

Sent: Thu, 15 May 2014 06:13:56 -0400

From: Bulletin Intelligence <vp@bulletinintelligence.com>

To: "Cerde, Jose" <jose_cerde@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>, "Cerde, Jose" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=jose_cerde>, "Feldman, Stefanie G." </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=stefanie_g_feldman1>_ _

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>, membersovpvpmlaide@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

FOIA-6

/cn=recipients/cn=davidc.lienemann27685035">, "Tejeda, Jose" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=josetejeda55772522">, "Kaye, Melanie" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=melanie_a_kaye">, "Escudero, Adrian V." </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=adrianv.escudero11120257">, "Hill, Patricia" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=hill, patricia.j.6b5">, "Zikusoka, David N." </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=davidn.zikusoka74383180">, "Edwards, Hannah E." </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=edwards, hannah.e.bc9">, "Freeman, Gary" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=freeman, gary.d.653">, "Hertz, Jessica R." </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=hertz, jessica.r.562">, "Murray, Shailagh" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=shailagh_murray">, "Berner, Katherine" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=berner, katherine.k.f0e">, "Lysaght, Patrick J" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=whca_13193785c4">, "Schultz, Gregory" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=schultz, gregory.c.084">, "Zeigler-Brown, Cortez" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=zeigler-brown, cortez.r.075">, "Donley, Julia M" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=whca_132187096e">, "McNellis, Kerry" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=kerry_j_mcnellis1">, "Hornbrook, Alex" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=alexhornbrook51765131">, "Picos, Francisco" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=picos, francisco.c.412">, "Pietranton, Kelsey" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=pietranton, kelsey.l.c25">, "Clark, Katisha A" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=whca_13209188d2">, "Eaton, Sarah" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=sarahfletcher70386533">, "Hart, Elizabeth A." </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=hart, elizabeth.a.ffe">, "Joseph, Jeremy" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=joseph, jeremyc15">, "Richards, Kitty" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=richards, katherine.r.889">, "Carpenter, Michael" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=carpenter, michael.r.7b8">, "McNulty, Thomas P." </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=thomasp.mcnulty41242486">, "Flynn, John S" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=whca_1318036">, "Suber, Kellen C." </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=kellenc.suber67657165">, "Doody, Jillian" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=jilliandoody82705650">, "Baker, Sarah" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=baker, sarah.e.67f">, "Everett, Aaron" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=everett, aaron.r.492">, "Williams, Tonya" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=tonya_n_williams">, "Aidinoff, Marc" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=aidinoff, marc.f.f6c">, "Person, Fran" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=franperson76671426">, "Reddy, Vinay" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=reddy, vinay.c.ad8">, "Myers, Sam A." </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=sama.myers20454560">, "Trotter, Katherine K." </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=trotter, katherine.k.5b4">, "Woyak, Brian J." </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=brianj.woyak46686068">, "Barkoff, Kendra" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=kendra_a_barkoff">, "Rosenzweig, Dana" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=rosenzweig, dana.e.fc6">, "Nix, Sheila" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=nix, sheila.m.d38">, "Cloud, Donald" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=cloud, donald.w.359">, "Kurren, Amy" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=kurren, amy.m.791">, "Sullivan, Jacob" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=sullivan, jacob.j.6b6">, "Lyons, Jamie" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=lyons, jamie.e.ef0">, "Tennant, Thomas M" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=whca_13140822">, "Ruffner, Richard" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=ruffner, richard.b.7aa">, "Fromstein, Charles" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=fromstein, charles.a.b6e">, "Bernal, Anthony R." </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=anthonyr.bernal72748266">, "Lambros, Demetra" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=lambros, demetra.d.8b8">, "Prescott, Jeffrey" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=jeffrey_m_prescott">, "Bolduc, Chad" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=chad_m_bolduc">, "Lillard, Brooke" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group

/cn=recipients/cn=lillard, brooke m.ce1">, "Regoli, Elizabeth A" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=whca_13231520c2">, "Chung, Kathy" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=chung, kathy s.3c7">, "Russo, Bill" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=russo, william m.11f">, "Orbach Lachman, Sherry" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=orbach lachman, sherry e.5f8">, "Montoya, Jordan" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=montoya, jordan r.a75">

Subject: Vice Presidential News Clips for Thursday, May 15, 2014

[VPNewsClips140515.doc](#)

[VPNewsClips140515.pdf](#)

TO: THE VICE PRESIDENT AND STAFF

DATE: THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2014 -- 6:15 AM EDT

-----TODAY'S EDITION-----

BIDEN IN THE NEWS:

- + In Cleveland, Biden Urges Infrastructure Spending (AP)
- + In N.Y., Obama Calls For Spending To Improve Nation's Roads And Rails (WP)
- + Obama To Push Reforms To Infrastructure Permits (HILL)
- + Vice President Biden Follows Cleveland Transit Talk By Following Sweet Tooth (PLAINDLR)
- + VP Biden To Highlight Infrastructure Importance During Cleveland (WOIOTV)
- + Joe Biden Visits Cleveland To Promote Transportation Funding (WKSUFM)
- + Vice President Joe Biden in town (WMMSFM)
- + Landlord Joe Biden: Secret Service Signs New Deal On Rental Property (WT)
- + Operation American Spring To Hit D.C. To Oust Obama, Biden, Boehner, Holder (WT)
- + Hunter Biden's New Job At A Ukrainian Gas Company Is A Problem For U.S. Soft Power (WP)
- + Motorcycle Club Temporarily Leaves Property (AP)
- + Ukraine Gas Producer Appoints R. Hunter Biden To Board (NBCNEWS)
- + Why Did An Energy Firm With Big Assets In Ukraine Hire Joe Biden's Son? (YAHOO)
- + Vice President Joe Biden's Son Joins Ukraine Gas Company (BBC)
- + Hunter Biden Joins Board Of Ukraine Gas Company (UPI)
- + Lashing Out At Injustice In Delaware (LEWES)
- + Dr. Jill Biden To Headline Newsbabes Bash For Breast Cancer (WRCTV)
- + Second Lady Speaks To Graduating Owensboro Students (WAFBTV)
- + Jill Biden Challenges Owensboro College Grads (MADMESS)
- + Rahm Emanuel Votes Hillary Clinton Over Joe Biden For 2016 (ABCNEWS)

NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS:

- + Discrimination In The Military (NYT)
- + Keeping The Wireless Business Competitive (NYT)
- + No Slowdown In Unfair Marijuana Arrests (NYT)
- + The Kidnapping Of A Country (NYT)
- + The AIDS-Shaming Of Magic Johnson (NYT)
- + My State's Prettier Than Yours (NYT)
- + It's Now The Canadian Dream (NYT)
- + Still Tinkering (NYT)
- + Don't Force Google To 'Forget' (NYT)
- + New Bad Old Times For Guatemala? (NYT)
- + The Battle Of The Okinawans (NYT)
- + Hong Kong's Rising Cry (NYT)
- + Partisan Sabotage In The Senate Unplugs A Useful Bill (WP)
- + Montgomery County's School-funding Gimmickry Buys A Year Of Peace (WP)
- + MERS Is Still A Mystery Virus (WP)
- + America Should Not Soften Its Nuclear Demands Of Iran (WP)
- + Is China No. 1? (WP)

- + India Sees Hope In A Divisive Figure (WP)
- + Jill Abramson 'unexpectedly' Out At New York Times (WP)
- + Thomas Piketty Identifies An Important Ill Of Capitalism But Not Its Cure (WP)
- + The Two GOP Establishments (WP)
- + The Effect Of One-party Rule (WP)
- + Chris Christie Plays The Blame Game (WP)

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES:

- + Carey's Police Meddling Will Cost Dover \$300,000 (WILNJ)
- + Bill Would Permit Possession Of Heroin Overdose Drug (WILNJ)
- + Smyrna Receives Sparkling Start (WILNJ)
- + NAACP Remarks 'Not Being Racist,' Wilson Says (WILNJ)
- + Medical Examiner Callery 'Absent' Much Of Time (WILNJ)
- + Medimmune, Incyte Partner In Drug Trial (WILNJ)
- + Coons: Pfizer-AZ Raises Antitrust Concerns (WILNJ)
- + Broken Parts Extend Salem Nuclear Reactor Shutdown (WILNJ)
- + Newark Co-op Joins National Network (WILNJ)
- + Chobani Incorporates In Delaware, Sparking IPO Talk (WILNJ)
- + NAACP Remarks 'Not Being Racist,' Wilson Says (WILNJ)

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL EDITORIALS:

- + Revised Forensic Division Welcome (WILNJ)
 - + A Casino Bailout Would Equal A Fisker Bailout Every Year (WILNJ)
 - + Sussex County Council Should Not Switch Prayers (WILNJ)
 - + China Has 7 Million Graduates And No Jobs Available (WILNJ)
-

BIDEN IN THE NEWS:

IN CLEVELAND, BIDEN URGES INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING (AP)

Associated Press, May 15, 2014

CLEVELAND (AP) - President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden are traveling the country saying the nation needs to invest billions of federal dollars in highways and bridges, but some Ohio city officials are left to wonder: Where's the money to fix our streets?

Making the pitch Wednesday at a rail car repair shop in Cleveland, Biden said such investment is necessary for the United States to remain a pre-eminent economic force.

"Those in Congress who lack vision say we can't afford to make these investments," he said. "How can we not afford to make these investments?"

He said one study shows the U.S. needs \$3.6 trillion in infrastructure investment by 2020 but spends only 1 percent of its gross domestic product on infrastructure and ranks 18th in the world for the quality of its roads.

Biden was in Cleveland to highlight federal investment in a \$17.5 million new light rail station that will open in 2015. The president was in New York City, where the federal government has provided a \$1.6 billion loan to rebuild the Tappan Zee Bridge. Their message is that more money needs to be spent on infrastructure.

In response, Republican National Committee spokesman Michael Short issued a statement Wednesday that said the Obama administration should stop what he called its obstruction of the Keystone XL pipeline, "which has bipartisan support and would create good-paying Ohio jobs." City officials in Ohio wish that a small share of those billions would trickle down to them for maintenance. Some Ohio cities are operating on the thinnest of margins as costs rise, tax receipts fall and state funding is reduced. Federal and state governments pay the lion's share of big road and interstate projects, but routine maintenance of surface streets is typically left to cities to pay. Police and firefighters must continue to be paid, so budget items like street resurfacing are the first to be trimmed, said Paul Barnett, public works manager for the city of Akron.

Akron will spend about \$2 million on street resurfacing this year but needs to spend at least \$8

million to keep pace, Barnett said. The city will resurface only 11 of its 2,400 lane miles this year. "It's OK if you plan on resurfacing your streets once every 30 years," he said. The booming city of Columbus will spend \$33.5 million on street resurfacing this year. Cleveland will spend \$4.4 million. Toledo has upped its resurfacing budget to \$1 million compared with \$600,000 in 2013.

Still, Columbus is far from immune from the scourge of tire-crunching potholes that appeared like dandelions this spring thanks to Ohio's weather extremes, heavy rains and the asphalt-chewing phenomenon of freeze-thaw cycles. Bill Tilton, assistant director of public service for Columbus, said his crews have already repaired 105,000 potholes this year compared with 117,000 for all of 2013.

Toledo bought a machine so workers could replace entire stretches of pothole-pocked roadway, said Dave Welch, Toledo's commissioner of streets, bridges and harbor. "There are roads that are pothole patch after pothole patch," Welch said.

The inability to properly maintain streets is a problem in smaller cities as well. In Euclid, a suburb east of Cleveland that stretches along Lake Erie, Mayor Bill Cervenik said the federal government needs to step in.

"I certainly believe the federal government has to take a look at communities like ours and understand the problems we're having and put together policies that help those communities that are built and aging and fix them," Cervenik said.

Copyright 2014 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

IN N.Y., OBAMA CALLS FOR SPENDING TO IMPROVE NATION'S ROADS AND RAILS (WP)

By Scott Wilson

Washington Post, May 15, 2014

TARRYTOWN, N.Y. - President Obama called on Congress Wednesday to act swiftly to approve billions of dollars in funding for the nation's aging roads, bridges and rail systems, warning that a failure to do so may cost the economy 700,000 jobs.

Speaking on the banks of the Hudson River, Obama said no sector suffered more in the recession than the construction industry, arguing that new public works projects would help put many back to work and attract businesses deciding whether to locate in the United States or overseas.

"Building a world-class transportation system is one of the reasons America became an economic superpower in the first place," Obama said, noting the decline in federal investment in recent years as China and other developing countries increase their spending. "First-class infrastructure attracts first-class jobs."

The event was held at the Washington Irving Boat Club in the shadow of the Tappan Zee Bridge, its trademark traffic crawling across the span over the Hudson north of Manhattan. The venue was chosen to highlight a federal loan program that helps states replace aging roads and bridges, such as the Tappan Zee, now nearly six decades old and carrying far more traffic than originally intended.

Obama's remarks are the most public in a series of appearances that senior administration officials are making this week to highlight the need for new spending on languishing projects for highways, airports and more. Obama again argued that improving transportation services is a key to short-term job growth and long-term economic success. He was joined by New York Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo (D), who thanked the administration for the \$1.6 billion federal loan that is helping to finance the construction of the replacement for the Tappan Zee Bridge.

"This is a bridge from gridlock to bipartisanship; this is a bridge from paralysis to progress; and this is a bridge from yesterday to tomorrow," Cuomo said as cranes being used to raise the new bridge across the Hudson idled behind him on a breezy day.

As the mid-term elections approach, Democrats hope to use the issue of transportation funding to highlight Republican recalcitrance in Congress. In New York, Obama also announced a series of bureaucratic steps to better coordinate the federal permitting process, hoping to speed the time it takes to get transportation projects approved for construction.

Administration officials say Republicans and Democrats have largely agreed about spending on transportation services in the past, given the value such government projects have to the private-sector economy. But administration officials say that unless Congress approves new spending

soon, the federal Highway Trust Fund will run out of money this summer.

"If they don't act by the end of the summer, federal funding for transportation projects will run out," Obama said of Congress, placing the preponderance of blame on Republicans. "Instead of putting more workers back on the job," Obama said, "they are putting those jobs at risk."

The administration says that the fund's bankruptcy would delay more than 100,000 road projects, more than 5,000 transit projects and put at risk 700,000 construction jobs. During his speech, Obama said that number was roughly the population of Tampa.

Michael Steel, a spokesman for House Speaker John A. Boehner (R-Ohio), questioned Obama's commitment to public works spending and job creation and cited the administration's more than five-year deliberation over whether to build an oil pipeline from Canada to Nebraska for eventual delivery to the Gulf Coast. "An infrastructure for the 21st century is going to require energy, and plenty of it," Steel said. "So why is the White House blocking the Keystone pipeline and the tens of thousands of American jobs it would create?"

The White House sent the Grow America Act, a broad transportation measure that includes guidelines for allowing new toll highways, to Congress this spring. A bipartisan group of senators is working on its own long-term transportation plan.

Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, who accompanied Obama to New York, told reporters this week that short-term spending measures - the divided Congress's preferred way to fund the government in recent years - have put off the planning and financing of long-range projects essential to solving, rather than just managing, the nation's growing transportation problems.

Those include bridges coming to the end of their planned use, including the Tappan Zee, and overburdened airports, rail systems and roads.

By 2050, Foxx said, the country's transportation system will need to move 100 million new people and 14 billion additional tons of freight, nearly twice the current level. The administration, drawing on calculations made by the American Society of Civil Engineers, estimates that \$3.6 trillion in spending will be needed to sufficiently address the mounting infrastructure problems by the end of the decade.

Foxx said the Senate, controlled by Democrats, has shown support for the measure. But the Republican-led House poses a larger challenge, and Foxx said the administration has much work to do if the measure is to succeed. "I have spent a lot of time and a lot of shoe leather on both ends of Capitol Hill, and what I can tell you is, is that people on both sides of the aisle want to see something get done," he said. "But we're going to have to work at it, and this is going to be a nine-inning game. It's not going to get solved in the first inning."

As Obama visited the iconic New York bridge, Vice President Biden traveled to Cleveland to make a similar push for transportation spending.

While in New York, Obama will do some fundraising for the Democratic Party in Manhattan, and Thursday, he will mark the ceremonial opening of the National Sept. 11 Memorial and Museum in Lower Manhattan.

OBAMA TO PUSH REFORMS TO INFRASTRUCTURE PERMITS (HILL)

By Justin Sink

The Hill, May 15, 2014

President Obama will announce a new plan to accelerate and expand federal permitting in a bid to expedite major infrastructure projects during a speech at the Tappan Zee bridge outside New York City on Wednesday.

Under the new permitting guidelines, departments within the administration will be required to improve coordination and reduce the amount of time the government takes to resolve interagency disputes. The new rules will also ask federal agencies to undertake synchronized, simultaneous reviews of projects.

That means one environmental analysis could satisfy requirements for multiple agencies involved in project construction, rather than requiring contractors to redo work.

The administration will also expand the use of an online "dashboard" that serves as a central clearinghouse for the permitting process across the government. And the administration is setting up an "improvement center" dedicated to implementing the reforms within each federal agency.

"The new, government-wide plan will build on efforts the Administration has taken over the past three years to cut through red tape and expedite permitting decisions, while protecting our

communities and the environment," a White House official said.

In total, the White House says, the president will implement 15 specific reforms and nearly 100 near and long-term milestones designed to improve efficiency in the permitting process.

Officials say the Tappan Zee Bridge, which is being replaced in a \$3.9 billion construction project aided by a \$1.9 billion federal loan, is an ideal example of how the streamlined process can save time and money.

"Federal agencies completed the permitting and review in 1.5 years for a process that might otherwise take 3-5 years," a White House official said.

The president is also expected to push lawmakers to take action to replenish the Highway Trust Fund, which is set to become insolvent by the end of this summer.

Obama's remarks will "highlight the consequences of inaction," according to the White House official, with Obama to stress that a failure to replenish the fund would put at risk more than 112,000 ongoing highway and 5,600 transit projects as well as nearly 700,000 jobs.

The president's proposal would address the shortfall and fund an additional \$87 billion in repairs to bridges and transit systems. But Republicans have questioned how to pay for the president's proposal.

Still, the White House believes Obama can rally both legislative and political momentum around the issue. In his remarks, Obama is expected to hit House Republicans on budget bills that would cut funding for highway repairs and mass transit expansion.

"A look at the House Republican approach to infrastructure shows the same top down approach to the economy that isn't good for the middle class or jobs," the official said.

Obama's trip is the latest in a series of events this week focusing on infrastructure. On Tuesday, Vice President Biden travelled to St. Louis to highlight a \$380 million renovation of the city's iconic Gateway Arch. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx appeared at the daily White House press briefing on Monday to push for the administration's transportation bill.

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN FOLLOWS CLEVELAND TRANSIT TALK BY FOLLOWING SWEET TOOTH (PLAINDLR)

Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 15, 2014

CLEVELAND, Ohio - Vice President Joe Biden followed his well-known sweet tooth to Little Italy on Wednesday after speaking at the RTA's rail shop on the need for investment in infrastructure.

He said he planned to talk with business and community leaders about the impact of the renovation of the Cedar-University and Little Italy-University Circle rapid transit stations. But the meeting place, Presti's Bakery on Mayfield Road, iced the cake with an opportunity for some retail politics.

Biden arrived at the cafe around 3:45 p.m., via Coltman Road, in a motorcycle-escorted motorcade of about a dozen vehicles.

He greeted the afternoon crowd that was swelled by neighborhood residents who pursued the caravan, and worked his way around the room past the counter to a corner table to meet with business and community leaders.

He kissed Millie Morgan, who grew up in the neighborhood, and told her niece, Carmeline Mangano Worley, that her smile would light up the room. He posed for pictures, patted backs and shook hands.

"If you're not supposed to be here, you're in trouble now," he told Dan Brennan, president of the Little Italy Redevelopment Corporation, as cameras clicked around them.

Biden ordered tiramisu, cannoli and coffee before getting to business with Brennan; Steve Standley, chief administrative officer of University Hospitals; Jill Snyder, executive director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, and architect and local resident Steve Bucchieri.

"Tell me about what's going on," he said. "Economic growth - is this new rail station having an impact on it?"

"This is huge," Standley said.

He said initiatives that started with the Euclid Corridor project, spearheaded by UH, the Cleveland Clinic and Case Western Reserve University, had led to new housing, retail and commercial development in the area.

In his visits to other parts of the country, he said, "They're talking about the Cleveland model now."

VP BIDEN TO HIGHLIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE IMPORTANCE DURING CLEVELAND
(WOIO-TV)

WOIO-TV Cleveland, May 15, 2014

CLEVELAND, OH (WOIO) -

Vice President Joe Biden is coming to Cleveland to meet with city leaders this afternoon.

VP Biden is expected to highlight the federal funds used to rebuild the RTA rapid station in the Little Italy neighborhood.

His remarks are slated to start at 1:30 p.m. at the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority Rail Complex at the corner of East 73rd Street and Grand Avenue.

JOE BIDEN VISITS CLEVELAND TO PROMOTE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING (WKSUFM)

WKSU-FM Kent (OH), May 15, 2014

Joe Biden visits Cleveland to promote transportation funding

Vice President Joe Biden is in Cleveland today drawing attention to the White House's plans for transportation funding.

The administration says two-thirds of the nation's roadways are in "less than good" condition, and one in four bridges require significant repairs.

Biden will be speaking at the site of a new rapids station scheduled to open next year in Cleveland's Little Italy neighborhood.

Biden and President Obama are pushing for passage of a new transportation bill, and extension of stimulus funds for transportation projects in place since 2009.

The current highway bill expires Sept. 30. The Highway Trust Fund, which provides funding, could run short in August.

Storm damage closes roads, schools

Seven roads will remain closed indefinitely in Medina County following Monday's storms. Two roads in Akron remain closed, including a section of Bath Road that was washed out by the heavy rains.

Storm damage closed schools across the region yesterday. Most have reopened. Holy Family school in Stow will remain closed through Monday, suffering an estimated \$3 million in water damage.

The National Weather Service has confirmed that a tornado did touch down Monday night in Lorain County.

The twister spun through a field in Eaton Township and caused partial damage to one home.

Dick Goddard rescued from flooded car

Longtime Cleveland TV meteorologist Dick Goddard had to be rescued after rising water swamped his car on a highway exit ramp this week.

The eighty-three-year-old Goddard says he thought he was going to "buy the farm" when water flooded his car on an I-71 exit south of Cleveland during heavy rain Monday night.

Goddard was trapped for about 45 minutes before firefighters in a rubber boat reached his car, broke the window and pulled him out. He was treated for hypothermia.

Ohio Senate ponders changes to social services relief

The director of a county Jobs and Family Services office in southeast Ohio says a proposal before the Legislature should be more focused on addressing the basic needs of the state's residents.

Jack Frech of Athens County says funding for public programs that provide food and cash assistance to Ohioans in need have been reduced by millions. He made the comments in testimony to a Senate committee Wednesday.

The panel is examining a bill that would create an office within the state's social services agency to revise incentives for public assistance programs and coordinate employment services among the programs.

A spokesman for the state's Department of Jobs and Family Services said the programs help with residents' immediate needs and put them on a path out of poverty.

Ohio's high court upholds death penalty for Canton killer

The Ohio Supreme Court has upheld the death sentence of a man who stabbed his young children to death and fatally shot his former mother-in-law in 2009.

In a 6-1 decision Wednesday, the court rejected arguments from James Mammone's attorneys that graphic crime-scene photos were inflammatory and should never be shown to jurors.

Mammone also argued that publicity ruined his chances for a fair trial in Canton and that two jurors who said they supported the death penalty should have been removed. Two months after his wife divorced him, Mammone stabbed his 5-year-old daughter and 3-year-old son to death as they were strapped in their car seats in Canton in northeastern Ohio. He then went to the home of his ex-wife's mother, whom he severely beat and shot twice.

VICE PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN IN TOWN (WMMSFM)

WMMS-FM Cleveland, May 15, 2014

(Cleveland)- Cleveland is playing host to Vice President Joe Biden.

The Vice President will visit the under-construction RTA station at East 120th Street and Mayfield Road this afternoon to press Congress for more federal infrastructure funding.

The White House wants a measure that would meet the nation's road, rail and bridge repair plans for the next decade.

Get breaking news sent to your mobile phone. Text "news" to 21095.

(Copyright 2014 Clear Channel, all rights reserved.)

LANDLORD JOE BIDEN: SECRET SERVICE SIGNS NEW DEAL ON RENTAL PROPERTY (WT)

By Jim McElhatton

Washington Times, May 15, 2014

Landlord Joe Biden will keep collecting rent checks from the agency that protects his life thanks to another contract extension that allows Secret Service agents to continue staying in a cottage on his Delaware property.

The latest extension, signed on May 6, boosts the overall value of the contract to more than \$100,000 since the agency first started paying Mr. Biden a few years ago.

The arrangement, first reported by The Washington Times, puts Mr. Biden in the unusual position of being both a sitting vice president and a vendor for the federal government at the same time.

The deal has come under scrutiny from taxpayer watchdogs who question why Mr. Biden couldn't let the Secret Service stay on his property without paying.

But the Secret Service has said the cottage is a rental property so the agency pays rent. And Mr. Biden's office has said the cottage was existing rental property at the time the Secret Service signed its lease.

Mr. Biden and his wife reported \$19,022 in rental income on their cottage property in their joint tax return for 2013.

OPERATION AMERICAN SPRING TO HIT D.C. TO OUST OBAMA, BIDEN, BOEHNER, HOLDER (WT)

By Cheryl K. Chumley

Washington Times, May 15, 2014

A group of self-described revolutionary-style patriots with a million mobilized militia members are heading to downtown Washington, D.C., this week to bring a simple message to political leadership, from President Obama to House Speaker John Boehner: Get out.

They're called the Operation American Spring - and they're vowing to oust the likes of Mr. Obama, Mr. Boehner, Attorney General Eric Holder, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, Sen. Mitch McConnell, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Raw Story reported.

"We are calling for [their] removal ... as a start toward constitutional restoration," said retired Army Col. Harry Riley, the leader of the group, Raw Story reported. "They have all abandoned the U.S. Constitution, are unworthy to be retained in a position that calls for servant status."

The aim of the group, too, is to influence those politicians who aren't targeted for ouster to "sponsor and pass very constitutionally crafted state legislation to dissolve the size, powers, scope and spending of the U.S. government by two-thirds," the media outlet reported.

The group expects between 10 million and 30 million similarly thinking Americans to meet them in the capital on Friday for a rally that's being billed as a sort of "Arab Spring" for Americans.

Meanwhile, the group is holding another event on the same day in Bunkerville, Nev., near cattle rancher Cliven Bundy's property and in support of his stand-off with the Bureau of Land Management over grazing fees.

The Friday event was promoted by Tea Party Nation.

Mr. Riley said he hopes the event will go forward peaceably, but that so far, peaceful protests haven't brought citizens much luck. He also said that more than 1 million militia members have already mobilized for the event - and that projections of 10 million to attend aren't pie in the sky. "For more than five years, 'we the people' have been writing, calling, faxing Congress, the media, screaming in town halls, marching, rallying, demonstrating, petitioning, all to no avail," he said, Raw Story reported. "Every branch of government looks at 'we the people' whom they have taken an oath to serve, as 'pests,' interfering with their political agenda, cramping their self-serving, greedy agendas. We have no faith in the ballot box any longer, as many believe this sacred secret box has been compromised.

HUNTER BIDEN'S NEW JOB AT A UKRAINIAN GAS COMPANY IS A PROBLEM FOR U.S. SOFT POWER (WP)

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

Vice President-elect, Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del., left, stands with his son Hunter during a re-enactment of the Senate oath ceremony, Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2009, in the Old Senate Chamber on Capitol Hill in Washington. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

Around the world, there is a major perception that U.S. foreign policy is dictated by a thirst for oil and gas. For example, a 2002 Pew Research poll found that 75 percent of French respondents felt that the United States-led invasion of Iraq was a simple ruse to gain control of Iraqi oil. And that isn't just what the "cheese-eating surrender monkeys" think either: Establishment figures in the United States such as Sen. John McCain and former Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan have both made statements that suggest they buy into it, too.

Such a perception is probably an oversimplification, but there is clearly some truth to the idea. And whether it is true or not, perceptions clearly matter when it comes to international relations.

Think about that when you read the announcement that Vice President Biden's son, Hunter Biden, has accepted a position on the board at Ukraine's largest private gas firm. According to a news release posted Tuesday, the vice president's son would join the board of Burisma Holdings. The Yale-educated lawyer would be in charge of the company's legal unit, the release said.

Here's a small selection of the responses to the news, which ranged from the incredulous to the resigned:

While the general public appeared nonplussed, the official response has been muted. "Hunter Biden is a private citizen and a lawyer," White House spokesperson Kendra Barkoff told The Post. "The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

Meanwhile, an ethics watchdog argued that it probably wasn't that big of a deal. "It can't be that because your dad is the vice president, you can't do anything," Melanie Sloan, executive director of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, told Reuters.

It's true that there are no rules against Hunter Biden taking this position. And it's (fairly) safe to assume that his appointment was not part of a broader, U.S.-led plot to oust Moscow-backed Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich and steal all of Ukraine's gas. However, whatever the practical reality of this posting, its symbolic nature makes it look very bad.

For one thing, while Burisma is clearly trying to portray itself (perhaps genuinely) as an open, Western company, its ownership is more than a little murky. A 2012 investigation from Forbes Ukraine noted that registration documents from Ukraine and Cyprus indicated that Nikolay Zlochevsky, a former government minister and representative of Yanukovich's Party of Regions, was in control of the company. There was speculation from Ukrainian energy analysts that Biden's appointment may have been an attempt to avoid sanctions by other, bigger Yanukovich allies. It's also unclear why, exactly, Biden was hired: At Yahoo News, Olivier Knox and Meredith Shiner have speculated that the fact that so much of Burisma's permits are in Ukraine's troubled Dnieper-Donets Basin may play a role.

Then there's the broader problem: The appointment of the vice president's son to a Ukrainian oil board looks nepotistic at best, nefarious at worst. No matter how qualified Biden is, it ties into the idea that U.S. foreign policy is self-interested, and that's a narrative Vladimir Putin has pushed during Ukraine's crisis with references to Iraq and Libya. It clashes with the U.S. narrative that this is all about international law and human rights.

To be fair, Hunter Biden isn't the only person linked to politics on the board of Burisma: The Wall Street Journal reports that Devon Archer, the college roommate of John Kerry's stepson, has also joined, and on Wednesday, Ukrainian media reported that former Polish president Aleksander Kwasniewski would also join the board. It's an impressive crowd.

And Biden is certainly not the first politically-linked person to get a dubiously high-paying job on a board. As Mikhail Korchemkin of East European Gas Analysis pointed out to me, more than a few children of Russian politicians have ended up in executive positions in companies at the top of the Forbes 500 list, and China's "princelings" have a similar habit. Bringing big names in has obvious political advantages for companies and other rewards for the names - just ask Gerhard Schröder, the former chancellor of Germany, who sits on the board of the Nord Stream and catches flack for hugging Vladimir Putin, or Dominique Strauss Kahn, now on the board at a subsidiary of Rosneft, the Russian state oil giant where former secretary of state Donald L. Evans once turned down a role.

Still, you have to wonder how big the salary has to be to put U.S. soft power at risk like this. Pretty big, we'd imagine.

MOTORCYCLE CLUB TEMPORARILY LEAVES PROPERTY (AP)

Associated Press, May 15, 2014

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) - Officials say a motorcycle club has temporarily vacated a property in Wilmington that the Attorney General's office says is a criminal nuisance.

Attorney General Beau Biden and Wilmington Mayor Dennis Williams said in a press release that the Thunderguards Motorcycle Club agreed to leave property on Northeast Boulevard.

Biden says the property was closed on Wednesday. He says it will remain closed until a hearing to determine its permanent status is held.

Biden had claimed in a lawsuit last month that the site is the national clubhouse for the Thunderguards. The suit alleges that an adjacent parking lot and nearby storage units are used for criminal activity.

Wilmington officials say five homicides and several shootings have occurred on the property since 2006.

Copyright 2014 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

UKRAINE GAS PRODUCER APPOINTS R. HUNTER BIDEN TO BOARD (NBCNEWS)

NBC News, May 15, 2014

Ukraine's largest private gas producer announced on Tuesday that it added R. Hunter Biden - the son of U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden - to its board of directors.

In a statement on its website, Burisma Holdings said the younger Biden will be in charge of the company's legal unit, while providing support "among international organizations."

The release quoted Hunter Biden as saying 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."

David McNew / Getty Images, file

Vice-President Joe Biden and his son Hunter Biden walk in the Inaugural Parade January 20, 2009 in Washington, DC as Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th President of the United States.

Large corporations frequently appoint well-connected marquee names of both major U.S. political parties as directors. Yet corporate governance experts are critical of the process, which can be fraught with conflicts of interests and the appearance of favoritism.

The arrangement raised questions about the propriety of his appointment, given the tense political standoff between Russia and the West over the future status of Ukraine, where fighting has resulted in the deaths of dozens of soldiers and civilians. Natural gas has factored heavily in tensions between Russia and Ukraine, both of which have political leadership that's intertwined with their respective energy industries.

Until a few years ago, the younger Biden was a senior vice president for financial services giant MBNA-an arrangement that drew criticism during the 2008 elections for potential conflict of interests. As a senator, the elder Biden spearheaded legislation that would have affected MBNA's

business. Meanwhile, Vice President Biden has been a vocal supporter of a cross-border European natural gas pipeline.

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.

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 Rosemont 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.

WHY DID AN ENERGY FIRM WITH BIG ASSETS IN UKRAINE HIRE JOE BIDEN'S SON? (YAHOO)

By Olivier Knox And Meredith Shiner

Yahoo!, May 15, 2014

In the span of a few weeks, an energy firm little-known inside the United States added two members to its board of directors - scoring connections to Secretary of State John Kerry and Vice President Joe Biden in the bargain.

On April 22, Cyprus-based Burisma announced that financier Devon Archer had joined its board. Archer, who shared a room in college with Kerry's stepson, Christopher Heinz, served as national finance co-chair for the former senator's 2004 presidential campaign.

Then, on Monday, the firm announced that Biden's younger son, R. Hunter Biden, would join the board of directors.

Why would the company, which bills itself as Ukraine's largest private gas producer, need such powerful friends in Washington?

The answer might be the company's holdings in Ukraine. They include, according to the firm's website, permits to explore in the Dnieper-Donets Basin in the country's eastern regions, home to an armed pro-Russian separatist movement. They also include permits to explore in the Azov-Kuban Basin of the strategic Crimean peninsula, annexed earlier this year by Moscow.

It's not clear what will happen to energy firms, like Burisma, that aim to explore and exploit potential deposits in those areas. Neither the Archer nor the Biden announcement explicitly mentions the unrest, and it's not clear exactly when their discussions to join the board began. In an April 23 Q&A, the transcript of which appears on Burisma's website, Archer said he had been approached "a few months ago" about the opportunity to consult for the oil company. The announcement of his directorship came less than a month after the disputed vote in Crimea to rejoin Russia.

The White House and the vice president's office denied there was anything untoward about Biden's appointment.

"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," said President Barack Obama's press secretary, Jay Carney. "But I would refer you to the Vice President's office."

"Hunter Biden is a private citizen and a lawyer," the vice president's press secretary, Kendra Barkoff, said in a statement. "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." The person who answered the telephone at Biden's office in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday cheerfully declared that Biden was traveling, that his return date was unknown, and that his assistant was also out of pocket.

An email to Burisma's public relations department did not elicit a reply.

But Archer coyly acknowledged the potential benefits of having him on the board in the April 23 Q&A.

Question: "In the American media you are often linked to the immediate circle of the U.S. Secretary of State Mr. John Kerry and the Vice-president of the United States Mr. Joe Biden." Archer: "American journalists really think so (smiles). I do know them."

VICE PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN'S SON JOINS UKRAINE GAS COMPANY (BBC)

A review of the best commentary on and around the world...

By What In The World?, Pieces Of Global Opinion

BBC News, May 15, 2014

Burisma, a private oil and gas company in Ukraine, announced this week that it has appointed Hunter Biden, the youngest son of US Vice President Joe Biden, to its board of directors.

The company, founded in 2002, is controlled by a former energy official in the government of deposed Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich.

The move has raised some eyebrows in the US, given the Obama administration's attempts to manage the ongoing crisis in Ukraine.

"Joe Biden has been the White House's go-to guy during the Ukraine crisis, touring former Soviet republics and reassuring their concerned leaders," writes the National Journal's Marina Koren.

"And now, he's not the only Biden involved in the region."

She says that by appointing Hunter Biden head of its legal affairs unit, "Burisma is turning to US talent - and money and name recognition - for protection against Russia".

The younger Mr Biden isn't the only American with political ties to have recently joined Burisma's board. Devon Archer, a former senior advisor to current Secretary of State John Kerry's 2004 presidential campaign and a college roommate of Mr Kerry's stepson HJ Heinz, signed on in April. Mr Biden and Mr Archer are also managing partners at Rosemont Seneca Partners, a Washington, DC-based investment company.

Both Mr Biden and Mr Archer have not responded to requests from reporters for comment. In Burisma's press release announcing his hiring, Mr Biden says:

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.

All this could be explained simply as a foreign energy company looking to increase its visibility in the US and spur investment, writes the Federalist's Mollie Hemingway. State-controlled companies currently account for 90% of Ukraine's gas production, but this year Burisma became the nation's largest private producer.

Hemingway adds, however, that there may be another, less savoury possibility:

The most disturbing explanation is that the company is attempting to curry favour with the US government by enlisting the services of the close family friend and campaign bundler of the secretary of state and the son of the vice president. After all, Archer notes on one of his company's web pages that his firm's "relationship network creates opportunities for our portfolio companies which then compound to greater outcomes for all parties".

She concludes that this seems like a "clichéd movie plot": "a shady foreign oil company co-opts the vice president's son in order to capture lucrative foreign investment contracts".

The White House has emphasised that the vice president's son's new job will have no influence on US foreign policy.

"Hunter Biden is a private citizen and a lawyer," Kendra Barkoff, a spokeswoman for the vice president, told the Wall Street Journal. "The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

Vietnam
China's "brazen aggression" - By towing an oil rig into Vietnam's territorial waters in the East Sea, using water cannons and ramming Vietnamese Coast Guard vessels, writes Nam Thang in the Vietnam News, China has "seriously infringed on Vietnam's sovereignty, running counter to international law and practices and damaging the trust held by the world community".

"Why does China keep taking action detrimental to peace and stability in the East Sea?" he asks.

"The question needs to be answered because this is not the first time that China has committed acts that further complicate disputes in the area."

He calls China's territorial claims on the waters "groundless", and says that Vietnam is a "peace-loving nation", but it "will take all necessary and proper measures to defend its legitimate rights and benefits and safeguard its sovereignty".

Guatemala

A faltering democracy - When Guatemala imprisoned former President Efraín Ríos Montt for genocide last year, says Haverford College Prof Anita Isaacs, it represented a sign that the country's fragile democracy could be taking hold.

Within two weeks, however, Mr Montt's verdict was annulled, she writes in the New York Times, casting doubt in the independence of the country's judicial system.

Although the country's indigenous majority tried to push for greater rights and judicial independence, she says, the country's elite turned to blackmail, bribery and human rights violations to reassert their control. "Without a watchful eye from abroad," she says, the elites have ensured that "the unjust structures that serve their needs stay in place, even at the expense of rising unrest, polarization and violence". Israel

A just sentence for Ehud Olmert - On Tuesday Judge David Rozen sentenced former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to six years in prison for corruption. The Jerusalem Post's editors write that this "sent a message to all public officials that they should strive to be ethically irreproachable".

Although it's a "sad day" for the nation, they write, the sentence is "reassuring", as it shows no one is "above the law".

They conclude:

This should cause us both shame and pride - shame that such a senior, respected and popular politician could be corrupt; and pride because our law enforcement system did not balk at meting out the appropriate punishment. United Kingdom

Accentuate the positive for Scotland - UK Prime Minister David Cameron's strategy of granting more autonomy to Scotland in the hopes that it does not opt for full independence "has proven demonstrably unsuccessful", writes Bloomberg View's Mark Gilbert.

Although the pro-union side continues to lead in polls, he says, the gap is shrinking.

In order to keep Scotland in the fold, he writes, Mr Cameron "needs to stress what Scotland will gain from remaining in the UK rather than attempting to scare voters by banging on about the alleged downsides of flying solo".

Otherwise, he concludes, Mr Cameron could go down in history as the man who lost Scotland.

BBC Monitoring's quotes of the week

Iran and six world powers start three days of nuclear talks in Vienna on Tuesday. Iranian commentators share their expectations for the latest round of negotiations.

"At this juncture, negotiators need strong support from the government and the people in order to calmly conduct the talks... Some comprehend the importance of this new period of modern Iranian history and are seeking to support the negotiating team... But there is a minority in Iran who seeks to realise their personal interests or the interests of their political party, rather than protecting national interests and security." - Seyyed Ali Khorram in E'temad.

"Today, the Islamic Republic's nuclear industry is an established industry which is the product of Iranian young scientists' courage, knowledge and experience. In fact, the continuation of this industry is safeguarding the independence and dignity of the Iranian nation. The nuclear negotiating team should be at the frontline of defence for the independence and dignity of the Iranian nation and should never accept Western bullying." - Mohammad Kazem Anbarlu'i in Resalat.

"Despite my pessimism about the final outcome, I defend the overall performance of the nuclear negotiating team and believe it is working to defend the rights of Iranian citizens... Merely the notion that members of the negotiating team are revolutionary and committed cannot be a guarantee that they will perform correctly. However, questioning the past and destroying their reputation does not match the idea of duty to the Supreme Leader, and it deserves a divine punishment" - Mohammad Said Ahadian in Khorasan.

Have you found an interesting opinion piece about global issues that we missed? Share it with us via email at [echochambers \(at\) bbc.co.uk](mailto:echochambers@bbc.co.uk).

HUNTER BIDEN JOINS BOARD OF UKRAINE GAS COMPANY (UPI)

UPI, May 15, 2014

WASHINGTON, May 14 (UPI) --WASHINGTON, May 14 (UPI) --Bursima Holdings, Ukraine's largest private oil and gas producer, has appointed Hunter Biden, Vice President Joe Biden's youngest son, to its board of directors.

Critics have raised questions about the ethical and political implications of such a connection in the

midst of a political standoff with Russia over the Ukraine crisis. The vice president has emphasized the importance of decreasing Ukraine's dependency on Russian gas. Bursima is run by a former government official with ties to ousted Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich.

The company noted in a press release that Biden would join "Holdings' legal unit and will provide support for the company among international organizations."

"Bursima'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."

Joe Biden's office has said that Hunter Biden's employment has no bearing on administration policy.

"Hunter Biden is a private citizen and a lawyer," Kendra Barkoff, a representative for the vice president's office, told the Wall Street Journal. "The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

© 2014 United Press International, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

LASHING OUT AT INJUSTICE IN DELAWARE (LEWES)

Lewes (DE) Cape Gazette, May 15, 2014

Beau Biden does not deserve to be the Attorney General of Delaware. Nor does he have the integrity to hold the highest office within the state - governor of Delaware.

Unless Kathy Jennings comes forward with any positive affirmation in regards to the injustice being done in Delaware's Department of Correction, she also will not be privy to my support.

I bring forth solid evidence why the State of Delaware needs a state office of Inspector General, with power to detain and arrest anyone within the state for any criminal activities that are discovered the person has committed. This has been one of the Independent Party of Delaware platforms for many many years. We presented a bill to this effect to the General Assembly members several times. However, just as what I am about to discuss, this too was tucked away in the cobweb infested desks, particularly the concept of IG of our elected officials in Dover.

Chair of the Criminal Justice Council, Matt Denn also does not deserve to be attorney general, because he recently refused to permit any public comments regarding the homicide by blunt trauma force of inmate Ronald Shoup that occurred inside Sussex County Correctional Institution, Georgetown.

Let us pray that whoever murdered Ronald W. Shoup, age 48, who was in prison for a DUI, is not only fired, but prosecuted! There is compensation for the burial and hardship this travesty has caused to the family. No amount of money will ever bring Mr. Shoup back. But the state of Delaware and those who are responsible for this negligence should not be immune to being found guilty on criminal and civil matters surrounding the untimely death of Mr. Shoup.

Here is a lengthy list of litigation filed against the State of Delaware, including the many, many lawsuits and pleadings filed by inmates concerning prison abuse. :

<http://www.plainsite.org/flashlight/state-of-delaware/page-1/table-firmdockets>

There are many more similar cases that have been swept under the rug and disregarded by the former state police commissioners, who are under the authority of the Attorney General's Office. Specifically naming Beau Biden. Commissioners appointed by the governor of Delaware, and confirmed by our General Assembly, where current Lt. Gov. Matt Denn has a powerful voice as the tie breaking vote.

Because there is no other recourse other than filing legal claims in a court of law, it clearly shows the grievance process has severe corruption. It also shows there is severe negligence within a process that is intended to save the taxpayer the expenses of legal fees related to inmates having to have their grievances heard outside the walls of the DOC - denied proper due process of law and causing undue harm to the inmates, caused by those running the system. Sad to say, when prisoners do file these claims, they are greatly outmatched by the state (The AG's office has at least four or five full-time lawyers working to make these cases go away).

This is your tax dollars that are being wasted, not on frivolous claims but being frivolously wasted through a process that can be blamed on the state itself, if the complaints were actually processed

and investigated properly; The costs incurred by the state would not be as high; and judges ignore them. Judges will misstate the facts, ignore the facts and the law, in dismissing these cases. This is a very pathetic and a huge mistake that is not being acknowledged. I will even go as far as say they are being covered up, and the voters even being unable to inquire about these errors to the lawmakers. These are very serious accusations I make regarding the problems within the prison system. How am I aware of this ? A long time friend of mine, not only saw it, he experienced it as well a thousand times and two of his own cases were clearly wrongly dismissed. His lone surviving case is set for trial in U.S. District Court in Wilmington May 27. The cost of all this litigation, unnecessary if the prisons were run properly, and professionally, is in the tens of millions of taxpayers dollars. Earl Lofland Kent County chairman Independent Party of Delaware reformer candidate U.S. House of Representatives Clayton

DR. JILL BIDEN TO HEADLINE NEWSBABES BASH FOR BREAST CANCER (WRCTV)

WRC-TV Washington, May 15, 2014

Dozens of news anchors from the D.C. area are teaming up once again in the fight against breast cancer.

The sixth annual Newsbabes Bash for Breast Cancer is set for Wednesday, June 11 to raise money for Survivors Offering Support (SOS), a program at Georgetown and other hospitals. SOS pairs women who have been recently diagnosed with trained volunteers who have survived the battle.

News4's own Eun Yang, Angie Goff and Dianna Russini are among the hosts, as are anchors from Bloomberg, CNN, WUSA9, Fox5 and WJLA.

Dr. Jill Biden, a breast cancer survivor herself, will headline the event.

In addition, the Newsmen in Pink, a collective of male anchors from each station, will also be attending. Jim Vance, Doug Kammerer, Jim Handly, Aaron Gilchrist, Shomari Stone and Adam Tuss all plan to show up in pink.

Guests will enjoy specialty cocktails and heavy hors d'oeuvres.

It's all happening at the Powerhouse (3255 Grace St. NW) from 7 to 9 p.m. Attire for men and women: anything pink!

Find more information here, and follow @dcnewsbabes for updates about the event on Twitter.

SECOND LADY SPEAKS TO GRADUATING OWENSBORO STUDENTS (WAFBTV)

WAFB-TV Baton Rouge (LA), May 15, 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.

Copyright 2014 WFIE. All rights reserved.

JILL BIDEN CHALLENGES OWENSBORO COLLEGE GRADS (MADMESS)

Madisonville (KY) Messenger, May 15, 2014

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.

RAHM EMANUEL VOTES HILLARY CLINTON OVER JOE BIDEN FOR 2016 (ABCNEWS)

ABC News Radio, May 15, 2014

(WASHINGTON) - As a former White House insider in both the Clinton and Obama administrations, Rahm Emanuel has worked closely with Hillary Clinton and Vice President Joe Biden. But when it comes to who would be the better Democratic presidential candidate come 2016, his mind is made up.

Emanuel votes Hillary Clinton.

"If she chooses to run, I've already said I'm going to support her," the mayor of Chicago told ABC News.

"Joe's a good friend, personally," said Emanuel. "He's obviously worthy of being considered because he's a great vice president, a great senator, has something to offer...In this case, so does the former secretary of state, senator, and first lady."

Though Emanuel said he is confident that Clinton would win a hypothetical presidential matchup if she chooses to run, he added that Clinton is weighing the prospects of a presidential bid against other personal life factors.

"She's about to be a grandmother," he said. "And she cares about that, and making sure she has the time. Being a congressman, being a mayor, being a president, being a candidate for president, time is not one of the commodities you have a lot of."

Emanuel sat down with ABC News along with fellow Illinois Democrat Rep. Luis Gutierrez before a panel discussion on immigration reform at the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C. He said that the Republican Party cannot survive on the national stage without changing course on immigration reform.

"I think the 'leaders of the Republican Party' know where the future is heading, the current of history is heading," Emanuel said. "The problem is to get there, the boat breaks that they're on. In national elections you cannot be a majority party and be hostile to immigrants."

For the GOP, Emanuel said, it's no longer a question of "will" the party change course, but "when." Gutierrez described what he sees as a "fight within the Republican Party" between those who stand starkly in opposition to reform as a matter of principle and those who want reform for the sake of the party's national standing. He pointed to former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush as an example of a pro-reform voice within the GOP.

"I think when you hear Jeb Bush and other Republican leaders speak about immigration...I don't want to question their motives of where their heart is at, many of them have their heart exactly where Rahm Emanuel and I have our heart," he said. "And that is to do well and to make sure people have a system that is fair."

Gutierrez also acknowledged that the slow pace of change on the issue and the record number of deportations under President Obama have not been helpful to Democrats. But, he said, Obama is preparing to take executive action to reform the country's immigration system if Congress does not put forth legislation by the summer's end.

"If Republicans do not act, I assure them that this president will act, in a huge, very broad manner," Gutierrez said.

Emanuel also believes that Obama will "absolutely" act if Congress does not, "because certain issues are so urgent to the nation's future that a president must act."

"He can't legalize them, but he can stop their deportation, and put them in a safe place," Gutierrez added. "If they want to simply be a regional party, a party of little cities, and regions in a few states, okay, because that is your future. Abraham Lincoln...first Republican president, George Bush, 2004, you watch, he's going to be the last Republican president for a long time."

NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS:

DISCRIMINATION IN THE MILITARY (NYT)

New York Times, May 15, 2014

Three years after the demise of "don't ask, don't tell," an estimated 15,000 members of the military still must lie about themselves in order to go on risking their lives for their country. When Congress eliminated the law against gay men and lesbians serving openly in the military, the Pentagon left in place an equally unfounded prohibition on transgender people.

It was gratifying, then, to hear Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel say in an interview on ABC's "This Week" on Sunday, "Every qualified American who wants to serve our country should have an opportunity if they fit the qualifications and can do it." After all, unlike the ban on openly gay soldiers, the rule on transgender people is just a rule. There is no law prohibiting them from serving openly.

But, inexplicably, Mr. Hagel said only that he was "open" to reviewing the policy. He did not say whether he favored lifting the ban and when - or even whether - such a review might take place. There is none underway, and Mr. Hagel currently has no plan to start one. On Monday he told reporters he would prefer to learn more about the issue rather than begin a formal review.

In the ABC interview, Mr. Hagel repeated the standard excuse for this discrimination - that complex medical and logistical issues could preclude transgender people from serving in "austere" combat conditions. That excuse does not hold up, as a panel of former military officers and experts on gender and health led in part by former Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders concluded in March. "There is no compelling medical rationale for banning transgender military service," and "eliminating the ban would advance numerous military interests, including enabling commanders to better care for their service members," the panel said. Its report belongs at the top of Mr. Hagel's reading list, along with the psychiatric community's decision a year ago to finally stop mislabeling transgender identity as a mental disorder.

As with gay and lesbian soldiers, the issue is not whether transgender people can serve in the armed forces. The point is that they - including the estimated 15,000 of them now serving - have to cover up their identities. Some refrain from seeking necessary hormone treatment or other medical care, suffering anguish and risking their physical and emotional health.

And for what? There is "no medical reason to presume transgender individuals are unfit for duty," the panel wrote. Transgender medical care "is no more specialized or difficult than other sophisticated medical care the military system routinely provides," even in combat zones. As for gender-changing surgery, the panel noted that some elective cosmetic surgeries allowed at military medical facilities require similar leave time and risk more serious postoperative complications.

At least 12 countries, including Britain, Australia and Israel, allow transgender military service, with no apparent decline in readiness. Lt. Col. Cate McGregor of the Australian Defense Forces, former director of the Land Warfare Studies Center, is now speechwriter for the army chief of staff, who would not accept her offer to resign when she decided to undergo surgery in 2012.

Addressing issues like privacy and housing is not rocket science. It happens in civilian workplaces all the time. With the right leadership, outbreaks of intolerance can be minimized. If Mr. Hagel is still trying to make up his mind, his boss, President Obama, can make it up for him. The question is how fast can the armed forces join the modern world on this issue, not whether they should. The time for lame excuses is long past.

KEEPING THE WIRELESS BUSINESS COMPETITIVE (NYT)

New York Times, May 15, 2014

For most of its history, the telecommunications industry has been dominated by a handful of large companies. The cost of laying wires, setting up antennas, signing up customers and getting government licenses makes it hard for new players to get into a business dominated by former monopolies with deep pockets.

The wireless business is one of the few parts of the industry that has experienced sustained competition in the last two decades. But it is not as competitive as it once was. Thanks to a series of mergers, the number of national cellphone companies has fallen to four, from six as recently as 2003. Of those businesses, the two largest - AT&T and Verizon - are descendants of the former Ma Bell monopoly. Those companies together had 220 million subscribers at the end of March, compared with 103 million for their smaller competitors, Sprint and T-Mobile.

In recent years regulators have tried to keep the industry from becoming even less competitive. In

2011, they successfully blocked AT&T's proposed acquisition of T-Mobile. Now, as the Federal Communications Commission prepares to auction more wireless frequencies to cellphone companies, Tom Wheeler, the chairman, has made a smart proposal that would make sure AT&T and Verizon do not walk away with all of the licenses available.

