanistan are in Congress, according to Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. That includes John Walsh, a Montana Democrat who was appointed to his Senate seat and will have difficulty winning election in the fall.

Of the 17 (14 Republicans and three Democrats), few have campaigned primarily on their service. "These are just not issues that are dominating in the polls right now, on either side," said Jon Soltz, the head of VoteVets, which promotes the election of progressive veterans.

In 2006 and 2008, Democrats had some success running anti-war vets such as Patrick Murphy, Chris Carney and Joe Sestak, but they later lost races. And, of the Republicans elected, many have been guardsmen and reservists who had held or run for lower offices before; they tend to have strong political connections and aren't campaigning primarily on their war records.

Military service has never been a guarantee of electoral success, of course. Bill Clinton, who didn't serve, defeated two celebrated combat veterans. George W. Bush beat two opponents who, unlike him, had served in Vietnam.

But now the wars that dominated the national dialogue for a decade have faded in relevance. A Gallup poll in February found that 49 percent of Americans thought U.S. involvement in Afghanistan was a mistake (48 percent said it was not). A majority of Americans long ago decided that the war in Iraq was a mistake. Also, a Pew poll last year found isolationist sentiment running at a 50-year high, with Americans, by 52 percent to 38 percent, saying the United States should "mind its own business internationally."

Cotton, a product of Harvard and its Law School, used his military service to distinguish himself in 2012 and win a GOP House primary. He followed the same script this time but support for his military-themed campaign seems to have hit a ceiling.

In November, he released an ad showing photos of him in Army fatigues posing with military hardware while his mother gave the voice-over: "After Harvard, he gave up a great career to volunteer for the Army. They offered to make him a military lawyer but Tom insisted on the infantry."

Last month, there was the drill sergeant ad. Now, a group called the Government Integrity Fund is blanketing Arkansas with more martial imagery and photos of Cotton in camouflage. "A tour in Baghdad, another north of Tora Bora," says one. "For his combat service, Cotton was awarded the Bronze Star.

Now, Tom Cotton's ready to serve his country again, to fight Obamacare, bailouts and runaway spending."

Cotton keeps up the theme, going to the House floor last week to discuss a "couple of lessons I learned in the Army," including the admonition to "move to the sound of gunfire."

But Arkansans, it appears, are already well aware of Cotton's Army career. Now they want to know what he has done as a civilian.

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Teaching Young People About Brown V. Board's Legacy

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

Whenever an anniversary of a major milestone is celebrated, some might ask what changed since the last one. So it is with the 60th anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education case, decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1954, which turns 60 Saturday.

Unfortunately, recent events call for more awareness of the nation's racist past but likewise furnish an opportunity for education and for training the current generation on Brown's legacy.

One of the important lessons of the Brown v. Board case and its successor is that people matter. Not only were the attorneys like Thurgood Marshall, Charles Hamilton Houston, Robert Carter, and Jack Greenberg critical for the national strategy of attacking school segregation, but so too were those lawyers and plaintiffs fighting segregation in individual states.

In Delaware, Louis Redding led the fight to desegregate schools through the Brown rulings and the state's own court battle in the same area, Evans v. Buchanan.

Another point emanating from the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in the Brown v. Board of Education case is that the theory of how American national

government works is often at odds with the reality, especially when it comes to the checks-and-balances

system. For example, Article VI of the Constitution contains the supremacy clause, and along with the procedure of judicial review one might assume that the Supreme Court's holding on a major legal matter is the last word. Perhaps more than any other area in the 20th century, the post-Brown experience vividly demonstrated the folly of that assumption.

For if the original Brown v. Board of Education case possessed the independent influence it is often credited with, there would have been no need for a Brown v. Board of Education II case nor the executive branch actions taken to enforce desegregation efforts.

The departmentalist view of government authority has similarly fostered contemporary challenges to court rulings dealing with abortion and health care among other areas.

Defined in broad terms, desegregation has taken a step back due to recent court rulings.

First, the 2013 Supreme Court decision in Shelby County v. Holder struck down a key provision of the Voting Rights Act despite clear evidence that some state voting laws continue to require federal scrutiny to prevent discrimination.

Second, the Supreme Court's 2014 ruling in the Michigan affirmative action case means that states can ban diversity plans from higher education admission formulas.

Third, a plethora of states have attempted to unreasonably tighten voter identification procedures in order to negatively affect turnout, a tactic thankfully rejected by a court in Pennsylvania.

Taking steps to ensure the positive legacy of the Brown v. Board of Education ruling involves individuals, groups and government itself.

The local school board is the place to begin in that parents should make sure schools fully practice integration and resources are equal for all within the district. When there is disparity between school districts in terms of resources, there must be recognition and state action to alleviate the condition. Citizens must be aware who they elect to statewide positions will help mold the approach to education for the next generation.

Finally, local and state government must support efforts to equalize educational opportunities for persons of all races and ethnic backgrounds, not only because it is the law but because it is the best approach for students.

Making Brown v. Board of Education relevant to the current generation of youth will not only remind us of the historical principle it rejected – separate but equal – but will imbue students with the tools to scrutinize efforts to dismantle the gains which Brown wrought.

Dr. Samuel B. Hoff is George Washington Distinguished Professor of History and Political Science and Law Studies Director at Delaware State University. He served as Chair of the Dover Human Relations Commission for five years.

Climate 'Sustainability' Is More Faith Than Science

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

Those who adhere to the notion that it is incumbent on the current generation to "conserve" resources believe only they can divine the needs and wants of future generations. Divine is the proper word to use because the green movement is religious in its fever to promote sustainability.

The word sustainability means whatever the user wishes it to mean. Thus, it is a word without any meaning at all. It is exactly the sort of word needed to achieve Orwellian control of people; in order to coerce them to believe 2 + 2, really does equal 5.

To enforce compliance with the ideology, anyone who fails to adhere to sustainability doctrine is immediately labeled a denier, a skeptic, a "flat-earther" or worse. Public ridicule follows, with attempts to demonize and marginalize opposition, to what amounts to a Green God.

Companies are so frightened by the specter of protests; they now have "sustainability officers," who genuflect at the altar of the deity, without understanding they are worshipping, not promoting science.

The intermediate goal of sustainability proponents is a reduction in the use of energy, but reality will soon catch up with the notion most people want to consume less energy. Shockingly, most people want plentiful, reliable, affordable energy, and the jobs that accompany it. They certainly do not want the promise of subsidized "green jobs" that never materialize, or the destruction of unsubsidized jobs elsewhere in the economy due to the rising cost of reliable energy.

On April 10, at a Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing on grid reliability, U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski made the statement, "Eighty-nine percent of the coal electricity capacity that is due to go offline was utilized as backup to meet the demand this winter." The premature closure of these coal-fired power plants because of questionable EPA air quality regulations will cause electricity prices to "skyrocket," as predicted by candidate Barack Obama before he became president.

As a consequence, available supply will not meet demand. This will lead to brownouts, intermittent electricity supply and potentially catastrophic grid failure. These are the inevitable consequences of a deeply flawed energy policy and an EPA responsive to those who tout sustainability. The real question is how much will citizens needlessly suffer before they elect new leadership to chart a course leading to real energy independence?

At its core, the goal of sustainability proponents is not about less energy consumption; it is about reducing the number of people on planet Earth. This is due to their belief the resources of the Earth are scarce, and therefore access to them must be limited, and their use equalized. Limitations on the amount of carbon dioxide produced, the use of water, the amount of particulate matter in the atmosphere, which in the U.S. is less than nature intended, are just the first steps in the process toward total control of individuals.

If any society wants less people (a questionable goal on the surface), its populace needs access to affordable energy to create affluence. The greater the likelihood a child survives to adulthood and the more mechanized becomes agriculture, the fewer children born.

Japan, the U.S. and Western Europe are barely replacing their population. Except for immigration, the U.S. and Western Europe's populations are shrinking. The nation of Japan, with little immigration, is hosting parties where young adults can meet each other, in an effort to encourage marriage and childbirth, because the population is in decline.

Society does not need a word without meaning. It needs a robust economy in order to promote peace and prosperity. Sooner or later this reality is going to hit home, and the tyranny of the minority will come to an abrupt end. For those who are unemployed or underemployed, it cannot happen soon enough.

John Nichols, a Middletown resident, advocates for science-based solutions to meet complex energy needs.

VICE PRESIDENTIAL *NEWS CLIPS*

PRODUCED FOR THE OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

TO: **THE VICE PRESIDENT AND STAFF**

DATE: **WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2014 -- 6:15 AM EDT**

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BIDEN IN THE NEWS

Biden's Son, Kerry Family Friend Join Ukrainian Gas Producer's Board

Ukraine's Burisma Holdings Is Controlled by Former Energy Official Under Yanukovych

By Paul Sonne And James V. Grimaldi

Wall Street Journal, May 14, 2014

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Biden's Son Joins Board Of Ukraine Gas Company

By David Jackson, Usa Today

USA Today, May 14, 2014

Vice President **Biden**'s son Hunter is joining the board of a gas company that operates in Ukraine.

Burisma Holdings, Ukraine's largest private gas producer, said Hunter **Biden** – an attorney – will be in charge of its legal unit and help the company with other international organizations.

"I believe that my assistance in consulting the Company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine," the younger **Biden** said in a statement.

The **Biden** appointment comes as the United States and allied nations try to help Ukraine reduce its dependence on Russian energy by developing other sources.

Kendra Barkoff, spokesperson for Vice President **Biden**, said that "Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer. The Vice President does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

Joe Biden's Son Hunter To Head Legal Unit At Ukraine's Largest Private Gas Company

By Jessica Chasmar

Washington Times, May 14, 2014

Vice President Joseph R. **Biden**'s youngest son, Hunter, has been appointed head of legal affairs at Ukraine's largest private gas producer.

Burisma Holdings said in a statement that Hunter **Biden** will be in charge of the company's legal unit and will provide support for the company among international organizations.

"Burisma's track record of innovations and industry leadership in the field of natural gas means that it can be a strong driver of a strong economy in Ukraine," Mr. **Biden** said.

"As a new member of the Board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the Company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine," he said.

White House press secretary Jay Carney said Tuesday that Mr. **Biden**'s new position "does not reflect an endorsement by the administration," Time magazine's Zeke Miller reported.

The announcement comes just one day after Russia's state energy giant Gazprom threatened to halt natural gas shipments to Ukraine unless the country pays in advance for supplies.

The vice president has condemned Russia for its intervention in Ukraine and has pledged to support efforts to reduce its dependency on Russian energy, The Moscow Times reported.

VP Biden's Son Joins Ukraine Gas Company's Board

Associated Press, May 14, 2014

WASHINGTON — Hunter **Biden**, the younger son of Vice President Joe **Biden**, is joining the board of a gas company operating in Ukraine, the company announced Tuesday, as the West seeks to help Ukraine wean itself off its dependence on Russian energy.

Burisma Holdings said **Biden**, an attorney and chairman of the board of the World Food Program USA, will head the Burisma's legal unit, and will also seek support for the company among international organizations.

"I believe that my assistance in consulting the company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine," **Biden** said in a statement released by the company.

The announcement comes as Ukraine and the U.S. are looking to decrease Ukraine's reliance on Russian energy amid threats from Moscow to cut Ukraine off if it doesn't pay massive debts. Western countries believe Russia would have less leverage in the crisis with Ukraine if Europe was less dependent on Russian gas.

"Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer," said **Biden** spokeswoman Kendra Barkoff. "The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

Still, Vice President **Biden** has spoken frequently about the need to increase Ukraine's energy independence, including during a recent visit to Kiev. He's also a key interlocutor for the Obama administration with Kiev and other anxious nations in the region as the crisis there has unfolded.

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UPDATE 1-White House Says No Issue With Biden's Son, Ukraine Gas Company

Reuters, May 14, 2014

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Biden's Son Gets Ukrainian Oil Company Gig

ABC News, May 14, 2014

Vice President Joe **Biden**'s youngest son Hunter **Biden** has joined the board of directors of Ukraine's largest oil company at a time that the U.S. is urging Ukraine to develop energy independence from Russia and just days after the vice president visited Ukraine.

The vice president's office and the White House rejected any suggestion that there was a conflict of interest.

"Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer," Vice President **Biden**'s spokeswoman Kendra Barkoff told ABC News. "The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

White House spokesman Jay Carney said, "Hunter **Biden** and other members of the **Biden** family are obviously private citizens and where they work … does not reflect an endorsement by the administration or by the vice president or president."

According to a press release from the oil company, Burisma Holdings, **Biden** will help the company manage its relationships with "international organizations," in addition to overseeing the company's legal unit.

"Burisma's track record of innovations and industry leadership in the field of natural gas means that it can be a strong driver of a strong economy in Ukraine," Hunter **Biden** said in a statement.

"As a new member of the Board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine," he said.

Biden, a graduate of Yale Law School, is a counsel to the New York-based law firm Boies, Schiller & Flexner LLP and serves as an adjunct professor at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

Hunter Biden To Ukraine Gas Board

By Lucy Mccalmont

Politico, May 13, 2014

Hunter **Biden**, the younger son of Vice President Joe **Biden**, will be joining Ukraine's largest private gas producer, the company announced in a statement

"The company's strategy is aimed at the strongest concentration of professional staff and the introduction of best corporate practices, and we're delighted that Mr. **Biden** is joining us to help us achieve these goals," Alan Apter, Burisma Holdings' chairman of the board of directors, said in a statement, which was reported by The Moscow Times on Tuesday.

Biden, joining the board, will be in charge of the legal unit, the company said and will provide support for Burisma Holdings "among international organizations."

Biden said the company will help strengthen Ukraine's economy.

"Burisma's track record of innovations and industry leadership in the field of natural gas means that it can be a strong driver of a strong economy in Ukraine," **Biden** said in a statement. "As a new member of the Board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the Company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine."

The country has faced rising tensions with Russia and on Monday, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney said the U.S. would not recognize a referendum held Sunday in Eastern Ukraine aiming for self-rule in the region, calling it "illegal" under Ukrainian law.

Vice President **Biden** also expressed support for Ukraine, when he visited the country in April and slammed Russia for its role in the annexation of Crimea.

WH: Biden's Son To Ukraine Gas Company Isn't U.S. Endorsement

By Justin Sink

The Hill, May 13, 2014

Ukraine's largest private gas producer has hired Vice President **Biden**'s youngest son, but White House press secretary Jay Carney insisted on Tuesday the move shouldn't be read as an official endorsement by the U.S. government.

"Hunter **Biden** and other members of the **Biden** family are obviously private citizens, and where they work does not reflect an endorsement by the administration or by the vice president or president," Carney told reporters.

The vice president's office also defended the hire.

"Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer. The Vice President does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company. For any additional questions, I refer you to Hunter's office," said Kendra Barkoff, spokeswoman for Vice President **Biden**.

Burisma, which produces the equivalent of 10,500 barrels of oil daily, announced **Biden**'s hire in a statement earlier Tuesday.

"The company's strategy is aimed at the strongest concentration of professional staff and the introduction of best corporate practices, and we're delighted that Mr. **Biden** is joining us to help us achieve these goals," said Alan Apter, Burisma Holdings' chairman of the board of directors.

The younger **Biden**, for his part, said he believed his legal and corporate advice would "contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine."

"Burisma's track record of innovations and industry leadership in the field of natural gas means that it can be a strong driver of a strong economy in Ukraine," Hunter **Biden** said.

But the hire could raise ethical questions — and diplomatic headaches — for the White House. During a visit to Kiev last month, the vice president discussed energy security with Ukraine's leaders, including ways the country could produce its own domestic production of natural gas.

"Imagine where you'd be today if you were able to tell Russia: keep your gas. It would be a very different world," the vice president told Ukrainian lawmakers.

The hire also came a day after Russian energy giant Gazprom threatened to halt natural gas shipments to Ukraine unless the country prepays for its energy. That announcement has sparked fears that energy costs could strain Ukraine's fragile economy.

Joe Biden's Son Gets Job With Major Ukrainian Natural Gas Company

Washington Examiner, May 14, 2014

Vice President Joe **Biden**'s son has a new job on the board of directors of Burisma Holdings, a major gas producer in Ukraine.

"Burisma's track record of innovations and industry leadership in the field of natural gas means that it can be a strong driver of a strong economy in Ukraine," R. Hunter **Biden** said of his new job in a statement released by Burisma. "As a new member of the Board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the Company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine."

The company noted that young **Biden** "has experience in public service and foreign policy." It only alludes to his father's job by noting that "Mr. **Biden** served as Honorary Co-Chair of the 2008 Obama-**Biden** Inaugural Committee."

A Pakistani reporter couldn't help but juxtapose this hire with Vice President **Biden**'s public remarks in Ukraine during a visit to Kiev in April. **Biden** "stressed the need for the new authorities to tackle corruption," Agha Iqrar Haroon recalled at the Dispatch News Desk.

This wouldn't be the first time that Joe **Biden**'s public work dovetails with his son's private job. As then-Sen. Joe **Biden** developed an "cozy relationship" with MBNA, a credit card company based in his home state of Delaware, MBNA hired Hunter **Biden**.

"[T]he company is not eager to talk," the Washington Examiner's Byron York (then a reporter for The American Spectator) wrote in 1998. "First, a spokesman declined to discuss [Hunter] **Biden**'s salary. Then, when asked what young **Biden** is doing for the bank, the spokesman paused and said, 'That's not something we get into details on.' When pressed, the spokesman said, 'He's a talented young guy that

we are grooming for a management position.' The spokesman said Hunter **Biden** has been 'moving around the bank' as part of his introduction into the business. Hunter **Biden** himself declined to discuss his salary or his job."

Another Biden Has Waded Into The Ukraine Crisis

National Journal, May 14, 2014

Joe **Biden** has been the White House's go-to guy during the Ukraine crisis, touring former Soviet republics and reassuring their concerned leaders. And now, he's not the only **Biden** involved in the region.

The vice president's youngest son, Hunter **Biden**, has been appointed head of legal affairs at Burisma Holdings, Ukraine's largest private gas producer, The Moscow Times reported Tuesday. Hunter described his new role in a statement on the company's website:

As a new member of the board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion, and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine.

The new gig joins several others on Hunter's extensive resume. He currently serves as as managing partner at the Washington-based investment advisory company Rosemont Seneca Partners and counsel at the New York City-based law firm Boies Schiller Flexner. He is also an adjunct professor at Georgetown University's Foreign Service graduate program.

According to Bloomberg Businessweek, Burisma was founded in 2006 and "engages in oil-well drilling, production of liquefied natural gas, and undertaking geological studies." It is based in Cyprus. It owns several oil and gas companies in Ukraine, including in the southeastern city of Dnepropetrovsk.

Burisma hired another American—and another managing partner of Rosemont Seneca Partners—just last month. Devon Archer joined the company's board of directors to "focus on the interaction with current investors, as well as involving new investors from the United States," according to an April 22 press release from the company. Archer served as a senior adviser to John Kerry during his 2004 presidential campaign.

"Today Burisma Holdings reminds me of Exxon Mobil in its wake," Archer said in a recent interview posted on the company's website. "It has all the chances to be one of the biggest privately owned oil companies in the world."

Archer's work focuses heavily on energy independence for Ukraine, a topic that has received much attention in recent months. Ukraine is dependent on Russia for energy exports, and Moscow has pulled discount agreements during its ongoing standoff with Kiev. The addition of Hunter to the company masthead suggests Burisma is turning to U.S. talent—and money and name recognition—for protection against Russia. It also jibes with the Obama administration message that his father has been tasked with spreading.

The vice president's office released a statement Tuesday afternoon saying that the elder **Biden** "does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

It's unclear whether the entry of another **Biden** into the fray was meant to send a message to Moscow. But Russian President Vladimir Putin, eternally leery of American hands in eastern European business, is bound to notice.

Joe Biden's Son Is Now On The Board Of One Of Ukraine's Biggest Gas Conglomerates

Business Insider, May 14, 2014

Hunter **Biden**, the youngest son of Vice President Joe **Biden**, has been appointed to the board of directors of Ukraine's largest private-gas producer.

The company, Burisma Holdings, announced **Biden**'s appointment on its website Tuesday. Burisma said **Biden** would be the new head of the company's legal unit.

The White House shot down any notion of a conflict of interest with Hunter **Biden**'s appointment. In a statement provided to Business Insider, Joe **Biden** spokesperson Kendra Barkoff said Hunter's appointment did not constitute an endorsement by the vice president.

"Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer. The Vice President does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company," Barkoff said. "For any additional questions, I refer you to Hunter's office."

Boies, Schiller & Flexner LLP, the national law firm for which Hunter **Biden** serves as a counsel, did not respond to a request for comment on Tuesday.

During the daily White House press briefing on Tuesday, press secretary Jay Carney said where Hunter **Biden** works " does not reflect an endorsement by the administration, by the president or vice president."

Hunter **Biden**'s appointment comes as the U.S. and much of the West has sought to help Ukraine wean off its dependence on Russia for oil and gas supplies. Last month during a trip to Kiev, the vice president pledged U.S. assistance in Ukraine's pursuit of energy independence from Russia. Ukraine and the West believe energy independence would serve as a major leverage point for Ukraine in its standoff with Russia.

In a statement released by Burisma, Hunter **Biden** said he believes the company will help strengthen Ukraine's floundering economy.

"Burisma's track record of innovations and industry leadership in the field of natural gas means that it can be a strong driver of a strong economy in Ukraine. As a new member of the Board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the Company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine," Hunter **Biden** said in the statement.

Biden's Son Joins Ukraine Gas Company's Board Of Directors

CNBC, May 14, 2014

Earlier Tuesday, White House spokesman Jay Carney referred questions on the appointment to the vice president's office.

In response to an inquiry from CNBC, a spokesperson for the vice president said, "Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer. The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

A representative at Rosemont Seneca told CNBC that **Biden** was traveling and not immediately available for comment.

Read MoreThink US natgas can threaten Russia? Think again

With Moscow threatening to cut gas supplies to the former Soviet satellite, some have called for the U.S. to deepen its ties to Ukraine by shipping its own natural gas bounty to Eastern Europe.

Burisma touted **Biden**'s "public service and foreign policy," and is listed as a co-founder of Rosement Seneca Partners, an investment advisory company. He also served as executive director of E-

Commerce Policy Coordination under former Commerce Secretary William Daley, and co-chaired the 2008 Obama-**Biden** Inaugural Committee.

—By CNBC's Javier E. David.

Biden's Son Joins Ukraine's Top Private Gas Company

International Business Times, May 14, 2014

Burisma Holdings announced Tuesday that the younger **Biden** will join the company as the head of its legal unit.

"The company's strategy is aimed at the strongest concentration of professional staff and the introduction of best corporate practices, and we're delighted that Mr. **Biden** is joining us to help us achieve these goals," Alan Apter, chairman of Burisma's board of directors, said in a statement featured as a top story on the company's home page.

Burisma is a private oil and gas company founded in 2002, under joint activity agreements with Ukrainian state-owned producers, and quickly grew to become the largest private gas producer in Ukraine. The company's average daily output stood at 10.5 million cubic meters (66 million barrels of oil equivalent) per day in September 2013, and could double that figure within two years. All of the company's gas is sold to industrial customers in Ukraine.

Biden is not the only well-connected American to join the company. Just a few weeks ago, when the vice president made an official trip to Ukraine, Burisma appointed one Devon Archer to its board. Archer is a wealthy investor and Democratic campaign fundraiser with long ties to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry. Archer was an adviser to Kerry's presidential campaign in 2004 and co-chaired Kerry's National Finance Committee. Upon his appointment to Burisma, Archer said that the energy conglomerate reminded him of "Exxon in its early days."

The company's portfolio of licenses is well-diversified across all three of Ukraine's key hydrocarbon basins – Dnieper-Donets, Carpathian and Azov-Kuban, and its fields are fully connected to the major gas pipelines in the country, allowing Burisma to keep the cost of production relatively efficient.

Natural gas is the largest energy source in Ukraine, accounting for 38 percent of total primary energy production during 2011. The country relies on Russia's gas company Gazprom currently to satisfy most of its energy needs, but will aim to reduce that dependency in coming years, and Burisma is well-positioned to boost its share of the domestic market.

"As a new member of the board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine," **Biden** said regarding his new appointment.

Biden Touts St. Louis Arch Renovation Project

Associated Press, May 14, 2014

ST. LOUIS — Vice President Joe **Biden** made a rain-shortened appearance beneath the Gateway Arch Tuesday to tout the economic benefits of a massive renovation project at the iconic tourist attraction.