The government licenses the use of certain wireless frequencies, also known as spectrum, to radio and TV stations and cellphone companies. Next year, the F.C.C. will make more spectrum available to cellphone companies after broadcasters relinquish some of the frequencies they no longer want. (How much spectrum is auctioned will depend on how many broadcasters return their licenses.)

On Thursday, the F.C.C. will vote on a modest provision that would reserve some of the spectrum for cellphone companies that do not control a significant number of similar frequencies. Spectrum would be reserved only if the bidding reached a certain price threshold, which would be determined at a later date. The policy would most directly benefit Sprint, T-Mobile and rural carriers. But AT&T and Verizon, which control the best wireless frequencies in the country, would be able to bid on reserved spectrum in places where they did not control more than one-third of similar frequencies.

AT&T and Verizon argue that the F.C.C. will be overstepping its authority and will be picking winners and losers if it goes forward with this plan. But in fact no more than 30 megahertz of spectrum, a relatively small amount, will be reserved in any geographic area. Congress gave the commission the power to create rules to promote competition in the wireless business. A 2012 law that deals with auctions conducted by the agency authorizes the F.C.C. to carry out rules "concerning spectrum aggregation that promote competition."

Still, it would be foolish to think that reserving a small amount of spectrum would be sufficient to ensure that the wireless business remains competitive. As in other network-based industries with high barriers to entry, big cellphone companies have inherent advantages over smaller ones. For example, they can demand better prices from technology suppliers and can afford to spend more money on their networks, all of which allows them to attract more customers and become even more profitable.

Having allowed the industry to consolidate so much already, regulators must treat future corporate deals with great skepticism. Consumers need more choices; at the very least, the F.C.C. should be working to preserve the choices they still have.

NO SLOWDOWN IN UNFAIR MARIJUANA ARRESTS (NYT)

New York Times, May 15, 2014

When Mayor Bill de Blasio took office in January, community groups and juvenile justice advocates hoped that his administration would significantly decrease the numbers of black and Latino young people who are unfairly - and in some cases, illegally - arrested and dragged through the court system for possession of tiny amounts of marijuana. But a new analysis of state arrest data by a nonprofit called the Marijuana Arrest Research Project, which studies police policy, suggests that the de Blasio administration is on track to equal the more than 28,600 low-level marijuana arrests that were made under Michael Bloomberg in 2013. The administration needs to review Police Department policy to make sure these arrests are necessary and being fairly made. The State Legislature tried to correct the problem in 1977, when it barred the police from arresting people for tiny amounts of marijuana unless the drug was publicly displayed. The number of minor arrests declined immediately after the law was passed but rose sharply from fewer than 1,000 in 1990 to 50,000 in 2011. Research has repeatedly shown that whites and minorities use the drug at similar rates, yet more than 80 percent of those arrested are black or Latino. And even though most cases are eventually dismissed, the arrests exact a cost: Young people who are even temporarily entangled in the courts can be shut out of jobs or denied entry into the armed services. As the number of arrests skyrocketed, defense attorneys made the case that police officers were illegally charging suspects with "public possession" after directing them to reveal the drug or removing it from their pockets during constitutionally questionable searches. Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly tacitly acknowledged that problem in 2011, ordering officers to follow the 1977 law. The numbers of arrests declined significantly. The 28,600 arrests made last year may seem low compared with the number in 2011.

The police have historically implied that marijuana arrests help get criminals off the street. But a

majority of these low-level arrests end in an "adjournment in contemplation of dismissal," which means that the charges go away if the person stays out of trouble for six months or a year, or in a plea to a violation, which is a noncriminal disposition. (These cases waste scarce court resources and distract prosecutors from working on serious crime.) Moreover, a 2012 study by Human Rights Watch found that only about 3 percent of people arrested for low-level marijuana possession subsequently committed even one violent felony.

The new state data for the city shows a slight decline in arrests for the first quarter of this year, which can partly be explained by harsh weather that kept people indoors. But the 2,657 arrests in March exceed the number of arrests made in March 2013. Moreover, as in previous years, there were few arrests in affluent white areas, and those arrested were mostly black and Latino young men in heavily minority neighborhoods. Mr. de Blasio's team has thus far demonstrated no concern about the marijuana arrest problem. But the extreme racial disparities in the arrest statistics alone make it imperative that the city look more closely into what is happening here.

THE KIDNAPPING OF A COUNTRY (NYT)

By Lauren Bohn And Chika Oduah

New York Times, May 15, 2014

CHIBOK, Nigeria - THE road to Chibok is eerily quiet, lined with checkpoints manned by civilians, many of them teenagers, wielding rusty rifles and serving as added security for an area that has little. In this northeast Nigerian village, where more than 300 teenage schoolgirls were kidnapped by the militant Islamist separatist group Boko Haram on April 14, their stunned families were still waiting this week for them to come home.

Lawan Zanna was still waiting for Aisha, his 18-year-old daughter. "How can I sleep?" Mr. Zanna asked. "Anger is gripping my body." After the girls were abducted, Mr. Zanna said, he and other parents searched the nearby Sambisa forest for their children, but came back empty-handed. As he spoke, Aisha's sister Hawa, 19, stood in silence. The two girls shared a small bedroom and almost everything else.

More than 750 people have been killed this year alone in Boko Haram attacks; at least 29 boys were killed in a February school raid. This time, the government's failure in rescuing the girls, and in addressing the issue, has incensed Nigerians and, increasingly, people around the world.

In the midst of the crisis, the World Economic Forum on Africa hosted a three-day summit meeting, May 7-9, bringing about a thousand delegates from around the world and Nigeria's elite to Abuja, the Nigerian capital, to discuss economic growth and development. As the .001 percent opined in air-conditioned suites, far from the hot reality of Abuja's streets and psyche, the government deployed 6,000 security officers for the event - an effort that many Nigerians half-joked, half-lamented would never be made to protect ordinary Nigerians, nor to retrieve the Chibok schoolgirls.

The city was at a standstill. Blue-uniformed security and police officers gathered around boomboxes perched on wooden benches and turned up to maximum volume, listening to voices shouting curses at the enigmatic Boko Haram. "We just don't know who these people are or what exactly they want to do," said a call-in guest on 95.1 FM Nigerian Info. "They say they want to impose Shariah law or whatever, but Nigeria is not an Islamic state! God go punish you!" A uniformed man holding a half-chewed juicy mango exclaimed, "Yes! God go punish them!" to nods of agreement.

Nigerian citizens exist in this surreal state of great contrasts, in a nation mired in corruption, under attack by an Islamist insurgency and at the same time brimming with potential and acclaimed as an economic engine for the African continent. With 170 million people, Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and largest oil producer. Its economy has surpassed South Africa's, making it the largest on the continent. But that growth has only widened economic inequality. Economic activity has slowed to a trickle in regions where terrorizing at the hands of Boko Haram has forced farmers to abandon their fields, while young people without job prospects have left for the cities. More Nigerians are poor today than at independence in 1960, with over 60 percent below the poverty line.

For the past three weeks, we have been traveling the country reporting on youth unemployment, an issue consistently ignored by the government, but one that has been exploited by Boko Haram. "The abductions are only the tip of the iceberg," said Tayo Olufuwa, a bespectacled 23-year-old

entrepreneur from Mushin, one of Lagos's poorest neighborhoods. Mr. Olufuwa has started an online employment search company, Jobs in Nigeria. When we filmed him two weeks ago, walking on his old childhood streets for a multimedia report, plainclothes policemen detained us for four hours, confiscating our credentials and equipment. They told us they were protecting us from Boko Haram and other security threats, wrestled with our driver for a bribe and mocked a crowd of children. "We are a country sleeping with one eye open," Mr. Olufuwa said afterward in exasperation.

It's an expression used often by Nigerians, who are frustrated yet unsurprised by conflicting actions and reports from a government they have come to distrust. At least 16 Nigerians were killed in March in stampedes when nearly a half-million people applied for fewer than 5,000 government jobs.

Frederick Kusompwa, 30, eagerly joined thousands of job seekers at the national stadium in Abuja, one of the application sites, only to watch people climbing over one another, clawing for registration forms: "I just asked myself, What has my country become?" The interior minister, whose office oversaw the recruitment, announced that the dead "lost their lives through their impatience."

Thousands apply for 20 full scholarships offered by the Institute of Petroleum Studies at the University of Port Harcourt in the Niger Delta. Celestina Johnson, an administrator at the institute, said she often wanted to cry during the interviews because so many of the applicants would never get a chance. As she spoke, the electricity went out - an everyday occurrence in Nigeria. "If this country's condition continues, there will be a mass revolt," Ms. Johnson said. "The country will break."

In Lagos, the commercial capital of the country, a 41-year-old cabdriver, Oyebajo Adekunle, sweated as he swerved through rush-hour traffic. A college graduate with a business degree, he said he never thought he'd be driving people around, struggling to make enough money for his family of six. He pulled up to a cluster of people - one of the daily Bring Back Our Girls protests that have taken place here and around the country for weeks. "I would go out and stand with the women, but I have to hustle," he said, wiping sweat from his brow. "It's like the government makes the hustle so hard, so that we're too tired to do anything about things like this." He rolled down his window to shake one of the female protesters' hands, locking eyes for a mere second, and then sped off to pick up another client.

Lauren Bohn and Chika Oduah are the recipients of a GlobalPost reporting fellowship in Nigeria for 2014.

THE AIDS-SHAMING OF MAGIC JOHNSON (NYT)

By Charles M. Blow

New York Times, May 15, 2014

The sheer volume of bile spewing from the mouth of the Clippers owner, Donald Sterling, is staggering. But just as awe-inducing, and stomach-churning, is the unrestrained breadth of its variety, which makes putting the offenses in order - if one were inclined to - nearly impossible. But high on any list - on a par with the racism, sexism, misogyny, paternalistic plantation thinking and bias cloaked in benevolence - has to be Sterling's attempt to AIDS-shame Magic Johnson. In an interview with CNN's Anderson Cooper that aired on Monday, Sterling asked about Johnson: "What has he done? Can you tell me? Big Magic Johnson, what has he done? He's got AIDS." For the record, as Cooper pointed out, Johnson has disclosed that he has H.I.V. but there is no evidence that his condition has ever progressed to AIDS.

Sterling continued:

"What kind of guy goes to every city, has sex with every girl, then goes and catches H.I.V.? Is that someone we want to respect and tell our kids about? I think he should be ashamed of himself. I think he should go into the background."

And there's more:

"Here's a man, I don't know if I should say this, he acts so holy. He made love with every girl in every city in America, and he had AIDS, and when he had those AIDS, I went to my synagogue and I prayed for him. I hoped he could live and be well. I didn't criticize him. I could have. Is he an example for children?"

This line of attack on Johnson is one of the most revolting things to come out of this whole

revolting episode. It feeds into the ignorance about the disease itself and the stigma attached to it that is an enormous hindrance to bringing it more under control in this country.

Let's start here: Contracting H.I.V. (or AIDS) is not evidence of a character defect. It is simply a disease and should be treated as such. The way that so many people, like Sterling, seem to separate out and shun people with communicable diseases - particularly sex-related ones - is outrageous and mustn't be tolerated and glossed over.

Does behavior play a large role - possibly the central role - in the spread of H.I.V.? Of course, but behavior is also a major cause of many diseases: heart disease, diabetes, and in some cases even cancer.

We must extend our empathy and demonstrate our compassion toward all people living with and dealing with any disease, and encourage better understanding and education to reduce the number of people affected by such illnesses.

What we don't need is a man of Sterling's dubious motives and questionable character spreading pernicious misinformation and hurtful poison about a disease he seems to little understand.

One thing that Sterling said does, in fact, hold a grain of truth: "You know, because he has money, he's able to treat himself." It is true that Johnson's wealth means that he is able to afford the best medical care, while far too many people living with H.I.V. and AIDS suffer not only for lack of quality health care but also lack of funds, food and adequate housing.

That said, Johnson is still a shining example to people living with the disease that it doesn't have to be life ending, that you can remain healthy, have a family, have a career and have a life.

And, he is a particularly potent symbol because he is African-American, because as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention points out:

"African-Americans accounted for an estimated 44 percent of all new H.I.V. infections among adults and adolescents (age 13 or older) in 2010, despite representing only 12 percent of the U.S. population; considering the smaller size of the African-American population in the United States, this represents a population rate that is eight times that of whites over all."

Some of the problem is that -partly because of lack of education, economics and H.I.V. stigma - "almost 85,000 H.I.V.-infected people in the African-American community in 2010 were unaware of their H.I.V. status."

And if people don't know they are infected, they can't be in care and controlling the disease, and therefore become highly infectious to other people.

(A study has shown that a person with H.I.V. who takes medication early on and has the disease under control reduces his or her transmission rate by 96 percent.)

Furthermore, stigma plays a role in people's unwillingness to disclose a positive diagnosis, furthering the likelihood of more transmission.

Magic Johnson, much to his credit, revealed his H.I.V.-positive status more than 20 years ago and has since been, personally and through the foundation that bears his name, an advocate for H.I.V./AIDS awareness and prevention.

As Johnson said in an interview with Cooper on Tuesday, regarding Sterling and his comments on his H.I.V. status:

"The stigma is still there. We know that. We've been fighting it for years, and what we want to continue to do is just educate the world that it's O.K., that you can high-five a person who has H.I.V. It's O.K. ... It's a shame that Donald used this platform with you, instead of using this platform to come out and apologize to the world, which would have been great."

In attempting to AIDS-shame Johnson, Sterling further shamed himself - if that's even possible - and proved supremely disrespectful of and destructive to people living with H.I.V. and those (like Johnson, who responded magnanimously) who are working to reach the affected and protect those at risk.

In this it is clear that Johnson is a far better example for our children than Sterling.

MY STATE'S PRETTIER THAN YOURS (NYT)

By Gail Collins

New York Times, May 15, 2014

Our topic for today is state tourism slogans. Perhaps that's not what you had in mind. Perhaps you are from North Dakota ("Legendary") or North Carolina ("Beauty Amplified") and are already so self-satisfied you see no reason to worry about the subject at all.

But this is actually a deeply political matter. After all, it's the states' wildly different self-images and sense of specialness that makes places like Congress so interesting.

Consider Texas, which is currently bragging "It's Like a Whole Other Country." This is not the slogan of a place that prides itself on the ability to get along with others.

Neither is Montana's "Get Lost." This is actually supposed to be an invitation to come, not leave.

But at best, it conjures up visions of helicopters and search dogs. Like many states, Montana plays around with several slogans. One of its newest, "Step Out of Bounds," sounds a bit like a suggestion to walk off a cliff.

On the opposite side we have Washington ("Washington: The State"). These people definitely regard themselves as part of the group.

It's sad that states no longer like to identify themselves with agricultural production, which always had a nice touch of down-to-earth practicality. Wisconsin has never been the same since it stopped being "America's Dairyland" and rejected efforts by enthusiasts to adopt "Eat Cheese or Die." While the state's tourism website currently urges viewers to "Turn Up the Fun," a spokeswoman denied that it now has any official marketing pitch whatsoever.

For a long and glorious time, Idaho's slogan was "Great Potatoes. Tasty Destinations." But I am sorry to say that the state has moved on and is now going with "Idaho: Adventures in Living."

Diane Norton, the Idaho tourism manager, said the state's new sales pitch "was developed using attitude research which revealed that Idaho is viewed as being 'an adventure' in and of itself." Well yeah, when you hire people to do a marketing survey, they are not going to come back with a root vegetable.

Honestly, I'm not sure how useful brand research is in these cases. The consultants almost always report that their focus groups determined that the state's most salient point is the great scenery.

Or, in the case where there isn't any scenery, the people.

Except New Mexico, where a focus group reportedly once described the state as boring and, on the positive side, "close to Arizona." Who knew? Actually these days many Americans' perception of the state is probably based on the series "Breaking Bad." Perhaps the slogan should be:

"Something's Cooking in New Mexico, and It's Not Actually Meth."

Instead, they came up with "New Mexico True." Honestly.

Connecticut is currently trying the historic route with a new tourism slogan ("Connecticut: Still Revolutionary"). This is something of a comeback attempt after the troubled "Connecticut: Full of Surprises" era, during which then-Gov. Jodi Rell failed to pay the state's dues to a regional tourism-promotion group. Imagine everyone's surprise when they woke up and discovered that Connecticut had been wiped off the map in the Discover New England website.

"There was no Connecticut there. We actually got kicked out of New England," said Colin McEnroe, a Connecticut radio host and Hartford Courant columnist.

Connecticut's problems stem in part from the fact that "Connecticut" is hard to put in a jingle. Think about it. If you want to refer to somebody as a Connecticut resident, the only noun you can use is "Nutmegger." As part of the "Still Revolutionary" campaign, now-Gov. Dan Malloy's administration unveiled a new song, "Better With You," which McEnroe said was notable mainly for never mentioning the state's name.

Every single state believes that it is meant to be a tourist destination. Nebraska, for instance, insists that tourism is its "third largest earner of revenue from outside the state," although given the fact that it lists the first two as "agriculture and manufacturing" there really aren't a whole lot of options left. Its marketing pitch used to be "Possibilities ... Endless," which is not to be confused with Delaware's "Endless Discoveries." Then this month the Nebraska Tourism Commission unveiled "Nebraska Nice." A spokesman announced that brand research had determined that "one of Nebraska's strongest assets is our people."

The "Nice" campaign irked Iowans, who resented the idea that Nebraska was trying to corral the humble politeness franchise. ("Nebraska: Nice Try" read a new Iowa T-shirt.) And they have a point. Nebraska should try to market something that it and it alone can lay claim to. I vote for "Visit Nebraska: We Have a Unicameral State Legislature."

I'm sorry to say that I have never been to Nebraska. Long ago, during the Clinton administration, I wrote something about the state's Senator Bob Kerrey that ticked off his press office, and I was informed that I was barred from Nebraska forever.

I mentioned this once a few years ago, and someone from the office of Kerrey's successor,

Senator Ben Nelson, informed me that the ban was revoked. Which did seem extremely nice.

IT'S NOW THE CANADIAN DREAM (NYT)

By Nicholas Kristof

New York Times, May 15, 2014

It was in 1931 that the historian James Truslow Adams coined the phrase "the American dream." The American dream is not just a yearning for affluence, Adams said, but also for the chance to overcome barriers and social class, to become the best that we can be. Adams acknowledged that the United States didn't fully live up to that ideal, but he argued that America came closer than anywhere else.

Adams was right at the time, and for decades. When my father, an eastern European refugee, reached France after World War II, he was determined to continue to the United States because it was less class bound, more meritocratic and offered more opportunity.

Yet today the American dream has derailed, partly because of growing inequality. Or maybe the American dream has just swapped citizenship, for now it is more likely to be found in Canada or Europe - and a central issue in this year's political campaigns should be how to repatriate it.

A report last month in The Times by David Leonhardt and Kevin Quealy noted that the American middle class is no longer the richest in the world, with Canada apparently pulling ahead in median after-tax income. Other countries in Europe are poised to overtake us as well.

In fact, the discrepancy is arguably even greater. Canadians receive essentially free health care, while Americans pay for part of their health care costs with after-tax dollars. Meanwhile, the American worker toils, on average, 4.6 percent more hours than a Canadian worker, 21 percent more hours than a French worker and an astonishing 28 percent more hours than a German worker, according to data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Canadians and Europeans also live longer, on average, than Americans do. Their children are less likely to die than ours. American women are twice as likely to die as a result of pregnancy or childbirth as Canadian women. And, while our universities are still the best in the world, children in other industrialized countries, on average, get a better education than ours. Most sobering of all: A recent O.E.C.D. report found that for people aged 16 to 24, Americans ranked last among rich countries in numeracy and technological proficiency.

Economic mobility is tricky to measure, but several studies show that a child born in the bottom 20 percent economically is less likely to rise to the top in America than in Europe. A Danish child is twice as likely to rise as an American child.

When our futures are determined to a significant extent at birth, we've reverted to the feudalism that our ancestors fled.

"Equality of opportunity - the 'American dream' - has always been a cherished American ideal," Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel-winning economist at Columbia University, noted in a recent speech.

"But data now show that this is a myth: America has become the advanced country not only with the highest level of inequality, but one of those with the least equality of opportunity."

Consider that the American economy has, over all, grown more quickly than France's. But so much of the growth has gone to the top 1 percent that the bottom 99 percent of French people have done better than the bottom 99 percent of Americans.

Three data points:

- The top 1 percent in America now own assets worth more than those held by the entire bottom 90 percent.
- The six Walmart heirs are worth as much as the bottom 41 percent of American households put together.
- The top six hedge fund managers and traders averaged more than \$2 billion each in earnings last year, partly because of the egregious "carried interest" tax break. President Obama has been unable to get financing for universal prekindergarten; this year's proposed federal budget for pre-K for all, so important to our nation's future, would be a bit more than a single month's earnings for those six tycoons.

Inequality has become a hot topic, propelling Bill de Blasio to become mayor of New York City, turning Senator Elizabeth Warren into a star, and elevating the economist Thomas Piketty into such a demigod that my teenage daughter asked me the other day for his 696-page tome. All this growing awareness is a hopeful sign, because there are policy steps that we could take that would

create opportunity and dampen inequality.

We could stop subsidizing private jets and too-big-to-fail banks, and direct those funds to early education programs that help break the cycle of poverty. We can invest less in prisons and more in schools.

We can impose a financial transactions tax and use the proceeds to broaden jobs programs like the earned-income tax credit and career academies. And, as Alan S. Blinder of Princeton University has outlined, we can give companies tax credits for creating new jobs.

It's time to bring the American dream home from exile.

STILL TINKERING (NYT)

By Linda Greenhouse

New York Times, May 15, 2014

Twenty years have passed since Justice Harry A. Blackmun, at age 85 and just months away from retirement, renounced the death penalty. "From this day forward, I no longer shall tinker with the machinery of death," he declared.

There's been an awful lot of tinkering going on lately.

Oklahoma's botched attempt last month to carry out an execution with a previously untried combination of lethal drugs from secret sources shone a spotlight on how states are scrambling to deal with the increasingly unreliable supply of the ingredients of the once standard three-drug cocktail. Clayton D. Lockett, the condemned Oklahoma murderer who was seen writhing and moaning after the badly administered first drug failed to render him fully unconscious, died of an apparent heart attack nearly two hours after officials had started trying to kill him.

Given the Roberts court's conservative trajectory, it may seem a waste of energy even to wonder whether that incident, or the disarray on the whole lethal injection front, might persuade the justices to take another look at the death penalty.

No current member of the court is on record as opposing capital punishment. Justice John Paul Stevens, who retired three years ago, was the last. He announced his opposition to the death penalty in a 2008 opinion, and his new book, "Six Amendments," proposes a constitutional amendment "to put an end to what has become a wretched arrangement."

That there are strains within the court over specific death-penalty issues presented by particular cases is obvious. Less than a month ago, a majority of five justices permitted a Texas execution to proceed despite the votes of Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen G. Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan to grant a stay. (The order denying the stay was unsigned, and none of the four dissenters wrote an opinion.) Lawyers for the death row inmate, Jose L. Villegas Jr., convicted of a triple murder, argued that their client was mentally retarded, an assertion the state disputed. His lawyers urged the justices to delay the execution until the court ruled in a separate case on how to define mental retardation in the capital punishment context - an issue that remains ambiguous 12 years after the court ruled in *Atkins v. Virginia* that the Eighth Amendment prohibits executing mentally retarded defendants. The court heard the pending case, *Hall v. Florida*, in March and will decide it before the current term ends in June.

Texas carried out the execution the day after the court's denial of the stay. "It does kind of burn. Goodbye," Mr. Villegas was reported to say as the single drug that Texas uses took effect. On Tuesday of this week, Texas was about to execute another death row inmate, Robert James Campbell, but the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit granted a last-minute stay after the inmate's lawyers presented evidence of his mental retardation.

Both the court and Congress have tried for years to limit death-penalty appeals by imposing increasingly daunting jurisdictional barriers. But these cases are still a staple of the Supreme Court's docket and will remain so as long as the death penalty exists. So in light of last month's debacle, and under no illusions that the court is about to engage in a fundamental debate over capital punishment, I decided to take a fresh look at an old case - the court's rejection in 2008 of a constitutional challenge to Kentucky's lethal injection protocol.

The case, *Baze v. Rees*, is usually noted for the opportunity it gave Justice Stevens to declare his opposition to the death penalty (although he actually joined the 7-to-2 majority in ruling for the state, out of a desire, as he put it then, "to respect precedents that remain a part of our law.") Less well remembered is what the court actually said about lethal injection.

There was no opinion for the court. The seven justices in the majority (Justice Ruth Bader

Ginsburg and the now-retired Justice David H. Souter dissented) explained themselves in six separate opinions. Re-reading the opinions in light of current events was an eerie experience. The court handed down *Baze v. Rees* almost exactly six years before the Oklahoma mess. The problems that some justices described in their opinions as unduly alarmist or unsubstantiated were the very problems that occurred last month. The dire warnings of the lawyers representing two Kentucky death row inmates - a team led by Donald B. Verrilli Jr., then a lawyer in private practice and now the Obama administration's solicitor general - actually came true.

Law professors like to ask their students to "run the counterfactual" - assume a narrative opposite from what actually happened, and assess the implications. What really happened six years after *Baze v. Rees* is the ultimate counterfactual - except that it's not hypothetical.

The case was not about the constitutionality of the death penalty or even about lethal injection as a means of carrying it out. Rather, the question as Mr. Verrilli framed it was whether the risk that something would go wrong in Kentucky's administration of its three-drug protocol was so substantial as to violate the Eighth Amendment's prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment.

He pointed out that if the first drug, a sedative, were to prove inadequate while the second drug, a paralyzing agent, worked as intended, the inmate would suffer excruciating pain from the third, heart-stopping drug while being unable to cry out or call for help. Mr. Verrilli argued the potential problem could be avoided by use of a single drug to bring about unconsciousness and death - the procedure that veterinarians use for animal euthanasia but that had not been used for human executions. (Texas, the most active death-penalty state, eventually adopted the single-drug procedure and currently uses it.)

In a plurality opinion joined by Justices Anthony M. Kennedy and Samuel A. Alito Jr., Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. said the inmates' lawyer hadn't made his case. The risk of harm wasn't sufficiently great or sufficiently imminent; the proposed alternative was only "slightly or marginally safer." The chief justice said, "Permitting an Eighth Amendment violation to be established on such a showing would threaten to transform courts into boards of inquiry charged with determining 'best practices' for executions, with each ruling supplanted by another round of litigation touting a new and improved methodology."

Mr. Verrilli had also argued that the intravenous line could fail, resulting in the sedating drug infiltrating the surrounding tissue instead of reaching the vein in amounts adequate to cause unconsciousness. While Kentucky's protocol gave the execution team up to an hour to establish the I.V. line, Mr. Verrilli's brief asserted that "more than 10 or 15 minutes of unsuccessful attempts is dangerous because the I.V. is almost certain to be unreliable." The chief justice's opinion rejected this argument, too, as overblown, noting that Kentucky's medical experts had testified that any infiltration into tissue instead of the vein would be "very obvious" even to an untrained observer.

Of course, these arguments predicted almost exactly what was to go wrong six years later in Oklahoma. A medical technician in the execution chamber of the state prison in McAlester poked and prodded at Mr. Lockett for 51 minutes before finding what he thought was a usable vein in his groin, and no one noticed when the insertion went awry.

I don't fault Chief Justice Roberts for lacking clairvoyance. I covered the case at the court, and I remember thinking that Kentucky did seem to know what it was doing. The state had what sounded like a plausible defense against an attack that was at best theoretical. And lethal injection did seem more humane than execution by hanging, the electric chair or the firing squad by which Utah executed Gary Gilmore in 1977. His was the first execution after the Supreme Court permitted capital punishment to resume in states that had reformulated their death penalties to the justices' specifications.

Still, Justice Ginsburg got it. "Rare though errors may be," she wrote in the dissenting opinion that Justice Souter also signed, "the consequences of a mistake about the condemned inmate's consciousness are horrendous and effectively undetectable after injection of the second drug." She added: "If readily available measures can materially increase the likelihood that the protocol will cause no pain, a state fails to adhere to contemporary standards of decency if it declines to employ those measures."

Chief Justice Roberts and the justices who joined him acknowledged that placing a condemned inmate at risk of unnecessary pain and suffering, if the risk was great enough, would be

unconstitutional. His opinion was a serious effort to thread a very small needle. By contrast, Justices Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia refused to sign the chief justice's opinion because, they said in their separate opinion, they believed that only the deliberate infliction of suffering would violate the Eighth Amendment.

During the seven months that the Baze case was pending before the Supreme Court, in 2007 and 2008, the number of executions plummeted as state officials and judges waited to see what rules would emerge. When none did, the numbers started climbing back up. Now Oklahoma and, just the other day, Louisiana have delayed pending executions while examining their lethal injection protocols. Early this month, President Obama ordered a federal review of how the death penalty was being carried out around the country. More tinkering? Perhaps.

The justices will most likely sit out this round. If they were to involve themselves again, I'm not sure what they would do. But they can't say they weren't warned.

DON'T FORCE GOOGLE TO 'FORGET' (NYT)

By Jonathan Zittrain

New York Times, May 15, 2014

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. - THE European Court of Justice ruled on Tuesday that Europeans have a limited "right to be forgotten" by search engines like Google. According to the ruling, an individual can compel Google to remove certain reputation-harming search results that are generated by Googling the individual's name. The court is trying to address an important problem - namely, the Internet's ability to preserve indefinitely all its information about you, no matter how unfortunate or misleading - but it has devised a poor solution.

The court's decision is both too broad and curiously narrow. It is too broad in that it allows individuals to impede access to facts about themselves found in public documents. This is a form of censorship, one that would most likely be unconstitutional if attempted in the United States.

Moreover, the test for removal that search engines are expected to use is so vague - search results are to be excluded if they are "inadequate, irrelevant or no longer relevant" - that search engines are likely to err on the safe side and accede to most requests.

But the decision is oddly narrow in that it doesn't require that unwanted information be removed from the web. The court doesn't have a problem with web pages that mention the name of the plaintiff in this case (Mario Costeja González) and the thing he regrets (a property foreclosure); it has a problem only with search engines that list those pages - including this article and possibly the court's own ruling - as results to a query on the basis of Mr. González's name. So nothing is being "forgotten," despite the court's stated attempt to protect such a right.

How an individual's reputation is protected online is too important and subtle a policy matter to be legislated by a high court, which is institutionally mismatched to the evolving intricacies of the online world.

Progress has been limited perhaps by a shortfall of imagination by Google, Microsoft's Bing and the handful of other powerful intermediaries who stand between what we ask and what we're told is relevant. Search engines generally treat personal names as search terms like any others: Data is data. Google and company have not internalized just how significant that first page of search results has become to someone whose name has been queried. What they place on that page may do more than anything else in the world to define a stranger in others' estimations.

What if search engine companies were to think more creatively about how such searches might work? In 2007, Google admirably experimented in this area, introducing a feature to its Google News aggregator that allowed people quoted or mentioned in a news article indexed by Google News to add a comment next to that article in the search results. Such participants could offer readers of Google News an explanation, an apology, or a reason to discount whatever it was they were about to read. (Academics were among the first users of the feature, often adding a comment to contextualize something a newspaper reporter had quoted them as saying.) But Google ultimately abandoned the feature.

That's too bad. If search engines allowed for such comments generally, they might be able to give you more influence over the information about you online - without giving you the power to censor. Perhaps querying someone's name would result in an initial page of search results in which some form of curating was permitted for people sharing that name; the subsequent pages of results would provide the unvarnished material that a regular search now generates.

For those who believe in a right to "be forgotten," such a proposal would of course fall short. But I suspect that in many cases, the desire for such a right is merely the desire not to have your life presented to the world mechanistically and without review, with nothing more than a search term and a single click. This is a legitimate desire that the sort of proposal I have in mind would satisfy. Whatever the solution, the status quo is no longer stable. In the wake of the decision by the European Court of Justice, search engine companies now face a potential avalanche of requests for redaction. And whatever the merits of the court's decision, Europe cannot expect to export its new approach to countries like the United States. (Even in Europe, search engine users will no doubt cultivate the same Internet "workarounds" that Chinese citizens use to see what their government doesn't want them to see.)

Google, Bing and Yahoo should devote their considerable resources to mitigating this problem. If they don't, search engine results may become increasingly dependent on where your keyboard is, rather than what you're looking for. And the search engines may find themselves in a cat-and-mouse game of censorship and evasion, leading only to a fragmentation, not an improvement, of the web.

Jonathan Zittrain, a professor of law and computer science at Harvard, is the author of "The Future of the Internet - And How to Stop It."

NEW BAD OLD TIMES FOR GUATEMALA? (NYT)

By Anita Isaacs

New York Times, May 15, 2014

HAVERFORD, Penn. - It has been only a year since a court convicted Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt, a former president of Guatemala, of genocide, a step hailed as a breakthrough for the country's fragile democracy. And yet Guatemala's hard-won progress is starting to falter; if nothing is done, it could easily slip back into authoritarianism, violence and disregard for basic human rights.

The trial of General Ríos Montt, who as the unelected president from 1982 to 1983 oversaw the murder of tens of thousands of Guatemalans, was the first time in history that a head of state anywhere was tried and convicted of genocide in a domestic courtroom. It was also supposed to be a major turning point for Guatemala's court system, which, until recently, punished only 2 percent of all crimes.

But less than two weeks later, the verdict was annulled on procedural grounds. The decision was a cruel disappointment for the victims of General Ríos Montt's regime, whose expectations had been raised by the trial, and a huge relief for former military leaders, who feared that they might stand trial next, and for powerful businesspeople who financed the country's civil war.

Nevertheless, as Guatemala faded from headlines, a flurry of political mobilization and maneuvering began. The poor, who had borne the brunt of General Ríos Montt's regime, were emboldened by the trial and demonstrated en masse when the verdict was annulled.

Despite the disappointing outcome, the country's indigenous majority believed the justice system might actually be made to work in their favor, that their voices had been heard and their rights respected. Since then, there have been sustained and increasingly defiant organizing and protests by peasants in rural areas of Guatemala, especially in regions plagued by land conflicts and growing tensions over the development of hydroelectric plants and subsoil mining.

But the country's elite, threatened by the idea of a justice system that might begin to work against them and by growing peasant activism, soon pushed back. The Guatemalan Bar Association first struck against the judge who ruled against General Ríos Montt, temporarily revoking her license to practice law. Then, last month, secret recordings surfaced in the Guatemalan press in which several politicians and lawyers could be heard bribing and blackmailing one another, in an effort to stack the supreme and appellate courts.

Business groups also maneuvered behind the scenes to pressure the constitutional court, and force Claudia Paz y Paz, the attorney general who had been a standard-bearer for the reformers by prosecuting gangsters and generals, out of office.

The commission that was established to nominate a new attorney general removed Ms. Paz y Paz from the list of contenders, even though its own assessment ranked her as the second-most qualified candidate. Asked whether politics intervened in the process, the commission president acknowledged, "It is possible."

Then, on May 10, the first anniversary of the genocide conviction, President Otto Pérez Molina

appointed a lawyer named Thelma Aldana as the new attorney general. The move was a slap in the face to reformers: Ms. Aldana has been accused of having close ties to the political party once run by General Ríos Montt and to the current vice president, Roxana Baldetti, who has been exposed by the Guatemalan press for having used her office for personal enrichment.

Ms. Aldana's own statements are worrisome as well: She has been openly critical of her predecessor, Ms. Paz y Paz, whom she describes as having "favored the political left," and has stressed her willingness to consider granting amnesty to members of the Guatemalan military who participated in crimes of genocide during the civil war.

The government and the country's wealthy landowners, meanwhile, have wasted no time in violently putting peasants back in their place. Instead of entering into a dialogue with protesters, the president has openly branded them criminals and terrorists. In such a climate, it is no surprise that Guatemala is ranked the most dangerous place in the world to be a union activist: Eighteen human rights defenders, mostly peasant activists, were killed this past year - the highest number of attacks on activist leaders since the end of the civil war.

In early April, security guards for a wealthy landowner shot six unarmed peasants protesting the construction of a hydroelectric dam. In a separate incident just two weeks later, armed assailants murdered a 16-year-old girl, who was the leader of an anti-mining youth movement, and critically wounded her father, who had organized his community to vote against a local mining project.

For all this, the rest of the world has been silent. Distracted by conflicts in Ukraine and Syria, the United States has not replaced its ambassador in Guatemala, a position that has been open since October.

A United Nations commission that has been instrumental in taking down organized crime bosses is nearing the end of its allotted time in the country, and there is nothing in line to replace it.

President Molina, who in the past has lobbied the Guatemalan Congress to keep the commission in the country, has been silent this time, and neither the United States nor the United Nations has pressed him on it.

Abandoned and isolated, Guatemala's poor have been left to fend for themselves against the people who see any steps toward a fairer, more functional system as a threat to their fortunes and their legacies. Without a watchful eye from abroad, they have been able to revert to their old behavior, making sure the unjust structures that serve their needs stay in place, even at the expense of rising unrest, polarization and violence.

Anita Isaacs is a professor of political science at Haverford College and the author of the forthcoming book "From Victims to Citizens: The Politics of Transitional Justice in Postwar Guatemala."

THE BATTLE OF THE OKINAWANS (NYT)

By Norihiro Kato

New York Times, May 15, 2014

As President Barack Obama wound up his visit to Japan last month, the Japanese and American governments released a joint statement outlining the outcome of his talks with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Almost every newspaper article I saw focused on the same few issues - above all, the two leaders' failure to reach an agreement on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a 12-nation trade agreement. There was one exception: The Okinawan daily Ryukyu Shimpo ran on its front page the large headline, "U.S. Military Presence in Okinawa to Be Permanent."

Ryukyu Shimpo had picked up on a sentence in the joint statement that other papers had ignored: "The early relocation of Futenma Marine Corps Air Station to Camp Schwab and consolidation of bases in Okinawa will ensure a long-term sustainable presence for U.S. forces." Okinawans have been fighting for decades to have the Marines' air operations removed from the entire Ryukyu archipelago. In January, residents of Nago on Okinawa Island, where Camp Schwab is located, overwhelmingly re-elected a mayor who has vowed to block the plan to resettle Futenma there, rejecting a pro-relocation candidate strongly supported by Mr. Abe's party.

Okinawans are among the most downtrodden people in the region. In premodern times, the small Ryukyu Kingdom, as it was known then, was a tributary state of China and Japan simultaneously. Japan treated residents badly after fully annexing the islands in the 1870s. The Battle of Okinawa at the end of World War II killed one in four inhabitants. In the postwar period the United States turned the Ryukyu Islands into a military colony.

Even since the islands reverted to Japan in 1972, they have been exploited for military purposes as a result of agreements between the Japanese and American governments. The strategic importance of Okinawa Prefecture to the two governments has increased recently owing to its proximity to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, to which both Japan and China lay claim.

This history has instilled tenacity in the inhabitants of the Ryukyu Islands. This was demonstrated by a man who met with representatives of the Abe administration in Tokyo just days before Mr. Obama's arrival there. Anzo Kedomori, the 72-year-old school superintendent of the small town of Taketomi, had been summoned by the Education Ministry for refusing to adopt a new, revisionist textbook in his district's ninth-grade class.

He was not cowed. Mr. Kedomori insisted that the textbook had not been selected according to the necessary procedures, and protested its failure to discuss Japan's callous treatment of Okinawa or the problems that the presence of American bases has caused.

The Education Ministry then summoned the superintendent for all secondary schools in Okinawa Prefecture. But he, too, declined to cooperate, saying he would respect the will of teachers in Taketomi.

People like these two men - and the mayor of Nago, who may yet succeed in derailing the government's plan to relocate Futenma - reveal the strength that comes to people who have been subordinated to greater powers for too long.

At the same time, in a sort of twisted way, they also embody the struggles of the Japanese government that is exploiting them as it tries to escape its reliance on the United States.

The Japanese government's 2013 budget allocated almost \$3.6 billion to cover costs associated with running American bases in Japan and providing for the 38,000 United States military personnel and their 43,000 dependents stationed there. This includes not only utility costs but also luxury housing, pools and golf courses. In 2008, the Japanese government built a middle school for 600 children of American troops at Kadena Air Base that cost twice as much, and was six times as large, as a school built nearby for 645 Japanese children.

According to a statement protesting the relocation of Futenma signed by prominent scholars and peace advocates in January, Okinawa Prefecture constitutes just 0.6 percent of the total land mass of Japan, yet it houses 73.8 percent of the American military bases in the country. The bases occupy almost one-fifth of Okinawa Island alone, including prime farming land. This part of Japan is, one might say, the netherworld to which the Japanese government has tried to banish its awareness of its subordination to the United States.

In 2009, while the Democratic Party of Japan was in power, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama attempted for the first time since the end of the war to move Japan away from its dependence on the United States, and to emphasize its ties with other Asian countries. His promise to move Futenma out of Okinawa Prefecture was the focus of this attempt. Although Mr. Hatoyama failed in this project, the issue of Futenma hasn't gone away; the Okinawan people still oppose hosting the bases.

And in their determination they may yet teach the Japanese government a thing or two about what successful resistance looks like.

Norihiro Kato is a literary scholar and a professor at Waseda University. This article was translated by Michael Emmerich from the Japanese.

HONG KONG'S RISING CRY (NYT)

By Michael Degolyer

New York Times, May 15, 2014

HONG KONG - Since Hong Kong was handed over by the British to China in 1997, the territory's seven million residents have been free to govern themselves with relatively little interference from Beijing. That freedom is now under threat, frustration with Beijing is mounting, and the possibility of violence is growing.

Although Beijing's hand can be felt in many areas, its increasing meddling in local politics is most troubling. The central government had promised Hong Kongers they could directly elect their leader in 2017, but it has yet to approve a process for nominating candidates. Beijing appears to want candidates screened by a Beijing-friendly nomination committee, thus dashing hopes for real electoral choice.

As a result, Hong Kongers are protesting against the central government with more frequency,

segments of the pro-democracy camp are becoming more radicalized, and Beijing's patience is wearing thin. In this atmosphere, physical confrontations between Hong Kongers and the police are more likely.

Should violence break out, China would have an excuse to crack down in Hong Kong, which would be a huge setback for Hong Kongers and the territory's thriving economy - as well as an ominous sign of how China intends to use its influence around the world as it continues its economic surge. Beijing and its local allies must give Hong Kongers more avenues for political participation - or the tension will keep rising. Just as important, the increasing numbers of Hong Kongers who seem intent on confronting Beijing, even if it means resorting to physical clashes with the local police, should re-channel their energies into peaceful protest.

A group of activists is planning for later this year what promises to be a large-scale demonstration for genuine universal suffrage. Known as "Occupy Central," the protest will aim to bring the city's financial center to a standstill through a nonviolent sit-in. According to the research by the Hong Kong Transition Project, two out of five Hong Kongers, despite fears of violence and economic damage, say they will support Occupy Central. Most of these people are under age 30.

But with increasing numbers of Hong Kongers, especially the young, unwilling to compromise on the question of how to nominate candidates for the 2017 election - Beijing wants to approve candidates, the democrats want the public to nominate candidates - the demonstration may very well turn violent.

The roots of frustration in Hong Kong go deeper than the conflict with Beijing over universal suffrage. Economic factors and strains put on Hong Kong's resources by mainland Chinese have fueled discontent in the territory for years. Beijing doesn't have to do much to make this already stressed situation explosive.

The gap between the haves and have-nots has widened over the past 20 years, led by the skyrocketing cost of housing. Mainland Chinese people and their money have pushed up prices in Hong Kong; at the same time, for locals wages have remained relatively low and opportunities scarce. Meanwhile, millions of mainland tourists come to Hong Kong to shop, overwhelming the infrastructure and crowding the streets. Aside from purchasing luxury items and books banned on the mainland, they clear the shelves of foodstuffs that they can be assured are genuine and safe. Baby milk powder, for example, is in such high demand by mainlanders that the Hong Kong government restricted sales to make sure Hong Kong babies had enough to eat. Milk powder is no longer available on open store shelves; one has to purchase it from a locked case.

The current chief executive of Hong Kong, Leung Chun-ying, has made attempts to address some of the economic issues that are fueling the radicalization. He needs to accelerate those programs and take action on the points of conflict with mainlanders.

Mr. Leung tried to tamp down the conflict over the lack of affordable housing by setting aside homes for Hong Kongers only and increasing the taxes on home purchases. Prices have dropped slightly, but the government could also sell some public housing at giveaway prices to lower discontent.

Mr. Leung also needs to address the number of mainland tourists entering Hong Kong. The sheer press of bodies back and forth across the land borders is a stampede waiting to happen. Mainland officials, concerned over congestion and growing conflict with tourists in Hong Kong, appear to be stepping in to control the volumes even if Mr. Leung will not.

Mr. Leung should announce that he will not seek a second term in 2017. That would show that he is acting in good faith to work out a fair system for the election without bias toward his own future. These actions could ease some of the tensions. But ultimately, Beijing needs to resolve Hong Kong's desire for universal suffrage.

Beijing would do well to continue talking about compromising on the question of how to nominate candidates. If the central government can set a moderate tone over the procedures for 2017, like the local government has been trying to do ("Let's Talk and Achieve Universal Suffrage" is the title of the public consultation paper), it will do better in the battle for public opinion. The Hong Kong radicals could then be ostracized by the moderate local democrats.

How Beijing handles Hong Kong's simmering frustrations will be a test of China's intentions and attitudes toward a freer way of life. If China's leaders kill political reform in Hong Kong, they are unlikely to start it on the mainland anytime soon. Nor are they likely to promote or protect such values as they move to replace the United States as the dominant power in Asia.

Michael DeGolyer is director of the Hong Kong Transition Project and professor of government and international studies at Hong Kong Baptist University.

PARTISAN SABOTAGE IN THE SENATE UNPLUGS A USEFUL BILL (WP)

Washington Post, May 15, 2014

TO THOSE who believe that the partisan warfare dominating Congress is merely the result of a healthy clash of ideas, we present to you the sad low point the Senate hit on Monday.

For years, seemingly everyone in Congress has agreed that the country should waste less energy and that the federal government has a larger role to play in promoting efficiency. Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) wrote a modest, bipartisan bill that would help with that. It eschewed radical policy. Lawmakers from both parties got input. Congress-watchers kept the bill on the short list of things legislators might actually manage to send to President Obama. Yet on Monday the bill failed on a largely party-line vote.

That means, for now, that the federal government will not be required to push through upgrades to energy-gobbling computer systems, or to tighten model building codes to reduce the unconscionable amount of energy buildings waste, or to demand that federally backed home mortgages account for energy efficiency in the appraisal and underwriting process. Manufacturers, meanwhile, will not have stronger incentives to use energy-efficient electric motors and transformers.

These failed proposals were timid. A stronger plan would have required states to improve their building codes rather than just give them a better model code from which to work. The bill could also have been more creative: One proposal called for investing in a Race-to-the-Top-style plan that would have encouraged states to compete on energy reductions. Instead, Portman-Shaheen was least-common-denominator policy.

But all the careful watering-down could not save this consensus bill from partisan sabotage. Though many GOP senators had extensive influence on the shape of the bill, Republicans sought to add a slew of energy-related amendments on the floor - on divisive issues such as Environmental Protection Agency rules and natural gas exports. Democrats didn't want to risk dooming the bill by attaching amendments that would have split their caucus or provoked a presidential veto. Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.) refused to allow votes on these sorts of changes. Enough Republicans, including several co-sponsors, bolted from the bill that it failed to obtain the 60 votes necessary to overcome a filibuster.

Mr. Reid should not have denied his fellow senators the opportunity to vote freely on energy policies when considering an energy bill, even if the debate would have been politically inconvenient. But once he refused to allow minority amendments, Republicans should have voted on the merits of the policy before them. Democrats wonder whether Republicans' underlying motivation was to deny Ms. Shaheen an election-year victory. That's very possible, just as it's very possible that Mr. Reid cared more about saving Democrats from taking politically difficult votes than about advancing decent policy. But the other explanation for the GOP's behavior - that Republicans petulantly filibustered after losing a procedural disagreement - is hardly any better.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S SCHOOL-FUNDING GIMMICKRY BUYS A YEAR OF PEACE (WP)

By Editorial Board

Washington Post, May 15, 2014

WITH THE aid of budgetary sleight of hand, Montgomery County has papered over the latest dispute over funding between the County Council, which holds the purse strings, and the school system, which accounts for more than half of the jurisdiction's spending. The school system got every penny of the \$2.3 billion it wanted - but with a catch that protects county taxpayers from a state law that locks in the increase in perpetuity.

The deal resolves for now what has become a venomous, perennial dispute between the county and the schools, the stakes of which have been driven higher by the senseless law, known as maintenance of effort. The law makes it all but impossible for counties to trim education spending during economic downturns - even if they have pumped up school spending in good times.

Understandably, that law - enacted by state legislators at the behest of the teachers union - has made council members in Montgomery extremely wary of exceeding per-pupil minimum spending mandated by Annapolis. Yet the county school system, by far Maryland's largest and one of the

United States' 20 biggest, has kept up the pressure for budget increases that go beyond the state minimums.

When times were flush, Montgomery lavished funding on the schools year after year, to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars in excess of the state-mandated per-pupil minimums. Then the recession hit, and county officials had to battle Annapolis for permission to scale down spending. This year, Schools Superintendent Joshua P. Starr's budget request was almost \$52 million above the state-mandated minimum. That left county officials bristling but nervous about a public brawl in an election year for the local and state legislatures. County Executive Isiah Leggett (D) proposed an increase that gave the schools most of what they wanted - some from the county, the rest from the schools' reserves.

The problem with Mr. Leggett's proposal is that it would set a new spending base from which the county would have trouble retreating in a new recession. Council President Craig Rice (D-Upcounty) rode to the rescue with a counterproposal that delivered the schools' full funding request but did not pad the per-pupil base.

Mr. Rice's method involves pumping up a county pension fund for retired teachers' health benefits, which allowed the schools to channel more of their own budget money for education. Yes, it's gimmickry - but gimmickry that buys another year of relative peace in the county-school funding wars. Mr. Starr, Mr. Leggett, the school board and every member of the county council lined up behind what was essentially a truce.

That's progress. But the fundamental problem remains the maintenance-of-effort law, which needs to be rewritten to allow counties to pare back spending for schools - as they routinely do for other expenses - in a downturn. With that flexibility, counties would be able to do right by schools in good times and protect taxpayers in bad times.

Read more about this issue: The Post's View: Montgomery County schools must attack the achievement gap Karin Chenoweth: Montgomery County schools dance around needed changes Dan Reed: The 'great' Montgomery County schools? Phil Andrews: When will Montgomery County stand up to Annapolis?

MERS IS STILL A MYSTERY VIRUS (WP)

Washington Post, May 15, 2014

SAUDI ARABIA crossed a grim threshold Wednesday, announcing that the number of cases of Middle East respiratory syndrome, caused by a novel coronavirus, has exceeded 500 in the kingdom, with 157 deaths among them. The global number of MERS cases is now more than 570, with two of them recently reported in the United States.

At the same time, the World Health Organization declared that the disease has not yet reached the point of a "public health emergency of international concern." The reason is that experts have not yet detected "evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission" of the kind that could lead to a pandemic. Clearly, there has been some transmission involving people in close contact with victims, such as relatives and health-care workers, but not rapidly and broadly.

The WHO decision should not lead to a sense of complacency; the announcement was studded with warnings.

Far too much is still unknown about this virus and how it works. For example, it appears that one reason for the escalating number of cases in Saudi Arabia in recent weeks was a breakdown in infection control. A visiting WHO team found lapses in such basics as hand washing, gloves and masks. Hospital conditions were "suboptimal." How did the virus spread? Does it survive in the environment? That's an important factor in infection control for any hospital - whether in Jiddah or Orlando - that hasn't been answered.

Yet another big information gap has been the lack of a case-control study, which would compare those infected with a similar group of people that is not. Such a study could go a long way toward helping explain how the virus behaves and the risks of transmission and infection.

Comparing older genetic blueprints with recent ones has led experts to conclude there have not been modifications in the genome of the virus that would allow it to be transmitted from human to human more efficiently than before. That's reassuring, but the key will be a steady stream of genetic sequencing information to keep watch on the unpredictable evolutionary process.

The WHO emphasized that its concern has significantly increased in part because of "critical gaps in information." That is putting it politely. A large share of the responsibility for this black hole must

fall on Saudi Arabia, a closed society where the disease was not met with sufficient urgency for more than a year. While there are now signs of more openness, the world's toolkit for fighting MERS remains rather bare. There is no vaccine or effective antiviral. The WHO called for speeding up critical investigations, including case-control, serological, environmental and animal studies. The kingdom must do everything it can to expedite this vital research. Right now, MERS seems like a nightmare far away from the United States. But it is not. Both infections arrived here being carried by air passengers who passed by hundreds of other people on their journey. The best defense today is a deeper understanding of the virus and its behavior - and the sooner, the better.

AMERICA SHOULD NOT SOFTEN ITS NUCLEAR DEMANDS OF IRAN (WP)

By Michael Singh

Washington Post, May 15, 2014

Michael Singh is managing director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. From 2005 to 2008, he worked on Middle East issues at the National Security Council. He is on Twitter:

@MichaelSinghDC

Nuclear negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 powers - the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and China - resume this week in an atmosphere that is at once hopeful and grave. Officials from both sides have been surprisingly optimistic about their chances of reaching a long-term accord. Yet serious differences reportedly remain, and failure to resolve them would leave both sides to weigh the unpalatable alternatives to a diplomatic resolution.

Failure would be easy to recognize; what success would look like is less clear. Despite U.S. officials' insistence that "no deal is better than a bad deal," they are also keenly aware that promising diplomatic openings with Iran have been few and far between in the past 35 years, and likely worry that Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's ability to withstand domestic opposition to his economic and diplomatic initiatives may be fleeting.

Rouhani's purported weakness is paradoxically a source of Iranian advantage in these negotiations. While no political reformer, he is widely perceived as someone who is serious about resolving the nuclear dispute so that Iran can recover economically. U.S. and European observers hope that a nuclear deal could lead to a broader easing of tensions - though whether this is true is unclear - and conversely worry that failure to reach a deal could fatally undermine that chance.

Rouhani has correspondingly engendered sympathy for his constraints. Indeed, a "good deal" these days is often framed more in terms of Rouhani's capacity to deliver than our own requirements. Issues such as Syria and Iran's missile programs are often dismissed by observers as off the table because they are in the purview not of Rouhani but of the Revolutionary Guards, implying that we are negotiating not with the Iranian regime but merely one faction of it. But softening our nuclear demands in the hope of strengthening Rouhani would be a mistake, for several reasons.

First, a deal must satisfy not only U.S. negotiators but skeptical partners who question the Rouhani narrative and are unwilling to stake their security on it. The most important is Congress, which may refuse to lift sanctions if it believes an agreement leaves Iran with too great a residual nuclear capacity.

The administration could circumvent sanctions through waivers, but banks and others may hesitate to resume business with Iran without regulatory clarity. The crisis would remain unresolved, harming both Rouhani and the United States.

To advance U.S. interests in the Middle East, a deal should also be acceptable to U.S. allies there, for whom Iran's regional activities - which have continued apace under Rouhani - are of greater concern than its nuclear pursuits. If they deem a deal too lenient, these allies could respond both by confronting and accommodating Iran, perhaps simultaneously. They could ramp up sectarian activities or pursue their own nuclear capabilities, even as they cut side deals with Tehran inimical to U.S. desires.

Second, Rouhani may be eclipsed politically rather than strengthened once a nuclear accord is reached. Iranian presidents' power rarely lasts long, and Rouhani's utility to the regime - along with hopes of an easing of U.S.-Iran tensions - may fade once sanctions relief is obtained.

Even if Rouhani hangs on, one should not mistake his desire to ease Iran's isolation for an eagerness to turn westward. Iran will more likely pursue partners it sees as rivals to the United

States or as non-aligned. In recent weeks, Iranian officials have endorsed Russia's position on Ukraine, visited Beijing to pursue deeper military ties and signed a transit agreement with India and Afghanistan as U.S. troops prepare to withdraw from the latter. Combined with increased tensions in traditional U.S. alliances as a result of a nuclear deal with Iran, the effect could be a sharp blow to America's position.

Thus, a weak agreement could prove a strategic setback in the guise of a tactical success. Any accord must be crafted to reassure skeptics and survive a change of leadership or of course in Tehran. Rouhani's presence across the table may make an agreement possible, but it should not dictate the substance of the deal.

The surest way to avoid strategic failure is to insist on strict limits on Iran's nuclear activities and intrusive inspections, and credibly threaten stiff penalties for cheating. But other steps are also important, even if such measures are negotiated.

First, a deal must not only bind Iran's civilian nuclear authorities, but also its security apparatus, which is most likely to spearhead a covert nuclear effort. One way of doing this would be to insist that Iran curtail its missile activity and come clean about its weaponization research, ensuring that Iran's entire nuclear program and not just one element of it is subject to the scrutiny of inspectors. Second, sanctions relief can be phased so that one-off or reversible actions such as unfreezing assets are front-loaded, and less easily reversible steps such as lifting oil and financial sanctions are back-loaded. This would ensure Iran benefits from rolling back its nuclear program while guarding against a hardline resurgence and giving Congress time to judge Tehran's adherence to the deal before voting to remove sanctions.

Finally, the United States should complement nuclear negotiating efforts with an equally energetic campaign to bolster cooperation with our regional allies and counter Iran's support for terrorism and other destabilizing activities. This would ensure that Iran, and especially its hard-liners, continues to pay a high price for those activities, and signal to friends and foes alike that we remain committed to the region.

IS CHINA NO. 1? (WP)

By Robert J. Samuelson

Washington Post, May 15, 2014

It's probable that the U.S. economy is no longer the world's largest. New World Bank figures, notes economist Arvind Subramanian of the Peterson Institute, suggest that sometime in 2014 China will overtake the United States in gross domestic product - the production of goods and services.

We knew this day was coming, but if the World Bank figures are correct, it has arrived sooner than many experts predicted. Using those figures - which stop at 2011 - I estimate that China's GDP in 2014 will hit \$16.8 trillion compared with \$16.1 trillion for the United States. (All these figures are in "constant" 2011 dollars.)

This is a historic milestone, but its immediate significance is limited. It doesn't make the Chinese richer than Americans, because China's GDP is spread across many more people. Per capita GDP, a rough gauge of living standards, is about five times higher in the United States than in China, about \$50,000 per person compared with \$10,000. Similarly, China's status as an economic powerhouse is well established, regardless of whether its GDP exceeds America's or not. In 2012, it became the world's largest trading nation, notes the McKinsey Global Institute. Still, the World Bank figures are fascinating. In 2011, the U.S. economy still was larger than China's. To get my updated estimate for this year, I adjusted both countries' GDPs for economic growth in 2012 and 2013, plus a forecast for 2014. Because China is growing faster than the United States, its GDP overtakes America's in 2014.

These numbers reflect broad trends, because measuring economies at varying stages of development and with separate currencies is difficult. The technique used here (called "purchasing power parity") compares the value of similar items in different countries in an effort to get a common baseline. But huge variations "in tastes, cultures, climate, price structures [and] product availability" complicate the results, notes economist Timothy Taylor. Some economists use exchange rates to make comparisons, but this also involves serious distortions. By the math of exchange rates, China's economy still remains smaller than America's. (Taylor's Web site explains the measurement problems.)

The numbers also raise profound issues. Perhaps the biggest involves the nature of global

geopolitics. The U.S. and Chinese worldviews contrast starkly.

The lesson that Americans drew from the Great Depression and World War II was that U.S. isolationism in the 1920s and the 1930s had contributed to both. Post-World War II American foreign policy has presumed that U.S. leadership is necessary for a more peaceful and prosperous world. The American idea is that if countries could become more like the United States - democratic and affluent - global conflicts would subside. U.S. military power, from the creation of NATO in 1949 to the "war on terrorism," has aimed to minimize security threats to this economic vision.

Unlike the United States, China does not seek to remake the world in its own image. China wants a global system that supports its strong domestic economic growth, which is viewed as crucial to maintaining the Communist Party's grip on power. Export markets should remain open; China should have easy access to the oil, grains and minerals its economy needs. "Beijing still sees its actions and policies from the narrow perspective of national self-interest rather than its role as a leader," writes Cornell University economist Eswar Prasad in the Wall Street Journal. For example, the United States hasn't won much Chinese support in its efforts to curb North Korea's and Iran's nuclear programs.

These two worldviews have coexisted uneasily, but as China becomes more prosperous, the competition is bound to intensify. Economic power - the ability to confer advantages or disadvantages on other countries and to influence global markets and investment flows - is slowly shifting in China's favor. Conflicts seem inevitable.

INDIA SEES HOPE IN A DIVISIVE FIGURE (WP)

By Simon Denyer

Washington Post, May 15, 2014

Simon Denyer, The Post's China bureau chief, has worked for most of the past decade as a journalist in India. He is the author of "Rogue Elephant: Harnessing the Power of India's Unruly Democracy."

On Friday, results are due from the world's largest-ever exercise in democracy. They are expected to elevate one of India's most controversial politicians to its highest executive office: making Narendra Modi prime minister, thereby giving power to a man whose hands carry the nation's hopes of economic revival but also, according to his critics, the blood of 2,000 innocent people. Modi sat on those hands in 2002, when Hindu mobs rampaged through the state of Gujarat for three days in an orgy of violence, rape, arson and murder largely directed against Muslims while, his critics allege, his police force looked on or abetted the killers. As the state's chief minister, he continues to thrive on the prejudices of Gujarati Hindus toward the Muslim minority. How can India, a nation of breathtaking diversity, where people from countless different religions, castes, languages and classes have learned to live together largely in peace, be about to elect such a divisive figure?

The answer lies in the quiet trauma India suffered in the past decade, as the dreams of more than a billion people came crashing down. In 2004, it was on the crest of a wave, a superpower in the making, a nation talked about in the same breath as China, where the middle class flocked to gleaming shopping malls and the young flocked to jobs in IT - a nation that had begun to believe its own hype. Elections that year seemed to promise even greater glory, with the prime minister's office occupied by the very man who, as finance minister, had set the ball rolling in 1991.

Manmohan Singh, India's most honest politician and its most economically qualified, was perfectly placed to help the nation deliver on its abundant promise.

Ten years later, China's economy has gone from strength to strength, while India's has sunk back into the ranks of the also-rans. Beijing wowed the world with the 2008 Olympics, while India's 2010 Commonwealth Games seemed to confirm all the old stereotypes: dirty, corrupt and disorganized. Singh watched impotently as reforms stuttered to a halt, growth slowed and corruption gnawed at the nation's heart. His strengths, his honesty and economic competence, became the mirror images of his government's greatest failings. As if to drive the point home, half the nation was plunged into darkness in the summer of 2012 in the biggest power blackout in global history. In 2004, India had been looking forward to a demographic dividend as hundreds of millions of young people entered the workforce; in 2014, it risks a demographic disaster, if those young people join the growing ranks of the unemployed and the underemployed.

But the past decade also saw a political revival in India, as youth rose up and demanded change. Hundreds of thousands took to the streets to rail against corruption; more protests erupted after the gang rape and murder of a young, middle-class woman in Delhi at the end of 2012. An explosion in 24-hour news television tore down the walls of deference that had sheltered politicians. A Right to Information Act gave the poor masses power to demand accountability from the nation's vast bureaucracy. Even the traditionally apolitical middle class started to demand better governance. In contrast with the West, voter turnout in India is rising.

The likely beneficiary of this democratic awakening is, ironically, a man who seems to set little store in the checks and balances of democracy, a chest-thumping "strongman" who runs a state where dissent is suppressed and the media are cowed.

By voting for Modi, many Indians hope to end years of underachievement under desperately weak leadership. Under his rule, Gujarat's economy has grown more than 10 percent a year and corruption has been kept in check. Poverty has fallen faster than the national average, electricity and clean drinking water are being delivered to villages and girls' dropout rates from school have dropped. It may not be the miracle that some of his supporters pretend, but Modi's economic achievements cannot be brushed aside.

Some Indians voted for Modi hoping that the realities of governing at the head of a coalition government, as leader of a nation and not just a state, will force him to keep his baser instincts in check. To woo them, Modi has attempted an image makeover, recasting himself as a man of humanity and compassion. While the makeover is unconvincing, there remains the possibility that Modi will bend to the realities of national politics.

To many liberal Indians, Modi represents an assault on their nation's founding ideals. Yet to many young people, desperate for opportunities to match their vaulting aspirations, the riots of 2002 seem like the dim and distant past, while Modi's emphasis on governance and development offers hope for a brighter future.

Read more about this issue: The Post's View: Narendra Modi should build on his successes, not prejudicial rhetoric Anne Applebaum: Can Ukraine and India go beyond slogans? Fareed Zakaria: The Indian Spring Miranda Kennedy: How India's rapid changes are putting women at risk The Post's View: A political divide revealed by a diplomat's arrest

JILL ABRAMSON 'UNEXPECTEDLY' OUT AT NEW YORK TIMES (WP)

Washington Post, May 14, 2014

New York Times Executive Editor Jill Abramson is "unexpectedly" leaving her post after leading the paper for 2 1/2 years, the Times reported this afternoon.

Senior editors at the newspaper were informed of the news at a 2 p.m. meeting, according to Politico reporter Dylan Byers. Her replacement, Managing Editor Dean Baquet, addressed the newsroom about 30 minutes later, according to posts to Twitter from Times journalists. Baquet is the first African-American executive editor of the New York Times.

Abramson has served as the paper's first female executive editor, a tenure that has received no small amount of scrutiny. A story in Politico last year said that she was on the "verge" of losing newsroom support. Though Abramson indeed alienated some co-workers with her management style, she also presided over the newspaper at a time of massive change: There were buyouts, a masthead trimming, a move toward video storytelling, just to name a few.

Stormy times aside, the move caught not only a universe of media watchers by surprise, but also the New York Times. In a spot news piece on the development, New York Times reporter Ravi Somaiya wrote, "The reasons for the switch were not immediately clear."

Jeff Zeleny, an ABC News Senior Washington Correspondent who left the New York Times under Abramson's reign, tweeted:

Abramson had this to say in a statement: "I've loved my run at The Times. I got to work with the best journalists in the world doing so much stand-up journalism. Holding powerful institutions accountable is the mission of The Times and the hallmark of my time as executive editor, whether stories about China, government secrecy, or powerful figures and corporations."

Arthur Sulzberger Jr., the publisher of the Times, said this about Baquet: "There is no journalist in our newsroom or elsewhere better qualified to take on the responsibilities of executive editor at this time than Dean Baquet. He is an exceptional reporter and editor with impeccable news judgment who enjoys the confidence and support of his colleagues around the world and across

the organization."

The news was tightly held within the gossip confines of the Times newsroom. It was only after the meeting among top editors had convened that the New York Times communications department informed the paper's own reporters that a management change was underway, according to a source at the paper. That was about a half-hour before the official announcement.

That the news took staffers by surprise surfaced on Twitter:

Bill Keller preceded Abramson as executive editor and served for eight years in the position. In a very brief chat with the Erik Wemple Blog this afternoon, Keller said he's following the news "just like you." "These are two people who are really good friends of mine. I don't know what happened. I'm sad for Jill and hope for the best for Dean." Keller now serves as editor of the Marshall Project, a nonprofit news site on criminal justice.

Before catching on with the Marshall Project, Keller served as a columnist for the paper - just the sort of emeritus role that top newsroom leaders often slide into after running the beast for a number of years. Abramson, however, isn't doing any such thing. She is out the door. "She's left the Times," says New York Times spokeswoman Eileen Murphy. "She's not here." Murphy declined to comment on whether the clean break was the decision of Abramson, Sulzberger or a mutual thing.

Such arrangements would have been a good question for New York Times staffers to pose to Sulzberger, who addressed the newsroom at a 2:30 p.m. all-staff get-together. But Sulzberger didn't take questions, as Murphy confirms. The newsroom is a sprawling place. "It's not the appropriate forum for question-taking," says Murphy.

Here's the text of Sulzberger's remarks to the newsroom:

Thank you all for gathering here on such short notice.

We are announcing right now, as we speak that Dean Baquet is our new executive editor.

So before I go further, let me take a moment to celebrate Dean. He is, without question, one of our finest. He spent a good part of his career with us in the 90s, first as an investigative reporter and later as our national editor before leaving for the LA Times, where he rather famously - heroically even - took a stand for maintaining a robust newsroom - a position that ended up costing him his job as executive editor.

Their loss was our gain as he returned in 2007 as Washington bureau chief before Jill named him managing editor almost three years ago.

It is my great honor today to appoint Dean as our new executive editor.

I will come back to Dean in a moment and you will hear from him as well. But first, let me try to answer a question that I am sure is on all your minds. What happened with Jill? Why this change? I'll start by saying what this is not about.

It is not about the quality of our journalism, which in my mind has never been better.

Jill did an outstanding job in preserving and extending the level of excellence of our news report during her time as executive editor and, before that, as managing editor and Washington bureau chief. She's an accomplished journalist who contributed mightily to our reputation as the world's most important news provider.

Further, this is not about any disagreement over the direction of our digital future or any of the steps we have taken recently to create and launch new digital products and services.

Jill and I agreed fundamentally about the need to embrace new platforms and new expressions of our journalism. She helped a great deal in moving The Times further into our digital future. She was an enthusiastic supporter of The UpShot, NYTNOW, our soon-to-debut Cooking app and NYT5, among many other items in development.

This is also not about any sort of disagreement between the newsroom and the business side over the critical principle of an independent newsroom.

While we are all working more collaboratively, there is no one in the leadership of this Company - from me and Mark on down - who disagrees with the idea that our newsroom must remain independent with editorial decisions resting with the executive editor.

Rather, I choose to appoint a new leader for our newsroom because I believe that new leadership will improve some aspects of the management of the newsroom.

You will understand that there is nothing more I am going to say about this, but I want to assure all of you that there is nothing more at issue here.

We're in a terrific position to move forward. Both Jill and Dean were closely involved in the work of

our newsroom innovation team over the past six months and Dean and I are in agreement that we need to proceed on many of their recommendations to best position us for future success. I am entirely confident that Dean - along with all of you - will build upon that foundation. Now, let's turn this back to Dean. A nicer guy, you will not find, but that isn't what brought him to this point.

Bill Keller once said of Dean that he possesses "infectious enthusiasm and aggressive intelligence." I agree.

Combine that with a passion for journalism, investigative and otherwise; a fierce loyalty to the editors and reporters he leads; and a competitive spirit that inspires all around him to do better. That's Dean Baquet, the executive editor of The New York Times.

Dean Baquet's remarks to the newsroom:

May 14, 2014

It is humbling to be asked to lead the only newsroom in the country that is actually better than it was a generation ago, a newsroom that approaches the world with wonder and ambition every day.

A newsroom that exposes a bad cop and gets two people out of jail. A newsroom that breaks stories about the actions of government spies on the same day it crashes an elegant book review. A newsroom where Adam Nossiter visits a village in Africa to capture the grief of mothers whose daughters have been stolen.

A newsroom that produces photography reminiscent of the old Life magazine. A newsroom that can publish something as knockout-beautiful as T, on the same day it chronicles upheaval in the Ukraine.

A newsroom that produces a print and web report of great style and design. A newsroom that decided it should do video, and went out and won awards for it.

A newsroom that is reinventing the journalism of precision with the Upshot and is already rebuilding itself for the mobile world.

There are too many people for me to thank for this 40-year career, too many people who helped support a young black southerner whose parents had only grade-school educations and who became addicted to newspapers through the daily accounts of the ups and downs - mostly downs - of the fledgling New Orleans Saints.

But let me thank a few people.

First and foremost, there is Arthur Sulzburger, who is most responsible for preserving this newsroom. Before I came back to the Times eight years ago, I fought with my heart and my soul to protect another newsroom that I loved. So I treasure the opportunity to work with a great publisher who understands we are more than a business and who values an independent-minded editor with a history of pushing back.

I owe Jill Abramson a tremendous amount. She made me her partner for three years and taught me the value of great ambition and what she always called the great backstory. I will miss her. She made the paper better, which is the greatest testament one can pay to any editor.

I am indebted to Janet Elder, who secretly runs the joint, and to a masthead Jill and I built together and that I will call upon to help me guide the paper.

I am indebted to Joe Lelyveld, who taught me to put the paper first, and to John Carroll, who taught me that great editors can be humane. They are the two greatest editors of a generation.

I would like to thank Andy Rosenthal, who believe it or not edited my last investigative story - the story of Hillary Clinton's fortuitous commodities trade - and who has been a great friend across the divide.

I'd also like to thank Dylan Landis. It helps to have a writer in the house, one who has taught me there is sometimes more to learn from great fiction.

Mostly I thank the journalists of The New York Times - the reporters, editors, copy editors, producers, designers, photographers, videographers and graphics artists - who make this the greatest news operation in history.

Arthur, Bill, Jill and John Geddes propelled us toward a digital future. But we still have much work to do. As you know, a committee of the newsroom's brightest came back with many recommendations for maximizing our digital report. I embrace those recommendations fully, and bringing them to fruition will be one of our primary goals of the year.

But tucked inside that report was one great lesson that we should never forget - our journalism

rocks. Our job is to make sure everybody gets a chance to see it.

At this point there is no secret to the kinds of stories I love. I spent my career as an investigative reporter, so I value the hardest-hitting work.

Scoops reign. So in an age when readers have more freedom to pick and choose, we have to be first. But just as valuable is the fresh thought from Adam Liptak or James Stewart or Andrew Sorkin.

Lest you think that means a future of only hard news, know that nothing distinguishes The Times more than its critics, and its feature and culture sections.

Nothing lifts our pages like a Kimmelman, Kakutani, Cotter, Smith, Garner, or Maslin review. Or a Vogel-Flynn scoop on the art world. And rebuilding our Sunday magazine will be one of the great joys of our year.

Of course we will announce some changes in the coming weeks. But for now

I'd like to leave you with a few promises. I will listen hard. I will be hands-on, engaged, will walk the room. That's the only way I know how to edit.

Let's take risks, and not beat each other up when we fail. Let's work together, but not get paralyzed by guessing what Dean or anyone else wants. Give it a shot. We will commit big ambitious journalism every day. And we will have an absolute utter unadulterated blast while doing it.

THOMAS PIKETTY IDENTIFIES AN IMPORTANT ILL OF CAPITALISM BUT NOT ITS CURE (WP)

By Charles Lane

Washington Post, May 15, 2014

The year 2014 marks the 50th anniversary of the Beatles' arrival in the United States. The Allies liberated Paris 70 years ago. And, of course, it's been 135 years since "Progress and Poverty," by the American journalist Henry George, was published in 1879.

What's that? Never heard of George or his treatise on the causes of inequality? It sold 3 million copies. Perhaps you missed "Progress and Poverty's" anniversary while perusing this year's equally improbable bestseller, "Capital in the Twenty-First Century" by French economist Thomas Piketty.

With its sweeping review of historical data, culminating in a warning about capitalism's inexorable, destabilizing, tendency toward inequality - to be cured by a global wealth tax - Piketty's book has earned comparisons with "Das Kapital," by Karl Marx.

Yet Piketty's project may have more in common with George's book than Marx's, and not only because each tome reached U.S. readers six years after a ruinous financial crisis - the Panic of 1873 for George, the 2008 collapse of Lehman Brothers for Piketty.

Analyzing the stagnant economy and rich-poor gap of his day, George blamed not free markets, which he considered efficient and fair, but their corruption by a privileged few.

Specifically, George argued, land owners commanded a high and growing share of U.S. income even though their claim to it was based on something as unproductive as mere ownership - as opposed to the laborer's work effort or the investor's risk-taking.

For George, the solution was to abolish all taxes except a "single tax" on the value of land. Since land could neither be created nor destroyed, taxing it would reduce neither society's total wealth nor owners' incentives to put property to productive use - buildings and other improvements wouldn't be taxed.

To the contrary, taxing land, and only land, to pay the government's bills would liberate labor and capital to seek their most productive use and thus to grow the economy. A huge source of unearned wealth would be curbed, if not eliminated. Capitalism would be redeemed and democracy saved.

"It is not enough that men and women should vote," George wrote (including a gender that could not, at that time, cast ballots). "They must have liberty to avail themselves of the opportunities and means of life; they must stand on equal terms with reference to the bounty of nature. . . . This is the lesson of the centuries. Unless its foundations be laid in justice, the social structure of the United States or any other country cannot stand."

Similarly, Piketty's concern about the tendency of the return on capital (which he defines to include real estate as well as financial wealth) to exceed economic growth is essentially a worry about

growing unearned claims on society's resources.

To Piketty, like George an admirer of market efficiency and opponent of protectionism, the resulting accumulation of wealth in relatively few hands threatens economic fairness, economic dynamism - and democracy. "Extreme inequality makes it impossible to have proper working of democratic institutions," Piketty told a recent meeting at Washington's Urban Institute.

And so, updating Henry George's single tax, Piketty proposes a global wealth tax, making similar claims about its benefits for both equality and growth.

For Piketty and George, the bottom line, both moral and economic, is to socialize "rent" - rent, that is, not in the colloquial sense but in the economic sense of income disconnected from productivity. It's an attractive vision: an egalitarian, productive society, purged of parasitical rent-seeking through the expedient of well-aimed taxes.

Alas, Piketty's global wealth tax and George's single tax suffer from the same defect, and it's not political impracticality - after all, George nearly got himself elected mayor of New York City in 1886.

It's the inherent difficulty of separating the productive, untaxed component of the return on land or capital from the unproductive, taxed part.

Clear in the pages of a treatise, the distinction is murkier in practice. The market price of a vacant lot can reflect potential productive uses, as well as the risk a buyer takes by betting on them. A similar analysis applies to the rate of return on capital.

As a result, it's hard to devise a tax on wealth that raises a significant amount of revenue but doesn't discourage at least some socially beneficial saving or entre-pre-neur-ship. The potential for adverse unintended consequences - economic and political - is greater than Piketty seems to realize.

Great private fortunes can indeed entitle their owners to an undue share of society's current income and political power. At times, however, private wealth can serve as a font of charity or, indeed, a bulwark against government overreach.

We've been debating the right balance since the 19th century and probably will be long after the 21st.

THE TWO GOP ESTABLISHMENTS (WP)

By E.J. Dionne Jr.

Washington Post, May 15, 2014

The language commonly used to describe the battle going on inside the Republican Party is wrong and misleading. The fights this spring are not between "the grass roots" and "the establishment" but between two establishment factions spending vast sums to gain the upper hand.

Their confrontation has little to do with the long-term philosophical direction of the GOP. Very rich ideological donors, along with tea party groups, have been moving the party steadily rightward. Political correctness of an extremely conservative kind now rules.

This explains the indigestion some Republican politicians are experiencing as they are forced to eat old words acknowledging a human role in climate change. It's why party leaders keep repeating the word "Benghazi" as a quasi-religious incantation, why deal-making with President Obama is verboten and why they stick with their "repeal Obamacare" fixation.

The accounts of Tuesday's Republican primary in Nebraska for an open U.S. Senate seat are revealing. Ben Sasse, a university president who held a variety of jobs in George W. Bush's administration, won it handily. His success was broadly taken as a triumph for the tea party, which just a week ago was said to have suffered a defeat in North Carolina. There, Thom Tillis, the speaker of the state House of Representatives and the so-called establishment candidate, faced opponents perceived to be to his right. Yet Tillis will be one of the most right-wing candidates on any ballot this fall.

The more instructive way to look at the Nebraska result was suggested by a Wall Street Journal report on the outcome by Reid Epstein. Sometimes, news stories are like good poems that convey meaning through artful - if not always intentional - juxtaposition.

Epstein noted that Sasse was "backed by more than \$2.4 million in ad spending, either praising him or attacking his opponents, from organizations such as the small-government Club for Growth and the Senate Conservatives Fund, which targets Republicans it deems insufficiently conservative."

Yet in the very next paragraph, Epstein quoted a Facebook post from Sen. Ted Cruz, the tea party hero who supported Sasse. The Texas Republican declared that "Ben Sasse's decisive victory is a clear indication that the grass roots are rising up to make D.C. listen."

So, is this really the grass roots speaking to Washington? Or is it more accurately seen as a cadre of conservative groups, largely working out of Washington, rising up with a ton of cash to persuade voters to listen to them? It's hard to see Nebraska's primary as a mass revolt. The Nebraska secretary of state's Web site reported Wednesday morning that primary turnout (in both parties) came to 316,124 out of 1,152,180 registered Nebraskans. Sasse won with around 110,000 votes. The grass-roots claim becomes more problematic when you consider that Sasse has rather a lot of Washington experience while one of his opponents, former state treasurer Shane Osborn, was the favorite of many Nebraska tea party groups. As Jim Newell noted in an insightful piece in Salon, FreedomWorks, one of the Washington-based operations that latched onto the tea party early, initially endorsed Osborn but switched to Sasse. The stated reason for the turnabout was the support Osborn got from Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell who, for the time being, is cast by some on the right as an enemy.

Needless to say, the local tea party faithful who preferred Osborn resented the machinations of the big money groups headquartered in the nation's capital, whose competition resembles nothing so much as a "Game of Thrones" power struggle.

As for Sasse, his victory speech, as the conservative blogger Matt Lewis pointed out, made him sound more like the next Jack Kemp, the late conservative famed for his compassionate inclinations, than the hard-edged Cruz. Sasse's triumph reflected his skill at bringing the two GOP establishments together - he's the George W. guy with Harvard and Yale degrees whom Sarah Palin liked. The 42-year-old is on the verge of becoming the GOP's next new thing.

Thanks to Supreme Court decisions opening the way for unlimited and often anonymous campaign contributions, we are entering a time when "follow the money" is the proper rubric for understanding the internal dynamics of the Republican Party. Washington-based groups tied to various conservative interests and donors will throw their weight around all over the country, always claiming to speak for those "grass roots." Primary voters will be left with a choice between two establishments that, in the end, differ little on what they would do with power.

THE EFFECT OF ONE-PARTY RULE (WP)

By George F. Will

Washington Post, May 15, 2014

Democracy can be cruel because elections deprive the demos of the delight of alibis and the comfort of complaining. Illinois voters have used many elections to make theirs the worst-governed state, with about \$100 billion in unfunded public pension promises and \$6.7 billion in unpaid bills. The state is a stark illustration of the effect of prolonged one-party rule, conducted by politicians subservient to government employees unions.

A new Gallup poll shows that Illinois has the highest percentage - 50 percent - of residents who want to leave their state. If Illinois voters reelect Gov. Pat Quinn, they will reject Bruce Rauner, who vows to change the state's fundamental affliction - its political culture.

The state's strongest civic tradition is of governors going to jail. Four of the last nine have done so. Lt. Gov. Quinn ascended to the governorship in 2009 because Gov. Rod Blagojevich, of fragrant memory, tried to sell the Senate seat Barack Obama vacated. In 2010, Quinn defeated a downstate social conservative by 32,000 votes out of 3.7 million cast. Quinn's job approval today is about 35 percent.

Rauner, born a few blocks from Wrigley Field, grew up in a Chicago suburb - his father was an electrical engineer at Motorola; his mother was a nurse. He attended Dartmouth, earned a Harvard MBA and joined the private-equity firm GTCR, where he made enough money to buy his nine homes. When a reporter asked him if he is among the 1 percent, he cheerfully replied, "Oh, I'm probably .01 percent," an answer that was better arithmetic than politics.

Rauner spent \$6.5 million of his own money in winning the Republican primary, partly because Democratic-aligned unions spent millions trying to pick Quinn's opponent - attacking Rauner and supporting one of his GOP rivals. Quinn is, as Winston Churchill reportedly said of an adversary, a modest man with much to be modest about. Hence Quinn's campaign theme: Don't compare me to the Almighty; compare me to the alternative.

Concerning social issues, which energize much of the Republican base but repel many suburban voters in the "collar counties" around Chicago, Rauner is impeccably prudent, meaning disengaged. Abortion, he says, is "a tragedy" best left to women, not government. Gay marriage? Let each state decide by referendum "that particular contract between adults."

Quinn, unable to work the "war on women" trope, must rely on contemporary liberalism's only other idea, rage against the rich. But this becomes awkward.

Rauner's support for more charter schools and school-choice voucher programs is one reason why he has been endorsed by the Rev. James Meeks, pastor for 15,000 members of the South Side's Salem Baptist Church, Illinois's largest black church. And one reason the teachers unions oppose him with ferocious disparagement of his wealth.

Which is amusing. Since 2000, the Teachers' Retirement System, Illinois's largest pension program, has invested \$120 million with GTCR and reaped an average annual return of 25 percent, much better than TRS's other private-equity investments. For Karen Lewis, head of the Chicago Teachers Union, it suffices to say that Rauner is a "millionaire capitalist." He replies, "Teachers hired me for years." Public pension funds are by far the largest funders of private equity firms.

Illinois's rate of population growth is the sixth-lowest among the states, and its 8.4 percent unemployment rate is exceeded only by Rhode Island's, another Democratic-dominated state, and Nevada's. Michigan's unemployment rate, the Midwest's second-highest, is nearly a full point lower than Illinois's. Bewildered liberals will say the state's stagnation is "despite" Democrats having raised the corporate tax rate from 7.3 percent to 9.5 percent and imposing a "temporary" income tax rate increase from 3 percent to 5 percent. Now, unsurprisingly, Quinn proposes making the temporary increase permanent. Two contiguous states with Republican governors - Michigan and Indiana - have cut corporate taxation.

"Cleanliness," says Rauner, quoting former Illinois governor Adlai Stevenson, "is next to godliness, except in the Illinois legislature, where it is next to impossible." Governors come and go in Springfield but state legislators linger, and real power resides in the speaker of the House, Michael Madigan (D), who has been a legislator since Richard Nixon was president (1971). Rauner helped to finance the gathering of signatures to get term limits for state legislators on the November ballot, thereby energizing the huge majority that favors limits. Illinois voters can choose Rauner and term limits or the acceleration of stagnation and the end of the pleasure of complaining.

CHRIS CHRISTIE PLAYS THE BLAME GAME (WP)

By Dana Milbank

Washington Post, May 15, 2014

Chris Christie's presidential prospects are sagging - and it has nothing to do with those steel cables spanning the Hudson River.

The sprawling controversy, which began with bridge lane closures in Fort Lee, N.J., to punish a political foe, has given the governor a reputation for running New Jersey in a vindictive and even thuggish manner. But this would hurt him less in the 2016 Republican presidential primaries than the loss of the central rationale for his potential candidacy: that he returned New Jersey to fiscal health.

CBS News's Bob Schieffer, assigned to interview Christie onstage Wednesday at the Peter G. Peterson Foundation's annual "fiscal summit" in Washington, laid out the bad news: \$807 million budget shortfall; downgrades by credit-rating agencies; worry that the state can't pay its pension obligations; and slow job growth.

"Not so long ago, people were talking about the New Jersey miracle," the genial newsman said.

"Now suddenly the news is not so good about New Jersey."

Christie did what any strong leader would do when presented with such facts: He blamed the economists. "They overestimated our revenue," he said. "When I asked them, 'How could you be so wrong?' " he added, "they said, 'We just missed it.' You know, the great thing about economists is that's all they have to say: 'Governor, I'm sorry, we missed it.' Yeah, I'm sure you are, but I'm the one who has to fix your miss."

It was eerily similar to Christie's response to the bridge controversy: He was blameless. His staff let him down.

And what about the \$1.6 billion pension-plan payment the state may not be able to make? Christie

couldn't blame the economists - so he blamed his predecessors. "A billion of it is for the unaccrued liability that my predecessors didn't pay for increased benefits," he explained. "Christie Whitman, Jim McGreevey, Dick Codey, Jon Corzine made no pension payments. None. Zero."

This was not helping Christie's image as a straight shooter. "Bob keeps asking me these questions as if I'm actually going to answer them," the governor said when Schieffer had the nerve to inquire about how Christie would pay the pension liability. "You're ruining my reputation."

It was bad luck that Christie's fiscal crisis had climaxed just as he gave a highly billed address to the fiscal summit. But for the governor, the bad luck keeps coming. The speaker immediately before Christie was Bill Clinton, who was folksy and funny as he rebutted questions raised about his wife's health by Karl Rove.

PBS's Gwen Ifill, Clinton's interviewer, asked about the suggestion by "Dr. Rove" that Hillary Rodham Clinton had suffered a brain injury.

"Consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds," the former president joked. "First they said she faked her concussion, and now they say she's auditioning for a part on 'The Walking Dead.'"

Clinton, who had to know that his wife's health would come up, had a few more lines prepared.

"Now they say she's really got brain damage," he said. "If she does, I must be in really tough shape because she's still quicker than I am."

Six months ago, Christie and Hillary Clinton were in strong positions to be their respective parties' 2016 standard bearers. But the divergence in fortunes since then could be seen in the postures and presentations of the governor and the former president Wednesday.

Clinton, legs crossed, chin on fist, seemed to be enjoying himself as he defended his wife's handling of the Benghazi attacks as secretary of state. "Hillary did what she should have done," the former commander in chief said, floating a possible counterattack: "Most Americans don't even know how many American diplomatic personnel were killed when President Bush was president." Christie, by contrast, sat gripping the armrests, his feet planted on the floor, frequently straightening his tie. When Schieffer asked about "Bridgegate," Christie suddenly became interested in his coffee mug, holding it upside down to show that it was empty. "It's a prop, obviously," Christie said.

What impact would the bridge flap have on his political future? "I think it will have none because I didn't do anything," Christie said, blaming the "circus" of Washington. "A couple of staff people do something that they shouldn't have done, I fire them, and all of a sudden this becomes the biggest story in the country for a couple of months," he said, "because I guess you guys weren't doing anything else down here."

Christie dismissed the bridge as "a footnote," and he returned to the topic of New Jersey's finances. "My future is going to be based upon the record" of his fiscal management, he said. That's the problem.

Twitter: @Milbank

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES:

CAREY'S POLICE MEDDLING WILL COST DOVER \$300,000 (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 14, 2014

Dover will pay five high-ranking police officers a total of \$300,000 in a settlement that stems from complaints that former Mayor Carleton Carey violated employment and affirmative action policies and abused his authority by influencing the appointment of a deputy police chief.

The settlement agreement authorized by the City Council came after council members pressured Carey to resign last month over the five grievances. The complaints were filed shortly after he selected police Chief Paul Bernat to replace former chief James Hosfelt.

The officers claim that Carey, who has the power to select the city's top cop, influenced Bernat's decision to choose then-Lt. Marvin Mailey as his deputy.

The officers claim they were passed over because of race, and that Carey's influence was unprecedented. Mailey, the former head of the internal affairs unit, is African American. Four of the officers were Caucasian, and one was bi-racial, according to the settlement agreement.

The city, already facing a nearly \$7 million deficit over several years, now must find the money to pay the settlement.

Four officers - Capt. Tim Stump, Lts. Dan McKeown, Jason Pires and J. Eric Richardson - will receive \$50,000 each by the end of May. Capt. Robert Scott will be paid \$100,000, half by the end of this month, the other half in January 2015.

The payments may come from the city's budget, but officials are exploring whether the city's insurance will cover the settlement, Council President David Bonar said.

Council members reviewed the grievances in April and serious questions arose about whether Carey exceeded his authority and "orchestrated a series of events" to ensure Mailey was elevated to deputy chief.

They asked Carey to resign because of the city's potential exposure. A plan to shift oversight of the police department from mayor to the city manager was in the works well before the grievances were filed, Bonar said.

"The only thing we were told was that it was the chief's impression that he had kind of put him in the position where he was forced to hire someone else other than the people who filed the grievance," Bonar said.

Carey, in an interview Wednesday, denied the allegations. He said the only thing he did was appoint a police chief. The chief can appoint whomever he likes, Carey said.

"My goal was to do the best I could for the citizens of Dover. That's what I wanted to do, was willing to do and I have done," Carey said. "I certainly would have liked to continue."

He had no idea that council would speak publicly about the events. "I denied the accusations. That's as much as I could do," he said. "I just didn't think I should get involved in fighting the allegations at that point."

Dover's Police Department has faced controversy in the past year, with authorities still probing Cpl. Thomas Webster's Aug. 24 arrest of Lateef Dickerson on assault and other charges.

A Kent County Superior Court grand jury recently reviewed claims of police brutality after the department forwarded the matter to the state Attorney General's Office, but did not issue an indictment.

The incident prompted outcry from the city's African-American community and relations have been tense in the past few years, the state's president of the NAACP has said.

Officials said they are behind Bernat, Mailey and the rest of the department.

Contact Jon Offredo at (302) 678-4271 or at joffredo@delawareonline.com or on Twitter @jonoffredo.

BILL WOULD PERMIT POSSESSION OF HEROIN OVERDOSE DRUG (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 14, 2014

The Delaware Senate will consider a bill that makes a drug available without a prescription that supporters argue will save the life of someone overdosing on heroin or other opioids.

The legislation, which cleared a Senate committee Wednesday, allows Delaware's Department of Health and Social Services to distribute Naloxone without a prescription and at little or no cost to anyone who completes a training program. Officials say the legislation is a tool to combat the growing heroin and opioid epidemic facing the state.

"This legislation will save lives," said the bill's sponsor Sen. Bethany Hall-Long, D-Middletown.

Delaware law currently allows friends and family members to purchase the drug when a prescription is written for a person with the addiction. One brand of the drug, Narcan, is available as a nasal spray. In April, the Food and Drug Administration approved an autoinjector-like device for administration of the drug, but the cost of it is unknown.

It could have saved David Humes's son, Greg, who died of an overdose in 2012. Humes remembers police telling him that his son could have survived if the state had a 911 Good Samaritan or Narcan law.

He lives those words every day of his life, he told the Senate Health and Social Services Committee on Wednesday. Gov. Jack Markell signed the Samaritan law last year.

"Time matters. Give other parents a life-saving tool that I didn't have," he said.

It's not clear how the community-based training program would work, but officials from DHSS are looking at best practices across the nation, said Debbie Gottschalk, the department's chief policy adviser.

The idea is to get the drug in the hands of more people who are likely to come across overdoses, whether they are community group members, friends or family members, Gottschalk said. Training

is needed to help people understand how to administer the medicine, she added. For Diann Jones, of Middletown, the legislation offers peace of mind. Her daughter, 22, has been in and out of treatment for heroin and opioid addiction in the past two years. It's a constant struggle to fight the disease, but the legislation would allow her to help immediately, even if her daughter didn't seek a prescription, she said. They recently took a drive to North Carolina, but she would have been powerless if the worst had happened.

"I have no idea what I would have done," she said.

Emergency Medical Service units in Delaware have administered Naloxone for several years now and 900 unresponsive people were given the drug in 2013. Three hundred were revived, but it is unknown how many had overdosed on opioids.

A pilot project started in March that allows Basic Life Support units to carry the drug in high heroin use areas has already seen results. Units have administered it five times, reviving three people. The drug is administered before police officers arrive at the scene in the vast majority of instances where emergency responders use it.

The legislation provides a front-line defense to a heroin and opioid epidemic, said Joe Connor, president of Addictions Coalition Delaware. Treatment for addiction comes in many forms: abstinence, medicine, education.

"This is kind of the 911 of treatment," he said. "It brings someone back from an overdose and gives them another opportunity to get treatment."

Contact Jon Offredo at (302) 678-4271 or at joffredo@delawareonline.com or on Twitter @jonoffredo.

SMYRNA RECEIVES SPARKLING START (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 14, 2014

SMYRNA - John Richardson pitched nine innings against Salesianum on Saturday.

Photo Gallery: Smyrna 3, A.I. du Pont 1

Prep Notes: Several spring tournament fields set

The Smyrna right-hander won that one, and he had plenty left against A.I. du Pont on Wednesday. Richardson pitched a two-hitter, and the Eagles scored all of their runs in the first two innings and held on for a 3-1 victory over the third-ranked Tigers.

Last SlideNext Slide

"Mostly, I just couldn't let the team down," Richardson said. "I wanted to keep going. We're kind of underestimated in the state, and we've put ourselves on the map. I didn't want to give up on the team."

Richardson said he had all four pitches - fastball, curveball, changeup and slider - working well. He was far from overpowering (only two strikeouts), but kept the ball so low the Tigers would have been better off swinging 4-irons.

"He's a bulldog," Smyrna coach Mike Henderson said. "He's not your typical No. 1 [starter]. He's not going to some big college like a lot of people's No. 1s. But he pitched well against St. Mark's, beat Salesianum, beat A.I. du Pont, beat Polytech - all top-notch teams."

The Eagles (14-4) loaded the bases with no outs in the first, as Corey Everage was hit by a pitch and Ryan Seymour and Jared Gillis followed with singles. Everage scored on an error, and Nick Macey lifted a sacrifice fly to left to score Seymour for a 2-0 lead.

Smyrna hit the board again in the second when Justin Jones was hit by a pitch, scooted to second on an error and scored on a single by Everage.

That was all Richardson (5-2) needed, although he ran into trouble in the fourth. Matthew Geist and Peter Gillette singled, and the Tigers loaded the bases with no outs when Geist beat the throw to third on a sacrifice bunt by Kyle Phillips. But Richardson coaxed a 6-4-3 double play that allowed one run to score, and got out of the jam when A.I.'s Cory Alaburda lined out to third.

"Spot the ball, and good defense," Richardson said. "That's all you need."

Richardson got five groundball outs in the next two innings, then received a huge boost when Smyrna left fielder Justin Jones made a sliding, shoestring catch in the seventh.

"His efficiency is just ridiculous," Henderson said. "He averages 13 pitches per inning. We wouldn't be here without him."

The Tigers pitched three straight shutouts against Concord, Glasgow and Appoquinimink last

week, but lost their second straight after falling to Hodgson 7-2 on Monday.

"We've just run into some bad luck the last week and a half or so. We haven't been able to swing the sticks," A.I. coach Darren Brodie said. "We've faced some really good pitching. Their kid on the mound was outstanding. He did his job."

Contact Brad Myers at (302) 324-2807 or bmyers@delawareonline.com

NAACP REMARKS 'NOT BEING RACIST,' WILSON SAYS (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 14, 2014

Sam Wilson says he regrets nothing.

On Tuesday, he was called a "racist and a bigot," among other things, after he took issue with the word "colored" in the NAACP's name at the weekly Sussex County Council meeting.

His comments drew strong responses. A colleague on Council said Wilson showed "poor judgment."

"People are hung up too much on who they are or what color they are. I don't get hung up on it,"

Wilson said Wednesday. "It's certainly not being racist to ask the question."

Wilson touched off the controversy when he objected to giving a county grant to the Lower Sussex Branch NAACP Youth Council.

"I'm not going to give anything. Unless you can describe what that says," he told a county staffer who was reciting to Council which organizations were asking for grants this week. "What's NAACP stand for?"

The group's acronym stands for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Wilson, in the Council meeting, indicated the phrase "colored people" signified the NAACP must be involved in "discrimination."

Vance Phillips, another councilman, said he agreed with Wilson and would not give the Youth Council any money from his discretionary fund either.

On Wednesday, amplifying comments, Wilson said he believed the NAACP advocated only for black people to the exclusion of white people.

"How do you think it would fly if I said, 'This is for the NAAWP?' I don't think it would fly, either,"

Wilson said. "It's not my goal to say the blacks are over there and the whites are over here. That's not what I want to do and I didn't intend to do that."

The history of the NAACP is not of a blacks-only club. Started in 1909 to combat lynchings, the group was founded by several dozen people, only seven of whom were African-American.

Its first president was a white lawyer, Moorfield Storey. One of the best-known black activists of the time, W.E.B. DuBois, was the only black member of the original board of directors. All of the group's executives in the modern era have been black.

"The councilman is incorrect in his assumption that the NAACP is an organization that would reject anyone from joining because of race," said Jotaka Eaddy, senior director of the group's voting rights project. "Anyone who wants to work with us toward our mission, we're ready and willing to work with them."

Wilson, a Republican and farmer of land just outside Georgetown, said he's had only supportive calls and messages from constituents about his comments.

"I've had people call me who said that I said the right thing, asked the right questions. I've never had people call who disagreed," he said. "I know a lot of black folks who would probably agree with me."

Richard Smith, president of the Delaware chapter of the NAACP, said Tuesday that Wilson and Phillips "seem to be racists and bigots" after he heard the exchange.

Of that criticism, Wilson said: "To be honest with you, he's more of a racist and a bigot than I am."

Local black leaders strenuously disagreed with Wilson, who has staked out strongly held positions on social issues before.

When the state was debating gay marriage in 2013, Wilson used a Council meeting to say allowing same-sex marriage was "legislating immorality," and warned that allowing it "leads back to child abuse."

Later that year, when a Sussex school board voted not to add an elective high school course on Bible literacy, Wilson told a radio host it was because "one of them is a lesbian," and "they're not very strong on the Bible."

"Taking into consideration the things Sam has said, I'm not shocked, but I am surprised," said

Jane Hovington, the Lower Sussex Branch NAACP president. "But people are incensed." Right-leaning talk radio in Sussex County took Wilson's side on Wednesday. "Good for Sam for speaking up," Jared Morris, a host for Delaware 105.9, wrote in a blog entry suggesting Wilson was wise to distance himself from the NAACP because "the media elite" would someday soon "decide that supporting an organization that uses a 'racist' term like colored people is, in itself, racist."

Only in Delaware: 'Racists and bigots' and prayers, oh my

After Wilson and Phillips objected to contributing \$100 in their names to the Youth Council's customary \$500 annual grant from the county, George Cole, a GOP council member from Ocean View, tried to smooth things over. Cole made a motion to give the group \$500 this year without touching Wilson's and Phillips' discretionary accounts, and that motion passed quickly.

On Wednesday, Cole said he didn't want constituents to think the entire County Council had a problem with the NAACP.

"It was really just the two of them showing poor judgment, in my opinion," Cole said. "It reflects on the whole County Council. But no, the whole County Council did not do that." Cole also said it was unwise for the Council's only democrat, Joan Deaver, to deliver a retort to Phillips and Wilson that referenced the Ku Klux Klan. Deaver did not return a call for comment Wednesday.

Wilson said he was not bothered by the controversy his remarks caused.

"My dad used to say, the more you stir the pot, the worse it stinks," Wilson said. "And I think I stirred it pretty well yesterday."

Contact James Fisher at 983-6772, on Twitter @JamesFisherTNJ or jfisher@delawareonline.com.

Earlier story: Councilmen oppose NAACP grants

MEDICAL EXAMINER CALLERY 'ABSENT' MUCH OF TIME (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 14, 2014

DOVER Delaware's chief medical examiner, Richard T. Callery, used his state office, including state employees, to run a private consulting business, state prosecutor Kathleen Jennings told lawmakers during a joint committee hearing in Legislative Hall on Wednesday.

The hearing was called by Sen. Robert Marshall, a Wilmington Democrat and chair of the Senate Public Safety Committee, to learn more about how drugs went missing from the state's Controlled Substances Laboratory, which is housed in the chief medical examiner's office.

Prosecutors have notified 75 defendants that drug evidence in their cases may have been tampered with or gone missing, including five defendants in federal prosecutions.

The drug scandal has "compromised" 146 cases, resulting in plea deals or dismissals, Jennings told lawmakers on Wednesday. Marijuana, heroin, Oxycontin and cocaine are among the missing drugs.

Story: Police say twin was shaken to death

Story: Drug kingpin's sentencing delayed by theatrics

Delaware's public defender has filed more than 420 motions since April 30 seeking to reopen and overturn drug convictions due to security lapses in the drug lab and thefts of drug evidence.

During testimony Wednesday, Jennings blamed Callery for creating a culture in the medical examiner's office that led to unsupervised work and, ultimately, the drugs going missing.

She said Callery, who remains the subject of a Delaware State Police criminal investigation, for the potential misuse of state resources, was "absent for large, large periods of time consulting and testifying in other states."

The News Journal has detailed the those absences and problems that led to the missing drug evidence in a series of stories.

For years, Callery has worked side jobs as an expert witness for defendants in cases out of state, as well as some prosecutions. He also worked as a contract pathologist for the state of Rhode Island for at least a decade while employed full time for the state of Delaware.

"It's not rocket science that this would happen if someone isn't there supervising what is going on," Jennings said. "It's inevitable that bad things happen in a culture like that."

Callery remains on suspension but continues to collect his \$198,000-a-year salary while investigations continue. He is also the subject of an internal human resources investigation at the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services.

Another member of the office, forensic investigator James Woodson, also has been suspended

with pay while investigations continue.

State officials shuttered the state's drug lab on Feb. 25 after learning of the missing evidence. Investigators have since pored through 25,000 pieces of drug evidence - including more than 9,270 in the evidence locker in the chief medical examiner's office - for signs of tampering. Investigators have since pored through 25,000 pieces of drug evidence for signs of tampering and more than 9,270 in the evidence locker in the chief medical examiner's office. The Delaware State Police and other police agencies across the state have reported evidence problems in material they received back from the medical examiner's office, Jennings said, including departments agencies in Wilmington, New Castle County, Dover, Middletown, Milford and Bridgeville.

Since the February closure of the drug lab, law enforcement agencies have been sending drug evidence for testing to a contractor's lab in Willow Grove, Pa., at cost of to the state thus far of \$102,000, thus far.

Gov. Jack Markell and administration officials took their first formal steps Wednesday to reorganize the medical examiner's office in response to the missing drug scandal. A proposal presented at Wednesday's hearing would make the office under law enforcement control as a new division in the state Department of Safety and Homeland Security.

The administration plan would rename the office the Division of Forensic Science, create a Forensic Science Commission to oversee it, the new division and make the division director more accountable to top administration officials. Lawmakers must approve any such change.

Any reorganization could have impacts on the state budget. Lewis Schiliro, secretary of Homeland Security, said the move will come with a cost, but is necessary to reopen the state's drug lab and restart evidence processing.

"There will be some costs attached to it," Schiliro told lawmakers. "There is no other way to do this. In my view, we will not be able to accept evidence back there until we have a system in there that can attest to the credibility."

Lawmakers and Jennings blamed Callery for leaving the medical examiner's office without a consistent supervisor.

Callery is serving a 10-year term as chief medical examiner, with his term scheduled to run through 2017. He has "due-process" rights, HSS Secretary Rita Landgraf told lawmakers Wednesday, and is not easily fired.

"I know you are in a very difficult position," Sen. Greg Lavelle, a Sharpley Republican, told administration officials. "Boy it would be nice if he would resign, wouldn't it, and take responsibility for his failures in that office."

Rep. Michael Mulrooney, a Newark DemocratD-Pennwood, said it's past time for Callery to lose his job.

"Enough is enough," Mulrooney said. "Heads gotta roll. I'm just an old electrician. I know if I messed up a job this big, I'd be gone. I don't see why any government official has to be any different."

Reporter Sean O'Sullivan contributed to this story.

Contact Jonathan Starkey at (302) 983-6756, on Twitter @jwstarkey or at jstarkey@delawareonline.com

MEDIMMUNE, INCYTE PARTNER IN DRUG TRIAL (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 14, 2014

Wilmington biopharmaceutical firm Incyte and MedImmune, AstraZeneca's biologics and research development arm, are teaming up for the first time in a clinical study designed to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of a combination cancer treatment.

The first phase of the trial will seek to establish a recommended dose of two investigational compounds - MedImmune's MEDI4736 and Incyte's INCB24360 - which AstraZeneca describes as "part of a new class of cancer treatments known as immunotherapies, which use the body's own immune system to help fight cancer."

"Preclinical evidence suggests that the combination of these two agents may lead to an enhanced anti-tumor immune response," AstraZeneca said.

The second phase of the study will measure the safety and effectiveness of the treatment.

Story:: AstraZeneca positions vulnerable amid merger discussion

The MedImmune therapy blocks the signals that tumors use to help avoid detection by the immune system, according to AstraZeneca. Called a "human monoclonal antibody," it is a protein derived from a single human cell, rather than from an animal or created in a test tube, said AstraZeneca spokeswoman Alisha Martin. The proteins are then altered for efficacy and safety and cloned in large numbers to be used in therapy.

Meanwhile, the Incyte compound strengthens the ability of immune cells to fight tumors.

The collaboration is being done on a non-exclusive basis, so either firm may pursue additional trials of the therapies. AstraZeneca could not provide the cost of the study, but it will be co-funded equally by MedImmune and Incyte, which will conduct the trial.

The treatment will address multiple solid tumors, AstraZeneca said, "including metastatic melanoma, non-small cell lung cancer, squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck and pancreatic cancer."

The study is "open label," meaning both the researchers and participants are aware of the therapy being administered, so the companies will receive data in real time, Martin said.

Because of the nature of the study, she said, it's unknown how long it will take, but the companies expect to enroll the first patient this year and plan to present interim data at scientific conferences.

"Immuno-oncology is one of the most exciting areas in our industry, and we are progressing our strong pipeline as rapidly as possible," said Dr. Bahija Jallal, executive vice president of MedImmune, which AstraZeneca acquired for \$15 billion in 2007.

It now represents nearly half of AstraZeneca's R&D pipeline.

"Our partnership with Incyte is further evidence of our belief that combination therapies have the potential to be one of the most effective ways of treating cancer."