The Democratic vice president was introduced by St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay and accompanied by Interior Secretary Sally Jewell and Sen. Dick Durbin, an Illinois Democrat who was scheduled to later join **Biden** at a $1,000-a-plate fundraiser at the home of a lawyer in Alton, Illinois, just across the Mississippi River.

The Midwest trip came as the White House presses Congress to replenish the Federal Highway Trust Fund for road and bridge repairs. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx has said the fund could run out of money by August unless Congress acts. Obama is scheduled to speak Wednesday in front of

the Tappan Zee Bridge in New York, while his vice president heads to Cleveland to promote a federally funded transit center project.

The $410 million Arch renovation project includes construction of a pedestrian bridge over Interstate 70 to connect downtown St. Louis with the National Park Service site. Project funding is expected to come from $250 million private donations, government grants and a portion of a local sales tax increase.

"Infrastructure is the back upon which this great nation has been built," **Biden** told an audience of several dozen local politicians, civic and business leaders. "We have to rebuild the infrastructure in this country. We've stalled."

In response to **Biden**'s visit, the Missouri Republican Party issued a statement calling for White House and Democratic congressional support of the Keystone XL pipeline project.

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Biden Hails Infrastructure Investment From Under Gateway Arch

By Justin Sink

The Hill, May 14, 2014

Vice President Joe **Biden** hailed the $380 million renovation of the St. Louis Gateway Arch grounds as a "metaphor for America never resting" during a speech at the iconic landmark Tuesday.

The vice president slammed congressional Republicans "who say we can't afford these kinds of investments."

Biden noted that Republican President Abraham Lincoln had supported building the transcontinental railroad, and argued federal infrastructure spending would lead to economic gains across the country.

The vice president's speech was the latest in a series of events the White House is hoping to use to build pressure on Congress to fund new infrastructure projects.

Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx appeared at the daily White House press briefing on Monday to argue that unless lawmakers reauthorize funding for the highway trust fund, some 700,000 jobs could be at stake. And on Wednesday, President Obama will appear at the Tappan Zee Bridge in New York for an event on infrastructure.

"This is about getting something done that has traditionally enjoyed bipartisan support, which is passing legislation that invests substantially in rebuilding our roads and bridges across the country and thereby putting people to work right away and investing in our economic foundation, in our future by enhancing our transportation networks," White House press secretary Jay Carney said Tuesday.

Following his appearance in St. Louis, the vice president is headed to Illinois for a pair of closed-press fundraisers benefitting Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) and the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

According to the Chicago Sun-Times, attendees paid between $1,000 and $35,000 to attend the fundraisers. The events include a reception in Alton, Ill., followed by a dinner at the home of mesothelioma attorney John Simmons.

Republicans used the vice president's Gateway appearance to promote an infrastructure project of their own — the Keystone XL pipeline.

"If Vice President Joe **Biden** is looking for a shovel-ready project, we'd suggest that he and the Democrat Party green light the Keystone XL pipeline," said Republican National Committee spokesman Jahan Wilcox. "There's no better place for Mr. **Biden** to come out in support of Keystone than at the

Gateway Arch, because this project would create good paying jobs for Americans who reside west of the Mississippi."

5 Things To Know About VP Biden's St. Louis Visit

KSDK-TV St. Louis, May 13, 2014

ST. LOUIS (KSDK) – Vice President Joe **Biden** will touch down in St. Louis for a number of public and private events Tuesday.

With a nationally top-ranking official coming to town, there's a lot to know and expect about the visit.

RELATED: **Biden** coming to St. Louis on Tuesday

Here's a breakdown of what you need to know:

NewsChannel 5 will have coverage throughout the day on Vice President **Biden**'s visit.

Presidential Checklist: Jockeying For Position

Associated Press, May 14, 2014

WASHINGTON — In the latest prep work for a presidential campaign, Rand Paul is conspicuously courting moderate and establishment Republicans while Ted Cruz keeps up a travel schedule that has 2016 written all over it. Jeb Bush is stirring from something of a political snooze and a half-dozen other credible prospects are getting their voices heard in the din.

As for Democrats, a Hillary Rodham Clinton book coming out in June is about as exciting as it gets these days.

The suspense of a Democratic nomination race is in suspension until the party's dominant figure decides whether to run or someone goes for the prize without waiting for her to make up her mind. She sounds and acts a bit more like a candidate by the month, which doesn't necessarily mean she'll be one.

In both parties, potential contenders are best judged by what they do — and where they go, like Iowa and New Hampshire — not by what they say. Most are keeping up with the fiction that they are not really thinking about running for president even as they transparently position themselves to run for president.

Cruz has visited Iowa four times in the past eight months, and New Hampshire and South Carolina three times each, and claimed that's got nothing to do with presidential campaign politics, which no one believes. "I think it's too early to worry about 2016," the Texas senator said with a straight face.

For months, many prospective 2016 presidential candidates have been networking with party leaders, donors and activists. They've published or announced books. They're using TV appearances to become household names, at least in households tuned to the Sunday or cable news shows.

With a few notable exceptions, their preparations have accelerated since The Associated Press began broadly tracking their activities last summer. Yet even as most march through a pre-campaign checklist, they are keeping their options open should they decide to sit out the race.

Aside from Clinton, the former secretary of state, senator and first lady, potential Democratic contenders include Vice President Joe **Biden**, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley. Among Republicans in the mix: Bush, the former Florida governor; New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie; Cruz; Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal; Kentucky Sen. Paul; Texas Gov. Rick Perry; Florida Sen. Marco Rubio; Wisconsin Rep. Paul Ryan; former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum and Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker.

A look at who's doing what:

NONDENIAL DENIAL: Cagey words that cloak presidential ambitions, none too convincingly.

Democrats

Biden: "If I decide to run, believe me, this would be the first guy I talk to. But that decision hasn't been made, for real. And there's plenty of time to make that." April, CBS, in joint interview with President Barack Obama.

Clinton: "I haven't made up my mind. I really have not." — December, ABC.

Cuomo: "I'm sorry, I'm losing you. We have a technical difficulty. I'm running for governor of the state of New York." — Seeming not to hear a question about his presidential intentions. February, Fox Business Network.

O'Malley: "No one ever goes down this road, I would hope, without giving it a lot of consideration and a lot of preparation and a lot of thought work, and so that's what I'm doing." — February, speaking to reporters in Baltimore.

Republicans

Bush: "I can honestly tell you that I don't know what I'm going to do." — His standard disclaimer. Says he'll decide by end of year whether to run. One factor in his decision: Whether he can run an optimistic campaign and avoid the "mud fight" of politics.

Christie: "I am enormously flattered that folks would talk about me in my party as someone who they think could be a candidate for president. But I am absolutely in — nowhere near that consideration process." — Jan. 9 news conference addressing the scandal over Fort Lee, N.J., traffic tie-ups.

Cruz: "My focus is entirely on the U.S. Senate." — His standard disclaimer

Jindal: "My honest answer is I don't know what I'm going to be doing in 2016." — February, speaking to press while in Washington for governors meeting.

Paul: "We're definitely talking about it, my family is talking about it. I truly won't make my mind up until after the 2014 elections. But I haven't been shy in saying we're thinking about it." — March 9, Fox News.

Perry: "I don't know whether I'm going to run for the presidency. I'm going to spend the time in preparation." — April, in Ohio.

Rubio: "It's something I'll consider at the end of this year." — May, on ABC. Does he feel ready to be president? "I do, but I think we have other people as well."

Ryan: "Janna and I are going to sit down in 2015 and give it the serious ... conversation, consideration that are required for keeping our options open. But right now I have responsibilities in the majority in the House of Representatives that I feel I ought to attend to, and then I'll worry about those things." March, CBS.

Santorum: "I don't know if I can do this. It's just tough." — April, AP interview. Timing of decision? "A year at least, probably."

Walker: "I'm really focused on 2014, not getting ahead of the game. ... You guys can predict all you want." — January, CNN.

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WRITING A BOOK: The perfect stage-setter for a campaign season, just ask Barack Obama ("The Audacity of Hope," 2006; "Dreams from My Father," 2004)

Democrats

Biden: No, not since before 2008 election.

Clinton: Yes, "Hard Choices" due for release June 10.

Cuomo: Yes, coming in 2014.

O'Malley: No. "I'm not sure where I'd find the time for that." It's probably only a matter of time before he finds time.

Republicans

Bush: Yes, on immigration.

Christie: No.

Cruz: Yes, book deal disclosed by his agent in April.

Jindal: Not since before 2012 election.

Paul: No, not since just before the 2012 election.

Perry: Not since before 2012 election.

Rubio: Yes, coming in late 2014 from the publisher of his 2012 memoir.

Ryan: Yes, coming in 2014.

Santorum: Yes, "Blue Collar Conservatives" released in late April, says: "Do Republicans really care less about the person at the bottom of the ladder than Democrats do? To be painfully honest, I would have to say in some ways 'yes.'"

Walker: Yes, out in fall 2013.

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GO TO IOWA: Its caucuses are the opening act of the nomination contest.

Democrats

Biden: Yes, spoke at Sen. Tom Harkin's fall 2013 steak-fry fundraiser, a must-stop for many Democrats seeking to compete in the leadoff caucuses. Then in May, attended party for Iowans who came to Washington for annual lobbying trip. Raised money for Iowa congressional candidate Jim Mowrer. Schmoozed with Iowa power brokers during 2013 inauguration week in Washington.

Clinton: No, avoiding big primary/caucus states. But Ready for Hillary is mobilizing for her in the state.

Cuomo: No.

O'Malley: Yes, headlined Harkin's 2012 fundraiser.

Republicans

Bush: Has been holding off on splashy visits to early voting states but plans spring fundraiser in Florida for Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad. Attended 2012 economic development meeting in Iowa.

Christie: Yes, in 2012. More travel driven by politics in the cards now that he's chairman of Republican Governors Association for 2014 election year.

Cruz: Yes, four visits in eight months.

Jindal: Yes, summer 2013 visit, then flew with Iowa governor to governors association meeting in Milwaukee. In Iowa seven times in 2012.

Paul: Yes, three times in 2013. In March, snagged the state GOP chairman, who announced he was quitting to join Paul as an adviser.

Perry: Yes, third trip since November coming up: He's to campaign for Gov. Terry Branstad in late spring. Visited Des Moines suburbs and Davenport in February, meeting GOP activists and attending an event with business leaders sponsored by Koch brothers' Americans for Prosperity. Met Branstad and addressed Des Moines crowd of 400 in November.

Rubio: Yes, just days after 2012 election, but has been largely holding off on a new wave of trips to early voting states. That's changing.

Ryan: Yes, was keynote speaker for Iowa GOP's big fundraising dinner in Cedar Rapids in April. Main speaker at governor's annual birthday fundraiser in November 2013, in first visit since 2012 campaign.

Santorum: Yes, recent visit with strategists and media. August 2013 speech to conservative Christians in state where he won the 2012 caucuses. Screened his new Christmas movie in Iowa in November.

Walker: Yes, fundraiser last year.

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GO TO NEW HAMPSHIRE: Nation's first primary comes after Iowa and is just as important.

Democrats

Biden: Yes, raised money for three Democrats in March visit for job-training event. Quipped: "I'm here about jobs — not mine."

Clinton: No. But Ready for Hillary has sent people there this year.

Cuomo: No.

O'Malley: Yes, spoke at Democratic Party dinner in November. Also spoke at 2012 convention of New Hampshire Democrats.

Republicans

Bush: No.

Christie: Yes, three times in 2012.

Cruz: Yes, three times since August.

Jindal: Yes, keynote speech to local Republican organization in March, headlined state GOP fundraiser in 2013, visited twice in 2012.

Paul: Yes, addressed Freedom Summit in April. Won straw poll at March meeting of Northeast Republican Leadership Conference in Nashua. Several visits last year.

Perry: No.

Rubio: Yes, splashy debut in May, first visit of the 2016 season, headlining fundraisers, meeting local officials, giving interviews. Multiple visits before 2012 election.

Ryan: Yes, headlined Manchester fundraiser in February for former House colleague. Canceled October 2013 visit because of government shutdown.

Santorum: Yes, March speech to Northeast Republican Leadership Conference marked his return to a state where he performed weakly in 2012 campaign.

Walker: Yes, headlined a GOP state convention in October 2013, keynote at state party convention in September 2012.

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DON'T FORGET SOUTH CAROLINA: First Southern primary and big in its own right.

Democrats

Biden: Yes. In May, gave commencement speech at University of South Carolina and headlined Democratic fundraiser, first visit since he spoke at state party's annual fundraiser a year earlier. Several earlier visits since 2009.

Clinton: No, but things are stirring. At a May meeting in Columbia partly sponsored by Ready for Hillary, Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine urged Democratic women to "think about pledging your support right now" to ensure she has "millions of us ready to take the field with her" if she runs.

Cuomo: No.

O'Malley: Yes, 2013 speech to party activists.

Republicans

Bush: Yes, 2012 speech.

Christie: Yes, helped Mitt Romney raise money in 2012.

Cruz: Yes, speech at The Citadel military college in April was third visit in a year, following event with religious conservatives in November and speech to annual state GOP dinner last May.

Jindal: Yes, third visit in a year coming in June, as keynote speaker at state GOP's biggest gathering, the Silver Elephant dinner.

Paul: Yes, foreign policy speech at The Citadel military college and small GOP fundraiser in Charleston in November 2013 visit; headlined several fundraisers earlier in year.

Perry: Yes, two-day visit in December 2013, addressed state GOP. In August, raised money for Gov. Nikki Haley's re-election campaign.

Rubio: Yes, headlined 2012 Silver Elephant dinner.

Ryan: Yes, in 2012 campaign.

Santorum: Yes, April GOP event at The Citadel military college, where two sons are cadets. Campaigned in April 2013 for Curtis Bostic in GOP House runoff race; Bostic lost.

Walker: Yes, attended August fundraiser for Haley, who came to Wisconsin to campaign for him in 2012 recall vote.

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GO ABROAD: Helps to give neophytes foreign policy cred, and Israel is a touchstone for U.S. politicians.

Democrats

Biden: You bet. Visited Ukrainian capital in April to symbolize U.S. commitment to new government in its struggle against pro-Russian insurgents and threatening signals from Moscow. Brazil coming up in June. Long at forefront of Obama administration's diplomatic maneuvers with Kiev. Sent to Poland and Lithuania in March to reassure NATO allies anxious about Russia's annexation of Crimea. December 2013 visits to China, Japan and South Korea. Countless trips to Iraq and Afghanistan during first term.

Clinton: Another globe-trotter, nearly 1 million miles as secretary of state. Limited overseas travel in 2013: honorary degree at St. Andrews University in Scotland in September; trip to London in October for a diplomacy award and a fundraising concert for the family's foundation. Attended memorial services for Nelson Mandela in South Africa in December. Two recent speeches in Canada.

Cuomo: Not much lately. Israel twice in 2002.

O'Malley: Yes. Israel in 2013 this year for a second time. Also Denmark, Ireland, France, Brazil and El Salvador in 2013. Asia in 2011, Iraq in 2010.

Republicans

Bush: Yes, usually several overseas trips a year. Three times to Israel since 1980s.

Christie: Yes, Israel and Jordan in 2012.

Cruz: Yes, first visit to Israel in December 2012, again in January 2013 as part of Senate Republican delegation that traveled to Afghanistan, too.

Jindal: January 2014 trade and investment mission to Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, first time overseas as governor. Canada in August 2013 to speak to oil industry about his support of the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Paul: Yes, Israel and Jordan in 2013.

Perry: Yes, has visited Israel numerous times including an October trip that included a photo op with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, meeting Cabinet members and a separate stop in London to see British officials and financial leaders.

Rubio: Yes, visited the Philippines, Japan and South Korea in January, foreign policy speech in London in early December and Israel, Jordan, Palestinian Authority, Afghanistan in February 2013. Also went to Israel after 2010 election to Senate.

Ryan: Yes, Middle East during congressional career; visited troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Santorum: Scant foreign travel while in the Senate drew notice in 2012 GOP campaign.

Walker: Yes, China in 2013 trade mission.

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MEET THE MONEY: To know donors now is to tap them later.

Democrats

Biden: Yes, actively fundraising for Democratic committees and candidates in 2014 midterms. Headlined fundraiser at home of **Biden** donor in Florida for House candidate Alex Sink in February; Sink lost the special election in March.

Clinton: Yes, can tap deep well of Democratic and activist money. Raises money for Clinton foundation. Bundlers such as Hollywood moguls Jeffrey Katzenberg and Haim Saban have signaled support. Ready for Hillary super PAC raised more than $4 million in 2013 and $1.7 million in first three months of 2014. Worked fundraising circuit to help Terry McAuliffe's campaign for governor in Virginia and Bill de Blasio's mayoral bid in New York City.

Cuomo: Flush coffers for 2014 governor's race.

O'Malley: Yes, in December ended his year as finance chairman for the Democratic Governors Association and is one of the party's top fundraisers.

Republicans

Bush: Yes, addressed well-heeled crowd at Manhattan Institute, led by GOP benefactor Paul Singer, in May. Flew to Las Vegas in March to meet GOP superdonor Sheldon Adelson and address Republican Jewish Coalition at Adelson's company airport hangar. In February, his short video for a GOP fundraiser at Donald Trump's Palm Beach, Florida, estate was a bigger hit than Cruz's keynote speech. Party in summer of 2013 for his immigration book at home of Woody Johnson, owner of the New York Jets and a leading Republican bundler. Has longtime Wall Street connections.

Christie: Yes, became GOP governors chairman in November, giving him regular access to the party's top national donors. In that capacity, has already met donors in Idaho, Vermont, Illinois, Texas, Massachusetts and Utah. Was one of a handful of high-profile Republicans to meet with Adelson in Las Vegas at his resort casino in late March. One of three prospective candidates who attended Mitt Romney's retreat with major party donors in Utah in June 2013.

Cruz: Yes, met in March with top California conservative donors and keynoted Trump fundraiser. Has list of potential donors that's still growing after he collected more than 1.5 million signatures for the online petition "Don'tFundObamaCare," which he began in 2013.

Jindal: Yes, met leading GOP donors in New York City, as most GOP prospects do over time. Among prospective candidates who visited Iowa GOP donor Bruce Rastetter's farm in August 2013 for annual fundraiser for the governor.

Paul: Yes, headlined luncheon in April at Boston-area equity firm led by Romney's former national finance chairman and Romney's oldest son, Tagg, an event that drew together the 2012 presidential candidate's inner circle. Also attended Romney's 2013 Utah retreat. Has met GOP donors in New York City.

Perry: Yes, has proven an effective fundraiser, both from grassroots activists and mainstream Republicans. Has led many job-poaching missions in big states with Democratic governors and met privately during those trips with key donors, especially in New York and California.

Rubio: Yes, aggressive national fundraising outreach, including trips to New York and California to meet potential donors. Raised more money last year than potential rivals Ted Cruz and Rand Paul. Among a handful of possible candidates to attend September 2013 event at home of Woody Johnson, New York Jets' owner and Mitt Romney's national finance chairman.

Ryan: Yes, attracts Wall Street interest. Addressed GOP donor Paul Singer's Manhattan Institute at same May event that heard from Bush. Had a follow-up reception with Singer and another big donor, Woody Johnson, owner of the New York Jets and a national finance chairman for Romney's last presidential bid. Attended Romney's 2013 Utah retreat, has money connections from 2012 campaign.

Santorum: 2012 shoestring campaign was largely fueled by a super political action committee to which Republican donor Foster Friess gave more than $2 million.

Walker: Yes. Addressed Republican Jewish Coalition at a Las Vegas gathering in March where main attraction was Adelson, who's looking where to place his bets in GOP field. Headlined 2013 fundraisers in New York and Connecticut.

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NETWORK LIKE MAD: Taking their case to ideologues, activists and party heavyweights who hold great sway in nomination race.

Democrats

Biden: And how. Says he plans to campaign in more than 100 races in the 2014 election. Meets regularly with former Senate colleagues and congressional Democrats. Gives keynote speeches at annual state Democratic Party dinners across the country. Making calls for House Democrats' campaign organization, assisting in recruitment of candidates. Campaigned for new Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, Massachusetts Sen. Ed Markey. Speaks regularly to special interests.

Clinton: Steady presence now on speaking circuit, delivering paid speeches to industry groups and conferences and appearing before a number of groups with ties to the Democratic coalition.

Cuomo: Sparingly. Rarely leaves New York.

O'Malley: Yes, busy spring, with speeches to California Democratic state convention in March, Wisconsin Democrats in April and Massachusetts Democrats in May. Was Democratic governors' chairman for two years until December 2012.

Republicans

Bush: Doing more this year politically after a long period of "a little self-restraint." Already a GOP establishment favorite; House Speaker John Boehner has been nudging him to run. Recent travels to Tennessee, New Mexico, Nevada and Texas. Endorsed GOP establishment favorites in North Carolina Senate and California governor primaries. Skipped Conservative Political Action Conference in March, after giving keynote speech to the influential group a year earlier.

Christie: Yes, vigorous outreach now as the new Republican Governors Association chairman. Also spoke in March to Conservative Political Action Conference, which snubbed him last year. Addressed Republican Jewish Coalition spring meeting in Las Vegas, spending a full day with top donors and GOP operatives.

Cruz: Yes, vigorously. Spoke by video to National Rifle Association's April leadership forum. Addressed Conservative Political Action Conference in March, after landing the group's coveted keynote role in 2013. Has engaged in persistent courting of religious and economic conservatives in Texas and

beyond; pitched social conservative principles at Values Voter meeting in October, while also meeting privately beforehand with evangelical leaders. Addressed 2012 Republican National Convention before he was even elected to the Senate.

Jindal: Big time and small time, far and wide. Giving May commencement address at Liberty University in Virginia, a familiar stop for prospective candidates, then South Carolina speech in June. Addressed NRA annual leadership forum in April, Conservative Political Action Conference in March, also in 2013. Made time for fundraiser for local sheriff in Michigan. Altogether, has spent much of his time during six years as governor on the road, talking to GOP and activist groups, supporting Republican candidates and promoting achievements. Has close ties with social conservatives. Created political action committee to help conservative candidates running for Congress, giving him continued opportunities to network nationally.

Paul: Yes, and now roaming freely beyond tea party tent. Had private audience in April with Romney's 2012 campaign advisers, is helping Republicans across political spectrum, including moderate Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, and has pitched in with party leaders to heal divisions from last campaign. In April brought message of unity to state GOP convention in Maine, where a struggle over delegates created raw tensions between GOP establishment and libertarian or tea party supporters of his father in 2012 campaign. Generated buzz and won symbolic straw poll at Conservative Political Action Conference in March.

Perry: Yes, spoke at past two Conservative Political Action Conferences as well as its regional meeting in St. Louis in September. Addressed conservative activists at a RedState Gathering in New Orleans in August, mistakenly saying he was in Florida. Job-pitching tour in various states helps make connections.

Rubio: Yes, stepping it up. Private audience with Republican National Committee in Memphis in May, right after his New Hampshire trip. Earlier outreach to conservative and party activists focused on repairing tea party relationships strained over immigration. Well-received speech to Conservative Political Action Conference in March. In Virginia governor's race, campaigned for Republican Ken Cuccinelli, who lost. Speech to National Rifle Association in April; also foreign policy speech at University of Texas, more.

Ryan: Yes, prime networker as 2012 vice presidential candidate; now helping fellow House members raise money.

Santorum: Addressed NRA convention in April; speeches to groups around the country, including Conservative Political Action Conference. His Christian-themed film company is his calling card with religious conservatives.

Walker: One of only a few 2016 prospects who spoke to Republican Jewish Coalition. Skipped the big Conservative Political Action Conference in March, appeared there last year. Campaigned for GOP in Virginia governor's race. Spoke to Michigan Republican Leadership Conference on Mackinac Island in September 2013.

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HOG THE TV: Achieving national recognition by sermonizing on the Sunday news shows, or going for soft questions and easy laughs on late-night TV.

Democrats

Biden: He's back. After being largely absent from the airwaves for more than a year, **Biden** has resumed frequent interviews, including joint TV appearance with Obama in April. He did a TV blitz the morning after the State of the Union, a CNN interview aboard an Amtrak train and dished on his skin care

routine and his wife's oddball pranks during an interview with Rachael Ray. But not a Sunday news show fixture.

Clinton: No. But late-night TV host Jimmy Kimmel interviewed her in March. Appeared with Obama on CBS' "60 Minutes" in January to talk about tenure as secretary of state; gave interview to Barbara Walters late in 2013.