Said Incyte President and CEO Hervé Hoppenot: "Research collaborations that evaluate combinations of novel immunotherapies across a broad range of indications have the potential to accelerate our understanding of this rapidly evolving field, to identify new areas of opportunity for immunotherapies and to more rapidly address the unmet needs of patients with a wide range of cancers."

Contact Suzanne Herel at (302) 324-2876 or sherel@delawareonline.com.

COONS: PFIZER-AZ RAISES ANTITRUST CONCERNS (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 14, 2014

Pfizer's proposed acquisition of AstraZeneca could hurt competition in the pharmaceutical industry, and if it moves forward, it should be reviewed by U.S. antitrust regulators, Sen. Chris Coons wrote in a letter to the U.S. Federal Trade Commission and Justice Department.

Pfizer has a history of acquiring drug companies and slashing jobs, including research sites, Coons wrote in the letter, dated Wednesday. An acquisition of AstraZeneca threatens to lead to "fewer drugs and diminished consumer welfare," he wrote.

Pfizer wants to buy AstraZeneca, but the British pharma has spurned the offers, saying Pfizer undervalues its pipeline. Pfizer this week hinted it would further sweeten its \$106 billion bid in advance of a May 26 deadline by the British government or might consider a hostile takeover bid by going directly to shareholders.

Earlier story: Pfizer urged to keep AstraZeneca jobs in Delaware

Story:: AstraZeneca positions vulnerable amid merger discussion

Story: AstraZeneca profit misses estimates

Related: Medimmune, Incyte partner in drug trial

Such a combined company would represent the largest pharmaceutical firm in the world.

And by reincorporating in the United Kingdom, Pfizer would realize tax savings estimated at \$1 billion.

Coons wrote such an approach would allow it to operate as a U.S. company without paying U.S. taxes.

"We do not believe that this transfer from U.S. taxpayers to Pfizer constitutes a pro-competitive justification for the merger and encourage your careful review to ensure consumers, patients and the marketplace are protected from anticompetitive harm," Coons wrote.

The market "concentration" created by such a merger "will be sufficient to raise significant competitive concerns, beginning with certain prescription drugs" like AstraZeneca's Crestor and

Pfizer's Lipitor, both cholesterol drugs.

Coons noted that following its 2009 acquisition of Wyeth, Pfizer shuttered six of 20 research sites around the globe and cut research and development to half of what it had collectively spent the previous year. Since 2009, the consolidated drug industry has resulted in about 156,000 job losses in this country, Coons wrote.

AstraZeneca, which has its North American headquarters in Delaware, employs about 2,600 in the state as well as 3,100 at MedImmune, its biologics and research development arm, in Maryland.

"Any efficiencies claimed to justify this merger may be vastly outweighed by the significant competitive harm to consumers and patients," Coons wrote.

Coons, D-Del., included the signatures of five other senators on his letter.

BROKEN PARTS EXTEND SALEM NUCLEAR REACTOR SHUTDOWN (WILNJ)

By Jeff Montgomery

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 14, 2014

Eight thumb-sized, broken bolt-heads have sidetracked PSEG Nuclear's plans for restarting its Salem Unit 2 nuclear reactor, as investigators work to find the breakaway spots and reasons for failure.

Discovery of the broken reactor coolant pump parts during a routine refueling outage prompted the company to extend the shutdown, which began April 14. It was the latest in a string of problems at the Salem/Hope Creek nuclear complex.

Company spokesman Joe Delmar said Wednesday afternoon that PSEG was being conservative in delaying its restart to allow "additional internal inspections of the coolant pumps and make any repairs as needed."

Nuclear Regulatory Commission spokesman Neil Sheehan said the bolt tops, each about an inch in diameter and 3 inches long, are likely from the area of one of four reactor coolant pump's impeller vanes, or blades.

Investigators consider "stress-corrosion cracking," - a kind of failure that occurs in some types of metals exposed to particular types of stress, temperature and corrosive conditions - as one of the potential causes for the breaks, Sheehan said.

"The concern is that if bolts holding the turning vane failed, the vane could drop and impact the rotating pump internals," Sheehan said.

Worldwide, Sheehan said, only Salem Unit 2 and the Surry nuclear plant in Virginia use the type of reactor pump where the bolts were found - with four of the pumps installed at Salem and six at Surry.

PSEG operates three reactors at its Artificial Island site along the Delaware River in New Jersey southeast of Port Penn, owning all of the Hope Creek reactor and 57 percent of Salem Units 1, with energy giant Exelon owning the remaining 43 percent.

Unit 2 shut down for refueling April 14 and was expected to return to service around mid-May.

Salem Unit 1 has reported three unplanned shutdowns this year, potentially subjecting the operation to increased oversight.

Salem/Hope Creek ranks as the nation's second-largest nuclear generating complex and is part of the nation's most densely populated cluster of multiple, overlapping reactor emergency planning areas. Nearly 54,000 people live inside the 10-mile evacuation planning zone for the complex, about 80 percent in Delaware. Some 5.5 million in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania live within 50 miles of the facility.

NEWARK CO-OP JOINS NATIONAL NETWORK (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 14, 2014

Newark Natural Foods has joined the National Cooperative Grocers Association, a national organization that spans 38 states and 142 co-ops with a combined sales of more than \$1.6 billion. The grocery store, www.newarknaturalfoods.com, is located in the same town as the University of Delaware. It was founded in 1967 as a "food-buying club," and it was incorporated in 1975, according to the grocers association announcement. There are more than 3,400 active members in the co-op today, according to the association, and the grocer has more than \$5 million in annual sales.

"We're delighted to welcome our new member and associate co-ops and the communities they

serve," C.E. Pugh, chief operating officer for National Cooperative Grocers Association said in a statement included in the announcement. "The management and staff of these co-ops have done a fantastic job of growing their businesses and we're excited for their participation with NCGA. Our association is enhanced as they join other food co-ops across the country to provide healthier food, better services, and stronger communities."

The grocers association, www.ncga.coop, is a cooperative that provides business services, including purchasing and marketing, to members.

CHOBANI INCORPORATES IN DELAWARE, SPARKING IPO TALK (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 14, 2014

Chobani, the popular Greek yogurt maker founded by Turkish immigrant Hamdi Ulukaya, has incorporated in Delaware, according to a March 6 filing with the state Division of Corporations. The move is widely suspected to foreshadow an initial public offering for the private Norwich, New York, company, which last month secured a \$750 million investment from TPG Capital.

More than half of the publicly traded companies in the U.S. are incorporated in the First State, according to the Division of Corporations - including 64 percent of Fortune 500 companies. They're drawn by the state's business-friendly corporation law, which the group describes as "the most advanced and flexible business formation statute in the nation."

Contacted Wednesday, Chobani declined to comment on the prospect of an IPO.

In an emailed statement, the company said, "Our home remains in New York, where Chobani was founded, where our yogurt is made and where our company is headquartered. Like many companies based around the country, Chobani registered in Delaware earlier this year to permit greater flexibility in operating and growing the business."

That's good news for the New York Senate, which on May 6 - after being lobbied by a fourth-grade class - voted to make yogurt the state's official snack.

A move to Delaware would have been low-hanging fruit for comedians like Jon Stewart and David Letterman, who already have lampooned the debate over the bill, which included the following exchange, according to the Associated Press:

"What exactly are we defining as a snack?" asked Sen. Gustavo Rivera, a Democrat from the Bronx.

"I think it's self-explanatory. I mean, you have breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and then you have snacks," said the bill's Republican sponsor, Sen. Michael Ranzano.

Rivera responded, "Did you consider, say, the potato chip?"

NAACP REMARKS 'NOT BEING RACIST,' WILSON SAYS (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 14, 2014

Sam Wilson says he regrets nothing.

On Tuesday, he was called a "racist and a bigot," among other things, after he took issue with the word "colored" in the NAACP's name at the weekly Sussex County Council meeting.

His comments drew strong responses. A colleague on Council said Wilson showed "poor judgment."

"People are hung up too much on who they are or what color they are. I don't get hung up on it,"

Wilson said Wednesday. "It's certainly not being racist to ask the question."

Wilson touched off the controversy when he objected to giving a county grant to the Lower Sussex Branch NAACP Youth Council.

"I'm not going to give anything. Unless you can describe what that says," he told a county staffer who was reciting to Council which organizations were asking for grants this week. "What's NAACP stand for?"

The group's acronym stands for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Wilson, in the Council meeting, indicated the phrase "colored people" signified the NAACP must be involved in "discrimination."

Vance Phillips, another councilman, said he agreed with Wilson and would not give the Youth Council any money from his discretionary fund either.

On Wednesday, amplifying comments, Wilson said he believed the NAACP advocated only for black people to the exclusion of white people.

"How do you think it would fly if I said, 'This is for the NAAWP?' I don't think it would fly, either,"

Wilson said. "It's not my goal to say the blacks are over there and the whites are over here. That's not what I want to do and I didn't intend to do that."

The history of the NAACP is not of a blacks-only club. Started in 1909 to combat lynchings, the group was founded by several dozen people, only seven of whom were African-American. Its first president was a white lawyer, Moorfield Storey. One of the best-known black activists of the time, W.E.B. DuBois, was the only black member of the original board of directors. All of the group's executives in the modern era have been black.

"The councilman is incorrect in his assumption that the NAACP is an organization that would reject anyone from joining because of race," said Jotaka Eaddy, senior director of the group's voting rights project. "Anyone who wants to work with us toward our mission, we're ready and willing to work with them."

Wilson, a Republican and farmer of land just outside Georgetown, said he's had only supportive calls and messages from constituents about his comments.

"I've had people call me who said that I said the right thing, asked the right questions. I've never had people call who disagreed," he said. "I know a lot of black folks who would probably agree with me."

Richard Smith, president of the Delaware chapter of the NAACP, said Tuesday that Wilson and Phillips "seem to be racists and bigots" after he heard the exchange.

Of that criticism, Wilson said: "To be honest with you, he's more of a racist and a bigot than I am." Local black leaders strenuously disagreed with Wilson, who has staked out strongly held positions on social issues before.

When the state was debating gay marriage in 2013, Wilson used a Council meeting to say allowing same-sex marriage was "legislating immorality," and warned that allowing it "leads back to child abuse."

Later that year, when a Sussex school board voted not to add an elective high school course on Bible literacy, Wilson told a radio host it was because "one of them is a lesbian," and "they're not very strong on the Bible."

"Taking into consideration the things Sam has said, I'm not shocked, but I am surprised," said Jane Hovington, the Lower Sussex Branch NAACP president. "But people are incensed."

Right-leaning talk radio in Sussex County took Wilson's side on Wednesday.

"Good for Sam for speaking up," Jared Morris, a host for Delaware 105.9, wrote in a blog entry suggesting Wilson was wise to distance himself from the NAACP because "the media elite" would someday soon "decide that supporting an organization that uses a 'racist' term like colored people is, in itself, racist."

Only in Delaware: 'Racists and bigots' and prayers, oh my

After Wilson and Phillips objected to contributing \$100 in their names to the Youth Council's customary \$500 annual grant from the county, George Cole, a GOP council member from Ocean View, tried to smooth things over. Cole made a motion to give the group \$500 this year without touching Wilson's and Phillips' discretionary accounts, and that motion passed quickly.

On Wednesday, Cole said he didn't want constituents to think the entire County Council had a problem with the NAACP.

"It was really just the two of them showing poor judgment, in my opinion," Cole said. "It reflects on the whole County Council. But no, the whole County Council did not do that." Cole also said it was unwise for the Council's only democrat, Joan Deaver, to deliver a retort to Phillips and Wilson that referenced the Ku Klux Klan. Deaver did not return a call for comment Wednesday.

Wilson said he was not bothered by the controversy his remarks caused.

"My dad used to say, the more you stir the pot, the worse it stinks," Wilson said. "And I think I stirred it pretty well yesterday."

Contact James Fisher at 983-6772, on Twitter @JamesFisherTNJ or jfisher@delawareonline.com. Earlier story: Councilmen oppose NAACP grants

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL EDITORIALS:

REVISED FORENSIC DIVISION WELCOME (WILNJ)
Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 14, 2014

Delaware now has a plan that could strengthen the state's criminal investigation system. The proposal also could prevent future crime lab scandals, such as the one now threatening to set free convicted criminals because of tainted evidence.

On Wednesday, Lewis Schiliro, secretary of the Department of Safety and Homeland Security, and Rita Landgraf, secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services, called for the reorganization of the Medical Examiner's Office. They want to create a new Division of Forensic Science.

The new division would be under the Homeland Security Department. A special commission would oversee it. The proposal would combine some operations and enforce professional standards. Investigators are looking closely at the current Medical Examiner's Office because of reports of stolen drugs and bungled evidence control.

The Schiliro-Landgraf proposal includes a requirement that a director with expertise in forensic sciences head the division. The combination of the reorganization and the oversight commission could improve the professionalism of the state's forensic services.

The Legislature must approve the Schiliro-Landgraf proposal. We urge legislators to consider this plan carefully and seriously. The quicker they get a professional unit up and running, the better for all of Delaware.

The state should show it is serious about fighting crime and protecting the rights of the accused.

A CASINO BAILOUT WOULD EQUAL A FISHER BAILOUT EVERY YEAR (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 14, 2014

Although it is unfortunate to hear of Dover Downs and the other casinos doing poorly, it was not unexpected at all from a group that has had a monopoly for over 15 years, blew it and now wants a \$20 million annual cut in fees and taxes.

They have been classically mismanaged: 1) They have run up their debts; 2) been bled of their funds by excessive dividends, outlandish executive compensation and worse; 3) made other poor non-related investments, most not even in Delaware or casino related. Would "good partners" do that? These financial screw-ups have made them ill-prepared for the reality of competition from Maryland and Pennsylvania despite knowing it was coming.

Funny, isn't this what we did to New Jersey in the 1990s?

Bad ongoing management, not competition, is the problem. This proposed fiscal irresponsibility is so crazy, particularly with the state's current fiscal condition, I don't know if we should ask for an intervention or an investigation. Currently in just one new, properly built and run casino in Maryland, they make just as much as all three of ours combined; how pathetic. Remember, "All casinos have two things in common, no windows and no clocks, which creates a make-believe world." Folks, we have no "make-believe" here sadly.

Think, why do people drive to Atlantic City or fly across the continent to Las Vegas? It's simple; they have more fun there.

Making matters worse, our existing casinos want: 1) No strings on the fee cuts and money that they want from the taxpayers; 2) No executive salary or dividend caps; 3) No job guarantees (at this time, most of their employees are working part time with no benefits and many are eligible for Medicaid and welfare, all on the taxpayers' dime); and 4) The existing casinos still outlandishly want their M-O-N-O-P-O-L-Y! So much for being a fully competing "Sandwich Shop" as Sen. Brian Bushweller describes them.

Remember, if they do go bankrupt they will not collapse into a sinkhole, the banks will simply run them until they find a competent buyer/operator. Frankly, with no overwhelming debt, they will all be stronger and then they can live within the fee structure that currently exists, which by the way is cheaper than the bordering states.

In full disclosure, I am an attorney in Wilmington, originally from Seaford, who represents one of the companies proposing two new gambling sites in Delaware. One for Sussex, since it does not have one, and another for New Castle County. Incidentally, all of the new proposed sites can and will live within the existing fee structure and will spend hundreds of millions of their own dollars and plan to build facilities that include entertainment as well as shopping, so as to make the new sites true destinations that people will want to frequent.

Tell your legislators to say no to this outlandish bailout. Are your readers getting a bailout? Let's spend the money where it is needed: ambulance/fire companies, roads or bridges and schools. All

are better bets.

Finally, don't take our tax money or raise other taxes; instead, if the casinos need help and are this desperate, then lower the rates, eliminate their failed monopoly, allow two more gambling sites, auction off each license (\$15 million minimum) to make the state some money and refill our Treasury when we are running low, and protect current employees who apply to the new facilities. More jobs will ultimately be produced, and the state will make more money.

Darrell J. Baker is a Wilmington lawyer.

SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL SHOULD NOT SWITCH PRAYERS (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 14, 2014

A recent U.S. Supreme Court decision said it was OK for local governments to recite prayers as long as they do not "coerce participation by non-adherents." It was not one of the court's clearest decisions. It is raising questions around the country, including in Sussex County.

Some members of the county council admit they are considering an attempt to bring prayer back to its public meetings. Republican Councilman Sam Wilson said, "What's wrong with The Lord's Prayer?" Nothing, of course. But why change?

STORY: Sussex Council may say Lord's Prayer again

The reference was to a previous practice of the council's: Starting each meeting with The Lord's Prayer. Supporters of the prayer described it as universal and non-sectarian. Depending on how you define the word "sectarian," those descriptions might or might not be correct. However, the prayer led to a court fight and, under an agreement, the council agreed to what is described as the "less-sectarian" 23rd Psalm.

The council spent 25 minutes at a meeting this week discussing the return of The Lord's Prayer. We would suggest a little more meditation on the matter. Such a movement might be immediately popular, but it might cause unforeseen consequences, such as another costly lawsuit. A fight for the sake of a fight will not serve the county's citizens well. The current arrangement appears to be working well - council members do not appear any less wise than in the old Lord's Prayer days. Why start a new fight?

CHINA HAS 7 MILLION GRADUATES AND NO JOBS AVAILABLE (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, May 14, 2014

Even during China's most feudal phases, higher education has offered a reliable means of meritocratic advancement. Well into the 1990s, the limited number of university graduates meant that all of them were virtually assured places among the economic elite.

As China tries to evolve from "the workshop of the world" into a more technologically advanced service economy, however, a swelling glut of graduates is threatening this age-old compact. This year alone, Chinese universities are expected to produce a record 7 million degree holders, more than seven times the number 15 years ago. This rapid expansion has vastly outstripped demand: Unemployment among recent graduates has rocketed to 16 percent, four times the norm, while the wage premium they receive has plummeted by 19 percentage points. In some cities, semiskilled factory workers now make more than university graduates in office jobs.

High youth unemployment has spurred social unrest in many countries - including Spain, where joblessness among young people is double the national average, as well as Egypt and Tunisia. In China, the situation is even more fraught. For decades, the Communist Party has offered citizens a trade-off: economic opportunity in exchange for political docility. If the first is closed off, the whole bargain starts to look a lot less attractive.

Given the intensifying scramble for good jobs, connections have begun to matter more than merit. Party links in particular are a key deciding factor as businesses seek to build ties with influential officials by hiring their offspring.

The news media's attention has been focused on high-profile Western banks, which allegedly recruited the children of top party officials in an effort to build guanxi, or close personal relationships, with the Chinese leadership. But the problem extends right down the scale: One study of the career prospects of college graduates found that the children of even low-level party officials were able to secure starting salaries that were 15 percent higher than for those without such connections. No wonder graduates themselves have become the most rapidly expanding demographic within the party: The share of students who choose to join has risen to more than 11

percent today from less than 1 percent in 1990.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, wealth now matters as much as connections do in landing jobs. Some banks blatantly set conditions for coveted internships: "The parents must have a fixed-term deposit of at least 500,000 yuan at the branch," reads one advertisement. Job seekers are forced to offer "gifts" in exchange for government positions.

Obviously the government needs to generate more high-skill jobs in order to soak up the flood of graduates. Slowing growth will make that difficult. Yet Chinese leaders could at least lift roadblocks to job creation - from restrictions on internal migration to regulations that favor industry over services.

In the United States, for instance, young college graduates are highly mobile; about half of them live outside their state of birth. By contrast, Chinese graduates are trapped in their home cities or provinces by a strict household registration system that discourages them from moving to where the jobs are. This generates unemployment in marginal cities while leaving important vacancies unfilled in the megacities that drive China's economy.

At the same time, China favors industry over services by subsidizing the price of industrial land, with local governments keeping prices artificially low in hopes of attracting additional investment. As a result, from 2000 to 2010, the average price of commercial land rose from three times that of industrial land to almost nine times, dramatically raising the relative cost of business for service firms. Because services tend to be more labor-intensive and require more educated employees, this bias has slowed job growth for college graduates.

The policy of encouraging more Chinese to get a university education was meant to strengthen China, to help build it into a creative and modern service economy. Instead, the push is creating new and worrying vulnerabilities. It's too late to turn back, which means solutions must focus on stimulating demand for graduates and changing the skill mix of those students. As President Xi Jinping works to root out corrupt practices, large and small, he should also focus on the bribe taking that's becoming prevalent in the hiring process.

The alternative is a rising sense of injustice and frustration among tens of thousands of educated youth. That's hardly a future he or China's other leaders can afford to contemplate.

Yukon Huang is a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, where Canyon Bosler is a junior fellow.

Copyright 2014 by Bulletin Intelligence. Reproduction without permission prohibited. Editorial content is drawn from thousands of newspapers, national magazines, national and local television programs, and radio broadcasts. The Vice Presidential News Clips is published by Bulletin Intelligence, which creates custom news briefings for government and corporate leaders. We can be found on the Web at bulletinintelligence.com, or called at (703) 483-6100.

VICE PRESIDENTIAL *NEWS CLIPS*

PRODUCED FOR THE OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

TO: THE VICE PRESIDENT AND STAFF
DATE: THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2014 -- 6:15 AM EDT

TODAY'S EDITION

Biden In The News

In Cleveland, Biden Urges Infrastructure Spending (AP).....	2
In N.Y., Obama Calls For Spending To Improve Nation's Roads And Rails (WP).....	3
Obama To Push Reforms To Infrastructure Permits (HILL).....	5
Vice President Biden Follows Cleveland Transit Talk By Following Sweet Tooth (PLAINDLR).....	6
VP Biden To Highlight Infrastructure Importance During Cleveland (WOIOTV).....	6
Joe Biden Visits Cleveland To Promote Transportation Funding (WKSUFM).....	6
Vice President Joe Biden in town (WMMSFM).....	7
Landlord Joe Biden: Secret Service Signs New Deal On Rental Property (WT).....	8
Operation American Spring To Hit D.C. To Oust Obama, Biden, Boehner, Holder (WT).....	8
Hunter Biden's New Job At A Ukrainian Gas Company Is A Problem For U.S. Soft Power (WP).....	9
Motorcycle Club Temporarily Leaves Property (AP).....	10
Ukraine Gas Producer Appoints R. Hunter Biden To Board (NBCNEWS).....	10
Why Did An Energy Firm With Big Assets In Ukraine Hire Joe Biden's Son? (YAHOO).....	11
Vice President Joe Biden's Son Joins Ukraine Gas Company (BBC).....	12
Hunter Biden Joins Board Of Ukraine Gas Company (UPI).....	15
Lashing Out At Injustice In Delaware (LEWES).....	15
Dr. Jill Biden To Headline Newsbabes Bash For Breast Cancer (WRCTV).....	16
Second Lady Speaks To Graduating Owensboro Students (WAFBTV).....	17
Jill Biden Challenges Owensboro College Grads (MADMESS)	17
Rahm Emanuel Votes Hillary Clinton Over Joe Biden For 2016 (ABCNEWS).....	17

New York Times and Washington Post Op-Eds

Discrimination In The Military (NYT).....	19
Keeping The Wireless Business Competitive (NYT).....	20
No Slowdown In Unfair Marijuana Arrests (NYT).....	21
The Kidnapping Of A Country (NYT).....	21
The AIDS-Shaming Of Magic Johnson (NYT).....	23
My State's Prettier Than Yours (NYT).....	25
It's Now The Canadian Dream (NYT).....	26

Still Tinkering (NYT).....	28
Don't Force Google To 'Forget' (NYT).....	30
New Bad Old Times For Guatemala? (NYT).....	31
The Battle Of The Okinawans (NYT).....	33
Hong Kong's Rising Cry (NYT).....	34
Partisan Sabotage In The Senate Unplugs A Useful Bill (WP)...	36
Montgomery County's School-funding Gimmickry Buys A Year Of Peace (WP).....	37
MERS Is Still A Mystery Virus (WP).....	38
America Should Not Soften Its Nuclear Demands Of Iran (WP)	39
Is China No. 1? (WP).....	40
India Sees Hope In A Divisive Figure (WP).....	41
Jill Abramson 'unexpectedly' Out At New York Times (WP).....	43
Thomas Piketty Identifies An Important Ill Of Capitalism But Not Its Cure (WP).....	46
The Two GOP Establishments (WP).....	48
The Effect Of One-party Rule (WP).....	49
Chris Christie Plays The Blame Game (WP).....	50

Wilmington News Journal Stories

Carey's Police Meddling Will Cost Dover \$300,000 (WILNJ).....	52
Bill Would Permit Possession Of Heroin Overdose Drug (WILNJ).....	53
Smyrna Receives Sparkling Start (WILNJ).....	54
NAACP Remarks 'Not Being Racist,' Wilson Says (WILNJ).....	55
Medical Examiner Callery 'Absent' Much Of Time (WILNJ).....	56
Medimmune, Incyte Partner In Drug Trial (WILNJ).....	58
Coons: Pfizer-AZ Raises Antitrust Concerns (WILNJ).....	59
Broken Parts Extend Salem Nuclear Reactor Shutdown (WILNJ).....	60
Newark Co-op Joins National Network (WILNJ).....	60
Chobani Incorporates In Delaware, Sparking IPO Talk (WILNJ)	61
NAACP Remarks 'Not Being Racist,' Wilson Says (WILNJ).....	61

Wilmington News Journal Editorials

Revised Forensic Division Welcome (WILNJ).....	63
A Casino Bailout Would Equal A Fisker Bailout Every Year (WILNJ).....	64
Sussex County Council Should Not Switch Prayers (WILNJ).....	65
China Has 7 Million Graduates And No Jobs Available (WILNJ)	65

Online Version

BIDEN IN THE NEWS

In Cleveland, Biden Urges Infrastructure Spending

[Associated Press](#), May 15, 2014

CLEVELAND (AP) – President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe **Biden** are traveling the country saying the nation needs to invest billions of federal dollars in highways and bridges, but some Ohio city officials are left to wonder: Where's the money to fix our streets?

Making the pitch Wednesday at a rail car repair shop in Cleveland, **Biden** said such investment is necessary for the United States to remain a pre-eminent economic force.

"Those in Congress who lack vision say we can't afford to make these investments," he said. "How can we not afford to make these investments?"

He said one study shows the U.S. needs \$3.6 trillion in infrastructure investment by 2020 but spends only 1 percent of its gross domestic product on infrastructure and ranks 18th in the world for the quality of its roads.

Biden was in Cleveland to highlight federal investment in a \$17.5 million new light rail station that will open in 2015. The president was in New York City, where the federal government has provided a \$1.6 billion loan to rebuild the Tappan Zee Bridge. Their message is that more money needs to be spent on infrastructure.

In response, Republican National Committee spokesman Michael Short issued a statement Wednesday that said the Obama administration should stop what he called its obstruction of the Keystone XL pipeline, "which has bipartisan support and would create good-paying Ohio jobs."

City officials in Ohio wish that a small share of those billions would trickle down to them for maintenance. Some Ohio cities are operating on the thinnest of margins as costs rise, tax receipts fall and state funding is reduced. Federal and state governments pay the lion's share of big road and interstate projects, but routine maintenance of surface streets is typically left to cities to pay.

Police and firefighters must continue to be paid, so budget items like street resurfacing are the first to be trimmed, said Paul Barnett, public works manager for the city of Akron.

Akron will spend about \$2 million on street resurfacing this year but needs to spend at least \$8 million to keep pace, Barnett said. The city will resurface only 11 of its 2,400 lane miles this year.

"It's OK if you plan on resurfacing your streets once every 30 years," he said.

The booming city of Columbus will spend \$33.5 million on street resurfacing this year. Cleveland will spend \$4.4 million. Toledo has upped its resurfacing budget to \$1 million compared with \$600,000 in 2013.

Still, Columbus is far from immune from the scourge of tire-crunching potholes that appeared like dandelions this spring thanks to Ohio's weather extremes, heavy rains and the asphalt-chewing phenomenon of freeze-thaw cycles. Bill Tilton, assistant director of public service for Columbus, said his crews have already repaired 105,000 potholes this year compared with 117,000 for all of 2013.

Toledo bought a machine so workers could replace entire stretches of pothole-pocked roadway, said Dave Welch, Toledo's commissioner of streets, bridges and harbor. "There are roads that are pothole patch after pothole patch," Welch said

The inability to properly maintain streets is a problem in smaller cities as well. In Euclid, a suburb east of Cleveland that stretches along Lake Erie, Mayor Bill Cervenik said the federal government needs to step in.

"I certainly believe the federal government has to take a look at communities like ours and understand the problems we're having and put together policies that help those communities that are built and aging and fix them," Cervenik said.

Copyright 2014 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

In N.Y., Obama Calls For Spending To Improve Nation's Roads And Rails

By Scott Wilson

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

TARRYTOWN, N.Y. — President Obama called on Congress Wednesday to act swiftly to approve billions of dollars in funding for the nation's aging roads, bridges and rail systems, warning that a failure to do so may cost the economy 700,000 jobs.

Speaking on the banks of the Hudson River, Obama said no sector suffered more in the recession than the construction industry, arguing that new public works projects would help put many back to work and attract businesses deciding whether to locate in the United States or overseas.

"Building a world-class transportation system is one of the reasons America became an economic superpower in the first place," Obama said, noting the decline in federal investment in recent years as China and other developing countries increase their spending. "First-class infrastructure attracts first-class jobs."

The event was held at the Washington Irving Boat Club in the shadow of the Tappan Zee Bridge, its trademark traffic crawling across the span over the Hudson north of Manhattan. The venue was chosen to highlight a federal loan program that helps states replace aging roads and bridges, such as the Tappan Zee, now nearly six decades old and carrying far more traffic than originally intended.

Obama's remarks are the most public in a series of appearances that senior administration officials are making this week to highlight the need for new spending on languishing projects for highways, airports and more. Obama again argued that improving transportation services is a key to short-term job growth and long-term economic success. He was joined by New York Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo (D), who thanked the administration for the \$1.6 billion federal loan that is helping to finance the construction of the replacement for the Tappan Zee Bridge.

"This is a bridge from gridlock to bipartisanship; this is a bridge from paralysis to progress; and this is a bridge from yesterday to tomorrow," Cuomo said as cranes being used to raise the new bridge across the Hudson idled behind him on a breezy day.

As the mid-term elections approach, Democrats hope to use the issue of transportation funding to highlight Republican recalcitrance in Congress. In New York, Obama also announced a series of bureaucratic steps to better coordinate the federal permitting process, hoping to speed the time it takes to get transportation projects approved for construction.

Administration officials say Republicans and Democrats have largely agreed about spending on transportation services in the past, given the value such government projects have to the private-sector

economy. But administration officials say that unless Congress approves new spending soon, the federal Highway Trust Fund will run out of money this summer.

"If they don't act by the end of the summer, federal funding for transportation projects will run out," Obama said of Congress, placing the preponderance of blame on Republicans. "Instead of putting more workers back on the job," Obama said, "they are putting those jobs at risk."

The administration says that the fund's bankruptcy would delay more than 100,000 road projects, more than 5,000 transit projects and put at risk 700,000 construction jobs. During his speech, Obama said that number was roughly the population of Tampa.

Michael Steel, a spokesman for House Speaker John A. Boehner (R-Ohio), questioned Obama's commitment to public works spending and job creation and cited the administration's more than five-year deliberation over whether to build an oil pipeline from Canada to Nebraska for eventual delivery to the Gulf Coast. "An infrastructure for the 21st century is going to require energy, and plenty of it," Steel said. "So why is the White House blocking the Keystone pipeline and the tens of thousands of American jobs it would create?"

The White House sent the Grow America Act, a broad transportation measure that includes guidelines for allowing new toll highways, to Congress this spring. A bipartisan group of senators is working on its own long-term transportation plan.

Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, who accompanied Obama to New York, told reporters this week that short-term spending measures — the divided Congress's preferred way to fund the government in recent years — have put off the planning and financing of long-range projects essential to solving, rather than just managing, the nation's growing transportation problems.

Those include bridges coming to the end of their planned use, including the Tappan Zee, and overburdened airports, rail systems and roads.

By 2050, Foxx said, the country's transportation system will need to move 100 million new people and 14 billion additional tons of freight, nearly twice the current level. The administration, drawing on calculations made by the American Society of Civil Engineers, estimates that \$3.6 trillion in spending will be needed to sufficiently address the mounting infrastructure problems by the end of the decade.

Foxx said the Senate, controlled by Democrats, has shown support for the measure. But the Republican-led House poses a larger challenge, and Foxx said the administration has much work to do if the measure is to succeed. "I have spent a lot of time and a lot of shoe leather on both ends of Capitol Hill, and what I can tell you is, is that people on both sides of the aisle want to see something get done," he said. "But we're going to have to work at it, and this is going to be a nine-inning game. It's not going to get solved in the first inning."

As Obama visited the iconic New York bridge, Vice President **Biden** traveled to Cleveland to make a similar push for transportation spending.

While in New York, Obama will do some fundraising for the Democratic Party in Manhattan, and Thursday, he will mark the ceremonial opening of the National Sept. 11 Memorial and Museum in Lower Manhattan.

Obama To Push Reforms To Infrastructure Permits

By Justin Sink

[The Hill](#), May 15, 2014

President Obama will announce a new plan to accelerate and expand federal permitting in a bid to expedite major infrastructure projects during a speech at the Tappan Zee bridge outside New York City on Wednesday.

Under the new permitting guidelines, departments within the administration will be required to improve coordination and reduce the amount of time the government takes to resolve interagency disputes. The new rules will also ask federal agencies to undertake synchronized, simultaneous reviews of projects.

That means one environmental analysis could satisfy requirements for multiple agencies involved in project construction, rather than requiring contractors to redo work.

The administration will also expand the use of an online “dashboard” that serves as a central clearinghouse for the permitting process across the government. And the administration is setting up an “improvement center” dedicated to implementing the reforms within each federal agency.

“The new, government-wide plan will build on efforts the Administration has taken over the past three years to cut through red tape and expedite permitting decisions, while protecting our communities and the environment,” a White House official said.

In total, the White House says, the president will implement 15 specific reforms and nearly 100 near and long-term milestones designed to improve efficiency in the permitting process.

Officials say the Tappan Zee Bridge, which is being replaced in a \$3.9 billion construction project aided by a \$1.9 billion federal loan, is an ideal example of how the streamlined process can save time and money.

“Federal agencies completed the permitting and review in 1.5 years for a process that might otherwise take 3-5 years,” a White House official said.

The president is also expected to push lawmakers to take action to replenish the Highway Trust Fund, which is set to become insolvent by the end of this summer.

Obama’s remarks will “highlight the consequences of inaction,” according to the White House official, with Obama to stress that a failure to replenish the fund would put at risk more than 112,000 ongoing highway and 5,600 transit projects as well as nearly 700,000 jobs.

The president’s proposal would address the shortfall and fund an additional \$87 billion in repairs to bridges and transit systems. But Republicans have questioned how to pay for the president’s proposal.

Still, the White House believes Obama can rally both legislative and political momentum around the issue. In his remarks, Obama is expected to hit House Republicans on budget bills that would cut funding for highway repairs and mass transit expansion.

“A look at the House Republican approach to infrastructure shows the same top down approach to the economy that isn’t good for the middle class or jobs,” the official said.

Obama’s trip is the latest in a series of events this week focusing on infrastructure. On Tuesday, Vice President **Biden** travelled to St. Louis to highlight a \$380 million renovation of the city’s iconic Gateway Arch. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx appeared at the daily White House press briefing on Monday to push for the administration’s transportation bill.

Vice President Biden Follows Cleveland Transit Talk By Following Sweet Tooth

[Cleveland Plain Dealer](#), May 15, 2014

CLEVELAND, Ohio – Vice President Joe **Biden** followed his well-known sweet tooth to Little Italy on Wednesday after speaking at the RTA’s rail shop on the need for investment in infrastructure.

He said he planned to talk with business and community leaders about the impact of the renovation of the Cedar-University and Little Italy-University Circle rapid transit stations. But the meeting place, Presti’s Bakery on Mayfield Road, iced the cake with an opportunity for some retail politics.

Biden arrived at the cafe around 3:45 p.m., via Coltman Road, in a motorcycle-escorted motorcade of about a dozen vehicles.

He greeted the afternoon crowd that was swelled by neighborhood residents who pursued the caravan, and worked his way around the room past the counter to a corner table to meet with business and community leaders.

He kissed Millie Morgan, who grew up in the neighborhood, and told her niece, Carmeline Mangano Worley, that her smile would light up the room. He posed for pictures, patted backs and shook hands.

"If you're not supposed to be here, you're in trouble now," he told Dan Brennan, president of the Little Italy Redevelopment Corporation, as cameras clicked around them.

Biden ordered tiramisu, cannoli and coffee before getting to business with Brennan; Steve Standley, chief administrative officer of University Hospitals; Jill Snyder, executive director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, and architect and local resident Steve Bucchieri.

"Tell me about what's going on," he said. "Economic growth – is this new rail station having an impact on it?"

"This is huge," Standley said.

He said initiatives that started with the Euclid Corridor project, spearheaded by UH, the Cleveland Clinic and Case Western Reserve University, had led to new housing, retail and commercial development in the area.

In his visits to other parts of the country, he said, "They're talking about the Cleveland model now."

VP Biden To Highlight Infrastructure Importance During Cleveland

[WOIO-TV Cleveland](#), May 15, 2014

CLEVELAND, OH (WOIO) –

Vice President Joe **Biden** is coming to Cleveland to meet with city leaders this afternoon.

VP **Biden** is expected to highlight the federal funds used to rebuild the RTA rapid station in the Little Italy neighborhood.

His remarks are slated to start at 1:30 p.m. at the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority Rail Complex at the corner of East 73rd Street and Grand Avenue.

Joe Biden Visits Cleveland To Promote Transportation Funding

[WKSU-FM Kent \(OH\)](#), May 15, 2014

Joe **Biden** visits Cleveland to promote transportation funding

Vice President Joe **Biden** is in Cleveland today drawing attention to the White House's plans for transportation funding.

The administration says two-thirds of the nation's roadways are in "less than good" condition, and one in four bridges require significant repairs.

Biden will be speaking at the site of a new rapids station scheduled to open next year in Cleveland's Little Italy neighborhood.

Biden and President Obama are pushing for passage of a new transportation bill, and extension of stimulus funds for transportation projects in place since 2009.

The current highway bill expires Sept. 30. The Highway Trust Fund, which provides funding, could run short in August.

Storm damage closes roads, schools

Seven roads will remain closed indefinitely in Medina County following Monday's storms. Two roads in Akron remain closed, including a section of Bath Road that was washed out by the heavy rains.

Storm damage closed schools across the region yesterday. Most have reopened. Holy Family school in Stow will remain closed through Monday, suffering an estimated \$3 million in water damage.

The National Weather Service has confirmed that a tornado did touch down Monday night in Lorain County.

The twister spun through a field in Eaton Township and caused partial damage to one home.

Dick Goddard rescued from flooded car

Longtime Cleveland TV meteorologist Dick Goddard had to be rescued after rising water swamped his car on a highway exit ramp this week.

The eighty-three-year-old Goddard says he thought he was going to “buy the farm” when water flooded his car on an I-71 exit south of Cleveland during heavy rain Monday night.

Goddard was trapped for about 45 minutes before firefighters in a rubber boat reached his car, broke the window and pulled him out. He was treated for hypothermia.

Ohio Senate ponders changes to social services relief

The director of a county Jobs and Family Services office in southeast Ohio says a proposal before the Legislature should be more focused on addressing the basic needs of the state’s residents.

Jack Frech of Athens County says funding for public programs that provide food and cash assistance to Ohioans in need have been reduced by millions. He made the comments in testimony to a Senate committee Wednesday.

The panel is examining a bill that would create an office within the state’s social services agency to revise incentives for public assistance programs and coordinate employment services among the programs.

A spokesman for the state’s Department of Jobs and Family Services said the programs help with residents’ immediate needs and put them on a path out of poverty.

Ohio’s high court upholds death penalty for Canton killer

The Ohio Supreme Court has upheld the death sentence of a man who stabbed his young children to death and fatally shot his former mother-in-law in 2009.

In a 6-1 decision Wednesday, the court rejected arguments from James Mammone’s attorneys that graphic crime-scene photos were inflammatory and should never been shown to jurors.

Mammone also argued that publicity ruined his chances for a fair trial in Canton and that two jurors who said they supported the death penalty should have been removed.

Two months after his wife divorced him, Mammone stabbed his 5-year-old daughter and 3-year-old son to death as they were strapped in their car seats in Canton in northeastern Ohio. He then went to the home of his ex-wife’s mother, whom he severely beat and shot twice.

Vice President Joe Biden in town

[WMMS-FM Cleveland](#), May 15, 2014

(Cleveland)- Cleveland is playing host to Vice President Joe **Biden**.

The Vice President will visit the under-construction RTA station at East 120th Street and Mayfield Road this afternoon to press Congress for more federal infrastructure funding.

The White House wants a measure that would meet the nation’s road, rail and bridge repair plans for the next decade.

Get breaking news sent to your mobile phone. Text “news” to 21095.

(Copyright 2014 Clear Channel, all rights reserved.)

Landlord Joe Biden: Secret Service Signs New Deal On Rental Property

By Jim McElhatton

[Washington Times](#), May 15, 2014

Landlord Joe **Biden** will keep collecting rent checks from the agency that protects his life thanks to another contract extension that allows Secret Service agents to continue staying in a cottage on his Delaware property.

The latest extension, signed on May 6, boosts the overall value of the contract to more than \$100,000 since the agency first started paying Mr. **Biden** a few years ago.

The arrangement, first reported by The Washington Times, puts Mr. **Biden** in the unusual position of being both a sitting vice president and a vendor for the federal government at the same time.

The deal has come under scrutiny from taxpayer watchdogs who question why Mr. **Biden** couldn't let the Secret Service stay on his property without paying.

But the Secret Service has said the cottage is a rental property so the agency pays rent. And Mr. **Biden**'s office has said the cottage was existing rental property at the time the Secret Service signed its lease.

Mr. **Biden** and his wife reported \$19,022 in rental income on their cottage property in their joint tax return for 2013.

Operation American Spring To Hit D.C. To Oust Obama, Biden, Boehner, Holder

By Cheryl K. Chumley

[Washington Times](#), May 15, 2014

A group of self-described revolutionary-style patriots with a million mobilized militia members are heading to downtown Washington, D.C., this week to bring a simple message to political leadership, from President Obama to House Speaker John Boehner: Get out.

They're called the Operation American Spring — and they're vowing to oust the likes of Mr. Obama, Mr. Boehner, Attorney General Eric Holder, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, Sen. Mitch McConnell, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and Vice President Joseph R. **Biden**, Raw Story reported.

"We are calling for [their] removal ... as a start toward constitutional restoration," said retired Army Col. Harry Riley, the leader of the group, Raw Story reported. "They have all abandoned the U.S. Constitution, are unworthy to be retained in a position that calls for servant status."

The aim of the group, too, is to influence those politicians who aren't targeted for ouster to "sponsor and pass very constitutionally crafted state legislation to dissolve the size, powers, scope and spending of the U.S. government by two-thirds," the media outlet reported.

The group expects between 10 million and 30 million similarly thinking Americans to meet them in the capital on Friday for a rally that's being billed as a sort of "Arab Spring" for Americans.

Meanwhile, the group is holding another event on the same day in Bunkerville, Nev., near cattle rancher Cliven Bundy's property and in support of his stand-off with the Bureau of Land Management over grazing fees.

The Friday event was promoted by Tea Party Nation.

Mr. Riley said he hopes the event will go forward peaceably, but that so far, peaceful protests haven't brought citizens much luck. He also said that more than 1 million militia members have already mobilized for the event — and that projections of 10 million to attend aren't pie in the sky.

"For more than five years, 'we the people' have been writing, calling, faxing Congress, the media, screaming in town halls, marching, rallying, demonstrating, petitioning, all to no avail," he said, Raw Story

reported. “Every branch of government looks at ‘we the people’ whom they have taken an oath to serve, as ‘pests,’ interfering with their political agenda, cramping their self-serving, greedy agendas. We have no faith in the ballot box any longer, as many believe this sacred secret box has been compromised.

Hunter Biden’s New Job At A Ukrainian Gas Company Is A Problem For U.S. Soft Power

[Washington Post](#), May 14, 2014

Vice President-elect, Sen. Joe **Biden**, D-Del., left, stands with his son Hunter during a re-enactment of the Senate oath ceremony, Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2009, in the Old Senate Chamber on Capitol Hill in Washington. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

Around the world, there is a major perception that U.S. foreign policy is dictated by a thirst for oil and gas. For example, a 2002 Pew Research poll found that 75 percent of French respondents felt that the United States-led invasion of Iraq was a simple ruse to gain control of Iraqi oil. And that isn’t just what the “cheese-eating surrender monkeys” think either: Establishment figures in the United States such as Sen. John McCain and former Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan have both made statements that suggest they buy into it, too.

Such a perception is probably an oversimplification, but there is clearly some truth to the idea. And whether it is true or not, perceptions clearly matter when it comes to international relations.

Think about that when you read the announcement that Vice President **Biden**’s son, Hunter **Biden**, has accepted a position on the board at Ukraine’s largest private gas firm. According to a news release posted Tuesday, the vice president’s son would join the board of Burisma Holdings. The Yale-educated lawyer would be in charge of the company’s legal unit, the release said.

Here’s a small selection of the responses to the news, which ranged from the incredulous to the resigned:

While the general public appeared nonplussed, the official response has been muted. “Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer,” White House spokesperson Kendra Barkoff told The Post. “The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company.”

Meanwhile, an ethics watchdog argued that it probably wasn’t that big of a deal. “It can’t be that because your dad is the vice president, you can’t do anything,” Melanie Sloan, executive director of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, told Reuters.

It’s true that there are no rules against Hunter **Biden** taking this position. And it’s (fairly) safe to assume that his appointment was not part of a broader, U.S.-led plot to oust Moscow-backed Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich and steal all of Ukraine’s gas. However, whatever the practical reality of this posting, its symbolic nature makes it look very bad.

For one thing, while Burisma is clearly trying to portray itself (perhaps genuinely) as an open, Western company, its ownership is more than a little murky. A 2012 investigation from Forbes Ukraine noted that registration documents from Ukraine and Cyprus indicated that Nikolay Zlochevsky, a former government minister and representative of Yanukovich’s Party of Regions, was in control of the company. There was speculation from Ukrainian energy analysts that **Biden**’s appointment may have been an attempt to avoid sanctions by other, bigger Yanukovich allies.

It’s also unclear why, exactly, **Biden** was hired: At Yahoo News, Olivier Knox and Meredith Shiner have speculated that the fact that so much of Burisma’s permits are in Ukraine’s troubled Dnieper-Donets Basin may play a role.

Then there’s the broader problem: The appointment of the vice president’s son to a Ukrainian oil board looks nepotistic at best, nefarious at worst. No matter how qualified **Biden** is, it ties into the idea

that U.S. foreign policy is self-interested, and that's a narrative Vladimir Putin has pushed during Ukraine's crisis with references to Iraq and Libya. It clashes with the U.S. narrative that this is all about international law and human rights.

To be fair, Hunter **Biden** isn't the only person linked to politics on the board of Burisma: The Wall Street Journal reports that Devon Archer, the college roommate of John Kerry's stepson, has also joined, and on Wednesday, Ukrainian media reported that former Polish president Aleksander Kwasniewski would also join the board. It's an impressive crowd.

And **Biden** is certainly not the first politically-linked person to get a dubiously high-paying job on a board. As Mikhail Korchemkin of East European Gas Analysis pointed out to me, more than a few children of Russian politicians have ended up in executive positions in companies at the top of the Forbes 500 list, and China's "princelings" have a similar habit. Bringing big names in has obvious political advantages for companies and other rewards for the names – just ask Gerhard Schröder, the former chancellor of Germany, who sits on the board of the Nord Stream and catches flack for hugging Vladimir Putin, or Dominique Strauss Kahn, now on the board at a subsidiary of Rosneft, the Russian state oil giant where former secretary of state Donald L. Evans once turned down a role.

Still, you have to wonder how big the salary has to be to put U.S. soft power at risk like this. Pretty big, we'd imagine.

Motorcycle Club Temporarily Leaves Property

[Associated Press](#), May 15, 2014

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) – Officials say a motorcycle club has temporarily vacated a property in Wilmington that the Attorney General's office says is a criminal nuisance.

Attorney General Beau **Biden** and Wilmington Mayor Dennis Williams said in a press release that the Thunderguards Motorcycle Club agreed to leave property on Northeast Boulevard.

Biden says the property was closed on Wednesday. He says it will remain closed until a hearing to determine its permanent status is held.

Biden had claimed in a lawsuit last month that the site is the national clubhouse for the Thunderguards. The suit alleges that an adjacent parking lot and nearby storage units are used for criminal activity.

Wilmington officials say five homicides and several shootings have occurred on the property since 2006.

Copyright 2014 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Ukraine Gas Producer Appoints R. Hunter Biden To Board

[NBC News](#), May 15, 2014

Ukraine's largest private gas producer announced on Tuesday that it added R. Hunter **Biden** — the son of U.S. Vice President Joseph **Biden** — to its board of directors.

In a statement on its website, Burisma Holdings said the younger **Biden** will be in charge of the company's legal unit, while providing support "among international organizations."

The release quoted Hunter **Biden** as saying 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."

David McNew / Getty Images, fief

Vice-President Joe **Biden** and his son Hunter **Biden** walk in the Inaugural Parade January 20, 2009 in Washington, DC as Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th President of the United States.

Large corporations frequently appoint well-connected marquee names of both major U.S. political parties as directors. Yet corporate governance experts are critical of the process, which can be fraught with conflicts of interests and the appearance of favoritism.

The arrangement raised questions about the propriety of his appointment, given the tense political standoff between Russia and the West over the future status of Ukraine, where fighting has resulted in the deaths of dozens of soldiers and civilians. Natural gas has factored heavily in tensions between Russia and Ukraine, both of which have political leadership that's intertwined with their respective energy industries.

Until a few years ago, the younger **Biden** was a senior vice president for financial services giant MBNA—an arrangement that drew criticism during the 2008 elections for potential conflict of interests. As a senator, the elder **Biden** spearheaded legislation that would have affected MBNA's business. Meanwhile, Vice President **Biden** has been a vocal supporter of a cross-border European natural gas pipeline.

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.

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 Rosemont 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.

Why Did An Energy Firm With Big Assets In Ukraine Hire Joe Biden's Son?

By Olivier Knox And Meredith Shiner

[Yahoo!](#), May 15, 2014

In the span of a few weeks, an energy firm little-known inside the United States added two members to its board of directors — scoring connections to Secretary of State John Kerry and Vice President Joe **Biden** in the bargain.

On April 22, Cyprus-based Burisma announced that financier Devon Archer had joined its board. Archer, who shared a room in college with Kerry's stepson, Christopher Heinz, served as national finance co-chair for the former senator's 2004 presidential campaign.

Then, on Monday, the firm announced that **Biden's** younger son, R. Hunter **Biden**, would join the board of directors.

Why would the company, which bills itself as Ukraine's largest private gas producer, need such powerful friends in Washington?

The answer might be the company's holdings in Ukraine. They include, according to the firm's website, permits to explore in the Dnieper-Donets Basin in the country's eastern regions, home to an

armed pro-Russian separatist movement. They also include permits to explore in the Azov-Kuban Basin of the strategic Crimean peninsula, annexed earlier this year by Moscow.

It's not clear what will happen to energy firms, like Burisma, that aim to explore and exploit potential deposits in those areas. Neither the Archer nor the **Biden** announcement explicitly mentions the unrest, and it's not clear exactly when their discussions to join the board began. In an April 23 Q&A, the transcript of which appears on Burisma's website, Archer said he had been approached "a few months ago" about the opportunity to consult for the oil company. The announcement of his directorship came less than a month after the disputed vote in Crimea to rejoin Russia.

The White House and the vice president's office denied there was anything untoward about **Biden's** appointment.

"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," said President Barack Obama's press secretary, Jay Carney. "But I would refer you to the Vice President's office."

"Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer," the vice president's press secretary, Kendra Barkoff, said in a statement. "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."

The person who answered the telephone at **Biden's** office in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday cheerfully declared that **Biden** was traveling, that his return date was unknown, and that his assistant was also out of pocket.

An email to Burisma's public relations department did not elicit a reply.

But Archer coyly acknowledged the potential benefits of having him on the board in the April 23 Q&A.

Question: "In the American media you are often linked to the immediate circle of the U.S. Secretary of State Mr. John Kerry and the Vice-president of the United States Mr. Joe **Biden**."

Archer: "American journalists really think so (smiles). I do know them."

Vice President Joe Biden's Son Joins Ukraine Gas Company

A review of the best commentary on and around the world...

By What In The World?, Pieces Of Global Opinion

[BBC News](#), May 15, 2014

Burisma, a private oil and gas company in Ukraine, announced this week that it has appointed Hunter **Biden**, the youngest son of US Vice President Joe **Biden**, to its board of directors.

The company, founded in 2002, is controlled by a former energy official in the government of deposed Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich.

The move has raised some eyebrows in the US, given the Obama administration's attempts to manage the ongoing crisis in Ukraine.

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

She says that by appointing Hunter **Biden** head of its legal affairs unit, "Burisma is turning to US talent – and money and name recognition – for protection against Russia".

The younger Mr **Biden** isn't the only American with political ties to have recently joined Burisma's board. Devon Archer, a former senior advisor to current Secretary of State John Kerry's 2004 presidential campaign and a college roommate of Mr Kerry's stepson HJ Heinz, signed on in April.

Mr **Biden** and Mr Archer are also managing partners at Rosemont Seneca Partners, a Washington, DC-based investment company.

Both Mr **Biden** and Mr Archer have not responded to requests from reporters for comment. In Burisma's press release announcing his hiring, Mr **Biden** says:

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.

All this could be explained simply as a foreign energy company looking to increase its visibility in the US and spur investment, writes the Federalist's Mollie Hemingway. State-controlled companies currently account for 90% of Ukraine's gas production, but this year Burisma became the nation's largest private producer.

Hemingway adds, however, that there may be another, less savoury possibility:

The most disturbing explanation is that the company is attempting to curry favour with the US government by enlisting the services of the close family friend and campaign bundler of the secretary of state and the son of the vice president. After all, Archer notes on one of his company's web pages that his firm's "relationship network creates opportunities for our portfolio companies which then compound to greater outcomes for all parties".

She concludes that this seems like a "cliched movie plot": "a shady foreign oil company co-opts the vice president's son in order to capture lucrative foreign investment contracts".

The White House has emphasised that the vice president's son's new job will have no influence on US foreign policy.

"Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer," Kendra Barkoff, a spokeswoman for the vice president, told the Wall Street Journal. "The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company." Vietnam

China's "brazen aggression" – By towing an oil rig into Vietnam's territorial waters in the East Sea, using water cannons and ramming Vietnamese Coast Guard vessels, writes Nam Thang in the Vietnam News, China has "seriously infringed on Vietnam's sovereignty, running counter to international law and practices and damaging the trust held by the world community".

"Why does China keep taking action detrimental to peace and stability in the East Sea?" he asks. "The question needs to be answered because this is not the first time that China has committed acts that further complicate disputes in the area."

He calls China's territorial claims on the waters "groundless", and says that Vietnam is a "peace-loving nation", but it "will take all necessary and proper measures to defend its legitimate rights and benefits and safeguard its sovereignty". Guatemala

A faltering democracy – When Guatemala imprisoned former President Efraín Ríos Montt for genocide last year, says Haverford College Prof Anita Isaacs, it represented a sign that the country's fragile democracy could be taking hold.

Within two weeks, however, Mr Montt's verdict was annulled, she writes in the New York Times, casting doubt in the independence of the country's judicial system.

Although the country's indigenous majority tried to push for greater rights and judicial independence, she says, the country's elite turned to blackmail, bribery and human rights violations to reassert their control. "Without a watchful eye from abroad," she says, the elites have ensured that "the unjust structures that serve their needs stay in place, even at the expense of rising unrest, polarization and violence". Israel

A just sentence for Ehud Olmert – On Tuesday Judge David Rozen sentenced former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to six years in prison for corruption. The Jerusalem Post's editors write that this "sent a message to all public officials that they should strive to be ethically irreproachable".

Although it's a "sad day" for the nation, they write, the sentence is "reassuring", as it shows no one is "above the law".

They conclude:

This should cause us both shame and pride – shame that such a senior, respected and popular politician could be corrupt; and pride because our law enforcement system did not balk at meting out the appropriate punishment. United Kingdom

Accentuate the positive for Scotland – UK Prime Minister David Cameron's strategy of granting more autonomy to Scotland in the hopes that it does not opt for full independence "has proven demonstrably unsuccessful", writes Bloomberg View's Mark Gilbert.

Although the pro-union side continues to lead in polls, he says, the gap is shrinking.

In order to keep Scotland in the fold, he writes, Mr Cameron "needs to stress what Scotland will gain from remaining in the UK rather than attempting to scare voters by banging on about the alleged downsides of flying solo".

Otherwise, he concludes, Mr Cameron could go down in history as the man who lost Scotland. BBC Monitoring's quotes of the week

Iran and six world powers start three days of nuclear talks in Vienna on Tuesday. Iranian commentators share their expectations for the latest round of negotiations.

"At this juncture, negotiators need strong support from the government and the people in order to calmly conduct the talks... Some comprehend the importance of this new period of modern Iranian history and are seeking to support the negotiating team... But there is a minority in Iran who seeks to realise their personal interests or the interests of their political party, rather than protecting national interests and security." – Seyyed Ali Khorram in E'temad.

"Today, the Islamic Republic's nuclear industry is an established industry which is the product of Iranian young scientists' courage, knowledge and experience. In fact, the continuation of this industry is safeguarding the independence and dignity of the Iranian nation. The nuclear negotiating team should be at the frontline of defence for the independence and dignity of the Iranian nation and should never accept Western bullying." – Mohammad Kazem Anbarlu'i in Resalat.

"Despite my pessimism about the final outcome, I defend the overall performance of the nuclear negotiating team and believe it is working to defend the rights of Iranian citizens... Merely the notion that members of the negotiating team are revolutionary and committed cannot be a guarantee that they will perform correctly. However, questioning the past and destroying their reputation does not match the idea of duty to the Supreme Leader, and it deserves a divine punishment" – Mohammad Said Ahadian in Khorasan.

Have you found an interesting opinion piece about global issues that we missed? Share it with us via email at [echochambers \(at\) bbc.co.uk](mailto:echochambers@bbc.co.uk).

Hunter Biden Joins Board Of Ukraine Gas Company

[UPI](#), May 15, 2014

WASHINGTON, May 14 (UPI) --WASHINGTON, May 14 (UPI) --Bursima Holdings, Ukraine's largest private oil and gas producer, has appointed Hunter **Biden**, Vice President Joe **Biden**'s youngest son, to its board of directors.

Critics have raised questions about the ethical and political implications of such a connection in the midst of a political standoff with Russia over the Ukraine crisis. The vice president has emphasized the importance of decreasing Ukraine's dependency on Russian gas.

Bursima is run by a former government official with ties to ousted Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich.

The company noted in a press release that **Biden** would join "Holdings' legal unit and will provide support for the company among international organizations."

"Bursima'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."

Joe **Biden**'s office has said that Hunter **Biden**'s employment has no bearing on administration policy.

"Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer," Kendra Barkoff, a representative for the vice president's office, told the Wall Street Journal. "The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

© 2014 United Press International, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Lashing Out At Injustice In Delaware

[Lewes \(DE\) Cape Gazette](#), May 15, 2014

Beau **Biden** does not deserve to be the Attorney General of Delaware. Nor does he have the integrity to hold the highest office within the state – governor of Delaware.

Unless Kathy Jennings comes forward with any positive affirmation in regards to the injustice being done in Delaware's Department of Correction, she also will not be privy to my support.

I bring forth solid evidence why the State of Delaware needs a state office of Inspector General, with power to detain and arrest anyone within the state for any criminal activities that are discovered the person has committed. This has been one of the Independent Party of Delaware platforms for many many years. We presented a bill to this effect to the General Assembly members several times. However, just as what I am about to discuss, this too was tucked away in the cobweb infested desks, particularly the concept of IG of our elected officials in Dover.

Chair of the Criminal Justice Council, Matt Denn also does not deserve to be attorney general, because he recently refused to permit any public comments regarding the homicide by blunt trauma force of inmate Ronald Shoup that occurred inside Sussex County Correctional Institution, Georgetown.

Let us pray that whoever murdered Ronald W. Shoup, age 48, who was in prison for a DUI, is not only fired, but prosecuted! There is compensation for the burial and hardship this travesty has caused to the family. No amount of money will ever bring Mr. Shoup back. But the state of Delaware and those who are responsible for this negligence should not be immune to being found guilty on criminal and civil matters surrounding the untimely death of Mr. Shoup

Here is a lengthy list of litigation filed against the State of Delaware, including the many, many lawsuits and pleadings filed by inmates concerning prison abuse. : <http://www.plainsite.org/flashlight/state-of-delaware/page-1/table-firmdockets>

There are many more similar cases that have been swept under the rug and disregarded by the former state police commissioners, who are under the authority of the Attorney General's Office.

Specifically naming Beau **Biden**. Commissioners appointed by the governor of Delaware, and confirmed by our General Assembly, where current Lt. Gov. Matt Denn has a powerful voice as the tie breaking vote.

Because there is no other recourse other than filing legal claims in a court of law, it clearly shows the grievance process has severe corruption. It also shows there is severe negligence within a process that is intended to save the taxpayer the expenses of legal fees related to inmates having to have their grievances heard outside the walls of the DOC – denied proper due process of law and causing undue harm to the inmates, caused by those running the system. Sad to say, when prisoners do file these claims, they are greatly outmatched by the state (The AG's office has at least four or five full-time lawyers working to make these cases go away).

This is your tax dollars that are being wasted, not on frivolous claims but being frivolously wasted through a process that can be blamed on the state itself, if the complaints were actually processed and investigated properly; The costs incurred by the state would not be as high; and judges ignore them. Judges will misstate the facts, ignore the facts and the law, in dismissing these cases.

This is a very pathetic and a huge mistake that is not being acknowledged. I will even go as far as say they are being covered up, and the voters even being unable to inquire about these errors to the lawmakers. These are very serious accusations I make regarding the problems within the prison system. How am I aware of this ? A long time friend of mine, not only saw it, he experienced it as well a thousand times and two of his own cases were clearly wrongly dismissed.

His lone surviving case is set for trial in U.S. District Court in Wilmington May 27.

The cost of all this litigation, unnecessary if the prisons were run properly, and professionally, is in the tens of millions of taxpayers dollars.

Earl Lofland Kent County chairman Independent Party of Delaware reformer candidate U.S. House of Representatives Clayton

Dr. Jill Biden To Headline Newsbabes Bash For Breast Cancer

[WRC-TV Washington](#), May 15, 2014

Dozens of news anchors from the D.C. area are teaming up once again in the fight against breast cancer.

The sixth annual Newsbabes Bash for Breast Cancer is set for Wednesday, June 11 to raise money for Survivors Offering Support (SOS), a program at Georgetown and other hospitals.

SOS pairs women who have been recently diagnosed with trained volunteers who have survived the battle.

News4's own Eun Yang, Angie Goff and Dianna Russini are among the hosts, as are anchors from Bloomberg, CNN, WUSA9, Fox5 and WJLA.

Dr. Jill **Biden**, a breast cancer survivor herself, will headline the event.

In addition, the Newsmen in Pink, a collective of male anchors from each station, will also be attending. Jim Vance, Doug Kammerer, Jim Handly, Aaron Gilchrist, Shomari Stone and Adam Tuss all plan to show up in pink.

Guests will enjoy specialty cocktails and heavy hors d'oeuvres.

It's all happening at the Powerhouse (3255 Grace St. NW) from 7 to 9 p.m. Attire for men and women: anything pink!

Find more information here, and follow @dcnewsbabes for updates about the event on Twitter.

Second Lady Speaks To Graduating Owensboro Students

[WAFB-TV Baton Rouge \(LA\)](#), May 15, 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.

Copyright 2014 WFIE. All rights reserved.

Jill Biden Challenges Owensboro College Grads

[Madisonville \(KY\) Messenger](#), May 15, 2014

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.

Rahm Emanuel Votes Hillary Clinton Over Joe Biden For 2016

[ABC News Radio](#), May 15, 2014

(WASHINGTON) – As a former White House insider in both the Clinton and Obama administrations, Rahm Emanuel has worked closely with Hillary Clinton and Vice President Joe **Biden**. But when it comes to who would be the better Democratic presidential candidate come 2016, his mind is made up.

Emanuel votes Hillary Clinton.

"If she chooses to run, I've already said I'm going to support her," the mayor of Chicago told ABC News.

"Joe's a good friend, personally," said Emanuel. "He's obviously worthy of being considered because he's a great vice president, a great senator, has something to offer...In this case, so does the former secretary of state, senator, and first lady."

Though Emanuel said he is confident that Clinton would win a hypothetical presidential matchup if she chooses to run, he added that Clinton is weighing the prospects of a presidential bid against other personal life factors.

"She's about to be a grandmother," he said. "And she cares about that, and making sure she has the time. Being a congressman, being a mayor, being a president, being a candidate for president, time is not one of the commodities you have a lot of."

Emanuel sat down with ABC News along with fellow Illinois Democrat Rep. Luis Gutierrez before a panel discussion on immigration reform at the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C. He said that the Republican Party cannot survive on the national stage without changing course on immigration reform.

"I think the 'leaders of the Republican Party' know where the future is heading, the current of history is heading," Emanuel said. "The problem is to get there, the boat breaks that they're on. In national elections you cannot be a majority party and be hostile to immigrants."

For the GOP, Emanuel said, it's no longer a question of "will" the party change course, but "when."

Gutierrez described what he sees as a "fight within the Republican Party" between those who stand starkly in opposition to reform as a matter of principle and those who want reform for the sake of the party's national standing. He pointed to former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush as an example of a pro-reform voice within the GOP.

"I think when you hear Jeb Bush and other Republican leaders speak about immigration...I don't want to question their motives of where their heart is at, many of them have their heart exactly where Rahm Emanuel and I have our heart," he said. "And that is to do well and to make sure people have a system that is fair."

Gutierrez also acknowledged that the slow pace of change on the issue and the record number of deportations under President Obama have not been helpful to Democrats. But, he said, Obama is preparing to take executive action to reform the country's immigration system if Congress does not put forth legislation by the summer's end.

"If Republicans do not act, I assure them that this president will act, in a huge, very broad manner," Gutierrez said.

Emanuel also believes that Obama will "absolutely" act if Congress does not, "because certain issues are so urgent to the nation's future that a president must act."

"He can't legalize them, but he can stop their deportation, and put them in a safe place," Gutierrez added. "If they want to simply be a regional party, a party of little cities, and regions in a few states, okay, because that is your future. Abraham Lincoln...first Republican president, George Bush, 2004, you watch, he's going to be the last Republican president for a long time."

NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS

Discrimination In The Military

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

Three years after the demise of "don't ask, don't tell," an estimated 15,000 members of the military still must lie about themselves in order to go on risking their lives for their country. When Congress eliminated the law against gay men and lesbians serving openly in the military, the Pentagon left in place an equally unfounded prohibition on transgender people.

It was gratifying, then, to hear Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel say in an interview on ABC's "This Week" on Sunday, "Every qualified American who wants to serve our country should have an opportunity if they fit the qualifications and can do it." After all, unlike the ban on openly gay soldiers, the rule on transgender people is just a rule. There is no law prohibiting them from serving openly.

But, inexplicably, Mr. Hagel said only that he was "open" to reviewing the policy. He did not say whether he favored lifting the ban and when — or even whether — such a review might take place. There is none underway, and Mr. Hagel currently has no plan to start one. On Monday he told reporters he would prefer to learn more about the issue rather than begin a formal review.

In the ABC interview, Mr. Hagel repeated the standard excuse for this discrimination — that complex medical and logistical issues could preclude transgender people from serving in “austere” combat conditions. That excuse does not hold up, as a panel of former military officers and experts on gender and health led in part by former Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders concluded in March.

“There is no compelling medical rationale for banning transgender military service,” and “eliminating the ban would advance numerous military interests, including enabling commanders to better care for their service members,” the panel said. Its report belongs at the top of Mr. Hagel’s reading list, along with the psychiatric community’s decision a year ago to finally stop mislabeling transgender identity as a mental disorder.

As with gay and lesbian soldiers, the issue is not whether transgender people can serve in the armed forces. The point is that they — including the estimated 15,000 of them now serving — have to cover up their identities. Some refrain from seeking necessary hormone treatment or other medical care, suffering anguish and risking their physical and emotional health.

And for what? There is “no medical reason to presume transgender individuals are unfit for duty,” the panel wrote. Transgender medical care “is no more specialized or difficult than other sophisticated medical care the military system routinely provides,” even in combat zones. As for gender-changing surgery, the panel noted that some elective cosmetic surgeries allowed at military medical facilities require similar leave time and risk more serious postoperative complications.

At least 12 countries, including Britain, Australia and Israel, allow transgender military service, with no apparent decline in readiness. Lt. Col. Cate McGregor of the Australian Defense Forces, former director of the Land Warfare Studies Center, is now speechwriter for the army chief of staff, who would not accept her offer to resign when she decided to undergo surgery in 2012.

Addressing issues like privacy and housing is not rocket science. It happens in civilian workplaces all the time. With the right leadership, outbreaks of intolerance can be minimized. If Mr. Hagel is still trying to make up his mind, his boss, President Obama, can make it up for him. The question is how fast can the armed forces join the modern world on this issue, not whether they should. The time for lame excuses is long past.

Keeping The Wireless Business Competitive

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

For most of its history, the telecommunications industry has been dominated by a handful of large companies. The cost of laying wires, setting up antennas, signing up customers and getting government licenses makes it hard for new players to get into a business dominated by former monopolies with deep pockets.

The wireless business is one of the few parts of the industry that has experienced sustained competition in the last two decades. But it is not as competitive as it once was. Thanks to a series of mergers, the number of national cellphone companies has fallen to four, from six as recently as 2003. Of those businesses, the two largest — AT&T and Verizon — are descendants of the former Ma Bell monopoly. Those companies together had 220 million subscribers at the end of March, compared with 103 million for their smaller competitors, Sprint and T-Mobile.

In recent years regulators have tried to keep the industry from becoming even less competitive. In 2011, they successfully blocked AT&T’s proposed acquisition of T-Mobile. Now, as the Federal Communications Commission prepares to auction more wireless frequencies to cellphone companies, Tom Wheeler, the chairman, has made a smart proposal that would make sure AT&T and Verizon do not walk away with all of the licenses available.

The government licenses the use of certain wireless frequencies, also known as spectrum, to radio and TV stations and cellphone companies. Next year, the F.C.C. will make more spectrum available to cellphone companies after broadcasters relinquish some of the frequencies they no longer want. (How much spectrum is auctioned will depend on how many broadcasters return their licenses.)

On Thursday, the F.C.C. will vote on a modest provision that would reserve some of the spectrum for cellphone companies that do not control a significant number of similar frequencies. Spectrum would be reserved only if the bidding reached a certain price threshold, which would be determined at a later date. The policy would most directly benefit Sprint, T-Mobile and rural carriers. But AT&T and Verizon, which control the best wireless frequencies in the country, would be able to bid on reserved spectrum in places where they did not control more than one-third of similar frequencies.

AT&T and Verizon argue that the F.C.C. will be overstepping its authority and will be picking winners and losers if it goes forward with this plan. But in fact no more than 30 megahertz of spectrum, a relatively small amount, will be reserved in any geographic area. Congress gave the commission the power to create rules to promote competition in the wireless business. A 2012 law that deals with auctions conducted by the agency authorizes the F.C.C. to carry out rules “concerning spectrum aggregation that promote competition.”

Still, it would be foolish to think that reserving a small amount of spectrum would be sufficient to ensure that the wireless business remains competitive. As in other network-based industries with high barriers to entry, big cellphone companies have inherent advantages over smaller ones. For example, they can demand better prices from technology suppliers and can afford to spend more money on their networks, all of which allows them to attract more customers and become even more profitable.

Having allowed the industry to consolidate so much already, regulators must treat future corporate deals with great skepticism. Consumers need more choices; at the very least, the F.C.C. should be working to preserve the choices they still have.

No Slowdown In Unfair Marijuana Arrests

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

When Mayor Bill de Blasio took office in January, community groups and juvenile justice advocates hoped that his administration would significantly decrease the numbers of black and Latino young people who are unfairly — and in some cases, illegally — arrested and dragged through the court system for possession of tiny amounts of marijuana. But a new analysis of state arrest data by a nonprofit called the Marijuana Arrest Research Project, which studies police policy, suggests that the de Blasio administration is on track to equal the more than 28,600 low-level marijuana arrests that were made under Michael Bloomberg in 2013. The administration needs to review Police Department policy to make sure these arrests are necessary and being fairly made.

The State Legislature tried to correct the problem in 1977, when it barred the police from arresting people for tiny amounts of marijuana unless the drug was publicly displayed. The number of minor arrests declined immediately after the law was passed but rose sharply from fewer than 1,000 in 1990 to 50,000 in 2011. Research has repeatedly shown that whites and minorities use the drug at similar rates, yet more than 80 percent of those arrested are black or Latino. And even though most cases are eventually dismissed, the arrests exact a cost: Young people who are even temporarily entangled in the courts can be shut out of jobs or denied entry into the armed services.

As the number of arrests skyrocketed, defense attorneys made the case that police officers were illegally charging suspects with “public possession” after directing them to reveal the drug or removing it

from their pockets during constitutionally questionable searches. Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly tacitly acknowledged that problem in 2011, ordering officers to follow the 1977 law. The numbers of arrests declined significantly. The 28,600 arrests made last year may seem low compared with the number in 2011.

The police have historically implied that marijuana arrests help get criminals off the street. But a majority of these low-level arrests end in an “adjournment in contemplation of dismissal,” which means that the charges go away if the person stays out of trouble for six months or a year, or in a plea to a violation, which is a noncriminal disposition. (These cases waste scarce court resources and distract prosecutors from working on serious crime.) Moreover, a 2012 study by Human Rights Watch found that only about 3 percent of people arrested for low-level marijuana possession subsequently committed even one violent felony.

The new state data for the city shows a slight decline in arrests for the first quarter of this year, which can partly be explained by harsh weather that kept people indoors. But the 2,657 arrests in March exceed the number of arrests made in March 2013. Moreover, as in previous years, there were few arrests in affluent white areas, and those arrested were mostly black and Latino young men in heavily minority neighborhoods. Mr. de Blasio’s team has thus far demonstrated no concern about the marijuana arrest problem. But the extreme racial disparities in the arrest statistics alone make it imperative that the city look more closely into what is happening here.

The Kidnapping Of A Country

By Lauren Bohn And Chika Oduah

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

CHIBOK, Nigeria — THE road to Chibok is eerily quiet, lined with checkpoints manned by civilians, many of them teenagers, wielding rusty rifles and serving as added security for an area that has little. In this northeast Nigerian village, where more than 300 teenage schoolgirls were kidnapped by the militant Islamist separatist group Boko Haram on April 14, their stunned families were still waiting this week for them to come home.

Lawan Zanna was still waiting for Aisha, his 18-year-old daughter. “How can I sleep?” Mr. Zanna asked. “Anger is gripping my body.” After the girls were abducted, Mr. Zanna said, he and other parents searched the nearby Sambisa forest for their children, but came back empty-handed. As he spoke, Aisha’s sister Hawa, 19, stood in silence. The two girls shared a small bedroom and almost everything else.

More than 750 people have been killed this year alone in Boko Haram attacks; at least 29 boys were killed in a February school raid. This time, the government’s failure in rescuing the girls, and in addressing the issue, has incensed Nigerians and, increasingly, people around the world.

In the midst of the crisis, the World Economic Forum on Africa hosted a three-day summit meeting, May 7-9, bringing about a thousand delegates from around the world and Nigeria’s elite to Abuja, the Nigerian capital, to discuss economic growth and development. As the .001 percent opined in air-conditioned suites, far from the hot reality of Abuja’s streets and psyche, the government deployed 6,000 security officers for the event — an effort that many Nigerians half-joked, half-lamented would never be made to protect ordinary Nigerians, nor to retrieve the Chibok schoolgirls.

The city was at a standstill. Blue-uniformed security and police officers gathered around boomboxes perched on wooden benches and turned up to maximum volume, listening to voices shouting curses at the enigmatic Boko Haram. “We just don’t know who these people are or what exactly they want to do,”

said a call-in guest on 95.1 FM Nigerian Info. “They say they want to impose Shariah law or whatever, but Nigeria is not an Islamic state! God go punish you!” A uniformed man holding a half-chewed juicy mango exclaimed, “Yes! God go punish them!” to nods of agreement.

Nigerian citizens exist in this surreal state of great contrasts, in a nation mired in corruption, under attack by an Islamist insurgency and at the same time brimming with potential and acclaimed as an economic engine for the African continent. With 170 million people, Nigeria is Africa’s most populous country and largest oil producer. Its economy has surpassed South Africa’s, making it the largest on the continent. But that growth has only widened economic inequality. Economic activity has slowed to a trickle in regions where terrorizing at the hands of Boko Haram has forced farmers to abandon their fields, while young people without job prospects have left for the cities. More Nigerians are poor today than at independence in 1960, with over 60 percent below the poverty line.

For the past three weeks, we have been traveling the country reporting on youth unemployment, an issue consistently ignored by the government, but one that has been exploited by Boko Haram.

“The abductions are only the tip of the iceberg,” said Tayo Olufuwa, a bespectacled 23-year-old entrepreneur from Mushin, one of Lagos’s poorest neighborhoods. Mr. Olufuwa has started an online employment search company, Jobs in Nigeria. When we filmed him two weeks ago, walking on his old childhood streets for a multimedia report, plainclothes policemen detained us for four hours, confiscating our credentials and equipment. They told us they were protecting us from Boko Haram and other security threats, wrestled with our driver for a bribe and mocked a crowd of children. “We are a country sleeping with one eye open,” Mr. Olufuwa said afterward in exasperation.

It’s an expression used often by Nigerians, who are frustrated yet unsurprised by conflicting actions and reports from a government they have come to distrust. At least 16 Nigerians were killed in March in stampedes when nearly a half-million people applied for fewer than 5,000 government jobs.

Frederick Kusompwa, 30, eagerly joined thousands of job seekers at the national stadium in Abuja, one of the application sites, only to watch people climbing over one another, clawing for registration forms: “I just asked myself, What has my country become?” The interior minister, whose office oversaw the recruitment, announced that the dead “lost their lives through their impatience.”

Thousands apply for 20 full scholarships offered by the Institute of Petroleum Studies at the University of Port Harcourt in the Niger Delta. Celestina Johnson, an administrator at the institute, said she often wanted to cry during the interviews because so many of the applicants would never get a chance. As she spoke, the electricity went out — an everyday occurrence in Nigeria. “If this country’s condition continues, there will be a mass revolt,” Ms. Johnson said. “The country will break.”

In Lagos, the commercial capital of the country, a 41-year-old cabdriver, Oyebajo Adekunle, sweated as he swerved through rush-hour traffic. A college graduate with a business degree, he said he never thought he’d be driving people around, struggling to make enough money for his family of six. He pulled up to a cluster of people — one of the daily Bring Back Our Girls protests that have taken place here and around the country for weeks. “I would go out and stand with the women, but I have to hustle,” he said, wiping sweat from his brow. “It’s like the government makes the hustle so hard, so that we’re too tired to do anything about things like this.” He rolled down his window to shake one of the female protesters’ hands, locking eyes for a mere second, and then sped off to pick up another client.

Lauren Bohn and Chika Oduah are the recipients of a GlobalPost reporting fellowship in Nigeria for 2014.

The AIDS-Shaming Of Magic Johnson

By Charles M. Blow

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

The sheer volume of bile spewing from the mouth of the Clippers owner, Donald Sterling, is staggering. But just as awe-inducing, and stomach-churning, is the unrestrained breadth of its variety, which makes putting the offenses in order — if one were inclined to — nearly impossible.

But high on any list — on a par with the racism, sexism, misogyny, paternalistic plantation thinking and bias cloaked in benevolence — has to be Sterling's attempt to AIDS-shame Magic Johnson.

In an interview with CNN's Anderson Cooper that aired on Monday, Sterling asked about Johnson:

"What has he done? Can you tell me? Big Magic Johnson, what has he done? He's got AIDS."

For the record, as Cooper pointed out, Johnson has disclosed that he has H.I.V. but there is no evidence that his condition has ever progressed to AIDS.

Sterling continued:

"What kind of guy goes to every city, has sex with every girl, then goes and catches H.I.V.? Is that someone we want to respect and tell our kids about? I think he should be ashamed of himself. I think he should go into the background."

And there's more:

"Here's a man, I don't know if I should say this, he acts so holy. He made love with every girl in every city in America, and he had AIDS, and when he had those AIDS, I went to my synagogue and I prayed for him. I hoped he could live and be well. I didn't criticize him. I could have. Is he an example for children?"

This line of attack on Johnson is one of the most revolting things to come out of this whole revolting episode. It feeds into the ignorance about the disease itself and the stigma attached to it that is an enormous hindrance to bringing it more under control in this country.

Let's start here: Contracting H.I.V. (or AIDS) is not evidence of a character defect. It is simply a disease and should be treated as such. The way that so many people, like Sterling, seem to separate out and shun people with communicable diseases — particularly sex-related ones — is outrageous and mustn't be tolerated and glossed over.

Does behavior play a large role — possibly the central role — in the spread of H.I.V.? Of course, but behavior is also a major cause of many diseases: heart disease, diabetes, and in some cases even cancer.

We must extend our empathy and demonstrate our compassion toward all people living with and dealing with any disease, and encourage better understanding and education to reduce the number of people affected by such illnesses.

What we don't need is a man of Sterling's dubious motives and questionable character spreading pernicious misinformation and hurtful poison about a disease he seems to little understand.

One thing that Sterling said does, in fact, hold a grain of truth: "You know, because he has money, he's able to treat himself." It is true that Johnson's wealth means that he is able to afford the best medical care, while far too many people living with H.I.V. and AIDS suffer not only for lack of quality health care but also lack of funds, food and adequate housing.

That said, Johnson is still a shining example to people living with the disease that it doesn't have to be life ending, that you can remain healthy, have a family, have a career and have a life.

And, he is a particularly potent symbol because he is African-American, because as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention points out:

“African-Americans accounted for an estimated 44 percent of all new H.I.V. infections among adults and adolescents (age 13 or older) in 2010, despite representing only 12 percent of the U.S. population; considering the smaller size of the African-American population in the United States, this represents a population rate that is eight times that of whites over all.”

Some of the problem is that —partly because of lack of education, economics and H.I.V. stigma — “almost 85,000 H.I.V.-infected people in the African-American community in 2010 were unaware of their H.I.V. status.”

And if people don’t know they are infected, they can’t be in care and controlling the disease, and therefore become highly infectious to other people.

(A study has shown that a person with H.I.V. who takes medication early on and has the disease under control reduces his or her transmission rate by 96 percent.)

Furthermore, stigma plays a role in people’s unwillingness to disclose a positive diagnosis, furthering the likelihood of more transmission.

Magic Johnson, much to his credit, revealed his H.I.V.-positive status more than 20 years ago and has since been, personally and through the foundation that bears his name, an advocate for H.I.V./AIDS awareness and prevention.

As Johnson said in an interview with Cooper on Tuesday, regarding Sterling and his comments on his H.I.V. status:

“The stigma is still there. We know that. We’ve been fighting it for years, and what we want to continue to do is just educate the world that it’s O.K., that you can high-five a person who has H.I.V. It’s O.K. ... It’s a shame that Donald used this platform with you, instead of using this platform to come out and apologize to the world, which would have been great.”

In attempting to AIDS-shame Johnson, Sterling further shamed himself — if that’s even possible — and proved supremely disrespectful of and destructive to people living with H.I.V. and those (like Johnson, who responded magnanimously) who are working to reach the affected and protect those at risk.

In this it is clear that Johnson is a far better example for our children than Sterling.

My State’s Prettier Than Yours

By Gail Collins

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

Our topic for today is state tourism slogans. Perhaps that’s not what you had in mind. Perhaps you are from North Dakota (“Legendary”) or North Carolina (“Beauty Amplified”) and are already so self-satisfied you see no reason to worry about the subject at all.

But this is actually a deeply political matter. After all, it’s the states’ wildly different self-images and sense of specialness that makes places like Congress so interesting.

Consider Texas, which is currently bragging “It’s Like a Whole Other Country.” This is not the slogan of a place that prides itself on the ability to get along with others.

Neither is Montana’s “Get Lost.” This is actually supposed to be an invitation to come, not leave. But at best, it conjures up visions of helicopters and search dogs. Like many states, Montana plays around with several slogans. One of its newest, “Step Out of Bounds,” sounds a bit like a suggestion to walk off a cliff.

On the opposite side we have Washington (“Washington: The State”). These people definitely regard themselves as part of the group.

It's sad that states no longer like to identify themselves with agricultural production, which always had a nice touch of down-to-earth practicality. Wisconsin has never been the same since it stopped being "America's Dairyland" and rejected efforts by enthusiasts to adopt "Eat Cheese or Die." While the state's tourism website currently urges viewers to "Turn Up the Fun," a spokeswoman denied that it now has any official marketing pitch whatsoever.

For a long and glorious time, Idaho's slogan was "Great Potatoes. Tasty Destinations." But I am sorry to say that the state has moved on and is now going with "Idaho: Adventures in Living." Diane Norton, the Idaho tourism manager, said the state's new sales pitch "was developed using attitude research which revealed that Idaho is viewed as being 'an adventure' in and of itself." Well yeah, when you hire people to do a marketing survey, they are not going to come back with a root vegetable.

Honestly, I'm not sure how useful brand research is in these cases. The consultants almost always report that their focus groups determined that the state's most salient point is the great scenery. Or, in the case where there isn't any scenery, the people.

Except New Mexico, where a focus group reportedly once described the state as boring and, on the positive side, "close to Arizona." Who knew? Actually these days many Americans' perception of the state is probably based on the series "Breaking Bad." Perhaps the slogan should be: "Something's Cooking in New Mexico, and It's Not Actually Meth."

Instead, they came up with "New Mexico True." Honestly.

Connecticut is currently trying the historic route with a new tourism slogan ("Connecticut: Still Revolutionary"). This is something of a comeback attempt after the troubled "Connecticut: Full of Surprises" era, during which then-Gov. Jodi Rell failed to pay the state's dues to a regional tourism-promotion group. Imagine everyone's surprise when they woke up and discovered that Connecticut had been wiped off the map in the Discover New England website.

"There was no Connecticut there. We actually got kicked out of New England," said Colin McEnroe, a Connecticut radio host and Hartford Courant columnist.

Connecticut's problems stem in part from the fact that "Connecticut" is hard to put in a jingle. Think about it. If you want to refer to somebody as a Connecticut resident, the only noun you can use is "Nutmegger." As part of the "Still Revolutionary" campaign, now-Gov. Dan Malloy's administration unveiled a new song, "Better With You," which McEnroe said was notable mainly for never mentioning the state's name.

Every single state believes that it is meant to be a tourist destination. Nebraska, for instance, insists that tourism is its "third largest earner of revenue from outside the state," although given the fact that it lists the first two as "agriculture and manufacturing" there really aren't a whole lot of options left. Its marketing pitch used to be "Possibilities ... Endless," which is not to be confused with Delaware's "Endless Discoveries." Then this month the Nebraska Tourism Commission unveiled "Nebraska Nice." A spokesman announced that brand research had determined that "one of Nebraska's strongest assets is our people."

The "Nice" campaign irked Iowans, who resented the idea that Nebraska was trying to corral the humble politeness franchise. ("Nebraska: Nice Try" read a new Iowa T-shirt.) And they have a point. Nebraska should try to market something that it and it alone can lay claim to. I vote for "Visit Nebraska: We Have a Unicameral State Legislature."

I'm sorry to say that I have never been to Nebraska. Long ago, during the Clinton administration, I wrote something about the state's Senator Bob Kerrey that ticked off his press office, and I was informed that I was barred from Nebraska forever.

I mentioned this once a few years ago, and someone from the office of Kerrey's successor, Senator Ben Nelson, informed me that the ban was revoked. Which did seem extremely nice.

It's Now The Canadian Dream

By Nicholas Kristof

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

It was in 1931 that the historian James Truslow Adams coined the phrase "the American dream."

The American dream is not just a yearning for affluence, Adams said, but also for the chance to overcome barriers and social class, to become the best that we can be. Adams acknowledged that the United States didn't fully live up to that ideal, but he argued that America came closer than anywhere else.

Adams was right at the time, and for decades. When my father, an eastern European refugee, reached France after World War II, he was determined to continue to the United States because it was less class bound, more meritocratic and offered more opportunity.

Yet today the American dream has derailed, partly because of growing inequality. Or maybe the American dream has just swapped citizenship, for now it is more likely to be found in Canada or Europe — and a central issue in this year's political campaigns should be how to repatriate it.

A report last month in *The Times* by David Leonhardt and Kevin Quealy noted that the American middle class is no longer the richest in the world, with Canada apparently pulling ahead in median after-tax income. Other countries in Europe are poised to overtake us as well.

In fact, the discrepancy is arguably even greater. Canadians receive essentially free health care, while Americans pay for part of their health care costs with after-tax dollars. Meanwhile, the American worker toils, on average, 4.6 percent more hours than a Canadian worker, 21 percent more hours than a French worker and an astonishing 28 percent more hours than a German worker, according to data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Canadians and Europeans also live longer, on average, than Americans do. Their children are less likely to die than ours. American women are twice as likely to die as a result of pregnancy or childbirth as Canadian women. And, while our universities are still the best in the world, children in other industrialized countries, on average, get a better education than ours. Most sobering of all: A recent O.E.C.D. report found that for people aged 16 to 24, Americans ranked last among rich countries in numeracy and technological proficiency.

Economic mobility is tricky to measure, but several studies show that a child born in the bottom 20 percent economically is less likely to rise to the top in America than in Europe. A Danish child is twice as likely to rise as an American child.

When our futures are determined to a significant extent at birth, we've reverted to the feudalism that our ancestors fled.

"Equality of opportunity — the 'American dream' — has always been a cherished American ideal," Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel-winning economist at Columbia University, noted in a recent speech. "But data now show that this is a myth: America has become the advanced country not only with the highest level of inequality, but one of those with the least equality of opportunity."

Consider that the American economy has, over all, grown more quickly than France's. But so much of the growth has gone to the top 1 percent that the bottom 99 percent of French people have done better than the bottom 99 percent of Americans.

Three data points:

- The top 1 percent in America now own assets worth more than those held by the entire bottom 90 percent.

- The six Walmart heirs are worth as much as the bottom 41 percent of American households put together.

- The top six hedge fund managers and traders averaged more than \$2 billion each in earnings last year, partly because of the egregious “carried interest” tax break. President Obama has been unable to get financing for universal prekindergarten; this year’s proposed federal budget for pre-K for all, so important to our nation’s future, would be a bit more than a single month’s earnings for those six tycoons.

Inequality has become a hot topic, propelling Bill de Blasio to become mayor of New York City, turning Senator Elizabeth Warren into a star, and elevating the economist Thomas Piketty into such a demigod that my teenage daughter asked me the other day for his 696-page tome. All this growing awareness is a hopeful sign, because there are policy steps that we could take that would create opportunity and dampen inequality.

We could stop subsidizing private jets and too-big-to-fail banks, and direct those funds to early education programs that help break the cycle of poverty. We can invest less in prisons and more in schools.

We can impose a financial transactions tax and use the proceeds to broaden jobs programs like the earned-income tax credit and career academies. And, as Alan S. Blinder of Princeton University has outlined, we can give companies tax credits for creating new jobs.

It’s time to bring the American dream home from exile.

Still Tinkering

By Linda Greenhouse

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

Twenty years have passed since Justice Harry A. Blackmun, at age 85 and just months away from retirement, renounced the death penalty. “From this day forward, I no longer shall tinker with the machinery of death,” he declared.

There’s been an awful lot of tinkering going on lately.

Oklahoma’s botched attempt last month to carry out an execution with a previously untried combination of lethal drugs from secret sources shone a spotlight on how states are scrambling to deal with the increasingly unreliable supply of the ingredients of the once standard three-drug cocktail. Clayton D. Lockett, the condemned Oklahoma murderer who was seen writhing and moaning after the badly administered first drug failed to render him fully unconscious, died of an apparent heart attack nearly two hours after officials had started trying to kill him.

Given the Roberts court’s conservative trajectory, it may seem a waste of energy even to wonder whether that incident, or the disarray on the whole lethal injection front, might persuade the justices to take another look at the death penalty.

No current member of the court is on record as opposing capital punishment. Justice John Paul Stevens, who retired three years ago, was the last. He announced his opposition to the death penalty in a 2008 opinion, and his new book, “Six Amendments,” proposes a constitutional amendment “to put an end to what has become a wretched arrangement.”

That there are strains within the court over specific death-penalty issues presented by particular cases is obvious. Less than a month ago, a majority of five justices permitted a Texas execution to proceed despite the votes of Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen G. Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and

Elena Kagan to grant a stay. (The order denying the stay was unsigned, and none of the four dissenters wrote an opinion.) Lawyers for the death row inmate, Jose L. Villegas Jr., convicted of a triple murder, argued that their client was mentally retarded, an assertion the state disputed.

His lawyers urged the justices to delay the execution until the court ruled in a separate case on how to define mental retardation in the capital punishment context – an issue that remains ambiguous 12 years after the court ruled in *Atkins v. Virginia* that the Eighth Amendment prohibits executing mentally retarded defendants. The court heard the pending case, *Hall v. Florida*, in March and will decide it before the current term ends in June.

Texas carried out the execution the day after the court's denial of the stay. "It does kind of burn. Goodbye," Mr. Villegas was reported to say as the single drug that Texas uses took effect. On Tuesday of this week, Texas was about to execute another death row inmate, Robert James Campbell, but the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit granted a last-minute stay after the inmate's lawyers presented evidence of his mental retardation.

Both the court and Congress have tried for years to limit death-penalty appeals by imposing increasingly daunting jurisdictional barriers. But these cases are still a staple of the Supreme Court's docket and will remain so as long as the death penalty exists. So in light of last month's debacle, and under no illusions that the court is about to engage in a fundamental debate over capital punishment, I decided to take a fresh look at an old case – the court's rejection in 2008 of a constitutional challenge to Kentucky's lethal injection protocol.

The case, *Baze v. Rees*, is usually noted for the opportunity it gave Justice Stevens to declare his opposition to the death penalty (although he actually joined the 7-to-2 majority in ruling for the state, out of a desire, as he put it then, "to respect precedents that remain a part of our law.") Less well remembered is what the court actually said about lethal injection.

There was no opinion for the court. The seven justices in the majority (Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and the now-retired Justice David H. Souter dissented) explained themselves in six separate opinions. Re-reading the opinions in light of current events was an eerie experience.

The court handed down *Baze v. Rees* almost exactly six years before the Oklahoma mess. The problems that some justices described in their opinions as unduly alarmist or unsubstantiated were the very problems that occurred last month. The dire warnings of the lawyers representing two Kentucky death row inmates – a team led by Donald B. Verrilli Jr., then a lawyer in private practice and now the Obama administration's solicitor general – actually came true.

Law professors like to ask their students to "run the counterfactual" – assume a narrative opposite from what actually happened, and assess the implications. What really happened six years after *Baze v. Rees* is the ultimate counterfactual – except that it's not hypothetical.

The case was not about the constitutionality of the death penalty or even about lethal injection as a means of carrying it out. Rather, the question as Mr. Verrilli framed it was whether the risk that something would go wrong in Kentucky's administration of its three-drug protocol was so substantial as to violate the Eighth Amendment's prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment.

He pointed out that if the first drug, a sedative, were to prove inadequate while the second drug, a paralyzing agent, worked as intended, the inmate would suffer excruciating pain from the third, heart-stopping drug while being unable to cry out or call for help. Mr. Verrilli argued the potential problem could be avoided by use of a single drug to bring about unconsciousness and death – the procedure that veterinarians use for animal euthanasia but that had not been used for human executions. (Texas, the most active death-penalty state, eventually adopted the single-drug procedure and currently uses it.

In a plurality opinion joined by Justices Anthony M. Kennedy and Samuel A. Alito Jr., Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. said the inmates' lawyer hadn't made his case. The risk of harm wasn't sufficiently great or sufficiently imminent; the proposed alternative was only "slightly or marginally safer." The chief justice said, "Permitting an Eighth Amendment violation to be established on such a showing would threaten to transform courts into boards of inquiry charged with determining 'best practices' for executions, with each ruling supplanted by another round of litigation touting a new and improved methodology."

Mr. Verrilli had also argued that the intravenous line could fail, resulting in the sedating drug infiltrating the surrounding tissue instead of reaching the vein in amounts adequate to cause unconsciousness. While Kentucky's protocol gave the execution team up to an hour to establish the I.V. line, Mr. Verrilli's brief asserted that "more than 10 or 15 minutes of unsuccessful attempts is dangerous because the I.V. is almost certain to be unreliable." The chief justice's opinion rejected this argument, too, as overblown, noting that Kentucky's medical experts had testified that any infiltration into tissue instead of the vein would be "very obvious" even to an untrained observer.

Of course, these arguments predicted almost exactly what was to go wrong six years later in Oklahoma. A medical technician in the execution chamber of the state prison in McAlester poked and prodded at Mr. Lockett for 51 minutes before finding what he thought was a usable vein in his groin, and no one noticed when the insertion went awry.

I don't fault Chief Justice Roberts for lacking clairvoyance. I covered the case at the court, and I remember thinking that Kentucky did seem to know what it was doing. The state had what sounded like a plausible defense against an attack that was at best theoretical. And lethal injection did seem more humane than execution by hanging, the electric chair or the firing squad by which Utah executed Gary Gilmore in 1977. His was the first execution after the Supreme Court permitted capital punishment to resume in states that had reformulated their death penalties to the justices' specifications.

Still, Justice Ginsburg got it. "Rare though errors may be," she wrote in the dissenting opinion that Justice Souter also signed, "the consequences of a mistake about the condemned inmate's consciousness are horrendous and effectively undetectable after injection of the second drug." She added: "If readily available measures can materially increase the likelihood that the protocol will cause no pain, a state fails to adhere to contemporary standards of decency if it declines to employ those measures."

Chief Justice Roberts and the justices who joined him acknowledged that placing a condemned inmate at risk of unnecessary pain and suffering, if the risk was great enough, would be unconstitutional. His opinion was a serious effort to thread a very small needle. By contrast, Justices Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia refused to sign the chief justice's opinion because, they said in their separate opinion, they believed that only the deliberate infliction of suffering would violate the Eighth Amendment.

During the seven months that the Baze case was pending before the Supreme Court, in 2007 and 2008, the number of executions plummeted as state officials and judges waited to see what rules would emerge. When none did, the numbers started climbing back up. Now Oklahoma and, just the other day, Louisiana have delayed pending executions while examining their lethal injection protocols. Early this month, President Obama ordered a federal review of how the death penalty was being carried out around the country. More tinkering? Perhaps.

The justices will most likely sit out this round. If they were to involve themselves again, I'm not sure what they would do. But they can't say they weren't warned.

Don't Force Google To 'Forget'

By Jonathan Zittrain

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — THE European Court of Justice ruled on Tuesday that Europeans have a limited “right to be forgotten” by search engines like Google. According to the ruling, an individual can compel Google to remove certain reputation-harming search results that are generated by Googling the individual’s name. The court is trying to address an important problem — namely, the Internet’s ability to preserve indefinitely all its information about you, no matter how unfortunate or misleading — but it has devised a poor solution.

The court’s decision is both too broad and curiously narrow. It is too broad in that it allows individuals to impede access to facts about themselves found in public documents. This is a form of censorship, one that would most likely be unconstitutional if attempted in the United States. Moreover, the test for removal that search engines are expected to use is so vague — search results are to be excluded if they are “inadequate, irrelevant or no longer relevant” — that search engines are likely to err on the safe side and accede to most requests.

But the decision is oddly narrow in that it doesn’t require that unwanted information be removed from the web. The court doesn’t have a problem with web pages that mention the name of the plaintiff in this case (Mario Costeja González) and the thing he regrets (a property foreclosure); it has a problem only with search engines that list those pages — including this article and possibly the court’s own ruling — as results to a query on the basis of Mr. González’s name. So nothing is being “forgotten,” despite the court’s stated attempt to protect such a right.

How an individual’s reputation is protected online is too important and subtle a policy matter to be legislated by a high court, which is institutionally mismatched to the evolving intricacies of the online world.

Progress has been limited perhaps by a shortfall of imagination by Google, Microsoft’s Bing and the handful of other powerful intermediaries who stand between what we ask and what we’re told is relevant. Search engines generally treat personal names as search terms like any others: Data is data. Google and company have not internalized just how significant that first page of search results has become to someone whose name has been queried. What they place on that page may do more than anything else in the world to define a stranger in others’ estimations.

What if search engine companies were to think more creatively about how such searches might work? In 2007, Google admirably experimented in this area, introducing a feature to its Google News aggregator that allowed people quoted or mentioned in a news article indexed by Google News to add a comment next to that article in the search results. Such participants could offer readers of Google News an explanation, an apology, or a reason to discount whatever it was they were about to read. (Academics were among the first users of the feature, often adding a comment to contextualize something a newspaper reporter had quoted them as saying.) But Google ultimately abandoned the feature.

That’s too bad. If search engines allowed for such comments generally, they might be able to give you more influence over the information about you online — without giving you the power to censor. Perhaps querying someone’s name would result in an initial page of search results in which some form of curating was permitted for people sharing that name; the subsequent pages of results would provide the unvarnished material that a regular search now generates.

For those who believe in a right to “be forgotten,” such a proposal would of course fall short. But I suspect that in many cases, the desire for such a right is merely the desire not to have your life presented

to the world mechanistically and without review, with nothing more than a search term and a single click. This is a legitimate desire that the sort of proposal I have in mind would satisfy.

Whatever the solution, the status quo is no longer stable. In the wake of the decision by the European Court of Justice, search engine companies now face a potential avalanche of requests for redaction. And whatever the merits of the court's decision, Europe cannot expect to export its new approach to countries like the United States. (Even in Europe, search engine users will no doubt cultivate the same Internet "workarounds" that Chinese citizens use to see what their government doesn't want them to see.)

Google, Bing and Yahoo should devote their considerable resources to mitigating this problem. If they don't, search engine results may become increasingly dependent on where your keyboard is, rather than what you're looking for. And the search engines may find themselves in a cat-and-mouse game of censorship and evasion, leading only to a fragmentation, not an improvement, of the web.

Jonathan Zittrain, a professor of law and computer science at Harvard, is the author of "The Future of the Internet — And How to Stop It."

New Bad Old Times For Guatemala?

By Anita Isaacs

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

HAVERFORD, Penn. — It has been only a year since a court convicted Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt, a former president of Guatemala, of genocide, a step hailed as a breakthrough for the country's fragile democracy. And yet Guatemala's hard-won progress is starting to falter; if nothing is done, it could easily slip back into authoritarianism, violence and disregard for basic human rights.

The trial of General Ríos Montt, who as the unelected president from 1982 to 1983 oversaw the murder of tens of thousands of Guatemalans, was the first time in history that a head of state anywhere was tried and convicted of genocide in a domestic courtroom. It was also supposed to be a major turning point for Guatemala's court system, which, until recently, punished only 2 percent of all crimes.

But less than two weeks later, the verdict was annulled on procedural grounds. The decision was a cruel disappointment for the victims of General Ríos Montt's regime, whose expectations had been raised by the trial, and a huge relief for former military leaders, who feared that they might stand trial next, and for powerful businesspeople who financed the country's civil war.

Nevertheless, as Guatemala faded from headlines, a flurry of political mobilization and maneuvering began. The poor, who had borne the brunt of General Ríos Montt's regime, were emboldened by the trial and demonstrated en masse when the verdict was annulled.

Despite the disappointing outcome, the country's indigenous majority believed the justice system might actually be made to work in their favor, that their voices had been heard and their rights respected. Since then, there have been sustained and increasingly defiant organizing and protests by peasants in rural areas of Guatemala, especially in regions plagued by land conflicts and growing tensions over the development of hydroelectric plants and subsoil mining.

But the country's elite, threatened by the idea of a justice system that might begin to work against them and by growing peasant activism, soon pushed back. The Guatemalan Bar Association first struck against the judge who ruled against General Ríos Montt, temporarily revoking her license to practice law. Then, last month, secret recordings surfaced in the Guatemalan press in which several politicians and lawyers could be heard bribing and blackmailing one another, in an effort to stack the supreme and appellate courts.

Business groups also maneuvered behind the scenes to pressure the constitutional court, and force Claudia Paz y Paz, the attorney general who had been a standard-bearer for the reformers by prosecuting gangsters and generals, out of office.

The commission that was established to nominate a new attorney general removed Ms. Paz y Paz from the list of contenders, even though its own assessment ranked her as the second-most qualified candidate. Asked whether politics intervened in the process, the commission president acknowledged, "It is possible."

Then, on May 10, the first anniversary of the genocide conviction, President Otto Pérez Molina appointed a lawyer named Thelma Aldana as the new attorney general. The move was a slap in the face to reformers: Ms. Aldana has been accused of having close ties to the political party once run by General Ríos Montt and to the current vice president, Roxana Baldetti, who has been exposed by the Guatemalan press for having used her office for personal enrichment.

Ms. Aldana's own statements are worrisome as well: She has been openly critical of her predecessor, Ms. Paz y Paz, whom she describes as having "favored the political left," and has stressed her willingness to consider granting amnesty to members of the Guatemalan military who participated in crimes of genocide during the civil war.

The government and the country's wealthy landowners, meanwhile, have wasted no time in violently putting peasants back in their place. Instead of entering into a dialogue with protesters, the president has openly branded them criminals and terrorists. In such a climate, it is no surprise that Guatemala is ranked the most dangerous place in the world to be a union activist: Eighteen human rights defenders, mostly peasant activists, were killed this past year — the highest number of attacks on activist leaders since the end of the civil war.

In early April, security guards for a wealthy landowner shot six unarmed peasants protesting the construction of a hydroelectric dam. In a separate incident just two weeks later, armed assailants murdered a 16-year-old girl, who was the leader of an anti-mining youth movement, and critically wounded her father, who had organized his community to vote against a local mining project.

For all this, the rest of the world has been silent. Distracted by conflicts in Ukraine and Syria, the United States has not replaced its ambassador in Guatemala, a position that has been open since October.

A United Nations commission that has been instrumental in taking down organized crime bosses is nearing the end of its allotted time in the country, and there is nothing in line to replace it. President Molina, who in the past has lobbied the Guatemalan Congress to keep the commission in the country, has been silent this time, and neither the United States nor the United Nations has pressed him on it.

Abandoned and isolated, Guatemala's poor have been left to fend for themselves against the people who see any steps toward a fairer, more functional system as a threat to their fortunes and their legacies. Without a watchful eye from abroad, they have been able to revert to their old behavior, making sure the unjust structures that serve their needs stay in place, even at the expense of rising unrest, polarization and violence.

Anita Isaacs is a professor of political science at Haverford College and the author of the forthcoming book "From Victims to Citizens: The Politics of Transitional Justice in Postwar Guatemala."

The Battle Of The Okinawans

By Norihiro Kato

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

As President Barack Obama wound up his visit to Japan last month, the Japanese and American governments released a joint statement outlining the outcome of his talks with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Almost every newspaper article I saw focused on the same few issues — above all, the two leaders' failure to reach an agreement on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a 12-nation trade agreement. There was one exception: The Okinawan daily Ryukyu Shimpo ran on its front page the large headline, "U.S. Military Presence in Okinawa to Be Permanent."

Ryukyu Shimpo had picked up on a sentence in the joint statement that other papers had ignored: "The early relocation of Futenma Marine Corps Air Station to Camp Schwab and consolidation of bases in Okinawa will ensure a long-term sustainable presence for U.S. forces." Okinawans have been fighting for decades to have the Marines' air operations removed from the entire Ryukyu archipelago. In January, residents of Nago on Okinawa Island, where Camp Schwab is located, overwhelmingly re-elected a mayor who has vowed to block the plan to resettle Futenma there, rejecting a pro-relocation candidate strongly supported by Mr. Abe's party.

Okinawans are among the most downtrodden people in the region. In premodern times, the small Ryukyu Kingdom, as it was known then, was a tributary state of China and Japan simultaneously. Japan treated residents badly after fully annexing the islands in the 1870s. The Battle of Okinawa at the end of World War II killed one in four inhabitants. In the postwar period the United States turned the Ryukyu Islands into a military colony.

Even since the islands reverted to Japan in 1972, they have been exploited for military purposes as a result of agreements between the Japanese and American governments. The strategic importance of Okinawa Prefecture to the two governments has increased recently owing to its proximity to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, to which both Japan and China lay claim.