Cuomo: No. Prefers radio.

O'Malley: Getting back in the swing. January 2014 Sunday news show appearance on CNN was first in months, followed by CBS in February.

Republicans

Bush: Blanketed the five Sunday shows one day in March 2013 to plug his book on immigration, a few appearances other times.

Christie: Not so much since traffic scandal surfaced. Before that, liked to cut up on late-night TV. Four Sunday news shows after his 2013 re-election.

Cruz: Yes, several Sunday news show appearances already this year, plenty last year. Frequent guest on Fox News and CNN.

Jindal: No, only a couple of Sunday news show appearances since 2012 election.

Paul: Leader of the chattering pack with more than a dozen Sunday talk show appearances since 2012 election, including one in April from New Hampshire. Frequent guest on news networks, especially Fox.

Perry: Raising his profile lately, making several national TV appearances while starring in flood of media spots in California designed to persuade businesses based there to move to Texas. On NBC's "Meet the Press" in May: "I'm going to be across the country talking about red-state versus blue-state policies. Hopefully engaged in a good, thoughtful, winsome conversation about how do we make America more competitive."

Rubio: Staying on par with most rivals in Sunday news show appearances, did one from New Hampshire in May. Blanketed all five Sunday shows one day in April 2013 to talk about immigration, before he dropped the subject. Frequent guest on news networks.

Ryan: Many Sunday news show appearances since 2012 election. Occasional guest on network news.

Santorum: Yes, promoting his new book. Plugged his Christmas movie on "The Colbert Report," Fox News, MSNBC and more. Radio, too. Teamed up with Democrat Howard Dean as sparring partners for debates on the air and with audiences.

Walker: Already on the Sunday news show scoreboard for 2014. Half dozen or so Sunday news show appearances since 2012 election. Also, Piers Morgan, Lou Dobbs, more national TV interviews.

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ACTUALLY DO SOMETHING: For voters who want to support doers, not just talkers.

Democrats

Biden: Leading Obama's review of federal job-training programs, prime player in U.S. response to Ukrainian crisis. His office co-chaired a White House task force to address sexual assault on campuses. Point man on gun control, which failed. Negotiated fiscal cliff deal.

Clinton: Record as secretary of state, senator and first lady. Recent initiatives to help children's health and education and status of women.

Cuomo: 2014 budget proposal calls for tax cuts for businesses, homeowners and renters. In 2013, pushed through nation's first gun-control law after the Newtown, Connecticut, school massacre. Led New

York's effort to legalize same-sex marriage in 2011. Minimum wage boost, on-time budgets, teacher standards.

O'Malley: Toughened gun laws, repealed death penalty, saw voters approve gay marriage after he got behind legislation to approve it, set up a framework to develop offshore wind power, won legislative approval in April of minimum wage increase, a 2014 priority.

Republicans

Bush: As Florida governor, revamped state educational system, cut taxes, managed state through hurricanes.

Christie: Won November 2013 re-election, becoming first Republican to earn more than 50 percent of New Jersey vote in quarter-century. Led state's response to Superstorm Sandy. Agreed to expand state's Medicaid program under the new health law while some other Republican governors have refused to do so. Vetoed a bill that would have sanctioned gay marriage, but declined to appeal a court ruling that legalized it.

Cruz: Leading force in dispute that partly shut the government, 21-hour Senate speech against Obama's health law. Argued before U.S. Supreme Court nine times, with eight of those coming while he was Texas' longest-serving solicitor general, between 2003 and 2008.

Jindal: Privatized much of Louisiana's Medicaid program, shrank public hospital system, signed statewide voucher program that covers private school tuition for certain students. Signed abortion restrictions, fought liberalization of adoption law, making it impossible for gay couples to adopt jointly. Hurricane and Gulf oil spill disaster response.

Paul: One-man, nearly 13-hour Senate filibuster to protest drone policy put him at forefront of civil liberties debate.

Perry: "Texas Miracle" job-creation boom has seen state create a third of the net new jobs nationwide over last decade, although Texas has disproportionately high percentage of hourly workers earning minimum wage or less. Helped muscle through new abortion restrictions.

Rubio: Broker of Senate immigration overhaul, though he's gone quiet on the issue. Early leader of effort to link financing of health care law to government shutdown. Working with anti-abortion groups on Senate version of bill that would ban abortions after 20 weeks.

Ryan: Negotiated December 2013 bipartisan budget deal that scaled back across-the-board spending cuts, drawing contrast with potential rivals who opposed it. Budget-hawk record to be judged on. Emerging as influential moderate on immigration.

Santorum: Making Christian-themed, family-friendly movies at the moment; record from Senate days.

Walker: Curbs on public service unions became national flashpoint, but he won the effort — and the recall election that followed.

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TAKE A NATIONAL STAND: Effective state governance is nice but leaders must build national stature on issues of the day.

Democrats

Biden: Eclectic. Guns, violence against women, gay rights, veterans.

Clinton: Eclectic. 2013 speeches focused on the economy, housing, opportunities for women, voting rights.

Cuomo: Environmentalists nationally and the energy industry are closely watching his pending decision whether to allow fracking in upstate New York counties near the Pennsylvania line.

O'Malley: The liberal checklist: more spending on education, infrastructure, transportation; supports same-sex marriage, immigration reform, repealing death penalty, pushes environmental protections.

Republicans

Bush: Unapologetic proponent of Common Core education standards and immigration changes opposed by many in GOP.

Christie: Moderate on the reach and functions of government; bipartisanship.

Cruz: Anti-Obama's health care law, pushes broader tea party agenda.

Jindal: A record of privatization to show he means government should be trimmed, happy to carry a social conservative banner.

Paul: Tea-party plus, with a libertarian streak that places him to the left of rivals on some issues, to the right on others. Fiscal conservative, criticizes surveillance state. Says GOP should back off on pushing state voter ID laws offensive to blacks. Health law scold. Joining in 2014 with liberal lawmakers and others in effort to roll back some mandatory minimum sentences and give judges more flexibility in fitting punishment to crime.

Perry: Prominent voice on conservative issues since before the birth of the tea party. Wants to ban all abortion in Texas, relax environmental regulations, boost states' rights; opposes gay marriage.

Rubio: Proposes higher retirement age for Social Security benefits for younger workers and restraints on benefit increases to the wealthy. 2014 initiative on poverty calls for federal wage supplements for some low-wage workers instead of earned income tax credit. Economy, abortion, tea party fiscal conservatism; immigration liberalization if he decides to get back to it. Another voice against health care law. Has become a leading GOP voice in foreign policy, pressing for stronger U.S. action in geopolitical hot spots. On climate change: "I do not believe that human activity is causing these dramatic changes to our climate the way these scientists are portraying it."

Ryan: Cutting spending, taking on entitlements, rolling back Obama's health law. Anti-poverty initiative this year.

Santorum: Social conservative activism goes way back. Focus on blue-collar economic opportunity. Speaking against libertarian streak in GOP, a "strain of conservatism that has no basis in conservatism." Book calls climate change "hyped-up crisis."

Walker: Fiscal stewardship, from a GOP point of view. Tough guy against the unions and liberal defenders of the status quo. Says GOP in Congress is the party of no.

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BAGGAGE TO CHECK: It's never too early to deal with skeletons in the closet; rivals will be rattling them soon enough.

Democrats

Biden: Flubs, fibs, age. Deflection: "I am who I am." Saddled by Obama's low approval ratings.

Clinton: Benghazi, Libya; polarizing when political, age. GOP wants to pin blame on her for vulnerability of U.S. diplomatic mission in Libya that came under deadly attack in 2012. In long-confidential documents from Bill Clinton's administration, advisers urged her to "be real" and "humanize" herself, revealing concerns about her authenticity as a public figure.

Cuomo: New York economy is dragging, his poll numbers have sunk, went through public and bitter divorce with Kerry Kennedy, daughter of late Sen. Robert Kennedy, in 2005.

O'Malley: State-run health insurance exchange website was an expensive bust, prompting officials to make an embarrassing switch in April to one based on Connecticut's. Contraband- and drug-smuggling scheme at state-run Baltimore City Detention Center that resulted in 44 people being indicted has state

lawmakers looking to make reforms. Has record of raising taxes that could be challenged by less liberal Democrats, never mind Republicans.

Republicans

Bush: The Bush factor. Does the country want a Bush dynasty after presidents George H. W. and George W.? Courting trouble with the right with positions on education and remarks in April that people who cross into the U.S. illegally are doing so as an "act of love" for their families.

Christie: If you have to declare "I am not a bully," you've got a problem. Apologized in January 2014 for highway lane closures apparently ordered by his aides as retribution against a mayor who did not endorse him for re-election. Also fired his deputy chief of staff and denied knowledge of the machinations. Episode deepened questions about what Christie, or those around him, will do to win, and contributed to a significant drop in his poll standings. Investigations continue.

Cruz: Reputation as a hotheaded upstart, also part of his appeal. Polarizing within his party. Also comes with birther baggage: Questions have been raised in some quarters about his constitutional standing to become president because of his birth in Canada, to a Cuban father and American mother. Deflection: Promised last summer to renounce Canadian citizenship but hasn't.

Jindal: Ambitious plan to replace state's personal and corporate taxes with higher sales taxes flopped, delivered dud of a speech when given juicy platform of responding to Obama's first presidential address to Congress in 2009. Deflection: Poking fun at himself. Jindal administration's award of a $200 million Medicaid contract is under investigation by state and federal grand juries.

Paul: Dear old dad: Must move beyond Ron Paul's fringe reputation. Bridge-burning in Congress endears him to tea party, could bite him otherwise. Deflection: GOP outreach to minorities. The Washington Times canceled his column after he was found to have used passages from other people in his speeches and writings as if they were his own. Deflection: Promising proper citations and footnotes for his pronouncements "if it will make people leave me the hell alone."

Perry: "Oops!" Memories of his stumbling 2012 campaign, a quick progression from a front-runner to flameout. Deflection: Owns up to his "botched efforts" in last campaign. Also a potential drag: a grand jury investigation in Austin into whether he abused power by cutting off state financing for an office of public corruption prosecutors led by a Democrat who refused to resign after being convicted of drunken driving.

Rubio: Rift with tea party constituency on immigration, "a real trial for me." Deflection: Go aggressive on a matter of common ground, which he did in pledging to take apart the health law. And stop talking about immigration. Response to Obama's 2013 State of the Union speech was remembered only for his clumsy reach for water. Deflection: Made fun of himself.

Ryan: Budget axe cuts both ways — catnip to conservatives but people want their Medicare. Carries stigma of 2012 election loss as running mate. Tea party not happy with his late 2013 budget deal. Comments in March about cultural "tailspin" in inner cities struck some as veiled racism. Deflection: Called his remark "inarticulate."

Santorum: Overshadowed by newer conservative figures. Deflection: Being overshadowed means being an underdog, and he can thrive at that. Feisty 2012 campaign became the biggest threat to Romney's march to the nomination. New book contains provocative passages for future rivals to dredge up.

Walker: Some things that give him huge appeal with GOP conservatives — taking on unions, most notably — would whip up Democratic critics in general election. Wisconsin has lagged in job creation. Release of emails in February shed light on criminal investigation into whether Walker's aides were

illegally doing campaign work for the 2010 governor's election while being paid as county employees. Walker, then a county executive, wasn't charged but the episode has proved a distraction.

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RUN SHADOW CAMPAIGN: One way to run without running is to have a political action committee to promote ideas or other candidates for office, or to hire advisers who can switch to a campaign when the time comes.

Democrats

Biden: Constrained by his current job, but tapped longtime adviser and former lobbyist Steve Ricchetti to be his new chief of staff; maintains close contact with political advisers past and present.

Clinton: Ready for Hillary super PAC set up by supporters is laying groundwork, so are others. Several old Clinton hands are advising the group, including Craig T. Smith and Harold Ickes.

Cuomo: Overshadowed by Clinton's shadow campaign. Considered a likely contender if Clinton ends up not running.

O'Malley: Set up a PAC called O'Say Can You See and hired two people for fundraising and communications.

Republicans

Bush: He's a Bush, so he's got connections. Sally Bradshaw, chief of staff when he was governor, is his go-to political person.

Christie: Republican Governors Association chairmanship allows him to grow his national profile with voters and party officials with regular travel and key appearances. Began building broad coalition of donors through his national fundraising tour in spring 2013. But the shadow of the traffic scandal still hangs over his shadow campaign.

Cruz: Has leadership PAC, Jobs Growth and Economic Freedom. Has been one of the largest beneficiaries of Jim DeMint's Senate Conservatives Fund and has gotten millions of dollars and grassroots logistical support from the Club for Growth, FreedomWorks and Ending Spending PAC. Heritage Action PAC helped sponsor Cruz's summer anti-health-law trip around Texas and country.

Jindal: Created Washington-based nonprofit, America Next, in October 2013 to push policy ideas nationally. For executive director, tapped Jill Neunaber, who worked on Romney's presidential campaign in Iowa and New Hampshire. In March created PAC to help conservative candidates.

Paul: Has formidable leadership PAC called Rand PAC, has maintained ties to father's political network in early primary states and benefits from strong tea party support. Is starting to build teams on the ground in most states.

Perry: Created Americans for Economic Freedom PAC in fall 2013 to raise his profile again, help him test the waters and broadcast ads promoting Republican leadership around the country. Group used more than $200,000 left over from the PAC that raised millions for his 2012 campaign.

Rubio: Beginning more aggressive travel to early voting states; has lagged potential rivals on that front. Ramping up in other ways, too: Shuffled his staff and directed political resources of his Reclaim America PAC to three big Senate midterm races this year, one of them the GOP primary in Iowa.

Ryan: His Prosperity Action PAC. Questions remain about whether he will make a presidential bid given his rising influence in Congress.

Santorum: Keeps in touch with chief supporters of his winning 2012 Iowa caucus campaign, giving him a leg up on a campaign organization in that state.

Walker: Consults with top Republican governor strategists such as Phil Musser and Nick Ayers.

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GET WITH IT ON SOCIAL MEDIA: A must for spreading ideas, poking competitors, raising money, organizing events and showing a personal side, though often a very canned version.

Democrats

Biden: Launched Instagram account in April. Not active on Facebook, occasional contributor to his office's vigorous Twitter account.

Clinton: More than 1 million followers on Twitter, her preferred social media outlet.

Cuomo: Few if any personal tweets; Facebook also generated primarily by staff.

O'Malley: On Twitter, standard governor's fare but promotes rare appearances by his Celtic rock band, O'Malley's March, for which he sings and plays guitar, banjo and tin whistle. On Facebook, his PAC-generated page is more active than official governor's account.

Republicans

Bush: Tweets and posts many Wall Street Journal stories, education thoughts and some Bush family doings.

Christie: More engaged in Twitter ("It was great to be able to visit with the owners of Rossi's Rent-A-Rama in Ortley today.") than Facebook.

Cruz: Active on Facebook and Twitter, much content is pumped out by staff.

Jindal: Active on Twitter and on Facebook, where he lists among favorite books, "John Henry Newman: A Biography," about recently canonized British cardinal and sage. Also favors James Bond movies.

Paul: Aggressive. Bragged on Twitter in June that he'd attracted more than 1 million likes for his Facebook page, where he lists his own books as his favorites.

Perry: Active. One popular tweet was accidental — from his pocket, he said — and consisted of "I." Followers jumped in to complete his sentence. One offered: "I ... really like Obamacare." (He doesn't.) Facebook appears staff-generated.

Rubio: Aggressive, with large followings, appears to make personal use of Twitter more than staff-generated Facebook. Takes lots of shots at the health law. On Facebook, lists "Pulp Fiction" movie and "The Tudors" historical fiction TV series among favorites.

Ryan: King of Facebook among potential rivals in both parties, with nearly 4.9 million likes. Seeks $10 donations for "Team Ryan" bumper stickers for his PAC and kisses a fish. Posts photo of Obama with his feet up on Oval Office desk. Commanding presence on Twitter, too, via an account associated with his PAC and another as congressman.

Santorum: Active on Twitter and Facebook.

Walker: Posts vigorously on Facebook and on his Twitter accounts. Many exclamation points. "Glad USDA is keeping cranberries on school menus. I drink several bottles of cranberry juice each day!" And, "Green Bay Packers signing Julius Peppers to a 3-year deal is HUGE!" Promotes policy achievements and his TV appearances, reflects on sports, pokes Obama.

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Can Democrats Win When Obama's Not On The Ticket?

National Journal, May 14, 2014

By now, it's accepted wisdom that Democrats perform better in presidential elections, when the electorate is more diverse and younger, while the GOP's strength is in midterm elections, when their core voters are likelier to turn out. But it's worth remembering that this is a recent phenomenon, thanks to the changing makeup of the Democratic Party under Barack Obama's presidency—and there's no guarantee it will continue unabated.

It wasn't the case in 2004, when George W. Bush effectively mobilized conservative voters to overcome growing public dissatisfaction toward his presidency. It wasn't the case in 2006, when the Democratic Party capitalized on increased support from older, white voters to retake the House and Senate. And it wasn't the case in the decades prior, when Democrats often recorded significant gains or outperformed expectations in midterm years (1982, 1986, 1998), while Republicans won five of seven presidential elections from 1980 to 2004.

What's changed is the makeup of both parties' coalitions. Seniors, who frequently voted Democratic over pocketbook issues like Social Security and Medicare, have migrated into the Republican column. White blue-collar voters, once a staple of Democratic coalitions past, have become estranged from their old political home over cultural issues. In their place are what my colleague Ron Brownstein labels "the coalition of the ascendant"—single women, minorities, and millennial voters. Voters within these groups turned out at high levels in the last two presidential elections to offset Democratic losses elsewhere.

The challenge for Democrats in this year's midterms is getting these "ascendant" voters enthusiastic about showing up to the polls when Obama isn't on the ballot—something that Democratic turnout specialists are working overtime to achieve. Even if they don't show up and Republicans retake the Senate in 2014, the assumption is they're bound to return at similar levels for the next presidential election. That's not necessarily the case.

To be sure, the growing diversity of the electorate presents Republicans with fundamental challenges, regardless of the turnout rates of the core Democratic groups. But it's also clear that the historic nature of President Obama's candidacy helped him rally African-American voters to the polls in record numbers and at record levels—a dynamic that's unlikely to repeat itself in the future. For the first time in history, African-Americans voted at a higher rate than whites in 2012, with 66.2 percent of eligible black voters casting ballots. That's up six points from 2004, the last presidential election in which Obama wasn't on the ballot. In many urban, heavily African-American precincts, support for Obama ran close to 100 percent. Without that same degree of support in the future, Democrats will need to make up lost ground with white voters, while maintaining the overwhelming advantages with Hispanic and Asian-American voters they enjoyed in 2012.

A postelection analysis from Brookings Institution demographer William Frey found that if turnout rates from all racial groups remained at the same levels as 2004, Mitt Romney would have won the presidency—by 9,000 votes. And if only minority turnout dipped to its 2004 levels (with white turnout at its lower 2012 rate), Obama would have barely defeated Romney. Given the growing share of Hispanic and Asian-American voters, that's far from encouraging news for Republicans, but it's also a cautionary tale for the party dependent on demographic destiny to win future presidential elections.

Indeed, Democrats could find themselves reliant on brand-name candidates to generate the same degree of enthusiasm that Obama offered like-minded voters over the last two presidential elections. Hillary Clinton fits the bill, given her unique appeal among women and potential to improve on Obama's

performance among working-class voters. But would Joe **Biden** or any generic Democratic officeholder provide them with the same advantages? (Think Martin O'Malley versus Marco Rubio.)

Despite the diversifying Democratic coalition, the party's bench is virtually devoid of minority officeholders. There are only four Democratic governors or senators of color, compared to six Republicans. Obama hasn't brought along many other Democrats who present the same post-racial appeal he showcased in 2008. Even Obama campaign strategist David Axelrod acknowledged the Democratic Party "needs to do a better job" of recruiting more minority officeholders on an American Hospital Association panel in which we both participated. Without those landmark presidential candidates in the future, it's hard to see minority voter enthusiasm maintain its healthy rate.

"Although long-term demographic trends … are favorable for the Democrats, translating those trends into true political and electoral dominance will remain difficult so long as Democrats rely on simply turning out core Obama coalition voters. Their margins will be too thin and subject to backlash, especially below the presidential level," political scientists Ruy Teixeira and Andrew Levison wrote last spring in The New Republic. They later concluded: "If in 2016 white working-class support falls to or below the 33 percent it hit in 2012, a GOP president becomes a very real possibility."

Teixeira, who presciently anticipated that changing demographics would spur political realignment in the landmark book The Emerging Democratic Majority, is now suggesting the limits Democrats face depending entirely on the Obama-forged coalition. Meanwhile, Obama's job approval among noncollege whites hit 29 percent in this month's ABC News/Washington Post poll.

Second Lady Delivers OCTC Commencement Speech

WTVW-TV Evansville (IN), May 14, 2014

It was a special night for college graduates in Owensboro, with a very prominent keynote speaker. Dr. Jill **Biden**, wife of Vice President Joe **Biden**, delivered the commencement speech for Owensboro Community and Technical College. The event was held at RiverPark Center Tuesday evening.

The Second Lady of the United States said she felt "right at home" speaking to the OCTC graduates. Dr. **Biden** teaches English full-time at a community college near The White House. She noted the challenges many students face while earning their degrees.

"No matter how hard it got, and I know there have been hard times. Even if you lost faith in yourself, you picked yourself up and continued on your path. Maybe you took a chance, maybe you learned something new. Maybe you discovered you had a strength you never knew you had," said Dr. **Biden**.

She challenged the new graduates to lift up others, go to their strengths and never stop learning. The Second Lady personally handed each graduate his or her diploma, making an already special night all the more memorable.

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Biden Challenges OCTC Grads

Owensboro (KY) Messenger-Inquirer, May 14, 2014

By Steve Vied Messenger-Inquirer

Jill **Biden**, the wife of Vice President Joe **Biden**, heartily congratulated the graduates of Owensboro Community & Technical College Tuesday night during the school's spring commencement at the RiverPark Center.

But the 30-year educator, who continues to teach English full time at Northern Virginia Community College, also challenged them.

Second Lady Speaks To Graduating Owensboro Students

WFIE-TV Evansville (IN), May 14, 2014

OWENSBORO, KY (WFIE) –

The Second Lady of the United State, Jill **Biden**, made a stop in Owensboro Tuesday night to speak to the graduating class of Owensboro Community and Technical College.

Jill **Biden** left the RiverPark Center around 8:30 p.m. after speaking for about 20 minutes.

She is a community college professor herself. She teaches English at a college very close to the White House.

She's been a teacher for more than 30 years and stood on the stage handing diplomas to every student as their name was called.

This is the second time **Biden** had been invited to speak at Owensboro Community and Technical College.

This year, school officials say, they had some help from former Senator Wendell Ford in getting **Biden** there.

During her speech, she took time to praise the community college system and the leadership Owensboro has shown in preparing students for the future.

"I know that Owensboro has been on the forefront of many of these efforts and has been a leader both here in Kentucky and in other states as well," said Dr. Jill **Biden**. "You all have a lot to be proud of. You've heard my story, so you know that I feel right at home at a community college commencement."

Owensboro is only one of two cities that **Biden** chose to speak at this year.

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NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS

Ordering Google To Forget

By The Editorial Board

New York Times, May 14, 2014

In a ruling that could undermine press freedoms and free speech, the highest court of the European Union said on Tuesday that Google must comply with requests from individuals to remove links on search results pages to newspaper articles and other web pages that might cause embarrassment.

The European Court of Justice ruled that an individual's "right to be forgotten" was so strong that Google and other Internet search companies could be forced to remove links even if the information in question was itself accurate and lawful.

The court said links could be removed if they were found to be "inadequate, irrelevant or no longer relevant." But the ruling provided little guidance to lower courts about how to decide when links should be removed. As a result, it could open the floodgates for people living in the 28 countries of the European Union to demand that Google and other search engines remove millions of links from search results. Such a purge would leave Europeans less well informed and make it harder for journalists and dissidents to have their voices heard.

The ruling was based on a case brought by a Spanish man against a newspaper and Google. He argued that searching for his name led to two pages originally published in 1998 on the website of the newspaper, La Vanguardia, about his debts and the forced sale of his home. The Spanish Data Protection Agency did not require the newspaper to take down the pages, but it ordered Google to

remove links to them. Google appealed that decision and the National High Court of Spain sought advice from the European court. The case now goes back to the Spanish court for resolution.

In 1995, the European Union issued a directive to its members to protect the privacy of individuals. The directive did not explicitly establish a right to be forgotten. But the European court ruled that "after a certain time" individuals can argue that search links no longer comply with the directive and should be erased. The court, however, did not specify how much time has to pass for a request to be considered valid, presumably, leaving that question to Internet companies, privacy officials in European countries and lower courts to answer on a case-by-case basis.

European lawmakers and courts have a long history of protecting privacy. In March, the European Parliament approved a new data protection law that, among other things, includes an explicit right to be forgotten. European governments still need to sign off on that legislation before it can be finalized.

The desire to allow individuals to erase data that they no longer wish to disclose is understandable. For example, there are good reasons to let people remove embarrassing photos and posts they published on social media as children or young adults. But lawmakers should not create a right so powerful that it could limit press freedoms or allow individuals to demand that lawful information in a news archive be hidden.

A Call For Justice For Syrians

New York Times, May 14, 2014

For three years, the United Nations Security Council has failed to end the violence in Syria, largely because Russia and China have stubbornly blocked constructive action and protected President Bashar al-Assad. A new French-led move to have the Council refer Syria to the International Criminal Court for possible prosecution of war crimes won't end the slaughter either. But it would underscore the world's revulsion at atrocities by both sides and its insistence that those responsible be brought to justice.

A vote on the referral resolution is expected soon. Syria never joined the Rome Statute, the treaty creating the court, so the court cannot prosecute crimes there without a Council vote.

The United States dropped its objections to a court referral after the text was written so that neither Israel, which occupies the Golan Heights taken from Syria in 1967, nor the United States could be ensnared in the unlikely event its soldiers get involved. The wording circumvents the problem by defining the conflict narrowly, as involving the Syrian government, its allied militias and armed opposition forces between March 2011 and now. It exempts "current or former officials or personnel" of countries that have not ratified the treaty, except Syria.

The case reflects America's conflicted relations with the court. President Bill Clinton signed the treaty, but President George W. Bush tried to subvert it, until officials found it useful to go after President Omar Hassan al-Bashir of Sudan, who was accused of genocide. President Obama has been somewhat more supportive; America voted for a 2011 resolution that opened an inquiry into the excesses of Muammar el-Qaddafi's regime in Libya.

There is ample justification for an investigation. More than 150,000 people are estimated to have been killed in the Syrian civil war, 2.5 million have fled abroad and 9 million are displaced within the country. Civilians have been subject to starvation, torture and punishing attacks by chemical weapons, jet fighters, barrel bombs and suicide bombers. Navi Pillay, the United Nations human rights chief, told the Security Council last month that human rights violations by government forces "far outweigh" those by armed opposition groups. But United Nations investigators have also documented torture and killings by rebel forces.

There is no reason to believe Russia, at odds with the West over Ukraine, or China will back the referral. On the other hand, do they really want to protect war criminals?

Common Sense At The Library

By The Editorial Board

New York Times, May 14, 2014

The New York Public Library has abandoned its plan to renovate its landmark building in Midtown. There will be no hybrid lending-and-research library behind those stone lions on Fifth Avenue, no towering glass atrium looking out on Bryant Park. The dumpy Mid-Manhattan Library, across the street, will not be sold. No books will be banished to New Jersey.

What will happen instead, according to the library: A more modest, cheaper, quicker and, by the looks of it, smarter plan. The Mid-Manhattan Library will stay put and be made beautiful, with computer labs and adult-education space. Closed rooms within the glorious Beaux-Arts main building will be opened to the public, and a new, permanent exhibition of treasured manuscripts and artifacts will be created. Book storage will be expanded into space under Bryant Park, where a 19th-century reservoir once sat. And, the library's officials say, this plan is affordable.

The library's reversal was motivated by the best of reasons — what its president, Anthony Marx, aptly called "the facts." They include a budget that had swollen to $300 million and beyond, a sagging economy, and unexpected difficulties in building a new circulating library in the stacks beneath the Rose Reading Room. Beyond those particulars lay the intense derision the project had inspired among some critics, a cluster of lawsuits, and the skepticism of Mayor Bill de Blasio, who was leery about the proposed sale of the Mid-Manhattan Library.

Though the now-abandoned plan was widely mocked, the library's earlier goals, its need to raise money and stay relevant in the digital age while doing something about its white-elephant buildings, the Mid-Manhattan Library and its neglected Science, Industry and Business Library on 34th Street made sense at the time. But circumstances changed and Mr. Marx is right not to dig in, even though the library had already paid $9 million to the architect Norman Foster to design the new space.

It's nice to know that for a venerable institution like the New York Public Library, old doesn't mean inflexible.

Around A Sardinian Table, A Fractious Debate

By Mira Kamdar

New York Times, May 14, 2014

LU FRAILI, Sardinia — April was lovely, as always, in Sardinia. The summer tourists had not yet arrived; the island was covered with wildflowers and the wild asparagus was pushing up among the cork trees. This spring felt especially healing after the death and destruction wrought by cyclone Cleopatra last November. The storm had damaged my 84-year-old father's house, and I had come to deal with the repairs.

Sardinia is a special autonomous region of Italy, with greater local control of legislation, administration and finance than in other Italian regions. It is the second-largest island in the Mediterranean after Sicily, with which it shares representation in the European Parliament. A hardscrabble life, shaped by the island's unique language, environment and history, has given Sardinians a strong sense of identity, which they struggle to defend against the forces of cultural and economic integration with Italy, Europe, and the rest of the world.

My Sardinian friends organized a special dinner for me featuring a traditional suckling pig roasted on myrtle branches, as well as Sardinian wines, including Cannonau. Eventually, the conversation veered into the contentious realm of Italian politics and the upcoming European parliamentary elections.

The men on either side of me locked into a debate in rapid-fire Italian that I, the lone American, strained to follow. One guest was a convert to the populist Five Star Movement of comedian-turned-political-activist Beppe Grillo. Both of Italy's main political parties, he argued, were beholden to the same powerful business and Mafia interests. Only the Five Star party had the courage to chart a path out of Italy's political quagmire and its enslavement to a European Union co-opted by international business interests.

The other guest argued just as passionately that Mr. Grillo was a dangerous populist and that Italy's best hope lay with the center-left Democratic Party, Italy's new prime minister, the 39-year-old go-getter, Matteo Renzi, and Renato Soru, Sardinia's own Internet billionaire and the Democratic Party's candidate to represent Sardinia and Sicily in the European Parliament. One of the other guests chimed in to say the real danger was Silvio Berlusconi and his conservative Forza Italia party, along with the extreme-right Northern League.

Sardinia has a rich history of invasion and exploitation by outsiders. Now the lack of jobs forces many of the island's sons and daughters to leave to seek employment on the Italian mainland and beyond. Per capita income in Sardinia is nearly 25 percent lower than the Italian average, and unemployment tops 18 percent. The traditional handicrafts industry has been eviscerated. Middle-class tourism has nose-dived.

At the same time, the superrich continue to flock to Sardinia's Costa Smeralda where Mr. Berlusconi owns a multimillion-dollar estate and Qatar Holding has announced plans to build new ultraluxury hotels and an aquatic amusement park. But a tourism-dependent economy has compounded the estrangement many Sardinians feel toward their homeland and culture. Some still dream of seceding from Italy entirely, and the recent vote, largely symbolic, by Venetians to do just that has inspired them.

Beyond Italy, many see global economic integration as the greatest threat Sardinian culture has ever faced. While the European Union's money is welcomed — Sardinia benefits from union designation as a region targeted for economic improvement — the additional layer of European rules imposed on the island's small business owners and agriculturalists is resented.

The United States is now lobbying hard in the proposed trans-Atlantic trade deal to crack European resistance to American agribusiness products, generally characterized by European news media as hormone-laden beef, bleach-rinsed chicken and genetically modified foods. This does not go over well in Italy, and many Sardinians fear the agreement, if approved, would create a supragovernmental set of rules dictated by powerful multinational corporations that would threaten a central part of Sardinian culture: local food. Similar fears are driving the rise of euro-skepticism and secession talk elsewhere in Europe in advance of the European parliamentary elections next week.

At the end of the evening, I asked one of my Sardinian friends about the movement to have the island adopted by Switzerland. "Too much Cannonau can make everything seem possible," he said with a laugh.

Meet The New York Times's Editorial Board »

To Dream In Different Cultures

By T. M. Luhrmann

New York Times, May 14, 2014

WHEN Doug Hollan arrived on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi for his anthropology dissertation fieldwork in a rice farming village, his Toraja neighbors wanted to take turns sleeping with him and his wife.

The rural Toraja almost never sleep alone. They sleep in wood frame houses with little furniture and flimsy room dividers, and they sleep on the floor together in groups, sharing blankets and huddling close for warmth. And so the Toraja have "punctuated" sleep. They wake often as others turn and get up in the night, or when a child calls out or another adult can't sleep and starts to chat. Mr. Hollan never heard anyone complain about this.

Many years after he returned from Toraja, Mr. Hollan became a psychotherapist and opened a practice in Los Angeles. Most of his clients have voiced discomfort, at some point or another, with their sleep. They do so even though they have what you might imagine would be the perfect conditions to sleep soundly. They have private darkened rooms that they share with at most one person and, often, expensively manufactured beds that minimize disturbance to the other person when one gets up in the night. His clients want to make sure they get seven or eight hours of continuous sleep, and when they try to sleep but they can't, they get upset.

They are not alone. The National Sleep Foundation reports that more than one in five Americans has difficulty falling asleep almost every night, and a 2013 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study found that about 4 percent of adults in the United States had taken a prescription sleeping pill in the previous month. In 2012 Americans spent $32 billion in the sleep-assistance industry.

This obsession with eight hours of continuous sleep is largely a creation of the electrified age. Back when night fell for, on average, half of each 24 hours, people slept in phases. In "At Day's Close," a remarkable history of night in the early modern West, Roger Ekirch writes that people fell asleep not long after dark for the "first sleep." Then they awoke, somnolent but not asleep, often around midnight, when for a few hours they talked, read, prayed, had sex, brewed beer or burgled. Then they went back to sleep for a shorter period. Mr. Ekirch concludes, "There is every reason to believe that segmented sleep, such as many wild animals exhibit, had long been the natural pattern of our slumber before the modern age, with a provenance as old as humankind."

In an era when we are trying to cram as much into a day as we can, Americans think about sleep as a biological function that needs to be managed. Mr. Hollan's patients, he writes, think about sleep as a problem that interferes with more important things.

What have we lost with our dismissal of what the writer George Sturt called the "quiet depths of darkness"? In traditional non-Western societies like the Toraja, what happens at night really matters. People pay close attention to their dreams, and because they are awakened more often, they have more opportunity to remember them. When the anthropologist Eduardo Kohn arrived in a small village deep in the Amazon, people slept largely outdoors in an open thatch house, surrounded by other people. They would wake at night to drink tea, because it was cold, or because of the calls of animals. "Thanks to these continuous disruptions," he writes, "dreams spill into wakefulness and wakefulness into dreams in a way that entangles them both."

To my mind, the intriguing question is whether different sleep cultures encourage different patterns of spiritual and supernatural experience. That half-aware, drowsy state is a time when dreams commingle with awareness. People are more likely to have experiences of the impossible then. They hear their

mother, many miles distant, speaking their name, or they see angels standing by the window, and then they look again and they are gone.

As an anthropologist, I set out to understand the way people experience the spirit. I've talked to many American evangelical Christians about the way they have experienced God. Recently, I spent time in similar evangelical churches in Accra, Ghana, and Chennai, India. One of the more startling differences is that Christians in Accra and Chennai say that God talks to them when they sleep, and in their dreams. He wakes them up by calling their names. American subjects, asked about odd events in the night, were more likely to say things like this: "I see things, but it's just sleep deprivation." It seems likely that the way our culture invites us to pay attention to that delicate space in which one trembles on the edge of sleep changes what we remember of it.

Many years ago, I joined a group that decided that we would write down our dreams. And my dream life changed. I seemed to dream more. I remembered more detail. I sometimes had dreams of mythic intensity. In one, my bedraggled soul swam through a storm-clogged river to put its hand upon a muddy shore. To be clear, I was also reading Jung. But it did make me wonder about the way sleep's borderlands are textured by our social world.

T. M. Luhrmann is a contributing opinion writer and a professor of anthropology at Stanford.

The Speaker's Sand Trap

By Maureen Dowd

New York Times, May 14, 2014

The Speaker is hitting the links.

"This is a Tee Party I can live with," he grins, as he puts a tee emblazoned with "Speaker Boehner" into the turf.

The G.O.P.'s Dean Martin is on the road, making a ring-a-ding and ka-ching tour to rake in the moolah to ensure that Republicans keep the House in November and he keeps his job.

"That was a real humdinger this week when I told those folks in San Antonio that I'm living on borrowed time," he tells the other members of his foursome, who have ponied up big bucks to play 18 with the Speaker.

"The way I enjoy my Camels and cocktails, I guess I should have been happy to make it to 50, much less 65," he chuckles. "But I didn't expect such a big hubbub. Now that I've cheated death by Tea Party, I was taking a moment to ponder my mortality."

He gives his playing partners a sly look.

"As you know, I've taken steps to guarantee my position and the party's by teeing up that Benghazi committee, just like I teed up that Titleist. Talk about a sand trap.

"Every time I hear the word Benghazi, I think of Ben Gazzara, that great actor back in the '60s with the nice tan. He could play me in the movie. Is he still around?"

"And what kinda name is Trey Gowdy? Is he any relation to Curt Gowdy, that old sports announcer? He must be because he hasn't been off TV since I made him chairman of the House Select Committee to Keep Republicans in Power and Harass Hillary Clinton. The guy won't shut up about how we're not going to raise money off the four dead Americans, even while we're busy raising money off the four dead Americans.

"By the way, I'm no Hillary fan. But if Karl Rove thinks pushing the notion that Hillary's concussion made her cuckoo is a good idea, then he's the one with brain damage. How did he survive wasting all that donor money and not winning anything in the last election anyhow?"

As Boehner savors a 210-yard shot, his voice drops into a confidential growl.

"I was reluctant to set up this committee because I know how our wackos can cause a backlash, but I was starting to worry that health care wasn't gonna be enough to get us over the top in November," he confides.

"And I don't mind sticking it to Obama when he continues to be so insensitive about my skin color. His stupid joke at the White House Correspondents' Dinner about me, 'Orange is the new black.' Well, he's gonna be black and blue after we grill him and his team on what he was really doing in the White House that night during the attacks on the compound.

"If he was watching SportsCenter instead of sitting in the Command Center, that's not gonna look good. If he was buttering up Bibi to help him with the Jewish vote, that's not gonna look good. If he was catching some zzz's during Benghazzzi, that's bad. Of course, he already seems asleep at the switch most of the time. All he does is blame us because he can't get anything done.

"Does he think we're just gonna cuddle with him?"

After he and his group head down the fairway, Boehner takes a swig of merlot from his monogrammed silver "JAB" flask and climbs out of his cart.

Eyeing his approach, he muses: "I wouldn't mind working with the president on one thing — this damn immigration mess. If we don't do something to appeal to Hispanics, we are going to be nowheresville as a party in a decade. But there's nothing I can say to make my guys do it.

"Maybe throwing a bone to the kooks on Benghazi will buy me some room to maneuver on immigration. Some of these goofballs will be so focused on Benghazi, we can just throw a bill on the floor and pass it before they even know what's happening. We faked them out that way on the Doc Fix Medicare legislation. Har, har. The ayes have it."

Hitting his second shot into a deep sand trap in front of the green, Boehner gives the same exaggerated grimace he did ridiculing his own members recently on immigration reform.

"Damn sand traps," he mutters. "At least if all these alarmist reports on climate change turn out to be true, the sand traps will just be water hazards. If Marco Rubio's wrong pooh-poohing climate change, he's gonna be playing a lot of Marco Polo when Miami's underwater."

The Speaker hits out of the trap and lands his ball about 20 feet from the cup.

"Marco is not even the best candidate from Florida," Boehner says. "I've been talking to my man Jeb about getting in. Enough with all these rabid fruitloops. Jeb's my kind of Republican — normal."

Boehner putts and misses his 20-footer for par.

"Did you notice that broke way too much to the right?" he sighs. "That's our problem."

The Square People, Part 1

By Thomas L. Friedman

New York Times, May 14, 2014

HANOI, Vietnam — I think I'll plan to go from Kiev to Hanoi more often. It's only when you go to two seemingly disconnected places that you see the big trends, and one of the big ones I've noticed is the emergence of "The Square People."

In 2004, the Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington wrote about an emerging global "superclass" of "Davos Men" — alluding to attendees of the Davos World Economic Forum — a transnational, cosmopolitan elite drawn from high-tech, finance, multinationals, academics and NGOs. The Davos Men had "little need for national loyalty" and more in common with each other than their fellow

citizens, Huntington argued. They also had the skills to disproportionately benefit from the new globalization of markets and information technologies.

Well, a decade later, as the I.T. revolution and globalization have been democratized and diffused — as we've gone from laptops for elites to smartphones for everyone, from networking for the lucky few at Davos to Facebook for all and from only the rich heard in the halls of power to everyone being able to talk back to their leaders on Twitter — a new global political force is aborning, bigger and more important than Davos Men. I call them The Square People.

They are mostly young, aspiring to a higher standard of living and more liberty, seeking either reform or revolution (depending on their existing government), connected to one another either by massing in squares or through virtual squares or both, and united less by a common program and more by a shared direction they want their societies to go. We've seen them now in the squares of Tunis, Cairo, Istanbul, New Delhi, Damascus, Tripoli, Beirut, Sana, Tehran, Moscow, Rio, Tel Aviv and Kiev, as well as in the virtual squares of Saudi Arabia, China and Vietnam.

The latter three countries all have unusually large numbers of Facebook, Twitter or YouTube users, or their Chinese equivalents, which together constitute a virtual square where they connect, promote change and challenge authority. The most popular Vietnamese blogger, Nguyen Quang Lap, has more followers than any government newspaper here. In Saudi Arabia, one of the most popular Twitter hash tags is #If I met the King I would tell him."

And The Square People are only getting more numerous and empowered. "Our goal is that, in three years, every Vietnamese will own a smartphone," Nguyen Manh Hung, who leads the Viettel Group, a Vietnamese telecom, told me. "We are now manufacturing a smartphone for less than $40 and our goal is $35. We charge $2 a month for Internet connection for a P.C. and $2.50 for voice from a smartphone." Because the Vietnamese media is tightly censored, it is no accident that 22 million of Vietnam's 90 million people are on Facebook. Just two years ago there were only 8 million. Vietnam has about 100,000 students studying abroad; a decade ago it was a tenth of that. All future Square People.

To be sure, The Square People represent a diverse politics, including the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and ultranationalists in Kiev. But the dominant trend running through them all is this: "We now have the tools to see how everyone is living, including opportunities abroad and corrupt leaders at home, and we will not tolerate indefinitely living in a context where we can't realize our full potential. And also we now have the tools to collaborate to do something about it."

As a Vietnamese foreign policy expert put it, the Square People one way or another "are demanding a new social contract" with the old guards who've dominated politics. "The people want their voice to be heard in every major debate," not to mention better schools, roads and rule of law. And they are quick to compare with others: " 'Why do those Thai get to go demonstrate and we can't?' "

Ukraine's Square People want to associate with the European Union — not only because they think that's the key to prosperity, but because they think European rules, judicial norms, standards and transparency requirements will force the changes they want at home but cannot generate from above or below. Vietnamese reformers want to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership for the same reasons. Unlike Davos Men, The Square People want to use the global economy to reform their countries, not rise above them.

I gave a talk on globalization at the National University in Hanoi. Afterward I chatted with a young woman, Anh Nguyen, 19, a student who had asked several good questions. Her conversation was peppered with Square talk: "I feel empowered. ... I think Vietnam can change. ... Please tell the world about the big embezzlement case [at a state-owned shipping company] that was uncovered here. Before

people would have been silent, but the verdict came out and they sentenced the [bosses] to death. ... It really surprised people. ... Now not every big boss is protected by the government. ... We get many different sources of information from the world. It opens eyes." She has a much greater chance to achieve her potential than her parents, she added, "but not as much as I want."

Move over Davos Man, the Square People are coming.

An Inconvenient Truth About Our Food

By Mark Bittman

New York Times, May 14, 2014

"Fed Up" is probably the most important movie to be made since "An Inconvenient Truth," to which it's related in a couple of ways.

One of its producers is Laurie David, who also produced "An Inconvenient Truth." Climate change, diet and agriculture are inexorably intertwined; we can't tackle climate change without changing industrial agriculture, and we can't change industrial agriculture without tackling diet.

Like "An Inconvenient Truth," too, "Fed Up" can be seen as propaganda. (As can "Farmland," the beautifully shot movie that looks and feels like a Chevy commercial and seems to take as its underlying premise that most Americans mistrust, even hate, farmers. It's more than a little defensive.)

"Fed Up" says: "Here is a problem, a problem that vested interests have no interest in solving, and a problem that must be dealt with if we're interested in our survival. It's something worth fighting about."

The problem at hand, of course, is the standard American diet, especially in its current iteration, which took shape in the early 1980s after the commencement of the official "eat food lower in fat" recommendations. Those recommendations led to a 25 percent increase in the per-capita supply (and indeed consumption) of calories.

Many of those calories were from sugar, on which "Fed Up" focuses (oversimplifying matters a bit, as far as I can tell, but we can live with that), and the high consumption of which contributes or leads to obesity, metabolic syndrome, diabetes and worse. The vested interests profiting from this situation are Big Food and its allies, who will, it seems, go to any lengths to maintain the status quo — even at the cost of our collective public and financial health. (It's expensive to treat these chronic diseases, and we're all footing that bill.)

At some point I have to get to the disclaimers, so here goes: Laurie David is a friend of mine. I'm also acquainted with Katie Couric, the film's narrator, and half or more of the experts interviewed in the course of the movie. Even worse, I'm one of the interviewees. (A minor one; and at least I'm not an investor.)

I know these people in part because we agree on many if not most of the causes of the current food and health crisis, as well as on the directions we should take. There is little new in "Fed Up" for regular readers of this column, or to those who've read a selection of work by Marion Nestle, Michael Pollan, Gary Taubes, Rob Lustig, Michele Simon, Mark Hyman, David Ludwig, David Kessler or any other member of what we might call the professional sane eating brigade.

What matters, what's exciting, is that "Fed Up" might reach some of the majority of Americans who've never heard of any of us but who adore Katie Couric, the former "Today" show co-host and one of the most recognizable women in the country.

The film has three components: a narration of bare facts and not-so-innocent questions by Couric, such as, "Is there a link between our ever expanding waistlines … and dietary guidelines?" and, "What if every can of soda came with a warning label from the surgeon general?" (I said it was propaganda; it's

really a call to action.) There is a series of interviews with talking heads, which bring out the heavy-hitting facts about the dangers of the overconsumption of sugar and other hyperprocessed food. These, in turn, are interwoven with the stories of a few obese teenagers and their struggles to lose weight.

I was at first put off by these portraits, but was ultimately won over. The teens were given flip-cams and asked to keep video diaries, and these nonscripted video selfies, some apparently shot in private in their bedrooms, were sometimes almost unbearably touching. (For comic relief there is fantastic vintage footage, including a priceless clip of Homer Simpson shooting up a donut.)

The experts carry the ball. The journalist Gary Taubes calls the "energy balance" theory — the notion that all calories are the same, and that as long as you exercise enough, you'll avoid gaining or even lose weight no matter what you eat — "nonsense." One Coke, we learn, will take more than an hour to burn off. The pediatrician Rob Lustig, a leading anti-sugar campaigner, notes that "we have obese 6-month-olds. You wanna tell me that they're supposed to diet and exercise?" David Ludwig, another M.D., notes that there is no difference between many processed foods and sugar itself, saying you can eat a bowl of cornflakes with no added sugar or a bowl of sugar with no added cornflakes and "below the neck they're the same thing." Lustig reminds us that anyone can develop metabolic syndrome: "You can be sick without being fat; this is not just a problem of the obese."

And so on. Senator Tom Harkin says, "I don't know how they (the food industry) live with themselves," comparing them to the tobacco industry. Bill Clinton says, effectively, "We blew it," when it came to this struggle.