This history has instilled tenacity in the inhabitants of the Ryukyu Islands. This was demonstrated by a man who met with representatives of the Abe administration in Tokyo just days before Mr. Obama's arrival there. Anzo Kadamori, the 72-year-old school superintendent of the small town of Taketomi, had been summoned by the Education Ministry for refusing to adopt a new, revisionist textbook in his district's ninth-grade class.

He was not cowed. Mr. Kadamori insisted that the textbook had not been selected according to the necessary procedures, and protested its failure to discuss Japan's callous treatment of Okinawa or the problems that the presence of American bases has caused.

The Education Ministry then summoned the superintendent for all secondary schools in Okinawa Prefecture. But he, too, declined to cooperate, saying he would respect the will of teachers in Taketomi.

People like these two men — and the mayor of Nago, who may yet succeed in derailing the government's plan to relocate Futenma — reveal the strength that comes to people who have been subordinated to greater powers for too long.

At the same time, in a sort of twisted way, they also embody the struggles of the Japanese government that is exploiting them as it tries to escape its reliance on the United States.

The Japanese government's 2013 budget allocated almost \$3.6 billion to cover costs associated with running American bases in Japan and providing for the 38,000 United States military personnel and their 43,000 dependents stationed there. This includes not only utility costs but also luxury housing, pools and golf courses. In 2008, the Japanese government built a middle school for 600 children of American

troops at Kadena Air Base that cost twice as much, and was six times as large, as a school built nearby for 645 Japanese children.

According to a statement protesting the relocation of Futenma signed by prominent scholars and peace advocates in January, Okinawa Prefecture constitutes just 0.6 percent of the total land mass of Japan, yet it houses 73.8 percent of the American military bases in the country. The bases occupy almost one-fifth of Okinawa Island alone, including prime farming land. This part of Japan is, one might say, the netherworld to which the Japanese government has tried to banish its awareness of its subordination to the United States.

In 2009, while the Democratic Party of Japan was in power, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama attempted for the first time since the end of the war to move Japan away from its dependence on the United States, and to emphasize its ties with other Asian countries. His promise to move Futenma out of Okinawa Prefecture was the focus of this attempt. Although Mr. Hatoyama failed in this project, the issue of Futenma hasn't gone away; the Okinawan people still oppose hosting the bases.

And in their determination they may yet teach the Japanese government a thing or two about what successful resistance looks like.

Norihiro Kato is a literary scholar and a professor at Waseda University. This article was translated by Michael Emmerich from the Japanese.

Hong Kong's Rising Cry

By Michael Degolyer

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

HONG KONG — Since Hong Kong was handed over by the British to China in 1997, the territory's seven million residents have been free to govern themselves with relatively little interference from Beijing. That freedom is now under threat, frustration with Beijing is mounting, and the possibility of violence is growing.

Although Beijing's hand can be felt in many areas, its increasing meddling in local politics is most troubling. The central government had promised Hong Kongers they could directly elect their leader in 2017, but it has yet to approve a process for nominating candidates. Beijing appears to want candidates screened by a Beijing-friendly nomination committee, thus dashing hopes for real electoral choice.

As a result, Hong Kongers are protesting against the central government with more frequency, segments of the pro-democracy camp are becoming more radicalized, and Beijing's patience is wearing thin. In this atmosphere, physical confrontations between Hong Kongers and the police are more likely.

Should violence break out, China would have an excuse to crack down in Hong Kong, which would be a huge setback for Hong Kongers and the territory's thriving economy — as well as an ominous sign of how China intends to use its influence around the world as it continues its economic surge.

Beijing and its local allies must give Hong Kongers more avenues for political participation — or the tension will keep rising. Just as important, the increasing numbers of Hong Kongers who seem intent on confronting Beijing, even if it means resorting to physical clashes with the local police, should re-channel their energies into peaceful protest.

A group of activists is planning for later this year what promises to be a large-scale demonstration for genuine universal suffrage. Known as "Occupy Central," the protest will aim to bring the city's financial center to a standstill through a nonviolent sit-in. According to the research by the Hong Kong Transition Project, two out of five Hong Kongers, despite fears of violence and economic damage, say they will support Occupy Central. Most of these people are under age 30.

But with increasing numbers of Hong Kongers, especially the young, unwilling to compromise on the question of how to nominate candidates for the 2017 election — Beijing wants to approve candidates, the democrats want the public to nominate candidates — the demonstration may very well turn violent.

The roots of frustration in Hong Kong go deeper than the conflict with Beijing over universal suffrage. Economic factors and strains put on Hong Kong's resources by mainland Chinese have fueled discontent in the territory for years. Beijing doesn't have to do much to make this already stressed situation explosive.

The gap between the haves and have-nots has widened over the past 20 years, led by the skyrocketing cost of housing. Mainland Chinese people and their money have pushed up prices in Hong Kong; at the same time, for locals wages have remained relatively low and opportunities scarce. Meanwhile, millions of mainland tourists come to Hong Kong to shop, overwhelming the infrastructure and crowding the streets. Aside from purchasing luxury items and books banned on the mainland, they clear the shelves of foodstuffs that they can be assured are genuine and safe.

Baby milk powder, for example, is in such high demand by mainlanders that the Hong Kong government restricted sales to make sure Hong Kong babies had enough to eat. Milk powder is no longer available on open store shelves; one has to purchase it from a locked case.

The current chief executive of Hong Kong, Leung Chun-ying, has made attempts to address some of the economic issues that are fueling the radicalization. He needs to accelerate those programs and take action on the points of conflict with mainlanders.

Mr. Leung tried to tamp down the conflict over the lack of affordable housing by setting aside homes for Hong Kongers only and increasing the taxes on home purchases. Prices have dropped slightly, but the government could also sell some public housing at giveaway prices to lower discontent.

Mr. Leung also needs to address the number of mainland tourists entering Hong Kong. The sheer press of bodies back and forth across the land borders is a stampede waiting to happen. Mainland officials, concerned over congestion and growing conflict with tourists in Hong Kong, appear to be stepping in to control the volumes even if Mr. Leung will not.

Mr. Leung should announce that he will not seek a second term in 2017. That would show that he is acting in good faith to work out a fair system for the election without bias toward his own future.

These actions could ease some of the tensions. But ultimately, Beijing needs to resolve Hong Kong's desire for universal suffrage.

Beijing would do well to continue talking about compromising on the question of how to nominate candidates. If the central government can set a moderate tone over the procedures for 2017, like the local government has been trying to do ("Let's Talk and Achieve Universal Suffrage" is the title of the public consultation paper), it will do better in the battle for public opinion. The Hong Kong radicals could then be ostracized by the moderate local democrats.

How Beijing handles Hong Kong's simmering frustrations will be a test of China's intentions and attitudes toward a freer way of life. If China's leaders kill political reform in Hong Kong, they are unlikely to start it on the mainland anytime soon. Nor are they likely to promote or protect such values as they move to replace the United States as the dominant power in Asia.

Michael DeGolyer is director of the Hong Kong Transition Project and professor of government and international studies at Hong Kong Baptist University.

Partisan Sabotage In The Senate Unplugs A Useful Bill

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

TO THOSE who believe that the partisan warfare dominating Congress is merely the result of a healthy clash of ideas, we present to you the sad low point the Senate hit on Monday.

For years, seemingly everyone in Congress has agreed that the country should waste less energy and that the federal government has a larger role to play in promoting efficiency. Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) wrote a modest, bipartisan bill that would help with that. It eschewed radical policy. Lawmakers from both parties got input. Congress-watchers kept the bill on the short list of things legislators might actually manage to send to President Obama. Yet on Monday the bill failed on a largely party-line vote.

That means, for now, that the federal government will not be required to push through upgrades to energy-gobbling computer systems, or to tighten model building codes to reduce the unconscionable amount of energy buildings waste, or to demand that federally backed home mortgages account for energy efficiency in the appraisal and underwriting process. Manufacturers, meanwhile, will not have stronger incentives to use energy-efficient electric motors and transformers.

These failed proposals were timid. A stronger plan would have required states to improve their building codes rather than just give them a better model code from which to work. The bill could also have been more creative: One proposal called for investing in a Race-to-the-Top-style plan that would have encouraged states to compete on energy reductions. Instead, Portman-Shaheen was least-common-denominator policy.

But all the careful watering-down could not save this consensus bill from partisan sabotage. Though many GOP senators had extensive influence on the shape of the bill, Republicans sought to add a slew of energy-related amendments on the floor — on divisive issues such as Environmental Protection Agency rules and natural gas exports. Democrats didn't want to risk dooming the bill by attaching amendments that would have split their caucus or provoked a presidential veto. Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.) refused to allow votes on these sorts of changes. Enough Republicans, including several co-sponsors, bolted from the bill that it failed to obtain the 60 votes necessary to overcome a filibuster.

Mr. Reid should not have denied his fellow senators the opportunity to vote freely on energy policies when considering an energy bill, even if the debate would have been politically inconvenient. But once he refused to allow minority amendments, Republicans should have voted on the merits of the policy before them. Democrats wonder whether Republicans' underlying motivation was to deny Ms. Shaheen an election-year victory. That's very possible, just as it's very possible that Mr. Reid cared more about saving Democrats from taking politically difficult votes than about advancing decent policy. But the other explanation for the GOP's behavior — that Republicans petulantly filibustered after losing a procedural disagreement — is hardly any better.

Montgomery County's School-funding Gimmickry Buys A Year Of Peace

By Editorial Board

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

WITH THE aid of budgetary sleight of hand, Montgomery County has papered over the latest dispute over funding between the County Council, which holds the purse strings, and the school system, which accounts for more than half of the jurisdiction's spending. The school system got every penny of the \$2.3 billion it wanted — but with a catch that protects county taxpayers from a state law that locks in the increase in perpetuity.

The deal resolves for now what has become a venomous, perennial dispute between the county and the schools, the stakes of which have been driven higher by the senseless law, known as maintenance of effort. The law makes it all but impossible for counties to trim education spending during economic downturns — even if they have pumped up school spending in good times.

Understandably, that law — enacted by state legislators at the behest of the teachers union — has made council members in Montgomery extremely wary of exceeding per-pupil minimum spending mandated by Annapolis. Yet the county school system, by far Maryland's largest and one of the United States' 20 biggest, has kept up the pressure for budget increases that go beyond the state minimums.

When times were flush, Montgomery lavished funding on the schools year after year, to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars in excess of the state-mandated per-pupil minimums. Then the recession hit, and county officials had to battle Annapolis for permission to scale down spending.

This year, Schools Superintendent Joshua P. Starr's budget request was almost \$52 million above the state-mandated minimum. That left county officials bristling but nervous about a public brawl in an election year for the local and state legislatures. County Executive Isiah Leggett (D) proposed an increase that gave the schools most of what they wanted — some from the county, the rest from the schools' reserves.

The problem with Mr. Leggett's proposal is that it would set a new spending base from which the county would have trouble retreating in a new recession. Council President Craig Rice (D-Upcounty) rode to the rescue with a counterproposal that delivered the schools' full funding request but did not pad the per-pupil base.

Mr. Rice's method involves pumping up a county pension fund for retired teachers' health benefits, which allowed the schools to channel more of their own budget money for education. Yes, it's gimmickry — but gimmickry that buys another year of relative peace in the county-school funding wars. Mr. Starr, Mr. Leggett, the school board and every member of the county council lined up behind what was essentially a truce.

That's progress. But the fundamental problem remains the maintenance-of-effort law, which needs to be rewritten to allow counties to pare back spending for schools — as they routinely do for other expenses — in a downturn. With that flexibility, counties would be able to do right by schools in good times and protect taxpayers in bad times.

Read more about this issue: [The Post's View: Montgomery County schools must attack the achievement gap](#) Karin Chenoweth: [Montgomery County schools dance around needed changes](#) Dan Reed: [The 'great' Montgomery County schools?](#) Phil Andrews: [When will Montgomery County stand up to Annapolis?](#)

MERS Is Still A Mystery Virus

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

SAUDI ARABIA crossed a grim threshold Wednesday, announcing that the number of cases of Middle East respiratory syndrome, caused by a novel coronavirus, has exceeded 500 in the kingdom, with 157 deaths among them. The global number of MERS cases is now more than 570, with two of them recently reported in the United States.

At the same time, the World Health Organization declared that the disease has not yet reached the point of a "public health emergency of international concern." The reason is that experts have not yet detected "evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission" of the kind that could lead to a pandemic. Clearly, there has been some transmission involving people in close contact with victims, such as relatives and health-care workers, but not rapidly and broadly.

The WHO decision should not lead to a sense of complacency; the announcement was studded with warnings.

Far too much is still unknown about this virus and how it works. For example, it appears that one reason for the escalating number of cases in Saudi Arabia in recent weeks was a breakdown in infection control. A visiting WHO team found lapses in such basics as hand washing, gloves and masks. Hospital conditions were “suboptimal.” How did the virus spread? Does it survive in the environment? That’s an important factor in infection control for any hospital — whether in Jiddah or Orlando — that hasn’t been answered.

Yet another big information gap has been the lack of a case-control study, which would compare those infected with a similar group of people that is not. Such a study could go a long way toward helping explain how the virus behaves and the risks of transmission and infection.

Comparing older genetic blueprints with recent ones has led experts to conclude there have not been modifications in the genome of the virus that would allow it to be transmitted from human to human more efficiently than before. That’s reassuring, but the key will be a steady stream of genetic sequencing information to keep watch on the unpredictable evolutionary process.

The WHO emphasized that its concern has significantly increased in part because of “critical gaps in information.” That is putting it politely. A large share of the responsibility for this black hole must fall on Saudi Arabia, a closed society where the disease was not met with sufficient urgency for more than a year. While there are now signs of more openness, the world’s toolkit for fighting MERS remains rather bare. There is no vaccine or effective antiviral. The WHO called for speeding up critical investigations, including case-control, serological, environmental and animal studies. The kingdom must do everything it can to expedite this vital research.

Right now, MERS seems like a nightmare far away from the United States. But it is not. Both infections arrived here being carried by air passengers who passed by hundreds of other people on their journey. The best defense today is a deeper understanding of the virus and its behavior — and the sooner, the better.

America Should Not Soften Its Nuclear Demands Of Iran

By Michael Singh

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

Michael Singh is managing director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. From 2005 to 2008, he worked on Middle East issues at the National Security Council. He is on Twitter: @MichaelSinghDC

Nuclear negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 powers — the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and China — resume this week in an atmosphere that is at once hopeful and grave. Officials from both sides have been surprisingly optimistic about their chances of reaching a long-term accord. Yet serious differences reportedly remain, and failure to resolve them would leave both sides to weigh the unpalatable alternatives to a diplomatic resolution.

Failure would be easy to recognize; what success would look like is less clear. Despite U.S. officials’ insistence that “no deal is better than a bad deal,” they are also keenly aware that promising diplomatic openings with Iran have been few and far between in the past 35 years, and likely worry that Iranian President Hassan Rouhani’s ability to withstand domestic opposition to his economic and diplomatic initiatives may be fleeting.

Rouhani's purported weakness is paradoxically a source of Iranian advantage in these negotiations. While no political reformer, he is widely perceived as someone who is serious about resolving the nuclear dispute so that Iran can recover economically. U.S. and European observers hope that a nuclear deal could lead to a broader easing of tensions — though whether this is true is unclear — and conversely worry that failure to reach a deal could fatally undermine that chance.

Rouhani has correspondingly engendered sympathy for his constraints. Indeed, a “good deal” these days is often framed more in terms of Rouhani's capacity to deliver than our own requirements. Issues such as Syria and Iran's missile programs are often dismissed by observers as off the table because they are in the purview not of Rouhani but of the Revolutionary Guards, implying that we are negotiating not with the Iranian regime but merely one faction of it. But softening our nuclear demands in the hope of strengthening Rouhani would be a mistake, for several reasons.

First, a deal must satisfy not only U.S. negotiators but skeptical partners who question the Rouhani narrative and are unwilling to stake their security on it. The most important is Congress, which may refuse to lift sanctions if it believes an agreement leaves Iran with too great a residual nuclear capacity.

The administration could circumvent sanctions through waivers, but banks and others may hesitate to resume business with Iran without regulatory clarity. The crisis would remain unresolved, harming both Rouhani and the United States.

To advance U.S. interests in the Middle East, a deal should also be acceptable to U.S. allies there, for whom Iran's regional activities — which have continued apace under Rouhani — are of greater concern than its nuclear pursuits. If they deem a deal too lenient, these allies could respond both by confronting and accommodating Iran, perhaps simultaneously. They could ramp up sectarian activities or pursue their own nuclear capabilities, even as they cut side deals with Tehran inimical to U.S. desires.

Second, Rouhani may be eclipsed politically rather than strengthened once a nuclear accord is reached. Iranian presidents' power rarely lasts long, and Rouhani's utility to the regime — along with hopes of an easing of U.S.-Iran tensions — may fade once sanctions relief is obtained.

Even if Rouhani hangs on, one should not mistake his desire to ease Iran's isolation for an eagerness to turn westward. Iran will more likely pursue partners it sees as rivals to the United States or as non-aligned. In recent weeks, Iranian officials have endorsed Russia's position on Ukraine, visited Beijing to pursue deeper military ties and signed a transit agreement with India and Afghanistan as U.S. troops prepare to withdraw from the latter. Combined with increased tensions in traditional U.S. alliances as a result of a nuclear deal with Iran, the effect could be a sharp blow to America's position.

Thus, a weak agreement could prove a strategic setback in the guise of a tactical success. Any accord must be crafted to reassure skeptics and survive a change of leadership or of course in Tehran. Rouhani's presence across the table may make an agreement possible, but it should not dictate the substance of the deal.

The surest way to avoid strategic failure is to insist on strict limits on Iran's nuclear activities and intrusive inspections, and credibly threaten stiff penalties for cheating. But other steps are also important, even if such measures are negotiated.

First, a deal must not only bind Iran's civilian nuclear authorities, but also its security apparatus, which is most likely to spearhead a covert nuclear effort. One way of doing this would be to insist that Iran curtail its missile activity and come clean about its weaponization research, ensuring that Iran's entire nuclear program and not just one element of it is subject to the scrutiny of inspectors.

Second, sanctions relief can be phased so that one-off or reversible actions such as unfreezing assets are front-loaded, and less easily reversible steps such as lifting oil and financial sanctions are

back-loaded. This would ensure Iran benefits from rolling back its nuclear program while guarding against a hardline resurgence and giving Congress time to judge Tehran's adherence to the deal before voting to remove sanctions.

Finally, the United States should complement nuclear negotiating efforts with an equally energetic campaign to bolster cooperation with our regional allies and counter Iran's support for terrorism and other destabilizing activities. This would ensure that Iran, and especially its hard-liners, continues to pay a high price for those activities, and signal to friends and foes alike that we remain committed to the region.

Is China No. 1?

By Robert J. Samuelson

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

It's probable that the U.S. economy is no longer the world's largest. New World Bank figures, notes economist Arvind Subramanian of the Peterson Institute, suggest that sometime in 2014 China will overtake the United States in gross domestic product — the production of goods and services.

We knew this day was coming, but if the World Bank figures are correct, it has arrived sooner than many experts predicted. Using those figures — which stop at 2011 — I estimate that China's GDP in 2014 will hit \$16.8 trillion compared with \$16.1 trillion for the United States. (All these figures are in "constant" 2011 dollars.)

This is a historic milestone, but its immediate significance is limited. It doesn't make the Chinese richer than Americans, because China's GDP is spread across many more people. Per capita GDP, a rough gauge of living standards, is about five times higher in the United States than in China, about \$50,000 per person compared with \$10,000. Similarly, China's status as an economic powerhouse is well established, regardless of whether its GDP exceeds America's or not. In 2012, it became the world's largest trading nation, notes the McKinsey Global Institute.

Still, the World Bank figures are fascinating. In 2011, the U.S. economy still was larger than China's. To get my updated estimate for this year, I adjusted both countries' GDPs for economic growth in 2012 and 2013, plus a forecast for 2014. Because China is growing faster than the United States, its GDP overtakes America's in 2014.

These numbers reflect broad trends, because measuring economies at varying stages of development and with separate currencies is difficult. The technique used here (called "purchasing power parity") compares the value of similar items in different countries in an effort to get a common baseline. But huge variations "in tastes, cultures, climate, price structures [and] product availability" complicate the results, notes economist Timothy Taylor. Some economists use exchange rates to make comparisons, but this also involves serious distortions. By the math of exchange rates, China's economy still remains smaller than America's. (Taylor's Web site explains the measurement problems.)

The numbers also raise profound issues. Perhaps the biggest involves the nature of global geopolitics. The U.S. and Chinese worldviews contrast starkly.

The lesson that Americans drew from the Great Depression and World War II was that U.S. isolationism in the 1920s and the 1930s had contributed to both. Post-World War II American foreign policy has presumed that U.S. leadership is necessary for a more peaceful and prosperous world. The American idea is that if countries could become more like the United States — democratic and affluent — global conflicts would subside. U.S. military power, from the creation of NATO in 1949 to the "war on terrorism," has aimed to minimize security threats to this economic vision.

Unlike the United States, China does not seek to remake the world in its own image. China wants a global system that supports its strong domestic economic growth, which is viewed as crucial to maintaining the Communist Party's grip on power. Export markets should remain open; China should have easy access to the oil, grains and minerals its economy needs. "Beijing still sees its actions and policies from the narrow perspective of national self-interest rather than its role as a leader," writes Cornell University economist Eswar Prasad in the Wall Street Journal. For example, the United States hasn't won much Chinese support in its efforts to curb North Korea's and Iran's nuclear programs.

These two worldviews have coexisted uneasily, but as China becomes more prosperous, the competition is bound to intensify. Economic power — the ability to confer advantages or disadvantages on other countries and to influence global markets and investment flows — is slowly shifting in China's favor. Conflicts seem inevitable.

India Sees Hope In A Divisive Figure

By Simon Denyer

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

Simon Denyer, The Post's China bureau chief, has worked for most of the past decade as a journalist in India. He is the author of "Rogue Elephant: Harnessing the Power of India's Unruly Democracy."

On Friday, results are due from the world's largest-ever exercise in democracy. They are expected to elevate one of India's most controversial politicians to its highest executive office: making Narendra Modi prime minister, thereby giving power to a man whose hands carry the nation's hopes of economic revival but also, according to his critics, the blood of 2,000 innocent people.

Modi sat on those hands in 2002, when Hindu mobs rampaged through the state of Gujarat for three days in an orgy of violence, rape, arson and murder largely directed against Muslims while, his critics allege, his police force looked on or abetted the killers. As the state's chief minister, he continues to thrive on the prejudices of Gujarati Hindus toward the Muslim minority. How can India, a nation of breathtaking diversity, where people from countless different religions, castes, languages and classes have learned to live together largely in peace, be about to elect such a divisive figure?

The answer lies in the quiet trauma India suffered in the past decade, as the dreams of more than a billion people came crashing down. In 2004, it was on the crest of a wave, a superpower in the making, a nation talked about in the same breath as China, where the middle class flocked to gleaming shopping malls and the young flocked to jobs in IT — a nation that had begun to believe its own hype. Elections that year seemed to promise even greater glory, with the prime minister's office occupied by the very man who, as finance minister, had set the ball rolling in 1991. Manmohan Singh, India's most honest politician and its most economically qualified, was perfectly placed to help the nation deliver on its abundant promise.

Ten years later, China's economy has gone from strength to strength, while India's has sunk back into the ranks of the also-rans. Beijing wowed the world with the 2008 Olympics, while India's 2010 Commonwealth Games seemed to confirm all the old stereotypes: dirty, corrupt and disorganized. Singh watched impotently as reforms stuttered to a halt, growth slowed and corruption gnawed at the nation's heart. His strengths, his honesty and economic competence, became the mirror images of his government's greatest failings. As if to drive the point home, half the nation was plunged into darkness in the summer of 2012 in the biggest power blackout in global history.

In 2004, India had been looking forward to a demographic dividend as hundreds of millions of young people entered the workforce; in 2014, it risks a demographic disaster, if those young people join the growing ranks of the unemployed and the underemployed.

But the past decade also saw a political revival in India, as youth rose up and demanded change. Hundreds of thousands took to the streets to rail against corruption; more protests erupted after the gang rape and murder of a young, middle-class woman in Delhi at the end of 2012. An explosion in 24-hour news television tore down the walls of deference that had sheltered politicians. A Right to Information Act gave the poor masses power to demand accountability from the nation's vast bureaucracy. Even the traditionally apolitical middle class started to demand better governance. In contrast with the West, voter turnout in India is rising.

The likely beneficiary of this democratic awakening is, ironically, a man who seems to set little store in the checks and balances of democracy, a chest-thumping "strongman" who runs a state where dissent is suppressed and the media are cowed.

By voting for Modi, many Indians hope to end years of underachievement under desperately weak leadership. Under his rule, Gujarat's economy has grown more than 10 percent a year and corruption has been kept in check. Poverty has fallen faster than the national average, electricity and clean drinking water are being delivered to villages and girls' dropout rates from school have dropped. It may not be the miracle that some of his supporters pretend, but Modi's economic achievements cannot be brushed aside.

Some Indians voted for Modi hoping that the realities of governing at the head of a coalition government, as leader of a nation and not just a state, will force him to keep his baser instincts in check. To woo them, Modi has attempted an image makeover, recasting himself as a man of humanity and compassion. While the makeover is unconvincing, there remains the possibility that Modi will bend to the realities of national politics.

To many liberal Indians, Modi represents an assault on their nation's founding ideals. Yet to many young people, desperate for opportunities to match their vaulting aspirations, the riots of 2002 seem like the dim and distant past, while Modi's emphasis on governance and development offers hope for a brighter future.

Read more about this issue: The Post's View: Narendra Modi should build on his successes, not prejudicial rhetoric Anne Applebaum: Can Ukraine and India go beyond slogans? Fareed Zakaria: The Indian Spring Miranda Kennedy: How India's rapid changes are putting women at risk The Post's View: A political divide revealed by a diplomat's arrest

Jill Abramson 'unexpectedly' Out At New York Times

[Washington Post](#), May 14, 2014

New York Times Executive Editor Jill Abramson is "unexpectedly" leaving her post after leading the paper for 2 1/2 years, the Times reported this afternoon.

Senior editors at the newspaper were informed of the news at a 2 p.m. meeting, according to Politico reporter Dylan Byers. Her replacement, Managing Editor Dean Baquet, addressed the newsroom about 30 minutes later, according to posts to Twitter from Times journalists. Baquet is the first African-American executive editor of the New York Times.

Abramson has served as the paper's first female executive editor, a tenure that has received no small amount of scrutiny. A story in Politico last year said that she was on the "verge" of losing newsroom support. Though Abramson indeed alienated some co-workers with her management style, she also

presided over the newspaper at a time of massive change: There were buyouts, a masthead trimming, a move toward video storytelling, just to name a few.

Stormy times aside, the move caught not only a universe of media watchers by surprise, but also the New York Times. In a spot news piece on the development, New York Times reporter Ravi Somaiya wrote, “The reasons for the switch were not immediately clear.”

Jeff Zeleny, an ABC News Senior Washington Correspondent who left the New York Times under Abramson’s reign, tweeted:

Abramson had this to say in a statement: “I’ve loved my run at The Times. I got to work with the best journalists in the world doing so much stand-up journalism. Holding powerful institutions accountable is the mission of The Times and the hallmark of my time as executive editor, whether stories about China, government secrecy, or powerful figures and corporations.”

Arthur Sulzberger Jr., the publisher of the Times, said this about Baquet: “There is no journalist in our newsroom or elsewhere better qualified to take on the responsibilities of executive editor at this time than Dean Baquet. He is an exceptional reporter and editor with impeccable news judgment who enjoys the confidence and support of his colleagues around the world and across the organization.”

The news was tightly held within the gossip confines of the Times newsroom. It was only after the meeting among top editors had convened that the New York Times communications department informed the paper’s own reporters that a management change was underway, according to a source at the paper. That was about a half-hour before the official announcement.

That the news took staffers by surprise surfaced on Twitter:

Bill Keller preceded Abramson as executive editor and served for eight years in the position. In a very brief chat with the Erik Wemple Blog this afternoon, Keller said he’s following the news “just like you.” “These are two people who are really good friends of mine. I don’t know what happened. I’m sad for Jill and hope for the best for Dean.” Keller now serves as editor of the Marshall Project, a nonprofit news site on criminal justice.

Before catching on with the Marshall Project, Keller served as a columnist for the paper — just the sort of emeritus role that top newsroom leaders often slide into after running the beast for a number of years. Abramson, however, isn’t doing any such thing. She is out the door. “She’s left the Times,” says New York Times spokeswoman Eileen Murphy. “She’s not here.” Murphy declined to comment on whether the clean break was the decision of Abramson, Sulzberger or a mutual thing.

Such arrangements would have been a good question for New York Times staffers to pose to Sulzberger, who addressed the newsroom at a 2:30 p.m. all-staff get-together. But Sulzberger didn’t take questions, as Murphy confirms. The newsroom is a sprawling place. “It’s not the appropriate forum for question-taking,” says Murphy.

Here’s the text of Sulzberger’s remarks to the newsroom:

Thank you all for gathering here on such short notice.

We are announcing right now, as we speak that Dean Baquet is our new executive editor.

So before I go further, let me take a moment to celebrate Dean. He is, without question, one of our finest. He spent a good part of his career with us in the 90s, first as an investigative reporter and later as our national editor before leaving for the LA Times, where he rather famously – heroically even – took a stand for maintaining a robust newsroom – a position that ended up costing him his job as executive editor.

Their loss was our gain as he returned in 2007 as Washington bureau chief before Jill named him managing editor almost three years ago.

It is my great honor today to appoint Dean as our new executive editor.

I will come back to Dean in a moment and you will hear from him as well. But first, let me try to answer a question that I am sure is on all your minds. What happened with Jill? Why this change?

I'll start by saying what this is not about.

It is not about the quality of our journalism, which in my mind has never been better.

Jill did an outstanding job in preserving and extending the level of excellence of our news report during her time as executive editor and, before that, as managing editor and Washington bureau chief. She's an accomplished journalist who contributed mightily to our reputation as the world's most important news provider.

Further, this is not about any disagreement over the direction of our digital future or any of the steps we have taken recently to create and launch new digital products and services.

Jill and I agreed fundamentally about the need to embrace new platforms and new expressions of our journalism. She helped a great deal in moving The Times further into our digital future. She was an enthusiastic supporter of The UpShot, NYTNow, our soon-to-debut Cooking app and NYT5, among many other items in development.

This is also not about any sort of disagreement between the newsroom and the business side over the critical principle of an independent newsroom.

While we are all working more collaboratively, there is no one in the leadership of this Company – from me and Mark on down – who disagrees with the idea that our newsroom must remain independent with editorial decisions resting with the executive editor.

Rather, I choose to appoint a new leader for our newsroom because I believe that new leadership will improve some aspects of the management of the newsroom.

You will understand that there is nothing more I am going to say about this, but I want to assure all of you that there is nothing more at issue here.

We're in a terrific position to move forward. Both Jill and Dean were closely involved in the work of our newsroom innovation team over the past six months and Dean and I are in agreement that we need to proceed on many of their recommendations to best position us for future success. I am entirely confident that Dean – along with all of you – will build upon that foundation.

Now, let's turn this back to Dean. A nicer guy, you will not find, but that isn't what brought him to this point.

Bill Keller once said of Dean that he possesses "infectious enthusiasm and aggressive intelligence." I agree.

Combine that with a passion for journalism, investigative and otherwise; a fierce loyalty to the editors and reporters he leads; and a competitive spirit that inspires all around him to do better. That's Dean Baquet, the executive editor of The New York Times.

Dean Baquet's remarks to the newsroom:

May 14, 2014

It is humbling to be asked to lead the only newsroom in the country that is actually better than it was a generation ago, a newsroom that approaches the world with wonder and ambition every day.

A newsroom that exposes a bad cop and gets two people out of jail. A newsroom that breaks stories about the actions of government spies on the same day it crashes an elegant book review.

A newsroom where Adam Nossiter visits a village in Africa to capture the grief of mothers whose daughters have been stolen.

A newsroom that produces photography reminiscent of the old Life magazine. A newsroom that can publish something as knockout-beautiful as T, on the same day it chronicles upheaval in the Ukraine.

A newsroom that produces a print and web report of great style and design. A newsroom that decided it should do video, and went out and won awards for it.

A newsroom that is reinventing the journalism of precision with the Upshot and is already rebuilding itself for the mobile world.

There are too many people for me to thank for this 40-year career, too many people who helped support a young black southerner whose parents had only grade-school educations and who became addicted to newspapers through the daily accounts of the ups and downs – mostly downs – of the fledgling New Orleans Saints.

But let me thank a few people.

First and foremost, there is Arthur Sulzburger, who is most responsible for preserving this newsroom. Before I came back to the Times eight years ago, I fought with my heart and my soul to protect another newsroom that I loved. So I treasure the opportunity to work with a great publisher who understands we are more than a business and who values an independent-minded editor with a history of pushing back.

I owe Jill Abramson a tremendous amount. She made me her partner for three years and taught me the value of great ambition and what she always called the great backstory. I will miss her. She made the paper better, which is the greatest testament one can pay to any editor.

I am indebted to Janet Elder, who secretly runs the joint, and to a masthead Jill and I built together and that I will call upon to help me guide the paper.

I am indebted to Joe Lelyveld, who taught me to put the paper first, and to John Carroll, who taught me that great editors can be humane. They are the two greatest editors of a generation.

I would like to thank Andy Rosenthal, who believe it or not edited my last investigative story – the story of Hillary Clinton's fortuitous commodities trade — and who has been a great friend across the divide.

I'd also like to thank Dylan Landis. It helps to have a writer in the house, one who has taught me there is sometimes more to learn from great fiction.

Mostly I thank the journalists of The New York Times – the reporters, editors, copy editors, producers, designers, photographers, videographers and graphics artists – who make this the greatest news operation in history.

Arthur, Bill, Jill and John Geddes propelled us toward a digital future. But we still have much work to do. As you know, a committee of the newsroom's brightest came back with many recommendations for maximizing our digital report. I embrace those recommendations fully, and bringing them to fruition will be one of our primary goals of the year.

But tucked inside that report was one great lesson that we should never forget – our journalism rocks. Our job is to make sure everybody gets a chance to see it.

At this point there is no secret to the kinds of stories I love. I spent my career as an investigative reporter, so I value the hardest-hitting work.

Scoops reign. So in an age when readers have more freedom to pick and choose, we have to be first. But just as valuable is the fresh thought from Adam Liptak or James Stewart or Andrew Sorkin.

Lest you think that means a future of only hard news, know that nothing distinguishes The Times more than its critics, and its feature and culture sections.

Nothing lifts our pages like a Kimmelman, Kakutani, Cotter, Smith, Garner, or Maslin review. Or a Vogel-Flynn scoop on the art world. And rebuilding our Sunday magazine will be one of the great joys of our year.

Of course we will announce some changes in the coming weeks. But for now I'd like to leave you with a few promises. I will listen hard. I will be hands-on, engaged, will walk the room. That's the only way I know how to edit.

Let's take risks, and not beat each other up when we fail. Let's work together, but not get paralyzed by guessing what Dean or anyone else wants. Give it a shot. We will commit big ambitious journalism every day. And we will have an absolute utter unadulterated blast while doing it.

Thomas Piketty Identifies An Important Ill Of Capitalism But Not Its Cure

By Charles Lane

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

The year 2014 marks the 50th anniversary of the Beatles' arrival in the United States. The Allies liberated Paris 70 years ago. And, of course, it's been 135 years since "Progress and Poverty," by the American journalist Henry George, was published in 1879.

What's that? Never heard of George or his treatise on the causes of inequality? It sold 3 million copies. Perhaps you missed "Progress and Poverty's" anniversary while perusing this year's equally improbable bestseller, "Capital in the Twenty-First Century" by French economist Thomas Piketty.

With its sweeping review of historical data, culminating in a warning about capitalism's inexorable, destabilizing, tendency toward inequality — to be cured by a global wealth tax — Piketty's book has earned comparisons with "Das Kapital," by Karl Marx.

Yet Piketty's project may have more in common with George's book than Marx's, and not only because each tome reached U.S. readers six years after a ruinous financial crisis — the Panic of 1873 for George, the 2008 collapse of Lehman Brothers for Piketty.

Analyzing the stagnant economy and rich-poor gap of his day, George blamed not free markets, which he considered efficient and fair, but their corruption by a privileged few.

Specifically, George argued, land owners commanded a high and growing share of U.S. income even though their claim to it was based on something as unproductive as mere ownership — as opposed to the laborer's work effort or the investor's risk-taking.

For George, the solution was to abolish all taxes except a "single tax" on the value of land. Since land could neither be created nor destroyed, taxing it would reduce neither society's total wealth nor owners' incentives to put property to productive use — buildings and other improvements wouldn't be taxed.

To the contrary, taxing land, and only land, to pay the government's bills would liberate labor and capital to seek their most productive use and thus to grow the economy. A huge source of unearned wealth would be curbed, if not eliminated. Capitalism would be redeemed and democracy saved.

"It is not enough that men and women should vote," George wrote (including a gender that could not, at that time, cast ballots). "They must have liberty to avail themselves of the opportunities and means of life; they must stand on equal terms with reference to the bounty of nature. . . . This is the lesson of the centuries. Unless its foundations be laid in justice, the social structure of the United States or any other country cannot stand."

Similarly, Piketty's concern about the tendency of the return on capital (which he defines to include real estate as well as financial wealth) to exceed economic growth is essentially a worry about growing unearned claims on society's resources.

To Piketty, like George an admirer of market efficiency and opponent of protectionism, the resulting accumulation of wealth in relatively few hands threatens economic fairness, economic dynamism — and democracy. "Extreme inequality makes it impossible to have proper working of democratic institutions," Piketty told a recent meeting at Washington's Urban Institute.

And so, updating Henry George's single tax, Piketty proposes a global wealth tax, making similar claims about its benefits for both equality and growth.

For Piketty and George, the bottom line, both moral and economic, is to socialize "rent" — rent, that is, not in the colloquial sense but in the economic sense of income disconnected from productivity.

It's an attractive vision: an egalitarian, productive society, purged of parasitical rent-seeking through the expedient of well-aimed taxes.

Alas, Piketty's global wealth tax and George's single tax suffer from the same defect, and it's not political impracticality — after all, George nearly got himself elected mayor of New York City in 1886.

It's the inherent difficulty of separating the productive, untaxed component of the return on land or capital from the unproductive, taxed part.

Clear in the pages of a treatise, the distinction is murkier in practice. The market price of a vacant lot can reflect potential productive uses, as well as the risk a buyer takes by betting on them. A similar analysis applies to the rate of return on capital.

As a result, it's hard to devise a tax on wealth that raises a significant amount of revenue but doesn't discourage at least some socially beneficial saving or entre-pre-neur-ship. The potential for adverse unintended consequences — economic and political — is greater than Piketty seems to realize.

Great private fortunes can indeed entitle their owners to an undue share of society's current income and political power. At times, however, private wealth can serve as a font of charity or, indeed, a bulwark against government overreach.

We've been debating the right balance since the 19th century and probably will be long after the 21st.

The Two GOP Establishments

By E.J. Dionne Jr.

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

The language commonly used to describe the battle going on inside the Republican Party is wrong and misleading. The fights this spring are not between "the grass roots" and "the establishment" but between two establishment factions spending vast sums to gain the upper hand.

Their confrontation has little to do with the long-term philosophical direction of the GOP. Very rich ideological donors, along with tea party groups, have been moving the party steadily rightward. Political correctness of an extremely conservative kind now rules.

This explains the indigestion some Republican politicians are experiencing as they are forced to eat old words acknowledging a human role in climate change. It's why party leaders keep repeating the word "Benghazi" as a quasi-religious incantation, why deal-making with President Obama is verboten and why they stick with their "repeal Obamacare" fixation.

The accounts of Tuesday's Republican primary in Nebraska for an open U.S. Senate seat are revealing. Ben Sasse, a university president who held a variety of jobs in George W. Bush's

administration, won it handily. His success was broadly taken as a triumph for the tea party, which just a week ago was said to have suffered a defeat in North Carolina. There, Thom Tillis, the speaker of the state House of Representatives and the so-called establishment candidate, faced opponents perceived to be to his right. Yet Tillis will be one of the most right-wing candidates on any ballot this fall.

The more instructive way to look at the Nebraska result was suggested by a Wall Street Journal report on the outcome by Reid Epstein. Sometimes, news stories are like good poems that convey meaning through artful — if not always intentional — juxtaposition.

Epstein noted that Sasse was “backed by more than \$2.4 million in ad spending, either praising him or attacking his opponents, from organizations such as the small-government Club for Growth and the Senate Conservatives Fund, which targets Republicans it deems insufficiently conservative.”

Yet in the very next paragraph, Epstein quoted a Facebook post from Sen. Ted Cruz, the tea party hero who supported Sasse. The Texas Republican declared that “Ben Sasse’s decisive victory is a clear indication that the grass roots are rising up to make D.C. listen.”

So, is this really the grass roots speaking to Washington? Or is it more accurately seen as a cadre of conservative groups, largely working out of Washington, rising up with a ton of cash to persuade voters to listen to them? It’s hard to see Nebraska’s primary as a mass revolt. The Nebraska secretary of state’s Web site reported Wednesday morning that primary turnout (in both parties) came to 316,124 out of 1,152,180 registered Nebraskans. Sasse won with around 110,000 votes.

The grass-roots claim becomes more problematic when you consider that Sasse has rather a lot of Washington experience while one of his opponents, former state treasurer Shane Osborn, was the favorite of many Nebraska tea party groups. As Jim Newell noted in an insightful piece in Salon, FreedomWorks, one of the Washington-based operations that latched onto the tea party early, initially endorsed Osborn but switched to Sasse. The stated reason for the turnabout was the support Osborn got from Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell who, for the time being, is cast by some on the right as an enemy.

Needless to say, the local tea party faithful who preferred Osborn resented the machinations of the big money groups headquartered in the nation’s capital, whose competition resembles nothing so much as a “Game of Thrones” power struggle.

As for Sasse, his victory speech, as the conservative blogger Matt Lewis pointed out, made him sound more like the next Jack Kemp, the late conservative famed for his compassionate inclinations, than the hard-edged Cruz. Sasse’s triumph reflected his skill at bringing the two GOP establishments together — he’s the George W. guy with Harvard and Yale degrees whom Sarah Palin liked. The 42-year-old is on the verge of becoming the GOP’s next new thing.

Thanks to Supreme Court decisions opening the way for unlimited and often anonymous campaign contributions, we are entering a time when “follow the money” is the proper rubric for understanding the internal dynamics of the Republican Party. Washington-based groups tied to various conservative interests and donors will throw their weight around all over the country, always claiming to speak for those “grass roots.” Primary voters will be left with a choice between two establishments that, in the end, differ little on what they would do with power.

The Effect Of One-party Rule

By George F. Will

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

Democracy can be cruel because elections deprive the demos of the delight of alibis and the comfort of complaining. Illinois voters have used many elections to make theirs the worst-governed state, with about \$100 billion in unfunded public pension promises and \$6.7 billion in unpaid bills. The state is a stark illustration of the effect of prolonged one-party rule, conducted by politicians subservient to government employees unions.

A new Gallup poll shows that Illinois has the highest percentage — 50 percent — of residents who want to leave their state. If Illinois voters reelect Gov. Pat Quinn, they will reject Bruce Rauner, who vows to change the state's fundamental affliction — its political culture.

The state's strongest civic tradition is of governors going to jail. Four of the last nine have done so. Lt. Gov. Quinn ascended to the governorship in 2009 because Gov. Rod Blagojevich, of fragrant memory, tried to sell the Senate seat Barack Obama vacated. In 2010, Quinn defeated a downstate social conservative by 32,000 votes out of 3.7 million cast. Quinn's job approval today is about 35 percent.

Rauner, born a few blocks from Wrigley Field, grew up in a Chicago suburb — his father was an electrical engineer at Motorola; his mother was a nurse. He attended Dartmouth, earned a Harvard MBA and joined the private-equity firm GTCR, where he made enough money to buy his nine homes. When a reporter asked him if he is among the 1 percent, he cheerfully replied, "Oh, I'm probably .01 percent," an answer that was better arithmetic than politics.

Rauner spent \$6.5 million of his own money in winning the Republican primary, partly because Democratic-aligned unions spent millions trying to pick Quinn's opponent — attacking Rauner and supporting one of his GOP rivals. Quinn is, as Winston Churchill reportedly said of an adversary, a modest man with much to be modest about. Hence Quinn's campaign theme: Don't compare me to the Almighty; compare me to the alternative.

Concerning social issues, which energize much of the Republican base but repel many suburban voters in the "collar counties" around Chicago, Rauner is impeccably prudent, meaning disengaged. Abortion, he says, is "a tragedy" best left to women, not government. Gay marriage? Let each state decide by referendum "that particular contract between adults."

Quinn, unable to work the "war on women" trope, must rely on contemporary liberalism's only other idea, rage against the rich. But this becomes awkward.

Rauner's support for more charter schools and school-choice voucher programs is one reason why he has been endorsed by the Rev. James Meeks, pastor for 15,000 members of the South Side's Salem Baptist Church, Illinois's largest black church. And one reason the teachers unions oppose him with ferocious disparagement of his wealth.

Which is amusing. Since 2000, the Teachers' Retirement System, Illinois's largest pension program, has invested \$120 million with GTCR and reaped an average annual return of 25 percent, much better than TRS's other private-equity investments. For Karen Lewis, head of the Chicago Teachers Union, it suffices to say that Rauner is a "millionaire capitalist." He replies, "Teachers hired me for years." Public pension funds are by far the largest funders of private equity firms.

Illinois's rate of population growth is the sixth-lowest among the states, and its 8.4 percent unemployment rate is exceeded only by Rhode Island's, another Democratic-dominated state, and Nevada's. Michigan's unemployment rate, the Midwest's second-highest, is nearly a full point lower than Illinois's. Bewildered liberals will say the state's stagnation is "despite" Democrats having raised the corporate tax rate from 7.3 percent to 9.5 percent and imposing a "temporary" income tax rate increase from 3 percent to 5 percent. Now, unsurprisingly, Quinn proposes making the temporary increase

permanent. Two contiguous states with Republican governors — Michigan and Indiana — have cut corporate taxation.

“Cleanliness,” says Rauner, quoting former Illinois governor Adlai Stevenson, “is next to godliness, except in the Illinois legislature, where it is next to impossible.” Governors come and go in Springfield but state legislators linger, and real power resides in the speaker of the House, Michael Madigan (D), who has been a legislator since Richard Nixon was president (1971). Rauner helped to finance the gathering of signatures to get term limits for state legislators on the November ballot, thereby energizing the huge majority that favors limits. Illinois voters can choose Rauner and term limits or the acceleration of stagnation and the end of the pleasure of complaining.

Chris Christie Plays The Blame Game

By Dana Milbank

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

Chris Christie’s presidential prospects are sagging — and it has nothing to do with those steel cables spanning the Hudson River.

The sprawling controversy, which began with bridge lane closures in Fort Lee, N.J., to punish a political foe, has given the governor a reputation for running New Jersey in a vindictive and even thuggish manner. But this would hurt him less in the 2016 Republican presidential primaries than the loss of the central rationale for his potential candidacy: that he returned New Jersey to fiscal health.

CBS News’s Bob Schieffer, assigned to interview Christie onstage Wednesday at the Peter G. Peterson Foundation’s annual “fiscal summit” in Washington, laid out the bad news: \$807 million budget shortfall; downgrades by credit-rating agencies; worry that the state can’t pay its pension obligations; and slow job growth.

“Not so long ago, people were talking about the New Jersey miracle,” the genial newsman said. “Now suddenly the news is not so good about New Jersey.”

Christie did what any strong leader would do when presented with such facts: He blamed the economists. “They overestimated our revenue,” he said. “When I asked them, ‘How could you be so wrong?’ “ he added, “they said, ‘We just missed it.’ You know, the great thing about economists is that’s all they have to say: ‘Governor, I’m sorry, we missed it.’ Yeah, I’m sure you are, but I’m the one who has to fix your miss.”

It was eerily similar to Christie’s response to the bridge controversy: He was blameless. His staff let him down.

And what about the \$1.6 billion pension-plan payment the state may not be able to make? Christie couldn’t blame the economists — so he blamed his predecessors. “A billion of it is for the unaccrued liability that my predecessors didn’t pay for increased benefits,” he explained. “Christie Whitman, Jim McGreevey, Dick Codey, Jon Corzine made no pension payments. None. Zero.”

This was not helping Christie’s image as a straight shooter. “Bob keeps asking me these questions as if I’m actually going to answer them,” the governor said when Schieffer had the nerve to inquire about how Christie would pay the pension liability. “You’re ruining my reputation.”

It was bad luck that Christie’s fiscal crisis had climaxed just as he gave a highly billed address to the fiscal summit. But for the governor, the bad luck keeps coming. The speaker immediately before Christie was Bill Clinton, who was folksy and funny as he rebutted questions raised about his wife’s health by Karl Rove.

PBS’s Gwen Ifill, Clinton’s interviewer, asked about the suggestion by “Dr. Rove” that Hillary Rodham Clinton had suffered a brain injury.

"Consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds," the former president joked. "First they said she faked her concussion, and now they say she's auditioning for a part on 'The Walking Dead.' "

Clinton, who had to know that his wife's health would come up, had a few more lines prepared. "Now they say she's really got brain damage," he said. "If she does, I must be in really tough shape because she's still quicker than I am."

Six months ago, Christie and Hillary Clinton were in strong positions to be their respective parties' 2016 standard bearers. But the divergence in fortunes since then could be seen in the postures and presentations of the governor and the former president Wednesday.

Clinton, legs crossed, chin on fist, seemed to be enjoying himself as he defended his wife's handling of the Benghazi attacks as secretary of state. "Hillary did what she should have done," the former commander in chief said, floating a possible counterattack: "Most Americans don't even know how many American diplomatic personnel were killed when President Bush was president."

Christie, by contrast, sat gripping the armrests, his feet planted on the floor, frequently straightening his tie. When Schieffer asked about "Bridgegate," Christie suddenly became interested in his coffee mug, holding it upside down to show that it was empty. "It's a prop, obviously," Christie said.

What impact would the bridge flap have on his political future? "I think it will have none because I didn't do anything," Christie said, blaming the "circus" of Washington. "A couple of staff people do something that they shouldn't have done, I fire them, and all of a sudden this becomes the biggest story in the country for a couple of months," he said, "because I guess you guys weren't doing anything else down here."

Christie dismissed the bridge as "a footnote," and he returned to the topic of New Jersey's finances. "My future is going to be based upon the record" of his fiscal management, he said.

That's the problem.

Twitter: @Milbank

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES

Carey's Police Meddling Will Cost Dover \$300,000

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Dover will pay five high-ranking police officers a total of \$300,000 in a settlement that stems from complaints that former Mayor Carleton Carey violated employment and affirmative action policies and abused his authority by influencing the appointment of a deputy police chief.

The settlement agreement authorized by the City Council came after council members pressured Carey to resign last month over the five grievances. The complaints were filed shortly after he selected police Chief Paul Bernat to replace former chief James Hosfelt.

The officers claim that Carey, who has the power to select the city's top cop, influenced Bernat's decision to choose then-Lt. Marvin Mailey as his deputy.

The officers claim they were passed over because of race, and that Carey's influence was unprecedented. Mailey, the former head of the internal affairs unit, is African American. Four of the officers were Caucasian, and one was bi-racial, according to the settlement agreement.

The city, already facing a nearly \$7 million deficit over several years, now must find the money to pay the settlement.

Four officers — Capt. Tim Stump, Lts. Dan McKeown, Jason Pires and J. Eric Richardson — will receive \$50,000 each by the end of May. Capt. Robert Scott will be paid \$100,000, half by the end of this month, the other half in January 2015.

The payments may come from the city's budget, but officials are exploring whether the city's insurance will cover the settlement, Council President David Bonar said.

Council members reviewed the grievances in April and serious questions arose about whether Carey exceeded his authority and "orchestrated a series of events" to ensure Mailey was elevated to deputy chief.

They asked Carey to resign because of the city's potential exposure. A plan to shift oversight of the police department from mayor to the city manager was in the works well before the grievances were filed, Bonar said.

"The only thing we were told was that it was the chief's impression that he had kind of put him in the position where he was forced to hire someone else other than the people who filed the grievance," Bonar said.

Carey, in an interview Wednesday, denied the allegations. He said the only thing he did was appoint a police chief. The chief can appoint whomever he likes, Carey said.

"My goal was to do the best I could for the citizens of Dover. That's what I wanted to do, was willing to do and I have done," Carey said. "I certainly would have liked to continue."

He had no idea that council would speak publicly about the events. "I denied the accusations. That's as much as I could do," he said. "I just didn't think I should get involved in fighting the allegations at that point."

Dover's Police Department has faced controversy in the past year, with authorities still probing Cpl. Thomas Webster's Aug. 24 arrest of Lateef Dickerson on assault and other charges.

A Kent County Superior Court grand jury recently reviewed claims of police brutality after the department forwarded the matter to the state Attorney General's Office, but did not issue an indictment.

The incident prompted outcry from the city's African-American community and relations have been tense in the past few years, the state's president of the NAACP has said.

Officials said they are behind Bernat, Mailey and the rest of the department.

Contact Jon Offredo at (302) 678-4271 or at joffredo@delawareonline.com or on Twitter @jonoffredo.

Bill Would Permit Possession Of Heroin Overdose Drug

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

The Delaware Senate will consider a bill that makes a drug available without a prescription that supporters argue will save the life of someone overdosing on heroin or other opioids.

The legislation, which cleared a Senate committee Wednesday, allows Delaware's Department of Health and Social Services to distribute Naloxone without a prescription and at little or no cost to anyone who completes a training program.. Officials say the legislation is a tool to combat the growing heroin and opioid epidemic facing the state.

"This legislation will save lives," said the bill's sponsor Sen. Bethany Hall-Long, D-Middletown.

Delaware law currently allows friends and family members to purchase the drug when a prescription is written for a person with the addiction. One brand of the drug, Narcan, is available as a nasal spray. In April, the Food and Drug Administration approved an autoinjector-like device for administration of the drug, but the cost of it is unknown.

It could have saved David Humes's son, Greg, who died of an overdose in 2012. Humes remembers police telling him that his son could have survived if the state had a 911 Good Samaritan or Narcan law.

He lives those words every day of his life, he told the Senate Health and Social Services Committee on Wednesday. Gov. Jack Markell signed the Samaritan law last year.

"Time matters. Give other parents a life-saving tool that I didn't have," he said.

It's not clear how the community-based training program would work, but officials from DHSS are looking at best practices across the nation, said Debbie Gottschalk, the department's chief policy adviser.

The idea is to get the drug in the hands of more people who are likely to come across overdoses, whether they are community group members, friends or family members, Gottschalk said. Training is needed to help people understand how to administer the medicine, she added.

For Diann Jones, of Middletown, the legislation offers peace of mind.

Her daughter, 22, has been in and out of treatment for heroin and opioid addiction in the past two years. It's a constant struggle to fight the disease, but the legislation would allow her to help immediately, even if her daughter didn't seek a prescription, she said.

They recently took a drive to North Carolina, but she would have been powerless if the worst had happened.

"I have no idea what I would have done," she said.

Emergency Medical Service units in Delaware have administered Naloxone for several years now and 900 unresponsive people were given the drug in 2013. Three hundred were revived, but it is unknown how many had overdosed on opioids.

A pilot project started in March that allows Basic Life Support units to carry the drug in high heroin use areas has already seen results. Units have administered it five times, reviving three people. The drug is administered before police officers arrive at the scene in the vast majority of instances where emergency responders use it.

The legislation provides a front-line defense to a heroin and opioid epidemic, said Joe Connor, president of Addictions Coalition Delaware. Treatment for addiction comes in many forms: abstinence, medicine, education.

"This is kind of the 911 of treatment," he said. "It brings someone back from an overdose and gives them another opportunity to get treatment."

Contact Jon Offredo at (302) 678-4271 or at joffredo@delawareonline.com or on Twitter @jonoffredo.

Smyrna Receives Sparkling Start

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

SMYRNA – John Richardson pitched nine innings against Salesianum on Saturday.

Photo Gallery: Smyrna 3, A.I. du Pont 1

Prep Notes: Several spring tournament fields set

The Smyrna right-hander won that one, and he had plenty left against A.I. du Pont on Wednesday. Richardson pitched a two-hitter, and the Eagles scored all of their runs in the first two innings and held on for a 3-1 victory over the third-ranked Tigers.

Last SlideNext Slide

"Mostly, I just couldn't let the team down," Richardson said. "I wanted to keep going. We're kind of underestimated in the state, and we've put ourselves on the map. I didn't want to give up on the team."

Richardson said he had all four pitches – fastball, curveball, changeup and slider – working well. He was far from overpowering (only two strikeouts), but kept the ball so low the Tigers would have been better off swinging 4-irons.

"He's a bulldog," Smyrna coach Mike Henderson said. "He's not your typical No. 1 [starter]. He's not going to some big college like a lot of people's No. 1s. But he pitched well against St. Mark's, beat Salesianum, beat A.I. du Pont, beat Polytech – all top-notch teams."

The Eagles (14-4) loaded the bases with no outs in the first, as Corey Everage was hit by a pitch and Ryan Seymour and Jared Gillis followed with singles. Everage scored on an error, and Nick Macey lifted a sacrifice fly to left to score Seymour for a 2-0 lead.

Smyrna hit the board again in the second when Justin Jones was hit by a pitch, scooted to second on an error and scored on a single by Everage.

That was all Richardson (5-2) needed, although he ran into trouble in the fourth. Matthew Geist and Peter Gillette singled, and the Tigers loaded the bases with no outs when Geist beat the throw to third on a sacrifice bunt by Kyle Phillips. But Richardson coaxed a 6-4-3 double play that allowed one run to score, and got out of the jam when A.I.'s Cory Alaburda lined out to third.

"Spot the ball, and good defense," Richardson said. "That's all you need."

Richardson got five groundball outs in the next two innings, then received a huge boost when Smyrna left fielder Justin Jones made a sliding, shoestring catch in the seventh.

"His efficiency is just ridiculous," Henderson said. "He averages 13 pitches per inning. We wouldn't be here without him."

The Tigers pitched three straight shutouts against Concord, Glasgow and Appoquinimink last week, but lost their second straight after falling to Hodgson 7-2 on Monday.

"We've just run into some bad luck the last week and a half or so. We haven't been able to swing the sticks," A.I. coach Darren Brodie said. "We've faced some really good pitching. Their kid on the mound was outstanding. He did his job."

Contact Brad Myers at (302) 324-2807 or bmyers@delawareonline.com

NAACP Remarks 'Not Being Racist,' Wilson Says

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Sam Wilson says he regrets nothing.

On Tuesday, he was called a "racist and a bigot," among other things, after he took issue with the word "colored" in the NAACP's name at the weekly Sussex County Council meeting.

His comments drew strong responses. A colleague on Council said Wilson showed "poor judgment."

"People are hung up too much on who they are or what color they are. I don't get hung up on it," Wilson said Wednesday. "It's certainly not being racist to ask the question."

Wilson touched off the controversy when he objected to giving a county grant to the Lower Sussex Branch NAACP Youth Council.

"I'm not going to give anything. Unless you can describe what that says," he told a county staffer who was reciting to Council which organizations were asking for grants this week. "What's NAACP stand for?"

The group's acronym stands for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Wilson, in the Council meeting, indicated the phrase "colored people" signified the NAACP must be involved in "discrimination."

Vance Phillips, another councilman, said he agreed with Wilson and would not give the Youth Council any money from his discretionary fund either.

On Wednesday, amplifying comments, Wilson said he believed the NAACP advocated only for black people to the exclusion of white people.

"How do you think it would fly if I said, 'This is for the NAAWP?' I don't think it would fly, either," Wilson said. "It's not my goal to say the blacks are over there and the whites are over here. That's not what I want to do and I didn't intend to do that."

The history of the NAACP is not of a blacks-only club. Started in 1909 to combat lynchings, the group was founded by several dozen people, only seven of whom were African-American.

Its first president was a white lawyer, Moorfield Storey. One of the best-known black activists of the time, W.E.B. DuBois, was the only black member of the original board of directors. All of the group's executives in the modern era have been black.

"The councilman is incorrect in his assumption that the NAACP is an organization that would reject anyone from joining because of race," said Jotaka Eaddy, senior director of the group's voting rights project. "Anyone who wants to work with us toward our mission, we're ready and willing to work with them."

Wilson, a Republican and farmer of land just outside Georgetown, said he's had only supportive calls and messages from constituents about his comments.

"I've had people call me who said that I said the right thing, asked the right questions. I've never had people call who disagreed," he said. "I know a lot of black folks who would probably agree with me."

Richard Smith, president of the Delaware chapter of the NAACP, said Tuesday that Wilson and Phillips "seem to be racists and bigots" after he heard the exchange.

Of that criticism, Wilson said: "To be honest with you, he's more of a racist and a bigot than I am."

Local black leaders strenuously disagreed with Wilson, who has staked out strongly held positions on social issues before.

When the state was debating gay marriage in 2013, Wilson used a Council meeting to say allowing same-sex marriage was "legislating immorality," and warned that allowing it "leads back to child abuse."

Later that year, when a Sussex school board voted not to add an elective high school course on Bible literacy, Wilson told a radio host it was because "one of them is a lesbian," and "they're not very strong on the Bible."

"Taking into consideration the things Sam has said, I'm not shocked, but I am surprised," said Jane Hovington, the Lower Sussex Branch NAACP president. "But people are incensed."

Right-leaning talk radio in Sussex County took Wilson's side on Wednesday.

"Good for Sam for speaking up," Jared Morris, a host for Delaware 105.9, wrote in a blog entry suggesting Wilson was wise to distance himself from the NAACP because "the media elite" would someday soon "decide that supporting an organization that uses a 'racist' term like colored people is, in itself, racist."

Only in Delaware: 'Racists and bigots' and prayers, oh my

After Wilson and Phillips objected to contributing \$100 in their names to the Youth Council's customary \$500 annual grant from the county, George Cole, a GOP council member from Ocean View, tried to smooth things over. Cole made a motion to give the group \$500 this year without touching Wilson's and Phillips' discretionary accounts, and that motion passed quickly.

On Wednesday, Cole said he didn't want constituents to think the entire County Council had a problem with the NAACP.

"It was really just the two of them showing poor judgment, in my opinion," Cole said. "It reflects on the whole County Council. But no, the whole County Council did not do that." Cole also said it was unwise for the Council's only democrat, Joan Deaver, to deliver a retort to Phillips and Wilson that referenced the Ku Klux Klan. Deaver did not return a call for comment Wednesday.

Wilson said he was not bothered by the controversy his remarks caused.

"My dad used to say, the more you stir the pot, the worse it stinks," Wilson said. "And I think I stirred it pretty well yesterday."

Contact James Fisher at 983-6772, on Twitter @JamesFisherTNJ or jfisher@delawareonline.com.
Earlier story: Councilmen oppose NAACP grants

Medical Examiner Callery 'Absent' Much Of Time

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

DOVER Delaware's chief medical examiner, Richard T. Callery, used his state office, including state employees, to run a private consulting business, state prosecutor Kathleen Jennings told lawmakers during a joint committee hearing in Legislative Hall on Wednesday.

The hearing was called by Sen. Robert Marshall, a Wilmington Democrat and chair of the Senate Public Safety Committee, to learn more about how drugs went missing from the state's Controlled Substances Laboratory, which is housed in the chief medical examiner's office.

Prosecutors have notified 75 defendants that drug evidence in their cases may have been tampered with or gone missing, including five defendants in federal prosecutions.

The drug scandal has "compromised" 146 cases, resulting in plea deals or dismissals, Jennings told lawmakers on Wednesday. Marijuana, heroin, Oxycontin and cocaine are among the missing drugs.

Story: Police say twin was shaken to death

Story: Drug kingpin's sentencing delayed by theatrics

Delaware's public defender has filed more than 420 motions since April 30 seeking to reopen and overturn drug convictions due to security lapses in the drug lab and thefts of drug evidence.

During testimony Wednesday, Jennings blamed Callery for creating a culture in the medical examiner's office that led to unsupervised work and, ultimately, the drugs going missing.

She said Callery, who remains the subject of a Delaware State Police criminal investigation, for the potential misuse of state resources, was "absent for large, large periods of time consulting and testifying in other states."

The News Journal has detailed the those absences and problems that led to the missing drug evidence in a series of stories.

For years, Callery has worked side jobs as an expert witness for defendants in cases out of state., as well as some prosecutions He also worked as a contract pathologist for the state of Rhode Island for at least a decade while employed full time for the state of Delaware.

"It's not rocket science that this would happen if someone isn't there supervising what is going on," Jennings said. "It's inevitable that bad things happen in a culture like that."

Callery remains on suspension but continues to collect his \$198,000-a-year salary while investigations continue. He is also the subject of a an internal human resources investigation at the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services.

Another member of the office, forensic investigator James Woodson, also has been suspended with pay while investigations continue.

State officials shuttered the state's drug lab on Feb. 25 after learning of the missing evidence. Investigators have since pored through 25,000 pieces of drug evidence – including more than 9,270 in the evidence locker in the chief medical examiner's office – for signs of tampering. Investigators have since pored through 25,000 pieces of drug evidence for signs of tampering and more than 9,270 in the evidence locker in the chief medical examiner's office.

The Delaware State Police and other police agencies across the state have reported evidence problems in material they received back from the medical examiner's office, Jennings said, including departments agencies in Wilmington, New Castle County, Dover, Middletown, Milford and Bridgeville.

Since the February closure of the drug lab, law enforcement agencies have been sending drug evidence for testing to a contractor's lab in Willow Grove, Pa., at cost of to the state thus far of \$102,000, thus far.

Gov. Jack Markell and administration officials took their first formal steps Wednesday to reorganize the medical examiner's office in response to the missing drug scandal. A proposal presented at Wednesday's hearing would make the office under law enforcement control as a new division in the state Department of Safety and Homeland Security.

The administration plan would rename the office the Division of Forensic Science, create a Forensic Science Commission to oversee it, the new division and make the division director more accountable to top administration officials. Lawmakers must approve any such change.

Any reorganization could have impacts on the state budget. Lewis Schiliro, secretary of Homeland Security, said the move will come with a cost, but is necessary to reopen the state's drug lab and restart evidence processing.

"There will be some costs attached to it," Schiliro told lawmakers. "There is no other way to do this. In my view, we will not be able to accept evidence back there until we have a system in there that can attest to the credibility."

Lawmakers and Jennings blamed Callery for leaving the medical examiner's office without a consistent supervisor.

Callery is serving a 10-year term as chief medical examiner, with his term scheduled to run through 2017. He has "due-process" rights, HSS Secretary Rita Landgraf told lawmakers Wednesday, and is not easily fired.

"I know you are in a very difficult position," Sen. Greg Lavelle, a Sharpley Republican, told administration officials. "Boy it would be nice if he would resign, wouldn't it, and take responsibility for his failures in that office."

Rep. Michael Mulrooney, a Newark DemocratD-Pennwood, said it's past time for Callery to lose his job.

"Enough is enough," Mulrooney said. "Heads gotta roll. I'm just an old electrician. I know if I messed up a job this big, I'd be gone. I don't see why any government official has to be any different."

Reporter Sean O'Sullivan contributed to this story.

Contact Jonathan Starkey at (302) 983-6756, on Twitter @jwstarkey or at jstarkey@delawareonline.com

Medimmune, Incyte Partner In Drug Trial

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Wilmington biopharmaceutical firm Incyte and MedImmune, AstraZeneca's biologics and research development arm, are teaming up for the first time in a clinical study designed to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of a combination cancer treatment.

The first phase of the trial will seek to establish a recommended dose of two investigational compounds – MedImmune's MEDI4736 and Incyte's INCB24360 – which AstraZeneca describes as "part of a new class of cancer treatments known as immunotherapies, which use the body's own immune system to help fight cancer."

"Preclinical evidence suggests that the combination of these two agents may lead to an enhanced anti-tumor immune response," AstraZeneca said.

The second phase of the study will measure the safety and effectiveness of the treatment.

Story:: AstraZeneca positions vulnerable amid merger discussion

The MedImmune therapy blocks the signals that tumors use to help avoid detection by the immune system, according to AstraZeneca. Called a “human monoclonal antibody,” it is a protein derived from a single human cell, rather than from an animal or created in a test tube, said AstraZeneca spokeswoman Alisha Martin. The proteins are then altered for efficacy and safety and cloned in large numbers to be used in therapy.

Meanwhile, the Incyte compound strengthens the ability of immune cells to fight tumors.

The collaboration is being done on a non-exclusive basis, so either firm may pursue additional trials of the therapies. AstraZeneca could not provide the cost of the study, but it will be co-funded equally by MedImmune and Incyte, which will conduct the trial.

The treatment will address multiple solid tumors, AstraZeneca said, “including metastatic melanoma, non-small cell lung cancer, squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck and pancreatic cancer.”

The study is “open label,” meaning both the researchers and participants are aware of the therapy being administered, so the companies will receive data in real time, Martin said.

Because of the nature of the study, she said, it’s unknown how long it will take, but the companies expect to enroll the first patient this year and plan to present interim data at scientific conferences.

“Immuno-oncology is one of the most exciting areas in our industry, and we are progressing our strong pipeline as rapidly as possible,” said Dr. Bahija Jallal, executive vice president of MedImmune, which AstraZeneca acquired for \$15 billion in 2007.

It now represents nearly half of AstraZeneca’s R&D pipeline.

“Our partnership with Incyte is further evidence of our belief that combination therapies have the potential to be one of the most effective ways of treating cancer.”

Said Incyte President and CEO Hervé Hoppenot: “Research collaborations that evaluate combinations of novel immunotherapies across a broad range of indications have the potential to accelerate our understanding of this rapidly evolving field, to identify new areas of opportunity for immunotherapies and to more rapidly address the unmet needs of patients with a wide range of cancers.”

Contact Suzanne Herel at (302) 324-2876 or sherel@delawareonline.com.

Coons: Pfizer-AZ Raises Antitrust Concerns

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Pfizer’s proposed acquisition of AstraZeneca could hurt competition in the pharmaceutical industry, and if it moves forward, it should be reviewed by U.S. antitrust regulators, Sen. Chris Coons wrote in a letter to the U.S. Federal Trade Commission and Justice Department.

Pfizer has a history of acquiring drug companies and slashing jobs, including research sites, Coons wrote in the letter, dated Wednesday. An acquisition of AstraZeneca threatens to lead to “fewer drugs and diminished consumer welfare,” he wrote.

Pfizer wants to buy AstraZeneca, but the British pharma has spurned the offers, saying Pfizer undervalues its pipeline. Pfizer this week hinted it would further sweeten its \$106 billion bid in advance of a May 26 deadline by the British government or might consider a hostile takeover bid by going directly to shareholders.

Earlier story: Pfizer urged to keep AstraZeneca jobs in Delaware

Story:: AstraZeneca positions vulnerable amid merger discussion

Story: AstraZeneca profit misses estimates

Related: Medimmune, Incyte partner in drug trial

Such a combined company would represent the largest pharmaceutical firm in the world.

And by reincorporating in the United Kingdom, Pfizer would realize tax savings estimated at \$1 billion.

Coons wrote such an approach would allow it to operate as a U.S. company without paying U.S. taxes.

"We do not believe that this transfer from U.S. taxpayers to Pfizer constitutes a pro-competitive justification for the merger and encourage your careful review to ensure consumers, patients and the marketplace are protected from anticompetitive harm," Coons wrote.

The market "concentration" created by such a merger "will be sufficient to raise significant competitive concerns, beginning with certain prescription drugs" like AstraZeneca's Crestor and Pfizer's Lipitor, both cholesterol drugs.

Coons noted that following its 2009 acquisition of Wyeth, Pfizer shuttered six of 20 research sites around the globe and cut research and development to half of what it had collectively spent the previous year. Since 2009, the consolidated drug industry has resulted in about 156,000 job losses in this country, Coons wrote.

AstraZeneca, which has its North American headquarters in Delaware, employs about 2,600 in the state as well as 3,100 at MedImmune, its biologics and research development arm, in Maryland.

"Any efficiencies claimed to justify this merger may be vastly outweighed by the significant competitive harm to consumers and patients," Coons wrote.

Coons, D-Del., included the signatures of five other senators on his letter.

Broken Parts Extend Salem Nuclear Reactor Shutdown

By Jeff Montgomery

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Eight thumb-sized, broken bolt-heads have sidetracked PSEG Nuclear's plans for restarting its Salem Unit 2 nuclear reactor, as investigators work to find the breakaway spots and reasons for failure.

Discovery of the broken reactor coolant pump parts during a routine refueling outage prompted the company to extend the shutdown, which began April 14. It was the latest in a string of problems at the Salem/Hope Creek nuclear complex.

Company spokesman Joe Delmar said Wednesday afternoon that PSEG was being conservative in delaying its restart to allow "additional internal inspections of the coolant pumps and make any repairs as needed."

Nuclear Regulatory Commission spokesman Neil Sheehan said the bolt tops, each about an inch in diameter and 3 inches long, are likely from the area of one of four reactor coolant pump's impeller vanes, or blades.

Investigators consider "stress-corrosion cracking," – a kind of failure that occurs in some types of metals exposed to particular types of stress, temperature and corrosive conditions – as one of the potential causes for the breaks, Sheehan said.

"The concern is that if bolts holding the turning vane failed, the vane could drop and impact the rotating pump internals," Sheehan said.

Worldwide, Sheehan said, only Salem Unit 2 and the Surry nuclear plant in Virginia use the type of reactor pump where the bolts were found – with four of the pumps installed at Salem and six at Surry.

PSEG operates three reactors at its Artificial Island site along the Delaware River in New Jersey southeast of Port Penn, owning all of the Hope Creek reactor and 57 percent of Salem Units 1, with energy giant Exelon owning the remaining 43 percent.

Unit 2 shut down for refueling April 14 and was expected to return to service around mid-May.

Salem Unit 1 has reported three unplanned shutdowns this year, potentially subjecting the operation to increased oversight.

Salem/Hope Creek ranks as the nation's second-largest nuclear generating complex and is part of the nation's most densely populated cluster of multiple, overlapping reactor emergency planning areas. Nearly 54,000 people live inside the 10-mile evacuation planning zone for the complex, about 80 percent in Delaware. Some 5.5 million in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania live within 50 miles of the facility.

Newark Co-op Joins National Network

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Newark Natural Foods has joined the National Cooperative Grocers Association, a national organization that spans 38 states and 142 co-ops with a combined sales of more than \$1.6 billion.

The grocery store, www.newarknaturalfoods.com, is located in the same town as the University of Delaware. It was founded in 1967 as a "food-buying club," and it was incorporated in 1975, according to the grocers association announcement. There are more than 3,400 active members in the co-op today, according to the association, and the grocer has more than \$5 million in annual sales.

"We're delighted to welcome our new member and associate co-ops and the communities they serve," C.E. Pugh, chief operating officer for National Cooperative Grocers Association said in a statement included in the announcement. "The management and staff of these co-ops have done a fantastic job of growing their businesses and we're excited for their participation with NCGA. Our association is enhanced as they join other food co-ops across the country to provide healthier food, better services, and stronger communities."

The grocers association, www.ncga.coop, is a cooperative that provides business services, including purchasing and marketing, to members.

Chobani Incorporates In Delaware, Sparking IPO Talk

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Chobani, the popular Greek yogurt maker founded by Turkish immigrant Hamdi Ulukaya, has incorporated in Delaware, according to a March 6 filing with the state Division of Corporations.

The move is widely suspected to foreshadow an initial public offering for the private Norwich, New York, company, which last month secured a \$750 million investment from TPG Capital.

More than half of the publicly traded companies in the U.S. are incorporated in the First State, according to the Division of Corporations – including 64 percent of Fortune 500 companies. They're drawn by the state's business-friendly corporation law, which the group describes as "the most advanced and flexible business formation statute in the nation."

Contacted Wednesday, Chobani declined to comment on the prospect of an IPO.

In an emailed statement, the company said, "Our home remains in New York, where Chobani was founded, where our yogurt is made and where our company is headquartered. Like many companies based around the country, Chobani registered in Delaware earlier this year to permit greater flexibility in operating and growing the business."

That's good news for the New York Senate, which on May 6 – after being lobbied by a fourth-grade class – voted to make yogurt the state's official snack.

A move to Delaware would have been low-hanging fruit for comedians like Jon Stewart and David Letterman, who already have lampooned the debate over the bill, which included the following exchange, according to the Associated Press:

"What exactly are we defining as a snack?" asked Sen. Gustavo Rivera, a Democrat from the Bronx.

"I think it's self-explanatory. I mean, you have breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and then you have snacks," said the bill's Republican sponsor, Sen. Michael Ranzenhofer.

Rivera responded, "Did you consider, say, the potato chip?"

NAACP Remarks 'Not Being Racist,' Wilson Says

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Sam Wilson says he regrets nothing.

On Tuesday, he was called a "racist and a bigot," among other things, after he took issue with the word "colored" in the NAACP's name at the weekly Sussex County Council meeting.

His comments drew strong responses. A colleague on Council said Wilson showed "poor judgment."

"People are hung up too much on who they are or what color they are. I don't get hung up on it," Wilson said Wednesday. "It's certainly not being racist to ask the question."

Wilson touched off the controversy when he objected to giving a county grant to the Lower Sussex Branch NAACP Youth Council.

"I'm not going to give anything. Unless you can describe what that says," he told a county staffer who was reciting to Council which organizations were asking for grants this week. "What's NAACP stand for?"

The group's acronym stands for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Wilson, in the Council meeting, indicated the phrase "colored people" signified the NAACP must be involved in "discrimination."

Vance Phillips, another councilman, said he agreed with Wilson and would not give the Youth Council any money from his discretionary fund either.

On Wednesday, amplifying comments, Wilson said he believed the NAACP advocated only for black people to the exclusion of white people.

"How do you think it would fly if I said, 'This is for the NAAWP?' I don't think it would fly, either," Wilson said. "It's not my goal to say the blacks are over there and the whites are over here. That's not what I want to do and I didn't intend to do that."

The history of the NAACP is not of a blacks-only club. Started in 1909 to combat lynchings, the group was founded by several dozen people, only seven of whom were African-American.

Its first president was a white lawyer, Moorfield Storey. One of the best-known black activists of the time, W.E.B. DuBois, was the only black member of the original board of directors. All of the group's executives in the modern era have been black.

"The councilman is incorrect in his assumption that the NAACP is an organization that would reject anyone from joining because of race," said Jotaka Eaddy, senior director of the group's voting rights project. "Anyone who wants to work with us toward our mission, we're ready and willing to work with them."

Wilson, a Republican and farmer of land just outside Georgetown, said he's had only supportive calls and messages from constituents about his comments.

"I've had people call me who said that I said the right thing, asked the right questions. I've never had people call who disagreed," he said. "I know a lot of black folks who would probably agree with me."

Richard Smith, president of the Delaware chapter of the NAACP, said Tuesday that Wilson and Phillips "seem to be racists and bigots" after he heard the exchange.

Of that criticism, Wilson said: "To be honest with you, he's more of a racist and a bigot than I am."

Local black leaders strenuously disagreed with Wilson, who has staked out strongly held positions on social issues before.

When the state was debating gay marriage in 2013, Wilson used a Council meeting to say allowing same-sex marriage was “legislating immorality,” and warned that allowing it “leads back to child abuse.”

Later that year, when a Sussex school board voted not to add an elective high school course on Bible literacy, Wilson told a radio host it was because “one of them is a lesbian,” and “they’re not very strong on the Bible.”

“Taking into consideration the things Sam has said, I’m not shocked, but I am surprised,” said Jane Hovington, the Lower Sussex Branch NAACP president. “But people are incensed.”

Right-leaning talk radio in Sussex County took Wilson’s side on Wednesday.

“Good for Sam for speaking up,” Jared Morris, a host for Delaware 105.9, wrote in a blog entry suggesting Wilson was wise to distance himself from the NAACP because “the media elite” would someday soon “decide that supporting an organization that uses a ‘racist’ term like colored people is, in itself, racist.”

Only in Delaware: ‘Racists and bigots’ and prayers, oh my

After Wilson and Phillips objected to contributing \$100 in their names to the Youth Council’s customary \$500 annual grant from the county, George Cole, a GOP council member from Ocean View, tried to smooth things over. Cole made a motion to give the group \$500 this year without touching Wilson’s and Phillips’ discretionary accounts, and that motion passed quickly.

On Wednesday, Cole said he didn’t want constituents to think the entire County Council had a problem with the NAACP.

“It was really just the two of them showing poor judgment, in my opinion,” Cole said. “It reflects on the whole County Council. But no, the whole County Council did not do that.” Cole also said it was unwise for the Council’s only democrat, Joan Deaver, to deliver a retort to Phillips and Wilson that referenced the Ku Klux Klan. Deaver did not return a call for comment Wednesday.

Wilson said he was not bothered by the controversy his remarks caused.

“My dad used to say, the more you stir the pot, the worse it stinks,” Wilson said. “And I think I stirred it pretty well yesterday.”

Contact James Fisher at 983-6772, on Twitter @JamesFisherTNJ or jfisher@delawareonline.com.

Earlier story: Councilmen oppose NAACP grants

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL EDITORIALS

Revised Forensic Division Welcome

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Delaware now has a plan that could strengthen the state’s criminal investigation system. The proposal also could prevent future crime lab scandals, such as the one now threatening to set free convicted criminals because of tainted evidence.

On Wednesday, Lewis Schiliro, secretary of the Department of Safety and Homeland Security, and Rita Landgraf, secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services, called for the reorganization of the Medical Examiner’s Office. They want to create a new Division of Forensic Science.

The new division would be under the Homeland Security Department. A special commission would oversee it. The proposal would combine some operations and enforce professional standards.

Investigators are looking closely at the current Medical Examiner’s Office because of reports of stolen drugs and bungled evidence control.

The Schiliro-Landgraf proposal includes a requirement that a director with expertise in forensic sciences head the division. The combination of the reorganization and the oversight commission could improve the professionalism of the state's forensic services.

The Legislature must approve the Schiliro-Landgraf proposal. We urge legislators to consider this plan carefully and seriously. The quicker they get a professional unit up and running, the better for all of Delaware.

The state should show it is serious about fighting crime and protecting the rights of the accused.

A Casino Bailout Would Equal A Fisker Bailout Every Year

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Although it is unfortunate to hear of Dover Downs and the other casinos doing poorly, it was not unexpected at all from a group that has had a monopoly for over 15 years, blew it and now wants a \$20 million annual cut in fees and taxes.

They have been classically mismanaged: 1) They have run up their debts; 2) been bled of their funds by excessive dividends, outlandish executive compensation and worse; 3) made other poor non-related investments, most not even in Delaware or casino related. Would "good partners" do that? These financial screw-ups have made them ill-prepared for the reality of competition from Maryland and Pennsylvania despite knowing it was coming.

Funny, isn't this what we did to New Jersey in the 1990s?

Bad ongoing management, not competition, is the problem. This proposed fiscal irresponsibility is so crazy, particularly with the state's current fiscal condition, I don't know if we should ask for an intervention or an investigation. Currently in just one new, properly built and run casino in Maryland, they make just as much as all three of ours combined; how pathetic. Remember, "All casinos have two things in common, no windows and no clocks, which creates a make-believe world." Folks, we have no "make-believe" here sadly.

Think, why do people drive to Atlantic City or fly across the continent to Las Vegas? It's simple; they have more fun there.

Making matters worse, our existing casinos want: 1) No strings on the fee cuts and money that they want from the taxpayers; 2) No executive salary or dividend caps; 3) No job guarantees (at this time, most of their employees are working part time with no benefits and many are eligible for Medicaid and welfare, all on the taxpayers' dime); and 4) The existing casinos still outlandishly want their M-O-N-O-P-O-L-Y! So much for being a fully competing "Sandwich Shop" as Sen. Brian Bushweller describes them.

Remember, if they do go bankrupt they will not collapse into a sinkhole, the banks will simply run them until they find a competent buyer/operator. Frankly, with no overwhelming debt, they will all be stronger and then they can live within the fee structure that currently exists, which by the way is cheaper than the bordering states.

In full disclosure, I am an attorney in Wilmington, originally from Seaford, who represents one of the companies proposing two new gambling sites in Delaware. One for Sussex, since it does not have one, and another for New Castle County. Incidentally, all of the new proposed sites can and will live within the existing fee structure and will spend hundreds of millions of their own dollars and plan to build facilities that include entertainment as well as shopping, so as to make the new sites true destinations that people will want to frequent.

Tell your legislators to say no to this outlandish bailout. Are your readers getting a bailout? Let's spend the money where it is needed: ambulance/fire companies, roads or bridges and schools. All are better bets.

Finally, don't take our tax money or raise other taxes; instead, if the casinos need help and are this desperate, then lower the rates, eliminate their failed monopoly, allow two more gambling sites, auction off each license (\$15 million minimum) to make the state some money and refill our Treasury when we are running low, and protect current employees who apply to the new facilities. More jobs will ultimately be produced, and the state will make more money.

Darrell J. Baker is a Wilmington lawyer.

Sussex County Council Should Not Switch Prayers

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

A recent U.S. Supreme Court decision said it was OK for local governments to recite prayers as long as they do not "coerce participation by non-adherents." It was not one of the court's clearest decisions. It is raising questions around the country, including in Sussex County.

Some members of the county council admit they are considering an attempt to bring prayer back to its public meetings. Republican Councilman Sam Wilson said, "What's wrong with The Lord's Prayer?" Nothing, of course. But why change?

STORY: Sussex Council may say Lord's Prayer again

The reference was to a previous practice of the council's: Starting each meeting with The Lord's Prayer. Supporters of the prayer described it as universal and non-sectarian. Depending on how you define the word "sectarian," those descriptions might or might not be correct. However, the prayer led to a court fight and, under an agreement, the council agreed to what is described as the "less-sectarian" 23rd Psalm.

The council spent 25 minutes at a meeting this week discussing the return of The Lord's Prayer.

We would suggest a little more meditation on the matter. Such a movement might be immediately popular, but it might cause unforeseen consequences, such as another costly lawsuit. A fight for the sake of a fight will not serve the county's citizens well. The current arrangement appears to be working well – council members do not appear any less wise than in the old Lord's Prayer days. Why start a new fight?

China Has 7 Million Graduates And No Jobs Available

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Even during China's most feudal phases, higher education has offered a reliable means of meritocratic advancement. Well into the 1990s, the limited number of university graduates meant that all of them were virtually assured places among the economic elite.

As China tries to evolve from "the workshop of the world" into a more technologically advanced service economy, however, a swelling glut of graduates is threatening this age-old compact. This year alone, Chinese universities are expected to produce a record 7 million degree holders, more than seven times the number 15 years ago. This rapid expansion has vastly outstripped demand: Unemployment among recent graduates has rocketed to 16 percent, four times the norm, while the wage premium they receive has plummeted by 19 percentage points. In some cities, semiskilled factory workers now make more than university graduates in office jobs.

High youth unemployment has spurred social unrest in many countries – including Spain, where joblessness among young people is double the national average, as well as Egypt and Tunisia. In China, the situation is even more fraught. For decades, the Communist Party has offered citizens a trade-off: economic opportunity in exchange for political docility. If the first is closed off, the whole bargain starts to look a lot less attractive.

Given the intensifying scramble for good jobs, connections have begun to matter more than merit. Party links in particular are a key deciding factor as businesses seek to build ties with influential officials by hiring their offspring.

The news media's attention has been focused on high-profile Western banks, which allegedly recruited the children of top party officials in an effort to build *guanxi*, or close personal relationships, with the Chinese leadership. But the problem extends right down the scale: One study of the career prospects of college graduates found that the children of even low-level party officials were able to secure starting salaries that were 15 percent higher than for those without such connections. No wonder graduates themselves have become the most rapidly expanding demographic within the party: The share of students who choose to join has risen to more than 11 percent today from less than 1 percent in 1990.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, wealth now matters as much as connections do in landing jobs. Some banks blatantly set conditions for coveted internships: "The parents must have a fixed-term deposit of at least 500,000 yuan at the branch," reads one advertisement. Job seekers are forced to offer "gifts" in exchange for government positions.

Obviously the government needs to generate more high-skill jobs in order to soak up the flood of graduates. Slowing growth will make that difficult. Yet Chinese leaders could at least lift roadblocks to job creation – from restrictions on internal migration to regulations that favor industry over services.

In the United States, for instance, young college graduates are highly mobile; about half of them live outside their state of birth. By contrast, Chinese graduates are trapped in their home cities or provinces by a strict household registration system that discourages them from moving to where the jobs are. This generates unemployment in marginal cities while leaving important vacancies unfilled in the megacities that drive China's economy.

At the same time, China favors industry over services by subsidizing the price of industrial land, with local governments keeping prices artificially low in hopes of attracting additional investment. As a result, from 2000 to 2010, the average price of commercial land rose from three times that of industrial land to almost nine times, dramatically raising the relative cost of business for service firms. Because services tend to be more labor-intensive and require more educated employees, this bias has slowed job growth for college graduates.

The policy of encouraging more Chinese to get a university education was meant to strengthen China, to help build it into a creative and modern service economy. Instead, the push is creating new and worrying vulnerabilities. It's too late to turn back, which means solutions must focus on stimulating demand for graduates and changing the skill mix of those students. As President Xi Jinping works to root out corrupt practices, large and small, he should also focus on the bribe taking that's becoming prevalent in the hiring process.

The alternative is a rising sense of injustice and frustration among tens of thousands of educated youth. That's hardly a future he or China's other leaders can afford to contemplate.

Yukon Huang is a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, where Canyon Bosler is a junior fellow.

VICE PRESIDENTIAL *News Clips*

PRODUCED FOR THE OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

TO: THE VICE PRESIDENT AND STAFF
DATE: THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2014 -- 6:15 AM EDT

TODAY'S EDITION

Biden In The News

In Cleveland, Biden Urges Infrastructure Spending (AP)	2
In N.Y., Obama Calls For Spending To Improve Nation's Roads And Rails (WP)	3
Obama To Push Reforms To Infrastructure Permits (HILL)	5
Vice President Biden Follows Cleveland Transit Talk By Following Sweet Tooth (PLAINDLR)	6
VP Biden To Highlight Infrastructure Importance During Cleveland (WOIOTV)	6
Joe Biden Visits Cleveland To Promote Transportation Funding (WKSUFM)	6
Vice President Joe Biden in town (WMMSFM)	7
Landlord Joe Biden: Secret Service Signs New Deal On Rental Property (WT)	8
Operation American Spring To Hit D.C. To Oust Obama, Biden, Boehner, Holder (WT)	8
Hunter Biden's New Job At A Ukrainian Gas Company Is A Problem For U.S. Soft Power (WP)	9
Motorcycle Club Temporarily Leaves Property (AP)	10
Ukraine Gas Producer Appoints R. Hunter Biden To Board (NBCNEWS)	10
Why Did An Energy Firm With Big Assets In Ukraine Hire Joe Biden's Son? (YAHOO)	11
Vice President Joe Biden's Son Joins Ukraine Gas Company (BBC)	12
Hunter Biden Joins Board Of Ukraine Gas Company (UPI)	15
Lashing Out At Injustice In Delaware (LEWES)	15
Dr. Jill Biden To Headline Newsbabes Bash For Breast Cancer (WRCTV)	16
Second Lady Speaks To Graduating Owensboro Students (WAFBTV)	17
Jill Biden Challenges Owensboro College Grads (MADMESS) ..	17
Rahm Emanuel Votes Hillary Clinton Over Joe Biden For 2016 (ABCNEWS)	17

New York Times and Washington Post Op-Eds

Discrimination In The Military (NYT)	19
Keeping The Wireless Business Competitive (NYT)	20
No Slowdown In Unfair Marijuana Arrests (NYT)	21
The Kidnapping Of A Country (NYT)	21
The AIDS-Shaming Of Magic Johnson (NYT)	23
My State's Prettier Than Yours (NYT)	25
It's Now The Canadian Dream (NYT)	26
Still Tinkering (NYT)	28

Don't Force Google To 'Forget' (NYT)	30
New Bad Old Times For Guatemala? (NYT)	31
The Battle Of The Okinawans (NYT)	33
Hong Kong's Rising Cry (NYT)	34
Partisan Sabotage In The Senate Unplugs A Useful Bill (WP) ..	36
Montgomery County's School-funding Gimmickry Buys A Year Of Peace (WP)	37
MERS Is Still A Mystery Virus (WP)	38
America Should Not Soften Its Nuclear Demands Of Iran (WP) ..	39
Is China No. 1? (WP)	40
India Sees Hope In A Divisive Figure (WP)	41
Jill Abramson 'unexpectedly' Out At New York Times (WP)	43
Thomas Piketty Identifies An Important Ill Of Capitalism But Not Its Cure (WP)	46
The Two GOP Establishments (WP)	48
The Effect Of One-party Rule (WP)	49
Chris Christie Plays The Blame Game (WP)	50

Wilmington News Journal Stories

Carey's Police Meddling Will Cost Dover \$300,000 (WILNJ)	52
Bill Would Permit Possession Of Heroin Overdose Drug (WILNJ)	53
Smyrna Receives Sparkling Start (WILNJ)	54
NAACP Remarks 'Not Being Racist,' Wilson Says (WILNJ)	55
Medical Examiner Gallery 'Absent' Much Of Time (WILNJ)	56
Medimmune, Incyte Partner In Drug Trial (WILNJ)	58
Coons: Pfizer-AZ Raises Antitrust Concerns (WILNJ)	59
Broken Parts Extend Salem Nuclear Reactor Shutdown (WILNJ)	60
Newark Co-op Joins National Network (WILNJ)	60
Chobani Incorporates In Delaware, Sparking IPO Talk (WILNJ) ..	61
NAACP Remarks 'Not Being Racist,' Wilson Says (WILNJ)	61

Wilmington News Journal Editorials

Revised Forensic Division Welcome (WILNJ)	63
A Casino Bailout Would Equal A Fisker Bailout Every Year (WILNJ)	64
Sussex County Council Should Not Switch Prayers (WILNJ)	65
China Has 7 Million Graduates And No Jobs Available (WILNJ) ..	65

BIDEN IN THE NEWS

In Cleveland, Biden Urges Infrastructure Spending

[Associated Press](#), May 15, 2014

CLEVELAND (AP) – President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe **Biden** are traveling the country saying the nation needs to invest billions of federal dollars in highways and bridges, but some Ohio city officials are left to wonder: Where's the money to fix our streets?

Making the pitch Wednesday at a rail car repair shop in Cleveland, **Biden** said such investment is necessary for the United States to remain a pre-eminent economic force.

"Those in Congress who lack vision say we can't afford to make these investments," he said. "How can we not afford to make these investments?"

He said one study shows the U.S. needs \$3.6 trillion in infrastructure investment by 2020 but spends only 1 percent of its gross domestic product on infrastructure and ranks 18th in the world for the quality of its roads.

Biden was in Cleveland to highlight federal investment in a \$17.5 million new light rail station that will open in 2015. The president was in New York City, where the federal government has provided a \$1.6 billion loan to rebuild the Tappan Zee Bridge. Their message is that more money needs to be spent on infrastructure.

In response, Republican National Committee spokesman Michael Short issued a statement Wednesday that said the Obama administration should stop what he called its obstruction of the Keystone XL pipeline, "which has bipartisan support and would create good-paying Ohio jobs."

City officials in Ohio wish that a small share of those billions would trickle down to them for maintenance. Some Ohio cities are operating on the thinnest of margins as costs rise, tax receipts fall and state funding is reduced. Federal and state governments pay the lion's share of big road and interstate projects, but routine maintenance of surface streets is typically left to cities to pay.

Police and firefighters must continue to be paid, so budget items like street resurfacing are the first to be trimmed, said Paul Barnett, public works manager for the city of Akron.

Akron will spend about \$2 million on street resurfacing this year but needs to spend at least \$8 million to keep pace, Barnett said. The city will resurface only 11 of its 2,400 lane miles this year.

"It's OK if you plan on resurfacing your streets once every 30 years," he said.

The booming city of Columbus will spend \$33.5 million on street resurfacing this year. Cleveland will spend \$4.4 million. Toledo has upped its resurfacing budget to \$1 million compared with \$600,000 in 2013.

Still, Columbus is far from immune from the scourge of tire-crunching potholes that appeared like dandelions this spring thanks to Ohio's weather extremes, heavy rains and the asphalt-chewing phenomenon of freeze-thaw cycles. Bill Tilton, assistant director of public service for Columbus, said his crews have already repaired 105,000 potholes this year compared with 117,000 for all of 2013.

Toledo bought a machine so workers could replace entire stretches of pothole-pocked roadway, said Dave Welch, Toledo's commissioner of streets, bridges and harbor. "There are roads that are pothole patch after pothole patch," Welch said

The inability to properly maintain streets is a problem in smaller cities as well. In Euclid, a suburb east of Cleveland that stretches along Lake Erie, Mayor Bill Cervenik said the federal government needs to step in.

"I certainly believe the federal government has to take a look at communities like ours and understand the problems we're having and put together policies that help those communities that are built and aging and fix them," Cervenik said.

Copyright 2014 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

In N.Y., Obama Calls For Spending To Improve Nation's Roads And Rails

By Scott Wilson

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

TARRYTOWN, N.Y. — President Obama called on Congress Wednesday to act swiftly to approve billions of dollars in funding for the nation's aging roads, bridges and rail systems, warning that a failure to do so may cost the economy 700,000 jobs.

Speaking on the banks of the Hudson River, Obama said no sector suffered more in the recession than the construction industry, arguing that new public works projects would help put many back to work and attract businesses deciding whether to locate in the United States or overseas.

"Building a world-class transportation system is one of the reasons America became an economic superpower in the first place," Obama said, noting the decline in federal investment in recent years as China and other developing countries increase their spending. "First-class infrastructure attracts first-class jobs."

The event was held at the Washington Irving Boat Club in the shadow of the Tappan Zee Bridge, its trademark traffic crawling across the span over the Hudson north of Manhattan. The venue was chosen to highlight a federal loan program that helps states replace aging roads and bridges, such as the Tappan Zee, now nearly six decades old and carrying far more traffic than originally intended.

Obama's remarks are the most public in a series of appearances that senior administration officials are making this week to highlight the need for new spending on languishing projects for highways, airports and more. Obama again argued that improving transportation services is a key to short-term job growth and long-term economic success. He was joined by New York Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo (D), who thanked the administration for the \$1.6 billion federal loan that is helping to finance the construction of the replacement for the Tappan Zee Bridge.

"This is a bridge from gridlock to bipartisanship; this is a bridge from paralysis to progress; and this is a bridge from yesterday to tomorrow," Cuomo said as cranes being used to raise the new bridge across the Hudson idled behind him on a breezy day.

As the mid-term elections approach, Democrats hope to use the issue of transportation funding to highlight Republican recalcitrance in Congress. In New York, Obama also announced a series of bureaucratic steps to better coordinate the federal permitting process, hoping to speed the time it takes to get transportation projects approved for construction.

Administration officials say Republicans and Democrats have largely agreed about spending on transportation services in the past, given the value such government projects have to the private-sector

economy. But administration officials say that unless Congress approves new spending soon, the federal Highway Trust Fund will run out of money this summer.

"If they don't act by the end of the summer, federal funding for transportation projects will run out," Obama said of Congress, placing the preponderance of blame on Republicans. "Instead of putting more workers back on the job," Obama said, "they are putting those jobs at risk."

The administration says that the fund's bankruptcy would delay more than 100,000 road projects, more than 5,000 transit projects and put at risk 700,000 construction jobs. During his speech, Obama said that number was roughly the population of Tampa.

Michael Steel, a spokesman for House Speaker John A. Boehner (R-Ohio), questioned Obama's commitment to public works spending and job creation and cited the administration's more than five-year deliberation over whether to build an oil pipeline from Canada to Nebraska for eventual delivery to the Gulf Coast. "An infrastructure for the 21st century is going to require energy, and plenty of it," Steel said. "So why is the White House blocking the Keystone pipeline and the tens of thousands of American jobs it would create?"

The White House sent the Grow America Act, a broad transportation measure that includes guidelines for allowing new toll highways, to Congress this spring. A bipartisan group of senators is working on its own long-term transportation plan.

Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, who accompanied Obama to New York, told reporters this week that short-term spending measures — the divided Congress's preferred way to fund the government in recent years — have put off the planning and financing of long-range projects essential to solving, rather than just managing, the nation's growing transportation problems.

Those include bridges coming to the end of their planned use, including the Tappan Zee, and overburdened airports, rail systems and roads.

By 2050, Foxx said, the country's transportation system will need to move 100 million new people and 14 billion additional tons of freight, nearly twice the current level. The administration, drawing on calculations made by the American Society of Civil Engineers, estimates that \$3.6 trillion in spending will be needed to sufficiently address the mounting infrastructure problems by the end of the decade.

Foxx said the Senate, controlled by Democrats, has shown support for the measure. But the Republican-led House poses a larger challenge, and Foxx said the administration has much work to do if the measure is to succeed. "I have spent a lot of time and a lot of shoe leather on both ends of Capitol Hill, and what I can tell you is, is that people on both sides of the aisle want to see something get done," he said. "But we're going to have to work at it, and this is going to be a nine-inning game. It's not going to get solved in the first inning."

As Obama visited the iconic New York bridge, Vice President **Biden** traveled to Cleveland to make a similar push for transportation spending.

While in New York, Obama will do some fundraising for the Democratic Party in Manhattan, and Thursday, he will mark the ceremonial opening of the National Sept. 11 Memorial and Museum in Lower Manhattan.

Obama To Push Reforms To Infrastructure Permits

By Justin Sink

[The Hill](#), May 15, 2014

President Obama will announce a new plan to accelerate and expand federal permitting in a bid to expedite major infrastructure projects during a speech at the Tappan Zee bridge outside New York City on Wednesday.

Under the new permitting guidelines, departments within the administration will be required to improve coordination and reduce the amount of time the government takes to resolve interagency disputes. The new rules will also ask federal agencies to undertake synchronized, simultaneous reviews of projects.

That means one environmental analysis could satisfy requirements for multiple agencies involved in project construction, rather than requiring contractors to redo work.

The administration will also expand the use of an online “dashboard” that serves as a central clearinghouse for the permitting process across the government. And the administration is setting up an “improvement center” dedicated to implementing the reforms within each federal agency.

“The new, government-wide plan will build on efforts the Administration has taken over the past three years to cut through red tape and expedite permitting decisions, while protecting our communities and the environment,” a White House official said.

In total, the White House says, the president will implement 15 specific reforms and nearly 100 near and long-term milestones designed to improve efficiency in the permitting process.

Officials say the Tappan Zee Bridge, which is being replaced in a \$3.9 billion construction project aided by a \$1.9 billion federal loan, is an ideal example of how the streamlined process can save time and money.

“Federal agencies completed the permitting and review in 1.5 years for a process that might otherwise take 3-5 years,” a White House official said.

The president is also expected to push lawmakers to take action to replenish the Highway Trust Fund, which is set to become insolvent by the end of this summer.

Obama’s remarks will “highlight the consequences of inaction,” according to the White House official, with Obama to stress that a failure to replenish the fund would put at risk more than 112,000 ongoing highway and 5,600 transit projects as well as nearly 700,000 jobs.

The president’s proposal would address the shortfall and fund an additional \$87 billion in repairs to bridges and transit systems. But Republicans have questioned how to pay for the president’s proposal.

Still, the White House believes Obama can rally both legislative and political momentum around the issue. In his remarks, Obama is expected to hit House Republicans on budget bills that would cut funding for highway repairs and mass transit expansion.

“A look at the House Republican approach to infrastructure shows the same top down approach to the economy that isn’t good for the middle class or jobs,” the official said.

Obama’s trip is the latest in a series of events this week focusing on infrastructure. On Tuesday, Vice President **Biden** travelled to St. Louis to highlight a \$380 million renovation of the city’s iconic Gateway Arch. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx appeared at the daily White House press briefing on Monday to push for the administration’s transportation bill.

Vice President Biden Follows Cleveland Transit Talk By Following Sweet Tooth

[Cleveland Plain Dealer](#), May 15, 2014

CLEVELAND, Ohio – Vice President Joe **Biden** followed his well-known sweet tooth to Little Italy on Wednesday after speaking at the RTA's rail shop on the need for investment in infrastructure.

He said he planned to talk with business and community leaders about the impact of the renovation of the Cedar-University and Little Italy-University Circle rapid transit stations. But the meeting place, Presti's Bakery on Mayfield Road, iced the cake with an opportunity for some retail politics.

Biden arrived at the cafe around 3:45 p.m., via Coltman Road, in a motorcycle-escorted motorcade of about a dozen vehicles.

He greeted the afternoon crowd that was swelled by neighborhood residents who pursued the caravan, and worked his way around the room past the counter to a corner table to meet with business and community leaders.

He kissed Millie Morgan, who grew up in the neighborhood, and told her niece, Carmeline Mangano Worley, that her smile would light up the room. He posed for pictures, patted backs and shook hands.

"If you're not supposed to be here, you're in trouble now," he told Dan Brennan, president of the Little Italy Redevelopment Corporation, as cameras clicked around them.

Biden ordered tiramisu, cannoli and coffee before getting to business with Brennan; Steve Standley, chief administrative officer of University Hospitals; Jill Snyder, executive director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, and architect and local resident Steve Bucchieri.

"Tell me about what's going on," he said. "Economic growth – is this new rail station having an impact on it?"

"This is huge," Standley said.

He said initiatives that started with the Euclid Corridor project, spearheaded by UH, the Cleveland Clinic and Case Western Reserve University, had led to new housing, retail and commercial development in the area.

In his visits to other parts of the country, he said, "They're talking about the Cleveland model now."

VP Biden To Highlight Infrastructure Importance During Cleveland

[WOIO-TV Cleveland](#), May 15, 2014

CLEVELAND, OH (WOIO) –

Vice President Joe **Biden** is coming to Cleveland to meet with city leaders this afternoon.

VP **Biden** is expected to highlight the federal funds used to rebuild the RTA rapid station in the Little Italy neighborhood.

His remarks are slated to start at 1:30 p.m. at the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority Rail Complex at the corner of East 73rd Street and Grand Avenue.

Joe Biden Visits Cleveland To Promote Transportation Funding

[WKSU-FM Kent \(OH\)](#), May 15, 2014

Joe **Biden** visits Cleveland to promote transportation funding

Vice President Joe **Biden** is in Cleveland today drawing attention to the White House's plans for transportation funding.

The administration says two-thirds of the nation's roadways are in "less than good" condition, and one in four bridges require significant repairs.

Biden will be speaking at the site of a new rapids station scheduled to open next year in Cleveland's Little Italy neighborhood.

Biden and President Obama are pushing for passage of a new transportation bill, and extension of stimulus funds for transportation projects in place since 2009.

The current highway bill expires Sept. 30. The Highway Trust Fund, which provides funding, could run short in August.

Storm damage closes roads, schools

Seven roads will remain closed indefinitely in Medina County following Monday's storms. Two roads in Akron remain closed, including a section of Bath Road that was washed out by the heavy rains.

Storm damage closed schools across the region yesterday. Most have reopened. Holy Family school in Stow will remain closed through Monday, suffering an estimated \$3 million in water damage.

The National Weather Service has confirmed that a tornado did touch down Monday night in Lorain County.

The twister spun through a field in Eaton Township and caused partial damage to one home.

Dick Goddard rescued from flooded car

Longtime Cleveland TV meteorologist Dick Goddard had to be rescued after rising water swamped his car on a highway exit ramp this week.

The eighty-three-year-old Goddard says he thought he was going to "buy the farm" when water flooded his car on an I-71 exit south of Cleveland during heavy rain Monday night.

Goddard was trapped for about 45 minutes before firefighters in a rubber boat reached his car, broke the window and pulled him out. He was treated for hypothermia.

Ohio Senate ponders changes to social services relief

The director of a county Jobs and Family Services office in southeast Ohio says a proposal before the Legislature should be more focused on addressing the basic needs of the state's residents.

Jack Frech of Athens County says funding for public programs that provide food and cash assistance to Ohioans in need have been reduced by millions. He made the comments in testimony to a Senate committee Wednesday.

The panel is examining a bill that would create an office within the state's social services agency to revise incentives for public assistance programs and coordinate employment services among the programs.

A spokesman for the state's Department of Jobs and Family Services said the programs help with residents' immediate needs and put them on a path out of poverty.

Ohio's high court upholds death penalty for Canton killer

The Ohio Supreme Court has upheld the death sentence of a man who stabbed his young children to death and fatally shot his former mother-in-law in 2009.