The movie has some splendid moments: A mother cries at the difficulty of the choice she must make between giving her child what she wants and giving her what's best. Her struggle is common, and she's fighting against an almost overwhelming tide of marketing and, yes, even addiction. A school lunch worker, speaking of the fact that few kids choose the healthy option at lunch, says, "You can't choose for them." But they are children; we must choose for them. Not only are their parents not present, but their parents often don't know what's best.

That "Fed Up" is imperfect — how could a movie that was more than three years in the making, with constant tumult all around it, be otherwise? — is irrelevant. That it suggests that the response of the Obama administration to this crisis — and particularly Mrs. Obama — has been inadequate is also far from paramount. Yes, it's fair to say, as Michael Pollan says in the movie, that "the government is subsidizing the obesity epidemic." It's also true that the Obama administration is the first one to try to do anything positive about this, and that it's being fought at every turn.

Here's what really matters: "Fed Up" is new in its bright, peppy, presumably crowd-pleasing presentation and in its target audience, many of whom, we assume, are not New York Times readers. The movie addresses what the former Food and Drug Administration commissioner David Kessler calls "one of the great public health epidemics of our time." The greater public needs to know that.

As of this writing, the movie is in 19 markets, and doing well. If it were in hundreds of theaters, it would probably change more lives than any movie released this year, because if people see the film, they will get the message. It's not a subtle one.

Thomas Piketty And His Critics

By Thomas B. Edsall

New York Times, May 14, 2014

Many on the left see the popularity of Thomas Piketty's new book, "Capital in the Twenty-First Century," as a sign of hope, but both optimists and pessimists share a belief more telling than Piketty's success: the idea that the traditional Democratic economic agenda is dead.

Piketty's book reinforces the idea that the domestic policies liberals advocate for are palliative, not curative — that, in essence, inequality is here to stay.

The problem of deepening inequality is enormous, Piketty writes: "Growth can of course be encouraged by investing in education, knowledge and nonpolluting technologies. But none of these will raise the rate of growth to 4 or 5 percent a year."

Instead, he writes, "for countries at the world technological frontier" — the United States, northern Europe and parts of Asia — and "ultimately for the planet as a whole – there is ample reason to believe that the growth rate will not exceed 1-1.5 percent in the long run, no matter what economic policies are adopted."

Piketty's analysis articulates what many people on the Democratic left feel intuitively, that a domestic tax, spending and regulatory agenda is ineffective in the face of the power of globalized capital to grind down wages and benefits.

In Piketty's view, the solution is a measure beyond the political reach of any individual nation or international body, as they are now constituted: a global wealth tax. Only such a tax "would contain the unlimited growth of global inequality of wealth, which is currently increasing at a rate that cannot be sustained in the long run and that ought to worry even the most fervent champions of the self-regulated market."

Piketty's proposed global tax would set rates of 0.1 to 0.5 percent on fortunes of less than 1 million euros ($1.37 million); 1 percent on assets of 1 to 5 million euros ($1.37 million to $6.87 million); 2 percent on holdings of 5 to 10 million euros ($6.87 million to $13.7 million); and a sliding scale ultimately reaching 10 percent on fortunes of "several hundred million or several billion euros."

It would be an understatement to say that a tax on wealth faces major implementation problems. James Wetzler, the tax commissioner of New York State during the administration of Mario Cuomo, wrote in an essay that "absent aggressive policy intervention, the Western world appears to be headed toward a plutocratic dystopia characterized by wealth inequality approaching that of ancien régime France."

Wetzler added in an email that "to make the U.S. tax system more progressive, we should focus on strengthening our existing income, estate and gift taxes, not on a new starter like a wealth tax. A federal tax on wealth would require a constitutional amendment, and we know a lot less about its economic impact than we know about our existing taxes."

Further complicating implementation of a wealth tax, according to Wetzler, is that it "must address complexities associated with the fact that so much wealth is owned by corporations and other legal entities with dispersed ownership."

And that's only part of the problem. Who would run a super-national tax collection agency? How would the taxes collected on assets owned by one person but held in multiple countries be distributed? How would global wealth tax supporters actually win the enactment of regulations that would require transparency of ownership of real estate, of bank holdings and of control of private corporations?

Is it fair to describe Piketty's analysis (as opposed to the upbeat man) as pessimistic? First, Piketty declares that traditional liberal remedies – education spending, worker protections, more progressive

taxation, family stabilization assistance – may be helpful at the margins, but inequality will worsen "no matter what economic policies are." Second, Piketty does not offer a weapon other than a massively redistributive and politically unachievable tax with which to battle this intensifying inequality.

The unlikeliness of Piketty's policy prescription becoming reality has not placated the right. James Pethokoukis, the money and politics blogger for the American Enterprise Institute, exemplifies the aversion to Piketty now erupting among American conservatives. Pethokoukis warns that Piketty's "soft Marxism," if unchallenged, "will spread among the clerisy and reshape the political economic landscape on which all future policy battles will be waged. We've seen this movie before."

It's not only the right that is disturbed; there is also opposition among a number of progressive activists and liberal policy analysts who recognize the dangers Piketty's analysis poses to their agenda.

While Piketty notes that "there is widespread discontent with the extreme inequality and lack of opportunity and security," he simultaneously reinforces the "passivity and resignation" that comes out of "the failure of the state and of center-left parties to do much to change what's happening" Robert Kuttner, the founder and editor of The American Prospect, told me in an email. And so, Kuttner wrote, "working class people give up on it."

Dean Baker, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, a liberal economic think tank, took a harsher view of liberals' attraction to Piketty. In an email, Baker wrote that "a big part of the appeal is that it allows people to say capitalism is awful but there is nothing that we can do about it." Baker, who has formulated a detailed domestic agenda to fight inequality, worries "that many people will feel that they have done their part after struggling through a lengthy book on economics, and now they can go back to their vacation homes and say it's all a shame."

It may be that Piketty is right that traditional liberal policies are largely ineffective. There are, however, grounds to challenge this pessimism. Support for this challenge can be found not only on the left, but also on the center-right.

Kenneth Rogoff, a Harvard economist, contends in a review of Piketty's book that "the idea of a global wealth tax is replete with credibility and enforcement problems, aside from being politically implausible."

Rogoff views evidence of growing inequality presented by Piketty and others as "persuasive" and he proposes a number of alternative, smaller-scale remedies to control disproportionate wealth accumulation. He suggests a shift to a "relatively flat consumption tax, with a large deductible for progressivity." Consumption taxes apply to spending, as opposed to income taxes that are levied on wages, benefits, profits from sales, dividends and other gains. Why, Rogoff asks, should we "try to move to an improbable global wealth tax when alternatives are available that are growth friendly, raise significant revenue, and can be made progressive through a very high exemption"?

Rogoff cites a series of suggestions developed by Jeffrey Frankel, a professor at the Kennedy School at Harvard. These include "the elimination of payroll taxes for low-income workers, a cut in deductions for high-income workers, and higher inheritance taxes."

Despite the criticism of Piketty from right, left and center, he has, by shifting the focus from income to wealth, successfully transformed the debate over inequality.

His influence is reflected in two essays by Clive Crook, a financial columnist at Bloomberg View. The first was an unrelentingly negative review of Piketty's book, the headline of which gives you the flavor of the rest: "The Most Important Book Ever Is All Wrong."

"Every claim," Crook argues, "is either unsupported or contradicted by Piketty's own data and analysis."

On May 11th, however, Crook did an about face and wrote a very different essay, "Piketty's Wealth Tax Isn't a Joke."

"One idea that's been roundly dismissed by fans and critics alike deserves to be taken more seriously: the proposal for a global wealth tax," Crook writes, noting that "on equity and efficiency grounds, it makes sense to tax wealth."

Crook too sees insurmountable difficulties for any entity that might try to collect an annual wealth tax and argues instead for "moderate but effective taxation of capital income combined with moderate but effective taxation of inheritance, so that unrealized gains are brought back into the tax base, either during the course of an investor's life or at death."

In other words, centrists like Rogoff and Crook – in addition to liberals determined to assault bastions of privilege — are beginning to take proposals to restrain the growing concentration of wealth seriously.

Both the shift of attention to wealth and the seriousness with which a proposal to constrain the accumulation of wealth is being taken represent a major change in the contemporary debate over inequality. Few Americans appear to begrudge the multimillion dollar annual compensation of entrepreneurial executives like Steve Jobs or Bill Gates. But inherited and unearned wealth does not command the same legitimacy.

In fact, the emergence of what Piketty calls "patrimonial capitalism" — concentrated wealth and political power passed on from generation to generation in a class-based social order — runs directly counter to the longstanding American commitment to equality of opportunity. Piketty has laid the intellectual groundwork for a challenge to a social and political order based on socioeconomic ranking by wealth stratification.

Now we need effective politicians to articulate this challenge in ways that resonate with a striving electorate determined to achieve a higher standard of living through grit and hard work. Where is the level playing field? Politicians who seek to gain traction on these issues face high hurdles, but only those willing to risk confrontation can address the depth of public discontent, anger and resentment.

Teaching Liberation To Pakistan's Girls

By Bina Shah

New York Times, May 14, 2014

KARACHI, Pakistan — You can't go a day on the streets of Pakistan without hearing some spectacularly rude words and colorful insults taken in stride, whether thrown in anger at an errant motorist or in banter among friends at a tea shop. But the words "sex education" are different; they release a tirade of moral righteousness from many Pakistanis, who find this the dirtiest phrase of all. These people fear that it means "teaching children how to have sex," rather than educating them about their health and reproductive rights.

At least in some parts of Pakistan, though, that is beginning to change.

Most Pakistanis still profess conservatism and modesty about sexual relations and matters of the body. But Dr. Nafis Sadik, a United Nations population expert who led Pakistan's successful Family Planning Program in the 1960s, describes a deeper feeling of fear: that if girls are given access to information about sexual health and reproduction, they will become promiscuous. "Boys' and men's sexual behavior is condoned and appreciated," she has said, "but girls' and women's sexual behavior is seen as something that needs to be controlled."

Nevertheless, attitudes are evolving — not least because this prudishness has proved dangerous for the nation.

Today, Pakistanis face a major health care crisis of deadly communicable diseases like hepatitis C, which is rampant in rural areas, as well as a flood of health problems that women and girls experience because Pakistan has also retained the practice of early marriage. Many girls are married off by their families as soon as — or even shortly before — they have reached puberty in their early teens. A result: Pakistan ranks near the bottom among countries in maternal and child health care.

One anecdote captures the absurdity of the problem. Early this year, a village in rural Sindh summoned the boldness to instruct 700 girls from eight local schools on topics like menstruation, how to protect themselves from sexual assault, and even marital rape. The villagers had demanded the classes, and the students reacted enthusiastically to the revolutionary idea that they had the right to control their own bodies. But Mirza Kashif Ali, president of the All Pakistan Private Schools Federation, reacted angrily, reportedly saying: "What's the point of knowing about a thing you're not supposed to do? It should not be allowed at school level."

That "thing you're not supposed to do" is actually being done to young women and girls in child marriages all across Pakistan. Of Pakistan's 90 million women, 37 percent have married before the age of 18. And one of every 70 dies each year because of early pregnancy, not enough time between pregnancies, and other risks of teenage pregnancy. In 2002, a year assumed to be typical, some 900,000 abortions were performed, the great majority of them unsafe. Abortion is illegal, although rarely if ever prosecuted, and most women who need one must go to an underground doctor or, worse, untrained abortion providers.

Recognizing those facts, a groundbreaking "Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights" education program (the euphemism and its abbreviation — S.R.H.R. — were deemed necessary to avoid the label "sex education") was conducted in rural parts of two Pakistani provinces from 2010 to 2012.

The program was run by Rutgers WPF, a Netherlands-based organization, with two Pakistani partners, Bargad and Saifco; they went into 21 schools in the Sanghar district of Sindh and the Gujranwala district of Punjab to teach 220 female teachers how to speak to their female students about S.R.H.R. The sensitivities that had to be navigated were obvious: The curriculum guide's title was changed — from Comprehensive Sexuality Education to Life Skills Based Education — and the program avoided discussing contraception and sexual activity in the same context. It also included references to sexual and reproductive health and rights in the context of Islam.

The program reached 19,000 girls directly (and through them, an estimated 150,000 more), allowing them for the first time to talk openly to teachers about their health issues. The teachers also made connections with tens of thousands of parents, particularly mothers who had never spoken to their daughters about sexuality or what was expected of them in the marital relationship.

Child marriages are another question. Among Pakistan's rural poor, when girls are married off before full adulthood, the reasoning is usually about economics rather than sexual morality. Many families think they cannot afford to keep their daughters in school; by tradition, the precious little money they have is spent on educating boys. And when parents take a daughter out of school, the next logical step is to get her married.

One theory among reformers is that giving girls the ability to make decisions about their sexual health and reproductive rights can teach them how to say no to child marriage, and no to unwanted pregnancies. But Dr. Sadik says parents have more power to make any education program a success: They are the ones with — or without — the economic wherewithal that determines whether their daughters will begin marriage and childbearing in their early teens.

To address this, girls in the Sanghar and Gujranwala program were taught negotiating skills to influence family financial decisions, like budgeting. According to the sponsoring organization, the girls were urged to prove themselves valuable contributors to the household's economic health, so that parents would not consider them a burden, and in the end, most of the parents appeared to have left their daughters in school rather than force them into child marriages.

Innovative programs like these need to be accompanied by stricter laws against child marriage, like the recently enacted Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act of 2013, which makes marriage under the age of 18 illegal, and punishable with jail or fines for bride, groom or parents. Such measures can help transform the idea of "sex education" from something dirty into a vital tool of economic empowerment and progress.

We need to show our people that a young girl's body broken by pregnancy after pregnancy is the real obscenity — and that a few more precious years of freedom can make the difference between health and illness or death for Pakistan's girls. If we can do that, we'll have achieved a real revolution.

Bina Shah is the author of several novels, including "Slum Child," and short-story collections.

Dirty Dancing In Egypt

By Alaa Al Aswany

New York Times, May 14, 2014

CAIRO — Egyptians are currently suffering from a grinding economic crisis, hefty inflation, a breakdown of security and widespread terrorist attacks. Despite these trying times, the most watched clips on YouTube are of Oriental dance (as raqs sharqi is often translated).

In just one recent month, a video by the Egyptian-Armenian dancer Safinaz was viewed by Egyptians more than four million times. The Lebanese star Haifa Wehbe's dance video got more than 10 million hits. Oriental dance evidently provides light relief from the general state of tension, but there is more to it.

Oriental dance has always been controversial in Egyptian culture. Egyptians love belly dancing, as it is commonly known in the West. Tahia Carioca, a legendary belly dancer, declared to the newspaper Al Hayat in 1994, "Go to any wedding party and once the music starts up, you'll see all the girls in the family suddenly get to their feet and dance like crazy."

But people do not hold Oriental dance in high regard because they equate its suggestiveness with vulgarity and loose living. To call someone the "son of a belly dancer" is an insult.

The tradition of disdaining Oriental dance has a long pedigree. In the "Description de l'Égypte," written by French scholars following Napoleon's invasion in 1798, dancers were described as "women with no training or decorum, and of their dance movements nothing more obscene can be imagined."

That prospect seemed less troubling to the writer Gustave Flaubert, who toured Egypt in 1849-50 and was enchanted by a dancer named Kuchuk-Hanem (a Turkish name meaning "the little lady"). He admired her as "a tall creature, more pale of complexion than the Arabs." The American writer George William Curtis, who visited Egypt at around the same time and also fell in love with her, described the dancer as "a bud no longer, yet a flower not too fully blown."

So what is the secret of this mythical allure? The Palestinian-American academic and author of "Orientalism" Edward Said, writing in Al Hayat, contrasted Western ballet, which "is all about elevation, lightness, the defiance of the body's weight," with Eastern dance, which "shows the dancer planting herself more and more solidly in the earth, digging into it almost." He noted how the latter suggested "a sequence of horizontal pleasures," but "also paradoxically conveyed the kind of elusiveness and grace that cannot be pinned down on a flat surface."

One suspects that few fans are so finely attuned to the aesthetic considerations, but is Oriental dance more than mere titillation?

Andrea Deagon, an associate professor of classics at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, has practiced Oriental dance since she was 17. Oriental dance is liberating for women, Dr. Deagon argues: a form of self-expression in movement that voices what is, in Egyptian society, an otherwise unutterable truth about the pleasures of the body. And it is because Oriental dance poses a challenge to a religiosity that sees any form of display as an act of impurity that it has always been misunderstood and associated with dishonor.

That is precisely what makes it a subversive art: The dancer who shakes off the shackles of the patriarchal order strikes fear into the hearts of religious conservatives, and may even pose a threat to tyranny. Hence its periodic repression.

In 1834, Egypt's ruler, Muhammad Ali, took steps to preserve, as he saw it, Egypt's morals by ordering the arrest and exile to Upper Egypt of all belly dancers and prostitutes. He also imposed a punishment of 50 lashes on any woman who danced in the street.

In the 1960s, under the presidency of Gamal Abdel Nasser, the government department responsible for supervision and censorship of the arts ordered that "Oriental dance is not permitted to show the following: lying on the back, lying on the ground in a vulgar fashion so as to excite, or making rapid movements in such a way as to cause excitement. The thighs are not to be fully open while on the ground. There are to be no wobbling up and down movements." The dancers must have had a good laugh when they heard of the regulations, which, impossible to adhere to, would have entailed a career change.

The Nasserite state made great efforts to preserve Oriental dance as a sanitized form of folklore, removing it from the realm of the sensual. In 1961, Nasser placed the Reda Dance Troupe under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture. The Troupe, which included the aristocratic Farida Fahmy, danced all over the world, winning medals and prizes, but Egyptians — for all their admiration of the Reda Troupe — still clung to the earthier Oriental dance they knew and loved.

Even today, Oriental dance may be performed in Egypt only with a government permit. An officer of the "morality police" can arrest a dancer for wearing a costume that shows more of her body than the law allows, or because she has danced in a manner deemed too provocative.

A certain hypocrisy pertains. While the government has cracked down on dancers in the name of public morality, it has not hesitated to use them for its own political purposes. After the 1973 war between Egypt and Israel, the American secretary of state, Henry A. Kissinger, was engaged in the "shuttle diplomacy" that eventually led to the 1979 Camp David Accords. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry was always sure to book Mr. Kissinger's favorite dancer, Nagwa Fouad, for a private performance during his stays in Cairo.

Just as the Egyptian state has double standards when dealing with Oriental dance, so does the rest of society. The conservative Egyptian who looks down on dancers has no problem buying a costume for his wife so that she can dance for him. Provided belly dancing takes place within a conjugal setting, he considers such behavior licit.

Will Egyptians' attitudes toward dancers ever change? They have more pressing concerns for the moment: bringing about democracy, electing a government that respects human rights and providing a decent living for the millions living in poverty. But I look forward to a new Egypt where belly dancing will have evolved into an art form, without the connotations of immoral conduct that still surround it today.

In a real democracy, there is a place for every citizen, belly dancers included. Until then, Egyptians are sure to continue to be enthusiastic consumers of Oriental dance — but with scant respect for the dancers.

Alaa Al Aswany is the author of the novel "The Yacoubian Building" and other books. This article was translated by Russell Harris from the Arabic.

The Loyal Bunch

By Bongani Madondo

New York Times, May 14, 2014

JOHANNESBURG — Late last month, just as the dry winter weather started to bite, the political climate turned yellow, green and black, the colors of the African National Congress. Africa's oldest liberation party was girding itself for the fifth general elections since the end of apartheid and the most anticipated race since Nelson Mandela walked out of prison.

In the intervening years the A.N.C. has grown into something of a religion; it is the only thing that several generations, old and young, associate with the liberation of blacks from descendants of white settlers. Never mind that its current prophet-in-chief is President Jacob Zuma — middle name Gedleyihlekisa, which means "the one who kills you with a smile" in Zulu. Once again, the A.N.C. trounced the opposition.

The other players — the Democratic Alliance; a new, self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist party called the Economic Freedom Fighters; the dying horse that is Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party; and various other minor leaguers — made all the noises you'd expect from small opponents trying to dislodge a power-drunk giant. Some of us even rooted for those no-hopers; no one has street cred like the underdogs, and for a time there everything had seemed rickety.

Looking back over the last couple of years, I saw images redolent of apartheid-era uprisings: petrol bombs hurled at public amenities; striking miners massacred in Marikana, the platinum beltway; etc. A foreigner visiting South Africa might have wondered if ordinary people still believed in their liberators. I wondered myself.

A week before the voting, I went to downtown "Jozi," as its denizens call the city. Although not actually depressed economically, the area looks more and more like the District 9 of the dystopian movie, lined with makeshift Pakistani-owned mobile-phone shops and street hawkers selling cheap Made-in-China apparel. On one of these streets, outside Johannesburg Polytech Institute, I overheard this conversation among a group of teenage schoolgirls:

"That guy must go, and with him his looting friends," one said.

"That guy Jacob Zuma," another said. "Pity I don't qualify to vote, otherwise I would vote a hundred votes against him."

"No, you are only allowed one vote my friend. One man one vote," said a third.

In the end, the A.N.C. won with a commanding 62 percent of the total vote. The Democratic Alliance scored 22 percent, most of it apparently gained from the middle-classers among the "born frees," the generation of South Africans too young to have experienced apartheid directly. The newbie E.F.F. did well with the poorer born frees, and got 6 percent.

Oh well; we've been here before. In a 20-year cycle, you slowly make peace with the idea that some things don't change.

The night before the election I had dinner with my friend Tselane Tambo at an upscale Greek joint in an affluent northern suburb. "Of course these guys are all jokes," she said. Tselane is the youngest

daughter of the A.N.C.'s longest-serving president, Oliver Reginald Tambo. A columnist and blogger, she often tweets off radical statements about her dislike for the current state of the party she was born into.

Picking up The Star, a daily rag, she jabbed a headline on the front page with a pinkie. "Look! Look at this." The article said the public works department had spent about $21 million on security upgrades to Mr. Zuma's home, including a new "fire-fighting" swimming pool. (He claimed to have felt unsafe since another house of his was burned down and one of his wives was raped.) Tselane rolled her eyes: "The country's in tatters, and leaders are lining their pockets."

Then she grew sullen. "But the A.N.C. is my home," she said. "I was born A.N.C., and that's all I know."

On election day I packed my family in a taxi, and headed to the local voting station. We live in Killarney, a suburb adjacent to Mandela's last neighborhood, Houghton. Polling here takes place at the golf club. This makes me, a freelance author in a country that hardly reads, what Mr. Zuma has called a "clever" black, a member of a professional elite that is out of touch, he says, with the poor blacks he claims to represent.

Soon I found myself in line with Tito Mboweni, a former governor of the Reserve Bank, and Trevor Manuel, a former finance minister — both veterans of the A.N.C., both biting critics of it. As we edged toward the makeshift ballot room, a white woman in her 50s strode out. She was dressed all in black with a clingy vest that read: "Remember Marikana's Fallen Soldiers. They Died for Us." A walking billboard for the ultra-left E.F.F.

She passed by me and said, sobbing, "This is way too much. This has been an emotional day. The workers will rule one day."

Maybe. For now, though, no matter how disenchanted we are with corruption and our clown of a president, South Africans remain a loyal bunch. As a car attendant outside the Killarney Country Club put it: "Even when my wife cheats on me, I can't 'unwife' her just like that. I am A.N.C. in my blood. They are useless, they eat only with the rich, but hey, they are the party of my forefathers. It is like the church you were baptized in." Amen.

Bongani Madondo is a senior editor at the South African edition of Rolling Stone and the author of "Hot Type" and the upcoming "Sigh, the Beloved Country."

China Isn't Overtaking America

By Michael A. Levi

New York Times, May 14, 2014

NEW YORK — A report last month that China's economy will soon become the world's largest has sparked worries. Normally calm observers are taking the news as a sign that China is overtaking America as an economic power.

But much as counting warships or troops often provides a misleading measure of military might, tallying up gross domestic product — the figure behind the latest headlines — yields a warped picture of China's economic rise.

By most meaningful yardsticks, China is still less economically powerful than the United States. The problem with the new numbers starts with how they compare economies' sizes. The World Bank tables that show China passing the United States compare the two countries using "purchasing power parity," which measures national incomes in terms of what they can buy at home.

Because domestic spending is dominated by items such as food and housing that aren't traded internationally, and because most goods and services are cheaper in China than in the United States, this comparison boosts China's apparent economic strength.

Yet compared using market exchange rates, which measure incomes in terms of what they can buy on international markets (where every country pays the same price), the United States' economy remains nearly twice as big as China's. Indeed it is this latter measure that matters most when comparing economic power.

After all, one would never compare two countries' military strengths on the basis of how well each could suppress a domestic rebellion rather than fight a foreign war, and one should not compare countries' economic power on the basis of what a worker in each country can buy at home.

When American and Chinese companies bid against each other to acquire resources or companies abroad, what matters is their wealth as measured by the global market. Oil suppliers, for example, don't care if the $100 they get for a barrel sold to China can buy more rice in a Beijing market than at a shop in New York — they care about what their revenues are worth in the world market.

Similarly, the attractiveness of the Chinese and American markets to foreign firms depends on the profits to be made in international terms, not as measured by purchasing power.

The alarmism about China surpassing America also ignores the critical role of political and institutional strength and flexibility. One wouldn't compare countries' arsenals while ignoring their different states of disrepair — yet Chinese G.D.P. numbers ignore severe pollution problems that are driving successful Chinese abroad. Nor would one compare numbers of aircraft or troops without asking about the training, doctrine and organization necessary to mobilize them effectively in combat. China faces real challenges translating its economic resources into international influence.

The need to maintain political stability and the Communist Party's grip on power constrains what the Chinese government can do to capitalize on the country's economic heft. The difficulty of getting recalcitrant provincial and local governments to enforce Beijing's edicts can make it tough for China to take full advantage of its economic power. The Chinese government, for example, has tried to forge packages of infrastructure and resource investment in strategically attractive developing countries, only to have the Chinese companies that would need to implement the schemes refuse to participate.

Certainly, China has its advantages. There are some things that matter for international power — notably military personnel — that can be paid for domestically, making lower Chinese prices (and wages) a meaningful advantage.

The American market may be larger than China's, but China's is growing more rapidly, often creating more new opportunities for international firms. And Washington faces political and institutional constraints just like Beijing does. America's economy can't compete with a state-dominated behemoth when it comes to rewarding favored partners with economic opportunities. And the United States is less able to direct its outward commerce toward political ends than China is: Beijing is more capable, for example, of persuading Sinopec to pursue geopolitically attractive investments than Washington is of mobilizing ExxonMobil.

Twenty-first century rivalry between the United States and China will be as much about economic might as military power. Judging the economic balance correctly will be as essential a foundation for effective international strategy as proper assessment of the military balance was during the Cold War. Avoiding overreaction in the face of the latest headlines about China's economic triumph would be a great place to start.

Michael A. Levi, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, is co-author of "By All Means Necessary: How China's Resource Quest is Changing the World."

Rescuing The Kidnapped Girls Should Be Only A First Step For Nigeria To Counter Boko Haram

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

THOUGH IT is easily derided as superficial, the social media campaign in support of about 300 girls who were abducted in Nigeria is producing results. The Ni-ger-ian government has been shamed into accepting intelligence and advisers from the United States, Britain and Israel, and a U.S. surveillance plane has joined the search for the girls. The fanatical leader of Boko Haram, the Islamic extremist group that carried out the kidnapping on April 15, has taken notice and shifted from a vow to sell off the girls as slaves to a proposal to trade them for prisoners. The Ni-ger-ian government appears open to negotiations.

Any rescue of the girls, who were abducted from a tiny village in northeastern Nigeria, where Boko Haram has waged a horrific war against schools and their students, would be welcome. Certainly it would vindicate the average Nigerians — most of them women — who launched the #BringBackOurGirls campaign on Twitter in outrage over the seeming indifference of the government of Goodluck Jonathan. That the campaign was joined by the likes of first lady Michelle Obama and House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) brought welcome attention to the threat posed by Boko Haram, which has killed thousands of civilians over five years, has links to al-Qaeda and forms part of a mosaic of Islamist extremist groups that plague northern Africa.

The larger aim of this campaign, however, should be to alter Nigeria's self-defeating response to Boko Haram. The government has mixed heavy-handed repression with a prickly refusal to accept advice or more than small-scale assistance from the United States and other governments. In response to vicious attacks on schools and civilians, Mr. Jonathan's government has dispatched poorly trained and equipped military forces that have too often conducted their own rampages.

Human rights groups have documented secret detentions, extortion, burning of homes and extrajudicial killings. After Boko Haram attacked a barracks in March in an attempt to free detainees, a government counterattack killed hundreds, including many of the prisoners. If negotiations over the release of the girls move forward, the government could consider releasing some men and boys who were swept up in raids but not convicted of wrongdoing.

The Obama administration has tried pressing the government in private to adopt a broad strategy of counterterrorism, including social programs and better policing; it has tried public and private criticism of the military's abuses. Both have been brushed off by Mr. Jonathan. U.S. legal restrictions on aid to military units involved in human rights violations are also an obstacle. Consequently, aid has been limited to training special forces and sharing intelligence.

There is probably no cause for the United States to deploy its own forces in Nigeria. But the administration should use this moment to press Mr. Jonathan to accept more training assistance for Ni-ger-ian counterterrorism forces and police as part of a broader program to build governmental institutions in the impoverished and neglected areas where Boko Haram has flourished. A good starting point would be funding and protection for schools where girls can be educated.

Virginia's Governor Moves To Protect Access To Abortion

By Editorial Board

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

AS A candidate last year, Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe (D) promised to do what he could to roll back absurd, baldly political rules imposed on the state's abortion clinics with the transparent purpose of forcing many of them to close. Now Mr. McAuliffe, who took office in January, is taking a step toward fulfilling that promise. If he's successful, he will preserve access to abortions each year for some 10,000 Virginia women — many of them minorities — who otherwise would likely be unable to find nearby clinics to perform the procedure.

During the campaign, Mr. McAuliffe suggested that he might be able to challenge the regulations by issuing an "advisory opinion" meant to sway the state Board of Health. That had a superficial appeal; after all, the board had originally agreed that existing clinics should not be affected by new rules. Opinions from a ferociously antiabortion attorney general pushed the board to change its view.

But Mr. McAuliffe's "advisory opinion" option faded under the scrutiny of legal experts. So the governor is trying a new tack: appointing abortion rights advocates to the board in the explicit hope that they will initiate a "review" that will delay or water down the rules before they can take effect in the coming months.

The Republican speaker of the House of Delegates, William J. Howell (Stafford), reacted with predictable dyspepsia, calling Mr. McAuliffe's approach "an overtly political move." The unspoken irony was that no one could possibly outdo Mr. Howell and Republicans in their overtly political end-run around abortion rights that are the law of the land.

Their legislation, enacted in 2011, reclassified abortion clinics, which perform first-trimester procedures that take two or three hours, as the regulatory equivalent of full-service hospitals. As applied to existing clinics — a departure from past practice by which new codes generally applied only to new structures — the law imposed ludicrous requirements that would have no effect on the welfare of patients. Clinics would have to spend millions of dollars to widen hallways, add parking spaces, enlarge operating rooms and expand janitorial closets.

The truth is, first-trimester procedures, which account for nearly all the roughly 25,000 abortions performed annually in Virginia, are safe and relatively simple; mishaps in the state's clinics are exceedingly rare. There is no evidence that forcing clinics to install ventilation systems up to the standards of hospital operating rooms will improve outcomes in clinics that provide abortions, which do not require incisions.

For the state's surviving 18 abortion clinics — those that have not already closed under threat of the new rules — Mr. McAuliffe's maneuver may mean a reprieve for as many as half. Those clinics are the only convenient option for thousands of women who seek abortions each year. If the governor can preserve that option for those women, he will have served the cause of rights conferred by the Supreme Court.

This Time The Left Scuttles A Viable Alternative To Fannie And Freddie

By Editorial Board

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

CONTRARY TO what you may have heard, reducing the federal role in the housing market is not a radical free-market notion. In fact, after a $187 billion taxpayer bailout of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac exposed the misallocation of resources that those two institutions had fostered for decades, reform

enjoyed high-level Obama administration support: "I think it's absolutely the case that the U.S. government provided too much support for housing, too strong incentives for investment in housing," then-Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner said in a Feb. 11, 2011, speech at the Brookings Institution. His department produced three options for a Fannie-free future.

Three years later, Mr. Geithner is on the former-official book tour, and the work he and many others poured into rethinking housing finance is looking increasingly like wasted effort. Mel Watt, the federal housing regulator who serves as Fannie and Freddie's de facto chief, mounted the podium at the Brookings Institution on Tuesday to declare that he will henceforth focus on keeping the two entities alive more or less as is. To help ease the flow of mortgage credit, which has been drying up absent a permanent Fannie-Freddie fix, Mr. Watt will forgo planned contraction of the "conforming" loan limit for securitized mortgages and relax the perfectionism with which Fannie and Freddie had previously treated the loans it purchases. Item One in his new strategic plan for the entities, Mr. Watt announced, is to "MAINTAIN" — all-caps in original — "foreclosure prevention activities and credit availability for new and refinanced mortgages."

You can call this a victory for defenders of the status quo who backed Mr. Watt to replace Edward DeMarco, an advocate of aggressively winding down Fannie and Freddie. Or, equally validly, you can see Mr. Watt's declaration as a recognition of reality — economic and political. The economic reality is that there is still no good private-sector alternative to the Fannie-Freddie duopoly. And the political reality is that Congress has failed to legislate one. The only bipartisan bill has foundered in the Senate Banking Committee. Though it's still likely to pass a scheduled committee vote on Thursday, six key liberal Democrats have declared themselves opposed, which probably dooms its chances on the Senate floor. The left objected that the bill's subsidies for low-income borrowers were insufficient — which sounds to us like a complaint that it lacked the kind of credit set-asides that created damaging conflicts of interest for Fannie and Freddie.

The big winners from this turn of events, ironically, may be not the poor and the "underserved," but a group of giant hedge funds that snapped up millions of beaten-down Fannie and Freddie shares after the government bailout, and are now lobbying Congress — as well as suing in federal court — for a return to private ownership, albeit with what the hedge funds say would be stronger protections against excessive risk-taking. Thus would a huge taxpayer investment in rescuing Fannie and Freddie pave the way for a colossal windfall for bottom-feeding Wall Street types. The longer interest-group squabbling prevents Congress from enacting a better approach, the more time the hedgies have to achieve the outcome that favors them.

Read more about this topic: The Post's View: Fannie and Freddie wind-down opponents wind up misleading ads The Post's View: Bid to replace Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac gets a needed push Charles Lane: It's time to fix Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac

By Serving Alcohol, Starbucks Risks Losing Key Customers: People In Recovery

By Greg Williams

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

Greg Williams, who has been in recovery from alcohol and drug use for more than 12 years, wrote and produced the documentary "The Anonymous People."

Recently Starbucks announced it would expand its offerings and start selling alcoholic drinks in the evening in thousands of its stores. The move was touted by chief executive Howard Schultz as a strategy for the company to grow profits by increasing the average sale per customer.

Schultz's shareholders no doubt exchanged a mental fist-bump. But the celebration may be short-lived once they realize that they are in danger of turning away a key coffee-consuming segment: more than 23 million Americans living in recovery from substance-use disorders.

Starbucks spokeswoman Lisa Passé called it "a natural progression for Starbucks as we seek to create a new occasion for customers to gather, relax and connect with each other in the evenings." What Passé did not mention was why a lot of customers already gather, relax and connect at Starbucks — helping to make it the largest coffee chain in the world.

Every day, people in recovery meet up in Starbucks cafes to support one another, to talk to their 12-step sponsors and, most of all, to be welcomed in one of the few lively, popular, alcohol-free gathering places in their community.

Starbucks should pay special attention to them.

One of the most useful concepts in business is the Pareto principle, or what is commonly known as the 80/20 rule. This widely adopted marketing principle — that 20 percent of input causes 80 percent of the result — suggests that 80 percent of all coffee consumed at Starbucks is derived from just 20 percent of their consumer base.

And who might be part of that base? The October 2008 issue of the journal Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research found that 88.5 percent of those studied who were in recovery from alcoholism drank coffee. Thirty-three percent of those coffee drinkers drank more than four cups a day.

That means millions of recovering people drink coffee, and a third of them drink a lot of it.

If you closed your eyes and pictured a 12-step meeting room, you'd probably picture a coffee urn and plastic foam cups stacked next to it. And you'd be right. After a typical meeting, you'd see groups of people leaving together to head for the local Starbucks.

In the short run, Schultz may be adding a new set of customers who bring in a $20-plus sale once a week. But if the evening culture of the cafes turns into a hybrid bar scene, Starbucks will be at serious risk of forcing out a devoted set of high-volume existing customers. Many of them may already spend more than $20 a day on alcohol-free beverages.

If Starbucks executives studied this market demographic, perhaps they would think twice about this move. They don't have to be driven by the spirit of supporting people's journey of recovery from addiction. They could do it just for their shareholders.

GOP Should Give Grown-up Politics A Chance

Washington Post, May 13, 2014

Eliot Cohen nails the Obama administration and many of its critics for deeply unserious behavior:

Indiana Gov. Mike Pence signs legislation on March 24 at the Indiana Career Council Meeting at the Indiana State Library. (Rob Goebel/The Indianapolis Star via Associated Press)

Often, members of the Obama administration speak and, worse, think and act, like a bunch of teenagers. When officials roll their eyes at Vladimir Putin's seizure of Crimea with the line that this is "19th-century behavior," the tone is not that different from a disdainful remark about a hairstyle being "so 1980s." When administration members find themselves judged not on utopian aspirations or the purity of their motives—from offering "hope and change" to stopping global warming—but on their actual accomplishments, they turn sulky. As teenagers will, they throw a few taunts (the president last month said the GOP was offering economic policies that amount to a "stinkburger" or a "meanwich") and stomp off, refusing to exchange a civil word with those of opposing views.

In a searing memoir published in January, former Defense Secretary Robert Gates describes with disdain the trash talk about the Bush administration that characterized meetings in the Obama White House. Like self-obsessed teenagers, the staffers and their superiors seemed to forget that there were other people in the room who might take offense, or merely see the world differently. Teenagers expect to be judged by intentions and promise instead of by accomplishment, and their style can be encouraged by irresponsible adults (see: the Nobel Prize committee) who give awards for perkiness and promise rather than achievement.

He does not spare Republicans. ("The teenage temperament infects our politics on both sides of the aisle, not to mention our great universities and leading corporations. The old, adult virtues—gravitas, sobriety, perseverance and constancy—are the virtues that enabled America to stabilize a shattered world in the 1940s, preserve a perilous order despite the Cold War and navigate the conclusion of that conflict.")

With regard to the Obama crew, no one should be surprised. He ran a campaign in 2008 designed by and for young people. Fortune-cookie phrases became the mantra of the man running to be leader of the Free World. Obama girls swooned. We also see teenage behavior from media organizations, many of which have been deeply unserious in their choice of topics, in their willingness merely to regurgitate White House spin, in their obsession with contrived personality fights (remember Majority Leader Eric Cantor vs. House Speaker John Boehner?) and in their refusal to diversify their ranks with reporters who don't subscribe to cool-kid liberalism.

Some blame the culture generally for this phenomenon. But while the culture has dumbed down the country, made language more coarse and people less polite, commerce still gets done, parents raise kids, soldiers fight magnificently well — all using a healthy mix of common sense and expertise. Compare the way pols talk and act with the tone and conduct of parents, co-workers, business owners, military men and women (not the Beltway-tamed pseudo politicians) and professionals you interact with outside of politics. Frankly, a disturbingly large number of politicians bear as much resemblance to working adults as sitcom TV parents do to real ones.

What else has been unserious of late?

* Appointing Chuck Hagel as defense secretary. Imagine a CEO of the company hiring someone so obviously in over his head and unable even to effectively work from a script. (Might the shareholders think the CEO has lost it?)

* Running around hollering that the sky is falling if the sequester goes through. Would you want to rely on a co-worker who at the first sign of trouble rolled out a parade of phony horribles? (Might you prefer to work alone in the future?)

* The Senate majority leader, like the wide-eyed grouch screaming for kids to get off the lawn, making a Senate election about two rich donors in a sea of rich donors. Imagine a doctor, instead of rendering germane medical advice, going on rants about Big Pharma's conspiracy to take over medicine. (Might you get another doctor?)

* U.S. senators shutting down the government because "the important thing is to fight." Imagine a Marine with such a nonspecific and self-destructive mindset, blowing up his own facility just to show he can do it. (Might his commanding officer initiate court martial — or medical — proceedings?)

* The media fixating on a senator drinking from a water bottle in a response to the president's State of the Union address. Imagine a parent obsessed for weeks about a dropped fork at the dinner table. (Might the spouse inquire whether something is wrong?)

This gap between everyday experience and politics is one reason average citizens rate politicians so poorly. But the voice of conscience and maybe fear (for the country) still beckons. The interest in GOP governors or ex-governors to run in 2016 is in large part a search for maturity. Governors certainly are perceived as less politically infantile in large part because they have to do things (e.g. pass budgets, deal with Medicaid). The incentive for silly stunts is much lower at the state level while the consequences of gridlock, bad governance and extreme policies are acutely and swiftly felt.

And Republicans, no matter how much they dislike Hillary Clinton's politics and can accurately recite her policy flubs, should be aware that to most voters she comes across as serious and mature. Putting up a fire-breathing nominee with a bunch of silly ideas and little depth of knowledge would be like sending a Little Leaguer up to bat against the Detroit Tigers.

So where is the GOP grown-up? Former Florida governor Jeb Bush is impressing donors and conservative wonks in large part because he talks, doesn't scream; explains, doesn't regurgitate catch phrases; and seems comfortable in his own skin, rather than inhabiting a cartoon role. Other governors, including Indiana's Mike Pence and Wisconsin's Scott Walker, do the same.

Many Republicans seem to have recognized that they have been fed a steady diet of junk TV and cotton candy, and crave some substance, something more fulfilling. The noise from the teenage crowd is deafening, but one sign of maturity is the ability to ignore the racket and engage listeners in more important pursuits. But first, one or more Republicans has to decide to give grown-up politics and governance a shot.

Marco Rubio's Changing Climate

By Ruth Marcus

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

"I do not believe that human activity is causing these dramatic changes to our climate the way these scientists are portraying it," said Sen. Marco Rubio.

Thus did the Florida Republican undermine his other assertion, to ABC's Jonathan Karl: that he is prepared to be president.

"Our climate is always changing," Rubio further hole-dug. "And what they have chosen to do is take a handful of decades of research and say that this is now evidence of a longer-term trend that's directly and almost solely attributable to man-made activity. I do not agree with that."

Rubio certainly isn't alone among Republicans in dissing the scientific consensus — "these scientists," he said, flicking away reams of data as the fevered imaginings of climate true--believers.

And his phrasing is cleverly careful, with caveats and straw men that allow him to stop short of outright denialism while comforting the party's denialist base.

Consider Rubio on CNN last week: "I understand that there's a vast consensus of scientists that are saying that human activity is what's contributing to changes in our climate."

So far, so good, but does Rubio agree? He doesn't say, but in an interview last year with BuzzFeed — an interview Rubio's office flagged for me as emblematic of his views on climate change — Rubio suggested there was "reasonable debate" on the role of human activity.

With CNN, Rubio instead pivoted straight to the straw man: "I think it's an enormous stretch to say that every weather incident that we now read about or the majority of them are attributable to human activity." But of course, no reputable scientist is making that stretch.

Rubio has a more serious argument — that unilateral action will be unavailing, that the costs of responding to climate change exceed the benefits. But he undermines this point — and with it, his broader credibility — by refusing to acknowledge scientific reality.

Let's look at the data — or, as Rubio would call it, "a handful of decades of research."

The National Climate Assessment, this month: "Evidence from the top of the atmosphere to the depths of the oceans . . . tells an unambiguous story: the planet is warming, and over the last half-century, this warming has been driven primarily by human activity — predominantly the burning of fossil fuels."

Just this week, two groups of scientists offered disturbing assessments about what they deemed the unstoppable melting of Antarctic ice sheets, driven in part by human-caused global warming and threatening catastrophic rises in sea levels.

But if Rubio doesn't believe the scientists, perhaps he might believe . . . himself. As the Miami Herald recounted, "As the leader of the Florida House in 2008, Rubio presided over a unanimous vote in favor of directing the state Department of Environmental Protection to develop ground rules for companies to limit their carbon emissions."

The following year, Rubio described a cap-and-trade system as "inevitable" and pronounced himself "in favor of giving the Department of Environmental Protection a mandate that they go out and design a cap-and-trade or a carbon tax program."

According to the Herald, Rubio "hired a leading climate change expert" — eek, a scientist! — "from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to advise lawmakers."

Rubio claimed the following year that he was actually engineering a plan to stop cap-and-trade, but that was hardly a credible explanation for a convenient flip-flop as he ran in the Republican primary against then-Gov. Charlie Crist, a cap-and-trade advocate.

Since then, Rubio has moved from disclaiming scientific expertise to deriding it.

"I'm not a scientist. I'm not qualified to make that decision," Rubio told the Herald in December 2009 when asked whether climate change was the result of human activity. Climate change, by the way, isn't the only issue on which Rubio punted to scientists: When GQ asked in 2012 how old the Earth is, Rubio demurred, "I'm not a scientist, man."

Which is it, senator? You don't know as much as these scientists or you don't believe them?

Rubio's shift sadly mirrors his party's. As Paul Waldman recounted on The Post's Plum Line blog, in 2012, the leading Republican presidential candidates had "embarrassing flirtations with climate realism."

The 2016 crowd, by contrast, ranges from skepticism to blanket denial. "The last 15 years, there has been no recorded warming," asserted Texas Sen. Ted Cruz. "The Earth's 4.5 billion years old, and you're going to say that we had four hurricanes and so that proves a theory?" offered Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul.

"Climate is always evolving," Rubio told ABC. Sadly, it's not the only thing.

Bill Maher Speaks His Mind, Unfortunately

By Kathleen Parker

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

When my neighbor gleefully reported that Bill Maher had dedicated a searing monologue to me for a column I wrote about the Donald Sterling/Cliven Bundy rants, my first thought was, Nah . If I tussled with everybody who tossed a brick through the window, I'd never get the draperies hung.

My second thought was about something my father said to a drunk who was looking for a fight: "I'm too old to fight," my dad said, peering over his half-moon glasses. "But I'd be glad to step outside and kill you."

Dads.

I've decided to respond to Maher because I agree with him on his central point, that we should fight the scourge of privacy invasion.

But my point was a little different than Maher's characterization, if perhaps unclear to literal minds. One would think that someone who has so artfully mastered snark would recognize sarcasm, as when I wrote that "speaking one's mind isn't really all it's cracked up to be."

Assuring his audience that speaking his mind "is absolutely everything it's cracked up to be," to which I would only add "and much, much more," Maher said people would miss speaking their minds. Perhaps, but how would you know?

I think, Bill, that you and I are talking about different minds. As noted in my column, any uncertainty about the value of always speaking one's mind vanishes upon reading online comments. Have you read yours?

Maher further objected to my suggestion that the potential for exposure by being unwittingly recorded forces us to select our words and edit our thoughts more carefully. But don't all adults edit their words and thoughts to some degree? Oh, wait, no.

Southerners are perhaps too obsessed with trying never to offend while entertaining the most dastardly thoughts. Everyone knows that "Bless your heart" means anything but, depending.

But Maher would rather be a Mormon than have to be "always editing," as he put it in his monologue. Listening to 100 horrific rants by Bundy, he added, would be better than being Mitt Romney.

Bill, Bill, Billy, honey. Obviously, the consequence of self-editing isn't to become a cliche. Sometimes it just means being a little bit clever.

Certainly, those un-clever fellows Sterling and Bundy would be better off had they kept their thoughts to themselves. Do they have the right to express them? Absolutely, but the obvious consequences make my point. This isn't a matter of government oppression of free speech but of private citizens condemning their neighbors for expressing thoughts that have been historically harmful.

Yes, Bill, people should be able to think what they want in the privacy of their living rooms, not that our thoughts are necessarily good company. Most of them percolate unbidden from the unconscious and intrude upon our sense of order. Self-aware people examine those thoughts and wrestle them into submission. The rest are on TV. (Kidding, kidding, sheesh.)

Urging people to think before they speak is hardly East Germany, as Maher said. This is what parents teach their children every day. Don't write something in an e-mail that you wouldn't want others to see. And while we're at it, don't post idiotic pictures on Facebook if you're looking for a job.

This is common-sense advice based on reality. It's too bad Sterling's "friend" recorded him saying offensive things. Too bad he thinks this way. Too bad he doesn't have better friends.

Maher wondered whether I ever get together with my girlfriends, drink too much wine and say things I wouldn't want broadcast elsewhere. Well, yeah, that's why I call them friends. Indeed, I would be shocked if either of them ever repeated (or remembered) a word.

Finally, my point wasn't that we should surrender to Big Brother. As I've written and spoken often, we have become a dangerously voyeuristic society driven by the narcissistic urge to know and be known.

Translated: Basically, we're borderline sociopaths with a spy factory in our pockets.

Barring legal action against thought thieves posing as "friends," the solution is not so easily imagined. Until we conceive of one, it seems minimally rational to recognize that any electronic interaction carries risks.

In the spirit of modern friendship, meaning we're not really friends, I leave you, Bill, with an open invitation to stop by the Olive Street stoop next time you're in D.C. We'll drink too much wine and speak our minds freely with an assortment of neighbors who definitively will not bore you.

And I promise, I won't tell a soul.

A Nightmare Group In Syria Could Target The US

By David Ignatius

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

The chamber of horrors of the Syrian civil war has spawned a terrorist group so extreme that it has been rejected even by al-Qaeda — and this toxic group is now establishing a safe haven in the city of Raqqah in northern Syria that could soon be used to attack foreign targets.

The hyper-militant terrorist group is known in the West as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS. Its efforts to establish a Muslim caliphate that spans the two countries, and to absorb another al-Qaeda offshoot known as the al-Nusra Front, brought a rebuke a year ago from al-Qaeda's chief, Ayman al-Zawahiri.

"I have to choose between the rule of God and the rule of Zawahiri, and I choose the rule of God," thundered Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the charismatic leader of ISIS. The group went its own fiery way after it was denounced by Zawahiri, leaving the al-Nusra Front as al-Qaeda's official Syrian affiliate.

The terrorist threat in Syria is germinating in the dark space between the weak moderate opposition movement, which has been pleading for more Western training and assistance, and the embattled regime of President Bashar al-Assad. For now, the main check on ISIS's growth is that it burns so hot, and operates so brutally, that it alienates people where it takes root.

U.S. intelligence agencies are working with counterparts in the Middle East and Europe to track ISIS and al-Nusra Front operatives and to monitor foreign fighters who have traveled to Syria to join the jihad. This effort to map the Sunni jihadist networks has drawn a useful portrait:

●Of the roughly 110,000 total opposition fighters in Syria, ISIS accounts for somewhere between 5,000 and 10,000; the al-Nusra Front has 5,000 to 6,000 committed fighters. A third militant Sunni group called Ahrar al-Sham has 10,000 to 15,000 members, some of whom have extremist leanings. The extremists in these groups are regarded as the toughest and most motivated warriors within the opposition.

●About 10,000 to 15,000 foreigners have joined the opposition, traveling from such diverse locations as Chechnya, Australia, Libya, Belgium and the United States. Intelligence analysts are said to be especially concerned about roughly 1,500 foreign fighters who hold European passports, which allow them to travel freely across the continent and to enter the United States with relative ease.

U.S. officials believe that ISIS is providing tactical expertise and training facilities to these foreign fighters — building the infrastructure for foreign terrorist operations. Moreover, Baghdadi and other top leaders are said to have issued multiple statements over the past two years threatening international attacks.

In the view of these officials, ISIS could attempt an attack outside the Middle East soon, and several plots have already been disrupted. But analysts believe that the group is focused now mostly on battles within Syria and Iraq.

The group has established a secure haven in Raqqah, a city of about 220,000. Its fighters control the roads in and out. They sell the region's oil and natural gas resources to finance their operations, supplementing revenues from kidnapping and other criminal activities. U.S. officials believe ISIS is now self-financing and no longer needs donations from wealthy supporters in the Gulf.

As its name implies, ISIS seeks to mobilize Sunnis in both Iraq and Syria. The Iraq branch is battle-hardened from its years of fighting under Abu Musab al-Zarqawi against U.S. military occupation. Their Iraq force is smaller than in Syria, probably numbering in the hundreds, but it has a tight command structure and has spearheaded Sunni attacks against government troops in Fallujah and other neighborhoods west of Baghdad.

U.S. officials view Baghdadi as a dynamic leader who mobilizes Iraqi Sunnis into what he promotes as a vanguard against the Shiite-led government. He offers "repentance" for those who allied with U.S. forces against al-Qaeda in Iraq. Though less an operational commander than Zarqawi, he's just as capable of inspiring followers. In a well-researched profile last December, Time magazine described Baghdadi as "Osama bin Laden's true heir."

A nightmare for U.S. counterterrorism analysts is that these al-Qaeda offshoots could recruit new followers among the millions of desperate Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Syria itself.

One veteran U.S. official views the terrorist threat coming out of Syria and Iraq as potentially the most worrying development in the Middle East since the late 1970s. The United States may be less focused on the jihadists than it was a decade ago, but they remain very much interested in the United States.

Birth Of A Scandal Blaming Hillary Clinton For Ni-ger-ian Kidnappings

By Dana Milbank

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

Conservatives have reached the firm conclusion that Hillary Clinton is to blame for those Nigerian schoolgirls kidnapped by the terrorist group Boko Haram, 14 months after she left office.

All they have to do now is fill in the details.

On Fox News last week, Elisabeth Hasselbeck attributed the attack to Clinton's failure to put the group on a list of foreign terrorist organizations when she was secretary of state. That "perhaps could have saved these girls earlier," Hasselbeck declared.

Rush Limbaugh, on his radio show, suggested that Clinton didn't designate the group as terrorist because its members are black.

Fox's Megyn Kelly floated the idea that Clinton didn't put the group on the list because doing so would have "angered them," and a guest on her show said Clinton gave Boko Haram a "green light."

House intelligence committee Chairman Mike Rogers (R-Mich.) and others argued that the Twitter campaign raising awareness of the kidnappings, #BringBackOurGirls, was evidence of the toothless foreign policy favored by Clinton and President Obama. Clinton, who along with first lady Michelle Obama participated in the campaign, was derided for trying "to fight Boko Haram with hashtags."

Former congressman Allen West, always a step ahead, asserted that focus on the kidnapping is a "wag the dog" conspiracy by the Obama administration to distract attention from the Benghazi, Libya, investigation (of which Clinton is also a target).

Former House speaker Newt Gingrich called for congressional hearings — which would also provide the opportunity to explore whether Clinton suffered a brain injury, as Karl Rove has alleged, and whether she orchestrated the Monica Lewinsky article in Vanity Fair, as Lynne Cheney suggested.

The nascent effort to pin blame for Boko Haram on Clinton is still far from a full-blown Benghazi conspiracy theory. But it's worth examining, because it shows how a scandal is born.

The abduction of hundreds of Nigerian girls by Boko Haram, the latest atrocity by the militant group claiming to be acting on Islamic principles, has little to do with the United States. But while the rest of humanity reacts with revulsion, American conservatives have searched for ways to blame the kidnappings on the favorite for the 2016 Democratic presidential nomination.

They found their opening in a decision by the State Department not to put the group on its list of foreign terrorist organizations after Boko Haram bombed U.N. headquarters in Abuja in 2011. The FBI, the CIA and various lawmakers argued for its inclusion, but Nigeria's government, which Boko Haram is trying to topple, argued against it, as did academic experts on Nigeria. John Campbell, U.S. ambassador to Nigeria during the George W. Bush administration, told Fox's Chris Wallace on Sunday that, "along with a good many other Nigerian experts at the time, we all opposed designation."

Opponents figured the designation would elevate the prestige of Boko Haram, which was essentially a domestic Nigerian organization. Instead, Clinton in 2012 put three of the group's leaders on a list of foreign terrorists. After Boko Haram killed more than 160 civilians in Benisheik, Nigeria, in September 2013, Clinton's successor, John Kerry, finally put the group on the terror list — and Boko Haram's brazen attacks continued unimpeded.

The blame-Hillary effort began, as these things often do, with a report by a mainstream journalist. After Clinton tweeted about the "unconscionable" abductions and said "we must stand up to terrorism," Josh Rogin posted an article May 7 in the Daily Beast quoting an anonymous "former senior U.S. official" accusing Clinton of "gross hypocrisy" because she hadn't put Boko Haram on the list.

From there, conservatives were off to the races. Glenn Beck's the Blaze picked up Rogin's report, highlighting the anonymous quote. The Daily Caller went with the headline "Secretary Hillary — Now Decrying 'Terrorism' — Refused to Call Boko Haram a Terror Group." National Review and others joined in.

"Now word is because we did not place them on the terror list," said Fox News's Steve Doocy the morning after Rogin's report appeared, "it's going to be harder to go after them. And who exactly made sure that they were not placed on the terror list? Hillary Clinton."

Inevitably, the accusations landed on the House floor, where Rep. Louie Goh-mert (R-Tex.) gave a long speech the next day, quoting Rogin's article, citing Fox News and asserting that Clinton "protected" the terrorists.

"What happened here is obvious, although the commentariat is loath to connect the dots," the lawmaker said. "Ms. Clinton, like the Obama administration more broadly, believes that appeasing Islamists . . . promotes peace and stability."

It was a textbook example of the anatomy of a smear.

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES

Md., Del. Delegations Ask Pfizer For Job Assurances; Hostile Bid Possible

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

Pfizer hinted Tuesday it might sweeten its roughly $106 billion spurned bid for British pharma AstraZeneca, and said it wouldn't rule out a hostile takeover.

The New York-based drugmaker's update came as the congressional delegations of Delaware and Maryland filed letters to the drug giant asking for assurances that AZ's local workforce would remain intact in any merger.

The CEOs of both drugmakers testified before Parliament Tuesday, with lawmakers grilling Pfizer head Ian Read about his plans for the future of a combined company in the United Kingdom.

"There will be job cuts somewhere, that's part of being more efficient," Read told the committee. "Whereabouts in the world, I cannot say."

Story: AstraZeneca works to rally shareholders

Story:: AstraZeneca positions vulnerable amid merger discussion

Story: AstraZeneca profit misses estimates

However, he has made it clear that Pfizer is committed to England, where it would establish the corporate residence of a new company, thereby saving an estimated $1 billion in corporate taxes to the United States.

In their letters, the congressional delegations of Delaware and Maryland were following the lead of those states' governors, who also wrote to encourage Pfizer to retain AZ's headquarters for the Americas in Fairfax along with 2,600 Delaware jobs, and 3,100 employees at MedImmune in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

Read was more encouraging in his response to Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, saying, "MedImmune, a key biologics arm of AstraZeneca's R&D platform, demonstrates incredible value to patients by developing innovation-driven biopharmaceuticals.

"Leveraging biological advances to develop small and large molecule medicines, MedImmune's modality independent approach to research and development would be a good complement to Pfizer's research efforts in a potential combination with AstraZeneca, and could create an enhanced research portfolio in key areas such as Oncology, Immunology and Cardiovascular Disease."

Separately, Read has promised Prime Minister David Cameron that he would complete AstraZeneca's R&D innovation hub in Cambridge and locate "key scientific leadership" in the U.K., along with 20 percent of the combined company's total R&D workforce.

To Markell, Read wrote, "I recognize that Delaware has made a significant investment to the biopharmaceutical industry, and I understand your interest in the specific impact to your state. Pfizer values your investment and the important science that is being conducted there."

He said it was "premature to speculate on any specific impact this would have on jobs and facilities in any given state."

In their letter, sent Tuesday, U.S. Sens. Tom Carper and Chris Coons and Rep. John Carney told Pfizer it could expect to hear from other members of Congress "about how Pfizer's takeover of AstraZeneca will impact jobs, our states' healthcare system and national drug pipeline, and tax revenue. ... We strongly believe that any merger with Pfizer should include an advance commitment to maintain and grow its presence in Delaware."

They also acknowledged what they called "our country's outdated corporate tax system."

"As we continue to tackle the issue of tax reform in Congress, you will find the Delaware delegation engaged in and committed to revising the code to help American companies grow and profit here in the United States," they wrote.

The delegation also signaled that, as in England, Pfizer's proposal will be given a close look by U.S. lawmakers.

"Clearly, this potential merger will receive heightened scrutiny from lawmakers, regulators and the general public," they wrote.

Pfizer is the largest research-based pharmaceutical company in the United States, and AstraZeneca is England's second largest drugmaker. The deal would constitute one of the largest in the history of the pharmaceutical industry.

For their part, AstraZeneca executives have maintained that Pfizer has undervalued its drug pipeline.

In Parliament Tuesday, CEO Pascal Soriot said he worried about the "distraction" such a large merger would pose for AstraZeneca.

"What will we tell the person whose father died from lung cancer because one of our medicines was delayed – and essentially was delayed because in the meantime our two companies were involved in saving tax and saving costs?" he asked.

Charles Elson, director of the University of Delaware's Weinberg Center for Corporate Governance, said Pfizer's response to Markell and O'Malley effectively said the same thing: "we haven't made up our minds." It's a political, public relations effort on Pfizer's part, he said.

There isn't much the United States government can do at this point, he said. "It's England that's the issue."

In an email, Markell responded to Read's letter: "I appreciate Chairman Read's response and will look forward to hearing more in the follow-up conversations he has offered. We will continue to press for Pfizer to provide at least the same amount of certainty to Americans employed by AstraZeneca they have for British workers. I remain committed to using every tool available and pursuing every avenue possible to fight for Delaware jobs."

Read told the Parliamentary committee in London that his company had various options for its next move, and did not rule out going directly to shareholders of AstraZeneca in a hostile takeover attempt.

In a written statement, Pfizer reported it was publishing a presentation to AstraZeneca shareholders about the "merits of a combination of the two companies."

Pfizer "believes there is a compelling rationale for a combination, and if AstraZeneca engages in conversations to provide Pfizer with a better understanding of its business and prospects, it may lead to a transaction that AstraZeneca can recommend. Pfizer continues to believe that engagement by the AstraZeneca board is in the best interest of all stakeholders of both companies."

Pfizer touted the "strategic, financial and operational benefits" of such an acquisition, as well as a "significant value creation opportunity for AstraZeneca shareholders."

Carper, Coons and Carney stressed the "tens of millions of dollars" Delaware has invested in retaining AstraZeneca.

In 1999, Delaware gave an incentive package to AstraZeneca of $18.7 million in land for expansion and a cash grant, and devoted $70 million in road improvements to the area around the Fairfax campus.

Amid patent expirations, AstraZeneca has cut its workforce there from 5,000 employees seven years ago to what is expected to be 2,000 by the time a current round of layoffs is finished.

AstraZeneca acquired MedImmune for $15 billion in 2007. MedImmune represents almost half of AstraZeneca's research and development pipeline.

In a recent memo to its shareholders, AstraZeneca management touted the future profitability of its drug pipeline, including oncology, immunology and diabetes drugs.

Under British takeover law, Pfizer has until May 26 to make an official offer to acquire AstraZeneca.

The Associated Press contributed to this report. Contact Aaron Nathans at 324-2786 or anathans@delawareonline.com.

Scout Channels Ire Into Campaign For A State Shell

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

You could call Delaware's newly crowned state shell a product of First State pride.

The channeled whelk, a conch-shaped shell several inches long and home to predatory sea snails, was officially made Delaware's state shell after Gov. Jack Markell signed legislation last week. But the quest to get the First State shell began in October 2012, when Allyson Willis, now 12, of Middletown, was researching the various symbols for each state.

Delaware already had a state bird, the blue hen, and a state bug, the ladybug. The state even has a state soil, the Greenwich loam, and a state dessert, peach pie. But it didn't have a state shell.

"I realized that a lot of the states around us, New Jersey and New York, had state shells even though we have more beaches than they do," she said Friday. "It kind of made me mad.

"It was almost like we weren't there," Allyson said.

So, the then-elementary schooler and now Redding Middle School student decided to do something. She adopted it as her cause as part of her Girl Scout Bronze Award project, the highest honor a Girl Scout junior can earn. The award project, typically done by an entire troop, requires at least 20 hours of work and step-by-step documentation.

Story: Girl Scouts target math, science gender gap

She wrote to Delaware's Washington political contingent, Sens. Chris Coons and Tom Carper and U.S. Rep. John Carney.

Carney directed her to Rep. Quinn Johnson, D-Middletown. Meanwhile, Allyson collected signatures from 23 of her classmates at Silver Lake Elementary and other Girl Scouts, while working with Johnson, Sen. Bethany Hall-Long, D-Middletown, and the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control.

Allyson suggested the jingle shell as the state shell, but that was changed to the channeled whelk at Johnson's suggestion. The whelk was chosen because it is both a mainstay of Delaware and important to the ecology and economy of the state. Whelks are harvested every year along the East Coast, including thousands of pounds by Delaware watermen for exporting.

From there, the idea was crafted into legislation which unanimously passed through the House and Senate earlier this year. Senators gave Willis a standing ovation said her mother, Renee.

The shell signed by Markell and a copy of the bill will be included in a Delaware Museum of Natural History exhibit, which features themuseum's whelk collection and the journey to designate it as the state shell, Allyson said.

"It is so important to encourage civic engagement among young people and show them the value of advocating on behalf of issues that matter to them," Markell said in a release. "This piece of legislation is the result of Allyson's efforts and shows the impact one person can have on their community."

She also was presented with the Girl Scout Bronze Award in December after finishing her project last fall. She's now a Girl Scout Cadette.

Jennifer Powell Acord, communications and advocacy manager for the Girl Scouts of the Chesapeake Bay, said Willis is a role model for other Girl Scouts looking to craft a project around something they care about. The awards are given to Girl Scouts in elementary school. There are silver and gold award projects for members in middle and high schools.

"The quality of her project is really impressive and definitely well more than the average bronze award," she said. "Our council is really proud of her and the work that she did. She really took the initiative on this, and it is impressive for a girl her age to take on a project of this size."

It's all a little strange for Allyson.

"I never thought I would be in a museum," she said, adding that meeting the governor was both exciting and scary.

Her mom isn't surprised, though. Her daughter is a self-starter with an independent streak, she said.

"This is really big for her. Truthfully, it's really big for us too," Willis said. "What started out as a fun project and grew into something really big."

But Allyson never expected the quest for Delaware's state shell to go this far.

"I thought it was just a little girl's dream that would never come true," she said.

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Two Sussex Council Members Oppose NAACP Grants

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

GEORGETOWN – Two Sussex County Councilmen, Sam Wilson and Vance Phillips, declined Tuesday to give grants of $100 each to the Lower Sussex NAACP Youth Council, objecting to the phrase "colored people" in the group's name.

"Take my name off. I'm not going to give anything," Wilson said after county finance director Gina Jennings noted that in the past, each of the five council members had given $100 from their discretionary grant accounts to the local organization. "Unless you can describe what that says. What's NAACP stand for?"

The brief back-and-forth Wilson initiated broke up what is usually a humdrum end to Sussex County Council meetings. Council members approve small grants, usually $1,000 or less, to civic groups and charities that ask for money.

Council had already given to a group seeking to train middle and high school students how to use defibrillators, the Delaware Police Chief's Council and the West Rehoboth Community Land Trust before it came to a request from the NAACP Youth Council.

Story: Council may say Lord's Prayer again

The Youth Council sent a letter noting it planned to host financial education workshops for young people, put on family-friendly fitness events and have some members attend an annual national convention in Las Vegas.

The letter described the NAACP as "an organization that was founded in 1909 by a multiracial group of citizens who were determined to confront the issues of racism and injustice."

After Jennings summarized the letter for the five council members, who are all white, Wilson asked Jennings to say what NAACP stood for. "Let me pull up their letter to give you an exact – hold on a second," Jennings responded.

"You don't know what it means?" Joan Deaver, the council's sole Democratic member, asked Wilson from the other side of the dais. Deaver and Wilson, who describes himself as one of the council's staunch conservatives, often cast clashing votes.

"That's what I asked," Wilson said. "What's it stand for, Joan?"

Jennings started to reply to Wilson's query, but Council President Michael Vincent broke in: "I know what it stands for. So do you. I hope you do."

"Not exactly," Wilson said.

"OK. OK. Mrs. Jennings?" Vincent said. Jennings recited the umbrella group's full name: "The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People."

At this point, Councilman Vance Phillips, a frequent ally of Wilson on votes, jumped in, saying: "What color?" There was a silence in the room for a beat or two.

"I'm with Mr. Wilson," Phillips went on. "This is an organization that obviously is directed at a certain race that strikes me as inappropriate in this day of racial equality, and..."

"Sounds like discrimination to me," Wilson chimed in.

"I'll pull mine from that as well," Phillips said.

The three-minute exchange prompted criticism.

"Those two councilmen seem to be racists and bigots," said Richard Smith, president of the Delaware chapter of the NAACP. "What he said, we really can't stand for it. He needs to come and debate me, myself, on if we are a racial group or not. Because we really aren't. We stand for all people... He's trying to race-bait us. And we're not going to play that game."

Jane Hovington of Georgetown, president of the NAACP's Lower Sussex Branch, said the comments showed Wilson and Phillips were "hesitant about representing all of the people" in their districts.

"The most amazing thing is, they have no idea of the fallout from this," Hovington said. "Maybe they need to see our faces in there more often so they can see we are human beings, just like they are."

In an interview after the meeting, Phillips said he knew race could be a sensitive topic, and stood by his comments.

"It is a shame in the 21st century, when we have made such great strides on racial equality, there are still organizations out there dividing people by race," Phillips said. "In the words of Rodney King, can't we all just get along?"

At the meeting, Councilman George Cole made a motion to give the Youth Council the same $500 grant it had gotten before, but to draw it from three council members' accounts: his own, Deaver's and Vincent's, leaving Wilson's and Phillips' accounts untouched. That motion passed, with Phillips voting yes and Wilson voting no.

Wilson wasn't done, though. "Where's the workshop and convention, do you know?" he wondered aloud. "What area? Is it in Philadelphia?"

"Not where the Klan meets," Deaver responded. And when the next grant request came up, a $1,500 request from the Mid-Atlantic Symphony Orchestra, she interjected: "Are they all white people there?" Cole, seated next to her, snorted with laughter.

Vincent ended the back-and-forth after that.

"I think we need to keep some of these comments to ourselves," he said sternly.

Many conservatives disagree with the NAACP's views on public policy. Talk show host Rush Limbaugh, during the 2012 presidential election, called the organization an "average leftist extremist group" and said "nobody cares what the NAACP thinks because none of it is a surprise."

The letter from the local chapter's youth council to the council had the same measured tone of most letters from groups appealing to council members for grants.

"Our organization is nonpartisan, seeking to help make the American Dream a reality for all citizens," youth adviser Manuel R. Davis wrote. "Thanks for serving our communities in Sussex County, and know that you are appreciated."

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Incumbents Retain Seats In School Voting

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

Delaware filled 21 seats on local school boards across the state Tuesday with typically small turnouts and little drama.

Every school district had at least one seat up for grabs.

More than a third of the seats were filled without an election because there was only one candidate. All but five of the races that went to a vote included an incumbent, and all of those incumbents won re-election, according to unofficial figures from each county's department of elections.

As usual, turnout was tiny.

Caesar Rodney candidate Jessica Marelli took home the most votes in the state with 659, in one of only two races that garnered a total of more than 1,000 votes. Some elections garnered fewer than 500.

Most of the elections were relatively lopsided – only two winners saw a challenger come within 10 percentage points of their winning total.

The most contested race was the six-person field for a seat in the Capital School District.

John Martin Jr. was elected with 39 percent of the vote, outpacing Sharese Paylor with 26 percent, Curtis Raymond with 23 percent. Three other candidates received less than 10 percent of votes.

There also was a close contest in the District 5 race in the Indian River School District. Incumbent Douglas Hudson (48 percent) bested challengers W. Scott Collins (40 percent) and Bobbi Barends (10 percent).

School boards control each district's budget, hire and fire top district leaders, and negotiate major partnerships with state and federal agencies like the Race to the Top grant. They also are responsible for asking voters for property tax increases, something several school boards have done in recent years as state and federal budgets tightened.

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Election results

Below are complete, but unofficial election results from the departments of elections for each county. Winners are in bold. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

NEW CASTLE COUNTY

APPOQUINIMINK

Norman Abrams*…364 (65%)

Debbie Harrington…188 (35%)

BRANDYWINE

Cheryl Siskin…Elected without an opponent

CHRISTINA

DISTRICT D

Martin Nicholson…133 (40%)

John Young*…207 (60%)

DISTRICT F

Elizabeth Paige*…Elected without an opponent

COLONIAL

John Megahan Sr.…40 (17%)

Melodie Spotts*…197 (83%)

RED CLAY

Dennis Cini Sr.…198 (35%)
Michael Piccio*…372 (65%)
KENT COUNTY
CAESAR RODNEY
Jessica Marelli…639 (55%)
Flavous Statham…520 (45%)
CAPITAL
Howard Earle…3 (.36%)
Dennis Hallock Sr.…82 (9%)
John Martin Jr.…329 (39%)
Sharese Paylor…220 (26%)
Curtis Raymond…196 (23%)
Muriel Thomas…13 (1%)
LAKE FOREST
AT-LARGE SEAT (Two-year term)
Gwendolyn Scott-Jones…177 (43%)
Lisa Williams*…230 (56%)
AT-LARGE SEAT (Five-year term)
Ronda Swenson*…263 (72%)
Robert Vogel, Sr.…101 (27%)
MILFORD
Marvin Schelhouse*…Elected without an opponent
SMYRNA
Scot McClymont…385 (75%)
Jody Wilson…127 (25%)
SUSSEX COUNTY
Cape Henlopen
AREA C
Andrew Lewis*…Elected without an opponent
AT-LARGE SEAT
Juan Antonio Saez…391 (22%)
Alison Myers…659 (37%)
Robert Bennett…154 (8%)
Meyer Persow…161 (9%)
Teresa Carey…373 (21%)
DELMAR
Jason Coco*…Elected without an opponent
INDIAN RIVER
DISTRICT 3
Nina Bunting*…Elected without an opponent
DISTRICT 4
Donald Hattier*…Elected without an opponent
DISTRICT 5
Douglas Hudson*…183 (48%)

W. Scott Collins…151 (40%)
Bobbi Barends…40 (10%)
LAUREL
Brad Lee…302 (56%)
Terrance Hooper…236 (43%)
SEAFORD
Rebecca Adams*…Elected without an opponent
WOODBRIDGE
Steve McCarron…324 (83%)
Jan Bunting…66 (17%)

Sussex Council May Say Lord's Prayer Again

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

GEORGETOWN – The Lord's Prayer hasn't been uttered aloud at the start of a Sussex County Council meeting for nearly two years. But some of its members want to bring it back.

Until June 2012, the Council had led off meetings with The Lord's Prayer – "Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" – for more than 30 years. But then a lawsuit filed by four Sussex County residents convinced a federal judge, Leonard P. Stark, that Council's habit came too close to establishing Christianity as the legislative body's favored religion.

So County Council now starts each meeting by having its members stand and recite the less-sectarian 23rd Psalm – "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" – followed by the pledge of allegiance. A settlement agreement the county and the plaintiffs consented to, which was approved by the judge, forbids the Council from going back to using The Lord's Prayer.

On Tuesday, Council grappled with whether to resume saying its old prayer, now that a recent Supreme Court ruling has said legislatures are freer to include public prayer than past high court rulings have held.

"The Supreme Court made a ruling here. Why should we bow down to the lower court?" Republican Councilman Sam Wilson said Tuesday during a 25-minute discussion of legislative prayer. "What's wrong with The Lord's Prayer?"

STORY: Two council members oppose NAACP grants

On May 5, the U.S. Supreme Court, in a 5-4 ruling, upheld a legally challenged prayer practice in Greece, N.Y. Plaintiffs in a lawsuit there had contended the town government almost exclusively hosted Christian religious leaders to lead them in different prayers at the start of meetings.

But the court ruled Greece's pattern of prayer did not violate the First Amendment because it "did not coerce participation by non-adherents," and said the town wasn't obligated far afield for non-Christians to pray for it.

The ruling was seen by many as refuting a previous Supreme Court opinion on prayer that set forth a stricter 'endorsement test,' which tended to rule out prayer habits like Greece's.

J. Everett Moore, the county attorney, wrote a memo to County Council highlighting the differences between its prayer tradition and the custom the Supreme Court upheld in New York. The tradition in Greece, Moore noted, had different church leaders come to meetings and say a changing list of prayers, but in Sussex County, council members themselves lead the recitation of the same prayer each time.

If council wanted to change course and stop saying only the 23rd Psalm, Moore said, it would have to ask permission from Stark, the federal judge. In an interview last week, a secular group that assisted

the plaintiffs who had sued Sussex to stop The Lord's Prayer, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, said returning to that prayer would be "problematic."

Councilman George Cole said he wasn't interested in reopening the prayer issue. "I'm comfortable with what we're doing," he said. "I don't know if I want to go back into this chasing the tail."

Councilman Vance Phillips, though, asked for the matter to be put on the council's agenda for its next executive closed-door session, so it could get confidential legal advice about the issue.

"I believe there is sentiment on the council to at least consider asking relief," Phillips said.

Moore said it would be permissible to discuss the matter behind closed doors, but advised the council to hold any votes about whether to relitigate the issue in an open session.

At the end of the meeting, Seaford resident Robert Harrison told the council members he was unhappy the council recites any prayer at all.

"It gives the impression that good Sussex County citizens are religious," said Harrison.

"If the council intends to spite nonbelievers," he said, "it would only be just for nonbelievers to respond to those prayers."

Contact James Fisher at 983-6772, on Twitter @JamesFisherTNJ or jfisher@delawareonline.com. Staff writer Molly Murray contributed to this story.

Proposed $60 Million Settlment Would Benefit Veterans

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

A $60 million payment has been proposed by the Department of Justice and a company formerly known as Sallie Mae to settle allegations that the student loan provider violated the rights of members of the military.

The company, which is now called Navient, was charged in U.S. District Court in Delaware on May 13. The Department of Justice alleges the company failed to give veterans a 6 percent interest rate and special treatment in regards to default judgement that are required under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, according to court records.

A proposed settlement was filed the same day as the charges against the Sallie Mae spin-off company. The $60 million settlement would go toward paying members of the military who would have been impacted by the alleged failure to provide required benefits, according to court documents. An independent consultant, which was approved by the department of justice, will also review the company's entire loan portfolio for a set period of time to help identify those who are entitled to money.

The Department of Justice estimates that 60,000 people will benefit from the settlement. Some cases reach back to nearly 10 years ago, the department said.

In addition to the $60 million set aside to pay military members, the company would pay a $55,000 civil penalty to the government, according to court records.

The agreement would need approval from a judge, which has not happened yet.

In a statement, Navient said the "large majority" of the money will go to service members who the Department of Justice believes are entitled to a benefit, but the company "believes is inconsistent with prior regulatory requirements and guidance." The company said it decided to settle the case "in order to put the matter behind it," the statement said.

"We offer our sincere apologies to the servicemen and servicewomen who were affected by our processing errors and thus did not receive the full benefits they deserve," John F. Remondi, president and CEO, Navient, said in a statement released by the company. "Over the past several years we have implemented changes in our procedures and training programs to prevent these mistakes from

happening again. We also appreciate that the regulators agreed on consistent guidance that provides clarity and thereby enables us to offer SCRA benefits to even more service members back to as early as 2005 as well as going forward."

The company said it has taken steps since 2009 to help assist borrowers who are in the military or are veterans. There is a special number, (855) 284-4879 with staff trained to handle these cases, and a website, navient.com/military, also has information.

UD Approves Room And Board Increase

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

NEWARK – The average cost of the University of Delaware's student dining plan will increase by 3 percent and residence hall room charges by 3.5 percent starting with the fall semester, according to changes approved Tuesday by the UD Board of Trustees.

The new student orientation fee will increase from $120 to $145 to cover the cost of a math-placement exam required for all students. The comprehensive fee for full-time students and the student health services fee are set to decrease by 5 percent and 10 percent, respectively, also starting in the fall.

At its meeting Tuesday, the trustees approved a new PhD program in Financial Analytics and a new five-year combined bachelor's/master's program in Economics.

The Trustees eliminated the master's program in higher education administration, in part because the School of Education no longer employs faculty with such expertise.

The incoming freshmen class will be among UD's largest and most diverse with nearly 4,250 students committed to date, officials said.

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Smoking Ban Creates Area Of Shame For Smokers

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

If you're a smoker hanging out on the beach in Rehoboth Beach, smoke 'em if you got 'em.

That is, up until Thursday.

That's when the resort town's ban on smoking on the beach, except in a few designated areas, goes into effect.

And don't think you can just hop up onto the boardwalk and light up. Smoking will also be banned there.

If you want to satisfy a nicotine craving, you'll have to find one of the designated smoking areas spread out along the beach.

These smoking areas – marked with signs and equipped with urns to dispose of cigarette butts – will be at least 40 feet from beach access areas, near the edge of the sand dunes and will be small – about the size of four beach towels.

There is no word in the ordinance on whether these areas will be surrounded by a cage made of chicken wire to protect the smokers from thrown objects – or how far away gawkers and other shamers will be required to stay.

Story: Smoking ban set to begin

Story: After smoking, what's the next target?

I can see it. Families walking down to the beach, loaded down with their supplies for the day. The kids, at that age of not knowing when something is rude, point at the people huddled in the smoking area.

"What are they doing?" they'll ask. Whispers of "it's rude to point" and "keep walking" would be followed by brief explanations later of the dirty habit and to stay away from those people and that area.

Why even subject smokers to this? Why subject non-smokers to this?

If we are going to ban smoking on most of the beach, just do everyone a favor, even the smokers, and ban smoking on the beach altogether.

Poll: Should there be designated spots for smokers?

I don't say this as someone who is anti-smoker or anti-smoking. I am a former smoker and am glad I quit. But I don't preach that to anyone. My reasoning here is based on showing respect for each other and civility.

These partial bans just set up the potential for an ugly situation, even if it's just one in which one group is made to feel looked down upon in a very public way.

Share in the Only in Delaware conversation 24/7 on delawareonline. Contact Jeffrey Gentry at jgentry@delawareonline.com. Follow him on Twitter: @jeffreygentry

Appeal Targets DNREC Cleanup Plan For New Poultry Site

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

Citizen, regulator and business interests clashed anew Tuesday over plans to convert a shuttered pickle plant near Millsboro into a new kind of poultry factory, with neighbors and environmental groups urging an appeals board to block a needed cleanup deal for the site.

Protect Our Indian River and the Inland Bays Foundation asked the state Environmental Appeals Board to order reconsideration of a "brownfields" development plan for the Pinnacle Foods Group LLC site south of Millsboro. Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control officials approved a cleanup agreement in December, potentially clearing the way for Allen Harim Foods to move ahead with a purchase and redevelopment.

Allen Harim wants the 107-acre site – which once operated as a Vlasic Pickle factory – to process up to 2 million small "ginseng" chickens a week for buyers in South Korea and Korean and Asian markets in the United States.

The operation could eventually employ about 700, handling a new, locally raised 2-pound breed of stewing chicken and ushering in the first big change in decades for the Delmarva Peninsula poultry industry, where the broiler hen has ruled the factory farming roost for decades.

Residents in neighborhoods nearby have objected to the potential new, heavy traffic at the site, as well as the prospect for local disposal of millions of gallons of treated slaughter and food-processing wastewater each day. Critics have argued that a reopened plant would pour huge amounts of pollution into tributaries of the already-polluted inland bays.

"What you're going to hear is that there's a lot of evidence to suggests that there is contamination offsite" associated with past plant activities, said Kenneth T. Kristl, who directs the Environmental and Natural Resources Law Clinic at Widener University School of Law.

"The plan is wholly inadequate," Kristl said, arguing that the agreement fails to "deal with the contamination offsite," and fails to fully consider all concerns about pollution around the plant itself.

Protecting Our Indian River has separately asked Superior Court to overturn a Sussex County Board of Adjustment approval for a "potentially hazardous" activity on the site, arguing that the panel failed to consult with all relevant agencies on the proposal.

DNREC and representatives of Allen Harim argued before the environmental panel on Tuesday that state and company investigators thoroughly examined potential hazards.

Jeremy W. Homer, an attorney representing Allen Harim, said that environmental investigations had found the Pinnacle plant "is not a really very dirty site" to begin with.

"I want to make it clear that, although Allen Harim would not be responsible for contamination that's already there before the purchase, Pinnacle remains responsible," Homer said. The brownfield agreement "doesn't do away with the prior owner's responsibility."

Jay Meyer, a resident of neighborhood along an Indian River tributary opposite the plant, said that opponents plan to continue and widen the battle, including opposition to a needed wastewater treatment plant discharge permit.

"If they go through with approval on this, they're going to be dumping 12 million gallons of wastewater from cleaning chickens into the Indian River every week for the next 30 years," Meyer said. Our concern is what this is going to do to the environment."

Allen Harim has yet to file any application involving its wastewater needs. The Environmental Protection Agency and DNREC have listed Pinnacle's permit as one of the state's top three priorities for permit renewal this year.

Testimony continued this afternoon. Nancy Shevock, the board's chair, said the proceeding could be continued of arguments are unfinished before the end of the day. The board has 90 days to reach a decision.

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WILMINGTON JOURNAL NEWS EDITORIALS

Find Long-term Fix For Crime Evidence Outrage

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

Each headline about the incompetence and carelessness in the state Medical Examiner's Office brings shudders to the public as well as a sinking feeling about the Delaware justice system's reliability.

The state faces a massive cleanup job, one that could lead to reopening more than 420 cases.

In turn, those cases could open the jail doors for some put there with the help of evidence that is now questioned.

The scandal involves lapses in security and thefts of drug evidence in the medical examiner's office.

The Delaware Public Defender's Office has filed hundreds of motions in the last two weeks seeking to overturn old drug convictions. The first reaction is that of outrage. Yet we have to face a simple fact about the guarantees of our legal system. If people were convicted because of bad evidence, they were improperly convicted and should be set free.

However, that process is not automatic. It is the public defender's job to test all of those claims of improper evidence. It is unlikely that every prisoner named in the public defender's motions will walk away free. It is the court's job to weigh those claims against what can be proven and what cannot be proven.

Story: Public defender seeks 9,500 drug conviction reversals

It will be a long, hard and expensive route, but it is one the state is compelled to follow.

The public will rightly be outraged by this development; however, that outrage should not interfere with the process.

Public outrage, though, should be channeled toward a solution.

Despite all of the television shows about the near magic of crime laboratories in this country, the reality is far less impressive. The crime lab industry, if you will, has been hit time after time by scandals of incompetence, bureaucratic blundering and outright corruption.

State after state has been hit scandals of lost evidence, corrupt practices and outright incompetency. In 2009, a federal study commission called the situation a disgrace.

When the report came out, there was no national certification or standardization of what labs do and how they should handle evidence. None exists today.

Delaware, for example, splits drug and blood testing duties among a number of agencies, including the Medical Examiner's Office and the State Police. Outside labs are used in some cases, but there is no uniform system of evaluating and guarding evidence.

Putting all of these functions under one agency would streamline the process and make it more effective. At the same time, Delaware should adopt the top-tier standards and practices so that this state's evidence chain is considered beyond question.

This will disrupt current practices and upset some organization charts. Change is always difficult. But the process should be thought through and a good plan should be developed. Then the right amount of political will should be applied to get the job done.

Why Just Being A Veteran Won't Get You Elected These Days

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

Sen. Mark Pryor, the embattled Democratic incumbent in Arkansas, made a serious gaffe in March when he questioned Republican opponent Tom Cotton's reliance on military service as a campaign theme.

While praising the congressman for serving, Pryor told a TV interviewer that he didn't consider Cotton's military record in Iraq and Afghanistan a special credential. "I think that's part of that sense of entitlement that he gives off," Pryor said. "Almost like, 'I served my country, let me into the Senate.'"

For Cotton, who turned 37 on Tuesday, it was a gimme: He filmed a playful ad with his Army drill sergeant responding to the "entitlement" charge. "Did I say 'At ease,' Cotton?" the sergeant barks.

The ad went viral. But, surprisingly, it seems not to have helped Cotton's campaign.

A New York Times Upshot/Kaiser Family Foundation poll last month before the ad was released showed Pryor with a 10-point lead over Cotton. An NBC News-Marist poll, released Monday, shows Pryor with an 11-point lead. A Pryor win is by no means certain, but the fact that the Democrat is even in contention in a state where President Obama's approval rating is just 33 percent suggests that Cotton's military record is no magic bullet.

In a series of ads done by and for Cotton, the former Army Ranger's military career is the centerpiece of his Senate candidacy – and yet that doesn't seem to be helping him, even though his opponent may be the most vulnerable Senate Democrat in the country.

It's not just Arkansas: America loves its 2.8 million "heroes" who served in uniform since 9/11, but only 17 veterans of Iraq or Afghanistan are in Congress, according to Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. That includes John Walsh, a Montana Democrat who was appointed to his Senate seat and will have difficulty winning election in the fall.

Of the 17 (14 Republicans and three Democrats), few have campaigned primarily on their service. "These are just not issues that are dominating in the polls right now, on either side," said Jon Soltz, the head of VoteVets, which promotes the election of progressive veterans.

In 2006 and 2008, Democrats had some success running anti-war vets such as Patrick Murphy, Chris Carney and Joe Sestak, but they later lost races. And, of the Republicans elected, many have been guardsmen and reservists who had held or run for lower offices before; they tend to have strong political connections and aren't campaigning primarily on their war records.

Military service has never been a guarantee of electoral success, of course. Bill Clinton, who didn't serve, defeated two celebrated combat veterans. George W. Bush beat two opponents who, unlike him, had served in Vietnam.

But now the wars that dominated the national dialogue for a decade have faded in relevance. A Gallup poll in February found that 49 percent of Americans thought U.S. involvement in Afghanistan was a mistake (48 percent said it was not). A majority of Americans long ago decided that the war in Iraq was a mistake. Also, a Pew poll last year found isolationist sentiment running at a 50-year high, with Americans, by 52 percent to 38 percent, saying the United States should "mind its own business internationally."

Cotton, a product of Harvard and its Law School, used his military service to distinguish himself in 2012 and win a GOP House primary. He followed the same script this time but support for his military-themed campaign seems to have hit a ceiling.

In November, he released an ad showing photos of him in Army fatigues posing with military hardware while his mother gave the voice-over: "After Harvard, he gave up a great career to volunteer for the Army. They offered to make him a military lawyer but Tom insisted on the infantry."

Last month, there was the drill sergeant ad. Now, a group called the Government Integrity Fund is blanketing Arkansas with more martial imagery and photos of Cotton in camouflage. "A tour in Baghdad, another north of Tora Bora," says one. "For his combat service, Cotton was awarded the Bronze Star. Now, Tom Cotton's ready to serve his country again, to fight Obamacare, bailouts and runaway spending."

Cotton keeps up the theme, going to the House floor last week to discuss a "couple of lessons I learned in the Army," including the admonition to "move to the sound of gunfire."

But Arkansans, it appears, are already well aware of Cotton's Army career. Now they want to know what he has done as a civilian.

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Teaching Young People About Brown V. Board's Legacy

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

Whenever an anniversary of a major milestone is celebrated, some might ask what changed since the last one. So it is with the 60th anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education case, decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1954, which turns 60 Saturday.

Unfortunately, recent events call for more awareness of the nation's racist past but likewise furnish an opportunity for education and for training the current generation on Brown's legacy.

One of the important lessons of the Brown v. Board case and its successor is that people matter. Not only were the attorneys like Thurgood Marshall, Charles Hamilton Houston, Robert Carter, and Jack Greenberg critical for the national strategy of attacking school segregation, but so too were those lawyers and plaintiffs fighting segregation in individual states.

In Delaware, Louis Redding led the fight to desegregate schools through the Brown rulings and the state's own court battle in the same area, Evans v. Buchanan.

Another point emanating from the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in the Brown v. Board of Education case is that the theory of how American national

government works is often at odds with the reality, especially when it comes to the checks-and-balances

system. For example, Article VI of the Constitution contains the supremacy clause, and along with the procedure of judicial review one might assume that the Supreme Court's holding on a major legal matter is the last word. Perhaps more than any other area in the 20th century, the post-Brown experience vividly demonstrated the folly of that assumption.

For if the original Brown v. Board of Education case possessed the independent influence it is often credited with, there would have been no need for a Brown v. Board of Education II case nor the executive branch actions taken to enforce desegregation efforts.

The departmentalist view of government authority has similarly fostered contemporary challenges to court rulings dealing with abortion and health care among other areas.

Defined in broad terms, desegregation has taken a step back due to recent court rulings.

First, the 2013 Supreme Court decision in Shelby County v. Holder struck down a key provision of the Voting Rights Act despite clear evidence that some state voting laws continue to require federal scrutiny to prevent discrimination.

Second, the Supreme Court's 2014 ruling in the Michigan affirmative action case means that states can ban diversity plans from higher education admission formulas.

Third, a plethora of states have attempted to unreasonably tighten voter identification procedures in order to negatively affect turnout, a tactic thankfully rejected by a court in Pennsylvania.

Taking steps to ensure the positive legacy of the Brown v. Board of Education ruling involves individuals, groups and government itself.

The local school board is the place to begin in that parents should make sure schools fully practice integration and resources are equal for all within the district. When there is disparity between school districts in terms of resources, there must be recognition and state action to alleviate the condition. Citizens must be aware who they elect to statewide positions will help mold the approach to education for the next generation.

Finally, local and state government must support efforts to equalize educational opportunities for persons of all races and ethnic backgrounds, not only because it is the law but because it is the best approach for students.

Making Brown v. Board of Education relevant to the current generation of youth will not only remind us of the historical principle it rejected – separate but equal – but will imbue students with the tools to scrutinize efforts to dismantle the gains which Brown wrought.

Dr. Samuel B. Hoff is George Washington Distinguished Professor of History and Political Science and Law Studies Director at Delaware State University. He served as Chair of the Dover Human Relations Commission for five years.

Climate 'Sustainability' Is More Faith Than Science

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 13, 2014

Those who adhere to the notion that it is incumbent on the current generation to "conserve" resources believe only they can divine the needs and wants of future generations. Divine is the proper word to use because the green movement is religious in its fever to promote sustainability.

The word sustainability means whatever the user wishes it to mean. Thus, it is a word without any meaning at all. It is exactly the sort of word needed to achieve Orwellian control of people; in order to coerce them to believe 2 + 2, really does equal 5.

To enforce compliance with the ideology, anyone who fails to adhere to sustainability doctrine is immediately labeled a denier, a skeptic, a "flat-earther" or worse. Public ridicule follows, with attempts to demonize and marginalize opposition, to what amounts to a Green God.

Companies are so frightened by the specter of protests; they now have "sustainability officers," who genuflect at the altar of the deity, without understanding they are worshipping, not promoting science.

The intermediate goal of sustainability proponents is a reduction in the use of energy, but reality will soon catch up with the notion most people want to consume less energy. Shockingly, most people want plentiful, reliable, affordable energy, and the jobs that accompany it. They certainly do not want the promise of subsidized "green jobs" that never materialize, or the destruction of unsubsidized jobs elsewhere in the economy due to the rising cost of reliable energy.

On April 10, at a Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing on grid reliability, U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski made the statement, "Eighty-nine percent of the coal electricity capacity that is due to go offline was utilized as backup to meet the demand this winter." The premature closure of these coal-fired power plants because of questionable EPA air quality regulations will cause electricity prices to "skyrocket," as predicted by candidate Barack Obama before he became president.

As a consequence, available supply will not meet demand. This will lead to brownouts, intermittent electricity supply and potentially catastrophic grid failure. These are the inevitable consequences of a deeply flawed energy policy and an EPA responsive to those who tout sustainability. The real question is how much will citizens needlessly suffer before they elect new leadership to chart a course leading to real energy independence?

At its core, the goal of sustainability proponents is not about less energy consumption; it is about reducing the number of people on planet Earth. This is due to their belief the resources of the Earth are scarce, and therefore access to them must be limited, and their use equalized. Limitations on the amount of carbon dioxide produced, the use of water, the amount of particulate matter in the atmosphere, which in the U.S. is less than nature intended, are just the first steps in the process toward total control of individuals.

If any society wants less people (a questionable goal on the surface), its populace needs access to affordable energy to create affluence. The greater the likelihood a child survives to adulthood and the more mechanized becomes agriculture, the fewer children born.

Japan, the U.S. and Western Europe are barely replacing their population. Except for immigration, the U.S. and Western Europe's populations are shrinking. The nation of Japan, with little immigration, is hosting parties where young adults can meet each other, in an effort to encourage marriage and childbirth, because the population is in decline.

Society does not need a word without meaning. It needs a robust economy in order to promote peace and prosperity. Sooner or later this reality is going to hit home, and the tyranny of the minority will come to an abrupt end. For those who are unemployed or underemployed, it cannot happen soon enough.

John Nichols, a Middletown resident, advocates for science-based solutions to meet complex energy needs.