In a 6-1 decision Wednesday, the court rejected arguments from James Mammone's attorneys that graphic crime-scene photos were inflammatory and should never been shown to jurors.

Mammone also argued that publicity ruined his chances for a fair trial in Canton and that two jurors who said they supported the death penalty should have been removed.

Two months after his wife divorced him, Mammone stabbed his 5-year-old daughter and 3-year-old son to death as they were strapped in their car seats in Canton in northeastern Ohio. He then went to the home of his ex-wife's mother, whom he severely beat and shot twice.

Vice President Joe Biden in town

[WMMS-FM Cleveland](#), May 15, 2014

(Cleveland)- Cleveland is playing host to Vice President Joe **Biden**.

The Vice President will visit the under-construction RTA station at East 120th Street and Mayfield Road this afternoon to press Congress for more federal infrastructure funding.

The White House wants a measure that would meet the nation's road, rail and bridge repair plans for the next decade.

Get breaking news sent to your mobile phone. Text "news" to 21095.

(Copyright 2014 Clear Channel, all rights reserved.)

Landlord Joe Biden: Secret Service Signs New Deal On Rental Property

By Jim McElhatton

[Washington Times](#), May 15, 2014

Landlord Joe **Biden** will keep collecting rent checks from the agency that protects his life thanks to another contract extension that allows Secret Service agents to continue staying in a cottage on his Delaware property.

The latest extension, signed on May 6, boosts the overall value of the contract to more than \$100,000 since the agency first started paying Mr. **Biden** a few years ago.

The arrangement, first reported by The Washington Times, puts Mr. **Biden** in the unusual position of being both a sitting vice president and a vendor for the federal government at the same time.

The deal has come under scrutiny from taxpayer watchdogs who question why Mr. **Biden** couldn't let the Secret Service stay on his property without paying.

But the Secret Service has said the cottage is a rental property so the agency pays rent. And Mr. **Biden**'s office has said the cottage was existing rental property at the time the Secret Service signed its lease.

Mr. **Biden** and his wife reported \$19,022 in rental income on their cottage property in their joint tax return for 2013.

Operation American Spring To Hit D.C. To Oust Obama, Biden, Boehner, Holder

By Cheryl K. Chumley

[Washington Times](#), May 15, 2014

A group of self-described revolutionary-style patriots with a million mobilized militia members are heading to downtown Washington, D.C., this week to bring a simple message to political leadership, from President Obama to House Speaker John Boehner: Get out.

They're called the Operation American Spring — and they're vowing to oust the likes of Mr. Obama, Mr. Boehner, Attorney General Eric Holder, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, Sen. Mitch McConnell, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and Vice President Joseph R. **Biden**, Raw Story reported.

"We are calling for [their] removal ... as a start toward constitutional restoration," said retired Army Col. Harry Riley, the leader of the group, Raw Story reported. "They have all abandoned the U.S. Constitution, are unworthy to be retained in a position that calls for servant status."

The aim of the group, too, is to influence those politicians who aren't targeted for ouster to "sponsor and pass very constitutionally crafted state legislation to dissolve the size, powers, scope and spending of the U.S. government by two-thirds," the media outlet reported.

The group expects between 10 million and 30 million similarly thinking Americans to meet them in the capital on Friday for a rally that's being billed as a sort of "Arab Spring" for Americans.

Meanwhile, the group is holding another event on the same day in Bunkerville, Nev., near cattle rancher Cliven Bundy's property and in support of his stand-off with the Bureau of Land Management over grazing fees.

The Friday event was promoted by Tea Party Nation.

Mr. Riley said he hopes the event will go forward peaceably, but that so far, peaceful protests haven't brought citizens much luck. He also said that more than 1 million militia members have already mobilized for the event — and that projections of 10 million to attend aren't pie in the sky.

"For more than five years, 'we the people' have been writing, calling, faxing Congress, the media, screaming in town halls, marching, rallying, demonstrating, petitioning, all to no avail," he said, Raw Story reported. "Every branch of government looks at 'we the people' whom they have taken an oath to serve, as 'pests,' interfering with their political agenda, cramping their self-serving, greedy agendas. We have no faith in the ballot box any longer, as many believe this sacred secret box has been compromised.

Hunter Biden's New Job At A Ukrainian Gas Company Is A Problem For U.S. Soft Power

[Washington Post](#), May 14, 2014

Vice President-elect, Sen. Joe **Biden**, D-Del., left, stands with his son Hunter during a re-enactment of the Senate oath ceremony, Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2009, in the Old Senate Chamber on Capitol Hill in Washington. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

Around the world, there is a major perception that U.S. foreign policy is dictated by a thirst for oil and gas. For example, a 2002 Pew Research poll found that 75 percent of French respondents felt that the United States-led invasion of Iraq was a simple ruse to gain control of Iraqi oil. And that isn't just what the "cheese-eating surrender monkeys" think either: Establishment figures in the United States such as Sen. John McCain and former Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan have both made statements that suggest they buy into it, too.

Such a perception is probably an oversimplification, but there is clearly some truth to the idea. And whether it is true or not, perceptions clearly matter when it comes to international relations.

Think about that when you read the announcement that Vice President **Biden's** son, Hunter **Biden**, has accepted a position on the board at Ukraine's largest private gas firm. According to a news release posted Tuesday, the vice president's son would join the board of Burisma Holdings. The Yale-educated lawyer would be in charge of the company's legal unit, the release said.

Here's a small selection of the responses to the news, which ranged from the incredulous to the resigned:

While the general public appeared nonplussed, the official response has been muted. "Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer," White House spokesperson Kendra Barkoff told The Post. "The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

Meanwhile, an ethics watchdog argued that it probably wasn't that big of a deal. "It can't be that because your dad is the vice president, you can't do anything," Melanie Sloan, executive director of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, told Reuters.

It's true that there are no rules against Hunter **Biden** taking this position. And it's (fairly) safe to assume that his appointment was not part of a broader, U.S.-led plot to oust Moscow-backed Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich and steal all of Ukraine's gas. However, whatever the practical reality of this posting, its symbolic nature makes it look very bad.

For one thing, while Burisma is clearly trying to portray itself (perhaps genuinely) as an open, Western company, its ownership is more than a little murky. A 2012 investigation from Forbes Ukraine noted that registration documents from Ukraine and Cyprus indicated that Nikolay Zlochevsky, a former government minister and representative of Yanukovich's Party of Regions, was in control of the

company. There was speculation from Ukrainian energy analysts that **Biden's** appointment may have been an attempt to avoid sanctions by other, bigger Yanukovych allies.

It's also unclear why, exactly, **Biden** was hired: At Yahoo News, Olivier Knox and Meredith Shiner have speculated that the fact that so much of Burisma's permits are in Ukraine's troubled Dnieper-Donets Basin may play a role.

Then there's the broader problem: The appointment of the vice president's son to a Ukrainian oil board looks nepotistic at best, nefarious at worst. No matter how qualified **Biden** is, it ties into the idea that U.S. foreign policy is self-interested, and that's a narrative Vladimir Putin has pushed during Ukraine's crisis with references to Iraq and Libya. It clashes with the U.S. narrative that this is all about international law and human rights.

To be fair, Hunter **Biden** isn't the only person linked to politics on the board of Burisma: The Wall Street Journal reports that Devon Archer, the college roommate of John Kerry's stepson, has also joined, and on Wednesday, Ukrainian media reported that former Polish president Aleksander Kwasniewski would also join the board. It's an impressive crowd.

And **Biden** is certainly not the first politically-linked person to get a dubiously high-paying job on a board. As Mikhail Korchemkin of East European Gas Analysis pointed out to me, more than a few children of Russian politicians have ended up in executive positions in companies at the top of the Forbes 500 list, and China's "princelings" have a similar habit. Bringing big names in has obvious political advantages for companies and other rewards for the names – just ask Gerhard Schröder, the former chancellor of Germany, who sits on the board of the Nord Stream and catches flack for hugging Vladimir Putin, or Dominique Strauss Kahn, now on the board at a subsidiary of Rosneft, the Russian state oil giant where former secretary of state Donald L. Evans once turned down a role.

Still, you have to wonder how big the salary has to be to put U.S. soft power at risk like this. Pretty big, we'd imagine.

Motorcycle Club Temporarily Leaves Property

[Associated Press](#), May 15, 2014

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) – Officials say a motorcycle club has temporarily vacated a property in Wilmington that the Attorney General's office says is a criminal nuisance.

Attorney General Beau **Biden** and Wilmington Mayor Dennis Williams said in a press release that the Thunderguards Motorcycle Club agreed to leave property on Northeast Boulevard.

Biden says the property was closed on Wednesday. He says it will remain closed until a hearing to determine its permanent status is held.

Biden had claimed in a lawsuit last month that the site is the national clubhouse for the Thunderguards. The suit alleges that an adjacent parking lot and nearby storage units are used for criminal activity.

Wilmington officials say five homicides and several shootings have occurred on the property since 2006.

Copyright 2014 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Ukraine Gas Producer Appoints R. Hunter Biden To Board

[NBC News](#), May 15, 2014

Ukraine's largest private gas producer announced on Tuesday that it added R. Hunter **Biden** — the son of U.S. Vice President Joseph **Biden** — to its board of directors.

In a statement on its website, Burisma Holdings said the younger **Biden** will be in charge of the company's legal unit, while providing support "among international organizations."

The release quoted Hunter **Biden** as saying 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."

David McNew / Getty Images, file

Vice-President Joe **Biden** and his son Hunter **Biden** walk in the Inaugural Parade January 20, 2009 in Washington, DC as Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th President of the United States.

Large corporations frequently appoint well-connected marquee names of both major U.S. political parties as directors. Yet corporate governance experts are critical of the process, which can be fraught with conflicts of interests and the appearance of favoritism.

The arrangement raised questions about the propriety of his appointment, given the tense political standoff between Russia and the West over the future status of Ukraine, where fighting has resulted in the deaths of dozens of soldiers and civilians. Natural gas has factored heavily in tensions between Russia and Ukraine, both of which have political leadership that's intertwined with their respective energy industries.

Until a few years ago, the younger **Biden** was a senior vice president for financial services giant MBNA—an arrangement that drew criticism during the 2008 elections for potential conflict of interests. As a senator, the elder **Biden** spearheaded legislation that would have affected MBNA's business. Meanwhile, Vice President **Biden** has been a vocal supporter of a cross-border European natural gas pipeline.

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.

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 Rosemont 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.

Why Did An Energy Firm With Big Assets In Ukraine Hire Joe Biden's Son?

By Olivier Knox And Meredith Shiner

[Yahoo!](#), May 15, 2014

In the span of a few weeks, an energy firm little-known inside the United States added two members to its board of directors — scoring connections to Secretary of State John Kerry and Vice President Joe **Biden** in the bargain.

On April 22, Cyprus-based Burisma announced that financier Devon Archer had joined its board. Archer, who shared a room in college with Kerry's stepson, Christopher Heinz, served as national finance co-chair for the former senator's 2004 presidential campaign.

Then, on Monday, the firm announced that **Biden's** younger son, R. Hunter **Biden**, would join the board of directors.

Why would the company, which bills itself as Ukraine's largest private gas producer, need such powerful friends in Washington?

The answer might be the company's holdings in Ukraine. They include, according to the firm's website, permits to explore in the Dnieper-Donets Basin in the country's eastern regions, home to an armed pro-Russian separatist movement. They also include permits to explore in the Azov-Kuban Basin of the strategic Crimean peninsula, annexed earlier this year by Moscow.

It's not clear what will happen to energy firms, like Burisma, that aim to explore and exploit potential deposits in those areas. Neither the Archer nor the **Biden** announcement explicitly mentions the unrest, and it's not clear exactly when their discussions to join the board began. In an April 23 Q&A, the transcript of which appears on Burisma's website, Archer said he had been approached "a few months ago" about the opportunity to consult for the oil company. The announcement of his directorship came less than a month after the disputed vote in Crimea to rejoin Russia.

The White House and the vice president's office denied there was anything untoward about **Biden's** appointment.

"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," said President Barack Obama's press secretary, Jay Carney. "But I would refer you to the Vice President's office."

"Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer," the vice president's press secretary, Kendra Barkoff, said in a statement. "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."

The person who answered the telephone at **Biden's** office in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday cheerfully declared that **Biden** was traveling, that his return date was unknown, and that his assistant was also out of pocket.

An email to Burisma's public relations department did not elicit a reply.

But Archer coyly acknowledged the potential benefits of having him on the board in the April 23 Q&A.

Question: "In the American media you are often linked to the immediate circle of the U.S. Secretary of State Mr. John Kerry and the Vice-president of the United States Mr. Joe **Biden**."

Archer: "American journalists really think so (smiles). I do know them."

Vice President Joe Biden's Son Joins Ukraine Gas Company

A review of the best commentary on and around the world...

By What In The World?, Pieces Of Global Opinion

[BBC News](#), May 15, 2014

Burisma, a private oil and gas company in Ukraine, announced this week that it has appointed Hunter **Biden**, the youngest son of US Vice President Joe **Biden**, to its board of directors.

The company, founded in 2002, is controlled by a former energy official in the government of deposed Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych.

The move has raised some eyebrows in the US, given the Obama administration's attempts to manage the ongoing crisis in Ukraine.

“Joe **Biden** has been the White House’s go-to guy during the Ukraine crisis, touring former Soviet republics and reassuring their concerned leaders,” writes the National Journal’s Marina Koren. “And now, he’s not the only **Biden** involved in the region.”

She says that by appointing Hunter **Biden** head of its legal affairs unit, “Burisma is turning to US talent – and money and name recognition – for protection against Russia”.

The younger Mr **Biden** isn’t the only American with political ties to have recently joined Burisma’s board. Devon Archer, a former senior advisor to current Secretary of State John Kerry’s 2004 presidential campaign and a college roommate of Mr Kerry’s stepson HJ Heinz, signed on in April.

Mr **Biden** and Mr Archer are also managing partners at Rosemont Seneca Partners, a Washington, DC-based investment company.

Both Mr **Biden** and Mr Archer have not responded to requests from reporters for comment. In Burisma’s press release announcing his hiring, Mr **Biden** says:

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.

All this could be explained simply as a foreign energy company looking to increase its visibility in the US and spur investment, writes the Federalist’s Mollie Hemingway. State-controlled companies currently account for 90% of Ukraine’s gas production, but this year Burisma became the nation’s largest private producer.

Hemingway adds, however, that there may be another, less savoury possibility:

The most disturbing explanation is that the company is attempting to curry favour with the US government by enlisting the services of the close family friend and campaign bundler of the secretary of state and the son of the vice president. After all, Archer notes on one of his company’s web pages that his firm’s “relationship network creates opportunities for our portfolio companies which then compound to greater outcomes for all parties”.

She concludes that this seems like a “cliched movie plot”: “a shady foreign oil company co-opts the vice president’s son in order to capture lucrative foreign investment contracts”.

The White House has emphasised that the vice president’s son’s new job will have no influence on US foreign policy.

“Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer,” Kendra Barkoff, a spokeswoman for the vice president, told the Wall Street Journal. “The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company.” Vietnam

China’s “brazen aggression” – By towing an oil rig into Vietnam’s territorial waters in the East Sea, using water cannons and ramming Vietnamese Coast Guard vessels, writes Nam Thang in the Vietnam News, China has “seriously infringed on Vietnam’s sovereignty, running counter to international law and practices and damaging the trust held by the world community”.

“Why does China keep taking action detrimental to peace and stability in the East Sea?” he asks. “The question needs to be answered because this is not the first time that China has committed acts that further complicate disputes in the area.”

He calls China’s territorial claims on the waters “groundless”, and says that Vietnam is a “peace-loving nation”, but it “will take all necessary and proper measures to defend its legitimate rights and benefits and safeguard its sovereignty”. Guatemala

A faltering democracy – When Guatemala imprisoned former President Efraín Ríos Montt for genocide last year, says Haverford College Prof Anita Isaacs, it represented a sign that the country's fragile democracy could be taking hold.

Within two weeks, however, Mr Montt's verdict was annulled, she writes in the New York Times, casting doubt in the independence of the country's judicial system.

Although the country's indigenous majority tried to push for greater rights and judicial independence, she says, the country's elite turned to blackmail, bribery and human rights violations to reassert their control. "Without a watchful eye from abroad," she says, the elites have ensured that "the unjust structures that serve their needs stay in place, even at the expense of rising unrest, polarization and violence". Israel

A just sentence for Ehud Olmert – On Tuesday Judge David Rozen sentenced former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to six years in prison for corruption. The Jerusalem Post's editors write that this "sent a message to all public officials that they should strive to be ethically irreproachable".

Although it's a "sad day" for the nation, they write, the sentence is "reassuring", as it shows no one is "above the law".

They conclude:

This should cause us both shame and pride – shame that such a senior, respected and popular politician could be corrupt; and pride because our law enforcement system did not balk at meting out the appropriate punishment. United Kingdom

Accentuate the positive for Scotland – UK Prime Minister David Cameron's strategy of granting more autonomy to Scotland in the hopes that it does not opt for full independence "has proven demonstrably unsuccessful", writes Bloomberg View's Mark Gilbert.

Although the pro-union side continues to lead in polls, he says, the gap is shrinking.

In order to keep Scotland in the fold, he writes, Mr Cameron "needs to stress what Scotland will gain from remaining in the UK rather than attempting to scare voters by banging on about the alleged downsides of flying solo".

Otherwise, he concludes, Mr Cameron could go down in history as the man who lost Scotland. BBC Monitoring's quotes of the week

Iran and six world powers start three days of nuclear talks in Vienna on Tuesday. Iranian commentators share their expectations for the latest round of negotiations.

"At this juncture, negotiators need strong support from the government and the people in order to calmly conduct the talks... Some comprehend the importance of this new period of modern Iranian history and are seeking to support the negotiating team... But there is a minority in Iran who seeks to realise their personal interests or the interests of their political party, rather than protecting national interests and security." – Seyyed Ali Khorram in E'temad.

"Today, the Islamic Republic's nuclear industry is an established industry which is the product of Iranian young scientists' courage, knowledge and experience. In fact, the continuation of this industry is safeguarding the independence and dignity of the Iranian nation. The nuclear negotiating team should be at the frontline of defence for the independence and dignity of the Iranian nation and should never accept Western bullying." – Mohammad Kazem Anbarlu'i in Resalat.

"Despite my pessimism about the final outcome, I defend the overall performance of the nuclear negotiating team and believe it is working to defend the rights of Iranian citizens... Merely the notion that members of the negotiating team are revolutionary and committed cannot be a guarantee that they will perform correctly. However, questioning the past and destroying their reputation does not match the idea

of duty to the Supreme Leader, and it deserves a divine punishment” – Mohammad Said Ahadian in Khorasan.

Have you found an interesting opinion piece about global issues that we missed? Share it with us via email at [echochambers \(at\) bbc.co.uk](mailto:echochambers@bbc.co.uk).

Hunter Biden Joins Board Of Ukraine Gas Company

[UPI](#), May 15, 2014

WASHINGTON, May 14 (UPI) --WASHINGTON, May 14 (UPI) --Bursima Holdings, Ukraine's largest private oil and gas producer, has appointed Hunter **Biden**, Vice President Joe **Biden**'s youngest son, to its board of directors.

Critics have raised questions about the ethical and political implications of such a connection in the midst of a political standoff with Russia over the Ukraine crisis. The vice president has emphasized the importance of decreasing Ukraine's dependency on Russian gas.

Bursima is run by a former government official with ties to ousted Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich.

The company noted in a press release that **Biden** would join "Holdings' legal unit and will provide support for the company among international organizations."

"Bursima'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."

Joe **Biden**'s office has said that Hunter **Biden**'s employment has no bearing on administration policy.

"Hunter **Biden** is a private citizen and a lawyer," Kendra Barkoff, a representative for the vice president's office, told the Wall Street Journal. "The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

© 2014 United Press International, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Lashing Out At Injustice In Delaware

[Lewes \(DE\) Cape Gazette](#), May 15, 2014

Beau **Biden** does not deserve to be the Attorney General of Delaware. Nor does he have the integrity to hold the highest office within the state – governor of Delaware.

Unless Kathy Jennings comes forward with any positive affirmation in regards to the injustice being done in Delaware's Department of Correction, she also will not be privy to my support.

I bring forth solid evidence why the State of Delaware needs a state office of Inspector General, with power to detain and arrest anyone within the state for any criminal activities that are discovered the person has committed. This has been one of the Independent Party of Delaware platforms for many many years. We presented a bill to this effect to the General Assembly members several times. However, just as what I am about to discuss, this too was tucked away in the cobweb infested desks, particularly the concept of IG of our elected officials in Dover.

Chair of the Criminal Justice Council, Matt Denn also does not deserve to be attorney general, because he recently refused to permit any public comments regarding the homicide by blunt trauma force of inmate Ronald Shoup that occurred inside Sussex County Correctional Institution, Georgetown.

Let us pray that whoever murdered Ronald W. Shoup, age 48, who was in prison for a DUI, is not only fired, but prosecuted! There is compensation for the burial and hardship this travesty has caused to the family. No amount of money will ever bring Mr. Shoup back. But the state of Delaware and those who are responsible for this negligence should not be immune to being found guilty on criminal and civil matters surrounding the untimely death of Mr. Shoup

Here is a lengthy list of litigation filed against the State of Delaware, including the many, many lawsuits and pleadings filed by inmates concerning prison abuse. : <http://www.plainsite.org/flashlight/state-of-delaware/page-1/table-firmdockets>

There are many more similar cases that have been swept under the rug and disregarded by the former state police commissioners, who are under the authority of the Attorney General's Office. Specifically naming Beau **Biden**. Commissioners appointed by the governor of Delaware, and confirmed by our General Assembly, where current Lt. Gov. Matt Denn has a powerful voice as the tie breaking vote.

Because there is no other recourse other than filing legal claims in a court of law, it clearly shows the grievance process has severe corruption. It also shows there is severe negligence within a process that is intended to save the taxpayer the expenses of legal fees related to inmates having to have their grievances heard outside the walls of the DOC – denied proper due process of law and causing undue harm to the inmates, caused by those running the system. Sad to say, when prisoners do file these claims, they are greatly outmatched by the state (The AG's office has at least four or five full-time lawyers working to make these cases go away).

This is your tax dollars that are being wasted, not on frivolous claims but being frivolously wasted through a process that can be blamed on the state itself, if the complaints were actually processed and investigated properly; The costs incurred by the state would not be as high; and judges ignore them. Judges will misstate the facts, ignore the facts and the law, in dismissing these cases.

This is a very pathetic and a huge mistake that is not being acknowledged. I will even go as far as say they are being covered up, and the voters even being unable to inquire about these errors to the lawmakers. These are very serious accusations I make regarding the problems within the prison system. How am I aware of this ? A long time friend of mine, not only saw it, he experienced it as well a thousand times and two of his own cases were clearly wrongly dismissed.

His lone surviving case is set for trial in U.S. District Court in Wilmington May 27.

The cost of all this litigation, unnecessary if the prisons were run properly, and professionally, is in the tens of millions of taxpayers dollars.

Earl Lofland Kent County chairman Independent Party of Delaware reformer candidate U.S. House of Representatives Clayton

Dr. Jill Biden To Headline Newsbabes Bash For Breast Cancer

[WRC-TV Washington](#), May 15, 2014

Dozens of news anchors from the D.C. area are teaming up once again in the fight against breast cancer.

The sixth annual Newsbabes Bash for Breast Cancer is set for Wednesday, June 11 to raise money for Survivors Offering Support (SOS), a program at Georgetown and other hospitals.

SOS pairs women who have been recently diagnosed with trained volunteers who have survived the battle.

News4's own Eun Yang, Angie Goff and Dianna Russini are among the hosts, as are anchors from Bloomberg, CNN, WUSA9, Fox5 and WJLA.

Dr. Jill **Biden**, a breast cancer survivor herself, will headline the event.

In addition, the Newsmen in Pink, a collective of male anchors from each station, will also be attending. Jim Vance, Doug Kammerer, Jim Handly, Aaron Gilchrist, Shomari Stone and Adam Tuss all plan to show up in pink.

Guests will enjoy specialty cocktails and heavy hors d'oeuvres.

It's all happening at the Powerhouse (3255 Grace St. NW) from 7 to 9 p.m. Attire for men and women: anything pink!

Find more information here, and follow @dcnewsbabes for updates about the event on Twitter.

Second Lady Speaks To Graduating Owensboro Students

[WAFB-TV Baton Rouge \(LA\)](#), May 15, 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.

Copyright 2014 WFIE. All rights reserved.

Jill Biden Challenges Owensboro College Grads

[Madisonville \(KY\) Messenger](#), May 15, 2014

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.

Rahm Emanuel Votes Hillary Clinton Over Joe Biden For 2016

[ABC News Radio](#), May 15, 2014

(WASHINGTON) – As a former White House insider in both the Clinton and Obama administrations, Rahm Emanuel has worked closely with Hillary Clinton and Vice President Joe **Biden**. But when it comes to who would be the better Democratic presidential candidate come 2016, his mind is made up.

Emanuel votes Hillary Clinton.

"If she chooses to run, I've already said I'm going to support her," the mayor of Chicago told ABC News.

"Joe's a good friend, personally," said Emanuel. "He's obviously worthy of being considered because he's a great vice president, a great senator, has something to offer...In this case, so does the former secretary of state, senator, and first lady."

Though Emanuel said he is confident that Clinton would win a hypothetical presidential matchup if she chooses to run, he added that Clinton is weighing the prospects of a presidential bid against other personal life factors.

"She's about to be a grandmother," he said. "And she cares about that, and making sure she has the time. Being a congressman, being a mayor, being a president, being a candidate for president, time is not one of the commodities you have a lot of."

Emanuel sat down with ABC News along with fellow Illinois Democrat Rep. Luis Gutierrez before a panel discussion on immigration reform at the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C. He said that the Republican Party cannot survive on the national stage without changing course on immigration reform.

"I think the 'leaders of the Republican Party' know where the future is heading, the current of history is heading," Emanuel said. "The problem is to get there, the boat breaks that they're on. In national elections you cannot be a majority party and be hostile to immigrants."

For the GOP, Emanuel said, it's no longer a question of "will" the party change course, but "when."

Gutierrez described what he sees as a "fight within the Republican Party" between those who stand starkly in opposition to reform as a matter of principle and those who want reform for the sake of the party's national standing. He pointed to former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush as an example of a pro-reform voice within the GOP.

"I think when you hear Jeb Bush and other Republican leaders speak about immigration...I don't want to question their motives of where their heart is at, many of them have their heart exactly where Rahm Emanuel and I have our heart," he said. "And that is to do well and to make sure people have a system that is fair."

Gutierrez also acknowledged that the slow pace of change on the issue and the record number of deportations under President Obama have not been helpful to Democrats. But, he said, Obama is preparing to take executive action to reform the country's immigration system if Congress does not put forth legislation by the summer's end.

"If Republicans do not act, I assure them that this president will act, in a huge, very broad manner," Gutierrez said.

Emanuel also believes that Obama will "absolutely" act if Congress does not, "because certain issues are so urgent to the nation's future that a president must act."

"He can't legalize them, but he can stop their deportation, and put them in a safe place," Gutierrez added. "If they want to simply be a regional party, a party of little cities, and regions in a few states, okay, because that is your future. Abraham Lincoln...first Republican president, George Bush, 2004, you watch, he's going to be the last Republican president for a long time."

NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS

Discrimination In The Military

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

Three years after the demise of “don’t ask, don’t tell,” an estimated 15,000 members of the military still must lie about themselves in order to go on risking their lives for their country. When Congress eliminated the law against gay men and lesbians serving openly in the military, the Pentagon left in place an equally unfounded prohibition on transgender people.

It was gratifying, then, to hear Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel say in an interview on ABC’s “This Week” on Sunday, “Every qualified American who wants to serve our country should have an opportunity if they fit the qualifications and can do it.” After all, unlike the ban on openly gay soldiers, the rule on transgender people is just a rule. There is no law prohibiting them from serving openly.

But, inexplicably, Mr. Hagel said only that he was “open” to reviewing the policy. He did not say whether he favored lifting the ban and when — or even whether — such a review might take place. There is none underway, and Mr. Hagel currently has no plan to start one. On Monday he told reporters he would prefer to learn more about the issue rather than begin a formal review.

In the ABC interview, Mr. Hagel repeated the standard excuse for this discrimination — that complex medical and logistical issues could preclude transgender people from serving in “austere” combat conditions. That excuse does not hold up, as a panel of former military officers and experts on gender and health led in part by former Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders concluded in March.

“There is no compelling medical rationale for banning transgender military service,” and “eliminating the ban would advance numerous military interests, including enabling commanders to better care for their service members,” the panel said. Its report belongs at the top of Mr. Hagel’s reading list, along with the psychiatric community’s decision a year ago to finally stop mislabeling transgender identity as a mental disorder.

As with gay and lesbian soldiers, the issue is not whether transgender people can serve in the armed forces. The point is that they — including the estimated 15,000 of them now serving — have to cover up their identities. Some refrain from seeking necessary hormone treatment or other medical care, suffering anguish and risking their physical and emotional health.

And for what? There is “no medical reason to presume transgender individuals are unfit for duty,” the panel wrote. Transgender medical care “is no more specialized or difficult than other sophisticated medical care the military system routinely provides,” even in combat zones. As for gender-changing surgery, the panel noted that some elective cosmetic surgeries allowed at military medical facilities require similar leave time and risk more serious postoperative complications.

At least 12 countries, including Britain, Australia and Israel, allow transgender military service, with no apparent decline in readiness. Lt. Col. Cate McGregor of the Australian Defense Forces, former director of the Land Warfare Studies Center, is now speechwriter for the army chief of staff, who would not accept her offer to resign when she decided to undergo surgery in 2012.

Addressing issues like privacy and housing is not rocket science. It happens in civilian workplaces all the time. With the right leadership, outbreaks of intolerance can be minimized. If Mr. Hagel is still trying to make up his mind, his boss, President Obama, can make it up for him. The question is how fast can the armed forces join the modern world on this issue, not whether they should. The time for lame excuses is long past.

Keeping The Wireless Business Competitive

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

For most of its history, the telecommunications industry has been dominated by a handful of large companies. The cost of laying wires, setting up antennas, signing up customers and getting government licenses makes it hard for new players to get into a business dominated by former monopolies with deep pockets.

The wireless business is one of the few parts of the industry that has experienced sustained competition in the last two decades. But it is not as competitive as it once was. Thanks to a series of mergers, the number of national cellphone companies has fallen to four, from six as recently as 2003. Of those businesses, the two largest — AT&T and Verizon — are descendants of the former Ma Bell monopoly. Those companies together had 220 million subscribers at the end of March, compared with 103 million for their smaller competitors, Sprint and T-Mobile.

In recent years regulators have tried to keep the industry from becoming even less competitive. In 2011, they successfully blocked AT&T's proposed acquisition of T-Mobile. Now, as the Federal Communications Commission prepares to auction more wireless frequencies to cellphone companies, Tom Wheeler, the chairman, has made a smart proposal that would make sure AT&T and Verizon do not walk away with all of the licenses available.

The government licenses the use of certain wireless frequencies, also known as spectrum, to radio and TV stations and cellphone companies. Next year, the F.C.C. will make more spectrum available to cellphone companies after broadcasters relinquish some of the frequencies they no longer want. (How much spectrum is auctioned will depend on how many broadcasters return their licenses.)

On Thursday, the F.C.C. will vote on a modest provision that would reserve some of the spectrum for cellphone companies that do not control a significant number of similar frequencies. Spectrum would be reserved only if the bidding reached a certain price threshold, which would be determined at a later date. The policy would most directly benefit Sprint, T-Mobile and rural carriers. But AT&T and Verizon, which control the best wireless frequencies in the country, would be able to bid on reserved spectrum in places where they did not control more than one-third of similar frequencies.

AT&T and Verizon argue that the F.C.C. will be overstepping its authority and will be picking winners and losers if it goes forward with this plan. But in fact no more than 30 megahertz of spectrum, a relatively small amount, will be reserved in any geographic area. Congress gave the commission the power to create rules to promote competition in the wireless business. A 2012 law that deals with auctions conducted by the agency authorizes the F.C.C. to carry out rules "concerning spectrum aggregation that promote competition."

Still, it would be foolish to think that reserving a small amount of spectrum would be sufficient to ensure that the wireless business remains competitive. As in other network-based industries with high barriers to entry, big cellphone companies have inherent advantages over smaller ones. For example, they can demand better prices from technology suppliers and can afford to spend more money on their networks, all of which allows them to attract more customers and become even more profitable.

Having allowed the industry to consolidate so much already, regulators must treat future corporate deals with great skepticism. Consumers need more choices; at the very least, the F.C.C. should be working to preserve the choices they still have.

No Slowdown In Unfair Marijuana Arrests

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

When Mayor Bill de Blasio took office in January, community groups and juvenile justice advocates hoped that his administration would significantly decrease the numbers of black and Latino young people who are unfairly — and in some cases, illegally — arrested and dragged through the court system for possession of tiny amounts of marijuana. But a new analysis of state arrest data by a nonprofit called the Marijuana Arrest Research Project, which studies police policy, suggests that the de Blasio administration is on track to equal the more than 28,600 low-level marijuana arrests that were made under Michael Bloomberg in 2013. The administration needs to review Police Department policy to make sure these arrests are necessary and being fairly made.

The State Legislature tried to correct the problem in 1977, when it barred the police from arresting people for tiny amounts of marijuana unless the drug was publicly displayed. The number of minor arrests declined immediately after the law was passed but rose sharply from fewer than 1,000 in 1990 to 50,000 in 2011. Research has repeatedly shown that whites and minorities use the drug at similar rates, yet more than 80 percent of those arrested are black or Latino. And even though most cases are eventually dismissed, the arrests exact a cost: Young people who are even temporarily entangled in the courts can be shut out of jobs or denied entry into the armed services.

As the number of arrests skyrocketed, defense attorneys made the case that police officers were illegally charging suspects with “public possession” after directing them to reveal the drug or removing it from their pockets during constitutionally questionable searches. Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly tacitly acknowledged that problem in 2011, ordering officers to follow the 1977 law. The numbers of arrests declined significantly. The 28,600 arrests made last year may seem low compared with the number in 2011.

The police have historically implied that marijuana arrests help get criminals off the street. But a majority of these low-level arrests end in an “adjournment in contemplation of dismissal,” which means that the charges go away if the person stays out of trouble for six months or a year, or in a plea to a violation, which is a noncriminal disposition. (These cases waste scarce court resources and distract prosecutors from working on serious crime.) Moreover, a 2012 study by Human Rights Watch found that only about 3 percent of people arrested for low-level marijuana possession subsequently committed even one violent felony.

The new state data for the city shows a slight decline in arrests for the first quarter of this year, which can partly be explained by harsh weather that kept people indoors. But the 2,657 arrests in March exceed the number of arrests made in March 2013. Moreover, as in previous years, there were few arrests in affluent white areas, and those arrested were mostly black and Latino young men in heavily minority neighborhoods. Mr. de Blasio’s team has thus far demonstrated no concern about the marijuana arrest problem. But the extreme racial disparities in the arrest statistics alone make it imperative that the city look more closely into what is happening here.

The Kidnapping Of A Country

By Lauren Bohn And Chika Oduah

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

CHIBOK, Nigeria — THE road to Chibok is eerily quiet, lined with checkpoints manned by civilians, many of them teenagers, wielding rusty rifles and serving as added security for an area that has little. In this northeast Nigerian village, where more than 300 teenage schoolgirls were kidnapped by the militant

Islamist separatist group Boko Haram on April 14, their stunned families were still waiting this week for them to come home.

Lawan Zanna was still waiting for Aisha, his 18-year-old daughter. “How can I sleep?” Mr. Zanna asked. “Anger is gripping my body.” After the girls were abducted, Mr. Zanna said, he and other parents searched the nearby Sambisa forest for their children, but came back empty-handed. As he spoke, Aisha’s sister Hawa, 19, stood in silence. The two girls shared a small bedroom and almost everything else.

More than 750 people have been killed this year alone in Boko Haram attacks; at least 29 boys were killed in a February school raid. This time, the government’s failure in rescuing the girls, and in addressing the issue, has incensed Nigerians and, increasingly, people around the world.

In the midst of the crisis, the World Economic Forum on Africa hosted a three-day summit meeting, May 7-9, bringing about a thousand delegates from around the world and Nigeria’s elite to Abuja, the Nigerian capital, to discuss economic growth and development. As the .001 percent opined in air-conditioned suites, far from the hot reality of Abuja’s streets and psyche, the government deployed 6,000 security officers for the event — an effort that many Nigerians half-joked, half-lamented would never be made to protect ordinary Nigerians, nor to retrieve the Chibok schoolgirls.

The city was at a standstill. Blue-uniformed security and police officers gathered around boomboxes perched on wooden benches and turned up to maximum volume, listening to voices shouting curses at the enigmatic Boko Haram. “We just don’t know who these people are or what exactly they want to do,” said a call-in guest on 95.1 FM Nigerian Info. “They say they want to impose Shariah law or whatever, but Nigeria is not an Islamic state! God go punish you!” A uniformed man holding a half-chewed juicy mango exclaimed, “Yes! God go punish them!” to nods of agreement.

Nigerian citizens exist in this surreal state of great contrasts, in a nation mired in corruption, under attack by an Islamist insurgency and at the same time brimming with potential and acclaimed as an economic engine for the African continent. With 170 million people, Nigeria is Africa’s most populous country and largest oil producer. Its economy has surpassed South Africa’s, making it the largest on the continent. But that growth has only widened economic inequality. Economic activity has slowed to a trickle in regions where terrorizing at the hands of Boko Haram has forced farmers to abandon their fields, while young people without job prospects have left for the cities. More Nigerians are poor today than at independence in 1960, with over 60 percent below the poverty line.

For the past three weeks, we have been traveling the country reporting on youth unemployment, an issue consistently ignored by the government, but one that has been exploited by Boko Haram.

“The abductions are only the tip of the iceberg,” said Tayo Olufuwa, a bespectacled 23-year-old entrepreneur from Mushin, one of Lagos’s poorest neighborhoods. Mr. Olufuwa has started an online employment search company, Jobs in Nigeria. When we filmed him two weeks ago, walking on his old childhood streets for a multimedia report, plainclothes policemen detained us for four hours, confiscating our credentials and equipment. They told us they were protecting us from Boko Haram and other security threats, wrestled with our driver for a bribe and mocked a crowd of children. “We are a country sleeping with one eye open,” Mr. Olufuwa said afterward in exasperation.

It’s an expression used often by Nigerians, who are frustrated yet unsurprised by conflicting actions and reports from a government they have come to distrust. At least 16 Nigerians were killed in March in stampedes when nearly a half-million people applied for fewer than 5,000 government jobs.

Frederick Kusompwa, 30, eagerly joined thousands of job seekers at the national stadium in Abuja, one of the application sites, only to watch people climbing over one another, clawing for registration

forms: “I just asked myself, What has my country become?” The interior minister, whose office oversaw the recruitment, announced that the dead “lost their lives through their impatience.”

Thousands apply for 20 full scholarships offered by the Institute of Petroleum Studies at the University of Port Harcourt in the Niger Delta. Celestina Johnson, an administrator at the institute, said she often wanted to cry during the interviews because so many of the applicants would never get a chance. As she spoke, the electricity went out — an everyday occurrence in Nigeria. “If this country’s condition continues, there will be a mass revolt,” Ms. Johnson said. “The country will break.”

In Lagos, the commercial capital of the country, a 41-year-old cabdriver, Oyebajo Adekunle, sweated as he swerved through rush-hour traffic. A college graduate with a business degree, he said he never thought he’d be driving people around, struggling to make enough money for his family of six. He pulled up to a cluster of people — one of the daily Bring Back Our Girls protests that have taken place here and around the country for weeks. “I would go out and stand with the women, but I have to hustle,” he said, wiping sweat from his brow. “It’s like the government makes the hustle so hard, so that we’re too tired to do anything about things like this.” He rolled down his window to shake one of the female protesters’ hands, locking eyes for a mere second, and then sped off to pick up another client.

Lauren Bohn and Chika Oduah are the recipients of a GlobalPost reporting fellowship in Nigeria for 2014.

The AIDS-Shaming Of Magic Johnson

By Charles M. Blow

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

The sheer volume of bile spewing from the mouth of the Clippers owner, Donald Sterling, is staggering. But just as awe-inducing, and stomach-churning, is the unrestrained breadth of its variety, which makes putting the offenses in order — if one were inclined to — nearly impossible.

But high on any list — on a par with the racism, sexism, misogyny, paternalistic plantation thinking and bias cloaked in benevolence — has to be Sterling’s attempt to AIDS-shame Magic Johnson.

In an interview with CNN’s Anderson Cooper that aired on Monday, Sterling asked about Johnson:

“What has he done? Can you tell me? Big Magic Johnson, what has he done? He’s got AIDS.”

For the record, as Cooper pointed out, Johnson has disclosed that he has H.I.V. but there is no evidence that his condition has ever progressed to AIDS.

Sterling continued:

“What kind of guy goes to every city, has sex with every girl, then goes and catches H.I.V.? Is that someone we want to respect and tell our kids about? I think he should be ashamed of himself. I think he should go into the background.”

And there’s more:

“Here’s a man, I don’t know if I should say this, he acts so holy. He made love with every girl in every city in America, and he had AIDS, and when he had those AIDS, I went to my synagogue and I prayed for him. I hoped he could live and be well. I didn’t criticize him. I could have. Is he an example for children?”

This line of attack on Johnson is one of the most revolting things to come out of this whole revolting episode. It feeds into the ignorance about the disease itself and the stigma attached to it that is an enormous hindrance to bringing it more under control in this country.

Let’s start here: Contracting H.I.V. (or AIDS) is not evidence of a character defect. It is simply a disease and should be treated as such. The way that so many people, like Sterling, seem to separate out

and shun people with communicable diseases — particularly sex-related ones — is outrageous and mustn't be tolerated and glossed over.

Does behavior play a large role — possibly the central role — in the spread of H.I.V.? Of course, but behavior is also a major cause of many diseases: heart disease, diabetes, and in some cases even cancer.

We must extend our empathy and demonstrate our compassion toward all people living with and dealing with any disease, and encourage better understanding and education to reduce the number of people affected by such illnesses.

What we don't need is a man of Sterling's dubious motives and questionable character spreading pernicious misinformation and hurtful poison about a disease he seems to little understand.

One thing that Sterling said does, in fact, hold a grain of truth: "You know, because he has money, he's able to treat himself." It is true that Johnson's wealth means that he is able to afford the best medical care, while far too many people living with H.I.V. and AIDS suffer not only for lack of quality health care but also lack of funds, food and adequate housing.

That said, Johnson is still a shining example to people living with the disease that it doesn't have to be life ending, that you can remain healthy, have a family, have a career and have a life.

And, he is a particularly potent symbol because he is African-American, because as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention points out:

"African-Americans accounted for an estimated 44 percent of all new H.I.V. infections among adults and adolescents (age 13 or older) in 2010, despite representing only 12 percent of the U.S. population; considering the smaller size of the African-American population in the United States, this represents a population rate that is eight times that of whites over all."

Some of the problem is that —partly because of lack of education, economics and H.I.V. stigma — "almost 85,000 H.I.V.-infected people in the African-American community in 2010 were unaware of their H.I.V. status."

And if people don't know they are infected, they can't be in care and controlling the disease, and therefore become highly infectious to other people.

(A study has shown that a person with H.I.V. who takes medication early on and has the disease under control reduces his or her transmission rate by 96 percent.)

Furthermore, stigma plays a role in people's unwillingness to disclose a positive diagnosis, furthering the likelihood of more transmission.

Magic Johnson, much to his credit, revealed his H.I.V.-positive status more than 20 years ago and has since been, personally and through the foundation that bears his name, an advocate for H.I.V./AIDS awareness and prevention.

As Johnson said in an interview with Cooper on Tuesday, regarding Sterling and his comments on his H.I.V. status:

"The stigma is still there. We know that. We've been fighting it for years, and what we want to continue to do is just educate the world that it's O.K., that you can high-five a person who has H.I.V. It's O.K. ... It's a shame that Donald used this platform with you, instead of using this platform to come out and apologize to the world, which would have been great."

In attempting to AIDS-shame Johnson, Sterling further shamed himself — if that's even possible — and proved supremely disrespectful of and destructive to people living with H.I.V. and those (like Johnson, who responded magnanimously) who are working to reach the affected and protect those at risk.

In this it is clear that Johnson is a far better example for our children than Sterling.

My State's Prettier Than Yours

By Gail Collins

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

Our topic for today is state tourism slogans. Perhaps that's not what you had in mind. Perhaps you are from North Dakota ("Legendary") or North Carolina ("Beauty Amplified") and are already so self-satisfied you see no reason to worry about the subject at all.

But this is actually a deeply political matter. After all, it's the states' wildly different self-images and sense of specialness that makes places like Congress so interesting.

Consider Texas, which is currently bragging "It's Like a Whole Other Country." This is not the slogan of a place that prides itself on the ability to get along with others.

Neither is Montana's "Get Lost." This is actually supposed to be an invitation to come, not leave. But at best, it conjures up visions of helicopters and search dogs. Like many states, Montana plays around with several slogans. One of its newest, "Step Out of Bounds," sounds a bit like a suggestion to walk off a cliff.

On the opposite side we have Washington ("Washington: The State"). These people definitely regard themselves as part of the group.

It's sad that states no longer like to identify themselves with agricultural production, which always had a nice touch of down-to-earth practicality. Wisconsin has never been the same since it stopped being "America's Dairyland" and rejected efforts by enthusiasts to adopt "Eat Cheese or Die." While the state's tourism website currently urges viewers to "Turn Up the Fun," a spokeswoman denied that it now has any official marketing pitch whatsoever.

For a long and glorious time, Idaho's slogan was "Great Potatoes. Tasty Destinations." But I am sorry to say that the state has moved on and is now going with "Idaho: Adventures in Living." Diane Norton, the Idaho tourism manager, said the state's new sales pitch "was developed using attitude research which revealed that Idaho is viewed as being 'an adventure' in and of itself." Well yeah, when you hire people to do a marketing survey, they are not going to come back with a root vegetable.

Honestly, I'm not sure how useful brand research is in these cases. The consultants almost always report that their focus groups determined that the state's most salient point is the great scenery. Or, in the case where there isn't any scenery, the people.

Except New Mexico, where a focus group reportedly once described the state as boring and, on the positive side, "close to Arizona." Who knew? Actually these days many Americans' perception of the state is probably based on the series "Breaking Bad." Perhaps the slogan should be: "Something's Cooking in New Mexico, and It's Not Actually Meth."

Instead, they came up with "New Mexico True." Honestly.

Connecticut is currently trying the historic route with a new tourism slogan ("Connecticut: Still Revolutionary"). This is something of a comeback attempt after the troubled "Connecticut: Full of Surprises" era, during which then-Gov. Jodi Rell failed to pay the state's dues to a regional tourism-promotion group. Imagine everyone's surprise when they woke up and discovered that Connecticut had been wiped off the map in the Discover New England website.

"There was no Connecticut there. We actually got kicked out of New England," said Colin McEnroe, a Connecticut radio host and Hartford Courant columnist.

Connecticut's problems stem in part from the fact that "Connecticut" is hard to put in a jingle. Think about it. If you want to refer to somebody as a Connecticut resident, the only noun you can use is "Nutmegger." As part of the "Still Revolutionary" campaign, now-Gov. Dan Malloy's administration unveiled a new song, "Better With You," which McEnroe said was notable mainly for never mentioning the state's name.

Every single state believes that it is meant to be a tourist destination. Nebraska, for instance, insists that tourism is its "third largest earner of revenue from outside the state," although given the fact that it lists the first two as "agriculture and manufacturing" there really aren't a whole lot of options left. Its marketing pitch used to be "Possibilities ... Endless," which is not to be confused with Delaware's "Endless Discoveries." Then this month the Nebraska Tourism Commission unveiled "Nebraska Nice." A spokesman announced that brand research had determined that "one of Nebraska's strongest assets is our people."

The "Nice" campaign irked Iowans, who resented the idea that Nebraska was trying to corral the humble politeness franchise. ("Nebraska: Nice Try" read a new Iowa T-shirt.) And they have a point. Nebraska should try to market something that it and it alone can lay claim to. I vote for "Visit Nebraska: We Have a Unicameral State Legislature."

I'm sorry to say that I have never been to Nebraska. Long ago, during the Clinton administration, I wrote something about the state's Senator Bob Kerrey that ticked off his press office, and I was informed that I was barred from Nebraska forever.

I mentioned this once a few years ago, and someone from the office of Kerrey's successor, Senator Ben Nelson, informed me that the ban was revoked. Which did seem extremely nice.

It's Now The Canadian Dream

By Nicholas Kristof

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

It was in 1931 that the historian James Truslow Adams coined the phrase "the American dream."

The American dream is not just a yearning for affluence, Adams said, but also for the chance to overcome barriers and social class, to become the best that we can be. Adams acknowledged that the United States didn't fully live up to that ideal, but he argued that America came closer than anywhere else.

Adams was right at the time, and for decades. When my father, an eastern European refugee, reached France after World War II, he was determined to continue to the United States because it was less class bound, more meritocratic and offered more opportunity.

Yet today the American dream has derailed, partly because of growing inequality. Or maybe the American dream has just swapped citizenship, for now it is more likely to be found in Canada or Europe — and a central issue in this year's political campaigns should be how to repatriate it.

A report last month in *The Times* by David Leonhardt and Kevin Quealy noted that the American middle class is no longer the richest in the world, with Canada apparently pulling ahead in median after-tax income. Other countries in Europe are poised to overtake us as well.

In fact, the discrepancy is arguably even greater. Canadians receive essentially free health care, while Americans pay for part of their health care costs with after-tax dollars. Meanwhile, the American worker toils, on average, 4.6 percent more hours than a Canadian worker, 21 percent more hours than a French worker and an astonishing 28 percent more hours than a German worker, according to data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Canadians and Europeans also live longer, on average, than Americans do. Their children are less likely to die than ours. American women are twice as likely to die as a result of pregnancy or childbirth as Canadian women. And, while our universities are still the best in the world, children in other industrialized countries, on average, get a better education than ours. Most sobering of all: A recent O.E.C.D. report found that for people aged 16 to 24, Americans ranked last among rich countries in numeracy and technological proficiency.

Economic mobility is tricky to measure, but several studies show that a child born in the bottom 20 percent economically is less likely to rise to the top in America than in Europe. A Danish child is twice as likely to rise as an American child.

When our futures are determined to a significant extent at birth, we've reverted to the feudalism that our ancestors fled.

"Equality of opportunity — the 'American dream' — has always been a cherished American ideal," Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel-winning economist at Columbia University, noted in a recent speech. "But data now show that this is a myth: America has become the advanced country not only with the highest level of inequality, but one of those with the least equality of opportunity."

Consider that the American economy has, over all, grown more quickly than France's. But so much of the growth has gone to the top 1 percent that the bottom 99 percent of French people have done better than the bottom 99 percent of Americans.

Three data points:

- The top 1 percent in America now own assets worth more than those held by the entire bottom 90 percent.
- The six Walmart heirs are worth as much as the bottom 41 percent of American households put together.
- The top six hedge fund managers and traders averaged more than \$2 billion each in earnings last year, partly because of the egregious "carried interest" tax break. President Obama has been unable to get financing for universal prekindergarten; this year's proposed federal budget for pre-K for all, so important to our nation's future, would be a bit more than a single month's earnings for those six tycoons.

Inequality has become a hot topic, propelling Bill de Blasio to become mayor of New York City, turning Senator Elizabeth Warren into a star, and elevating the economist Thomas Piketty into such a demigod that my teenage daughter asked me the other day for his 696-page tome. All this growing awareness is a hopeful sign, because there are policy steps that we could take that would create opportunity and dampen inequality.

We could stop subsidizing private jets and too-big-to-fail banks, and direct those funds to early education programs that help break the cycle of poverty. We can invest less in prisons and more in schools.

We can impose a financial transactions tax and use the proceeds to broaden jobs programs like the earned-income tax credit and career academies. And, as Alan S. Blinder of Princeton University has outlined, we can give companies tax credits for creating new jobs.

It's time to bring the American dream home from exile.

Still Tinkering

By Linda Greenhouse

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

Twenty years have passed since Justice Harry A. Blackmun, at age 85 and just months away from retirement, renounced the death penalty. "From this day forward, I no longer shall tinker with the machinery of death," he declared.

There's been an awful lot of tinkering going on lately.

Oklahoma's botched attempt last month to carry out an execution with a previously untried combination of lethal drugs from secret sources shone a spotlight on how states are scrambling to deal with the increasingly unreliable supply of the ingredients of the once standard three-drug cocktail. Clayton D. Lockett, the condemned Oklahoma murderer who was seen writhing and moaning after the badly administered first drug failed to render him fully unconscious, died of an apparent heart attack nearly two hours after officials had started trying to kill him.

Given the Roberts court's conservative trajectory, it may seem a waste of energy even to wonder whether that incident, or the disarray on the whole lethal injection front, might persuade the justices to take another look at the death penalty.

No current member of the court is on record as opposing capital punishment. Justice John Paul Stevens, who retired three years ago, was the last. He announced his opposition to the death penalty in a 2008 opinion, and his new book, "Six Amendments," proposes a constitutional amendment "to put an end to what has become a wretched arrangement."

That there are strains within the court over specific death-penalty issues presented by particular cases is obvious. Less than a month ago, a majority of five justices permitted a Texas execution to proceed despite the votes of Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen G. Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan to grant a stay. (The order denying the stay was unsigned, and none of the four dissenters wrote an opinion.) Lawyers for the death row inmate, Jose L. Villegas Jr., convicted of a triple murder, argued that their client was mentally retarded, an assertion the state disputed.

His lawyers urged the justices to delay the execution until the court ruled in a separate case on how to define mental retardation in the capital punishment context – an issue that remains ambiguous 12 years after the court ruled in *Atkins v. Virginia* that the Eighth Amendment prohibits executing mentally retarded defendants. The court heard the pending case, *Hall v. Florida*, in March and will decide it before the current term ends in June.

Texas carried out the execution the day after the court's denial of the stay. "It does kind of burn. Goodbye," Mr. Villegas was reported to say as the single drug that Texas uses took effect. On Tuesday of this week, Texas was about to execute another death row inmate, Robert James Campbell, but the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit granted a last-minute stay after the inmate's lawyers presented evidence of his mental retardation.

Both the court and Congress have tried for years to limit death-penalty appeals by imposing increasingly daunting jurisdictional barriers. But these cases are still a staple of the Supreme Court's docket and will remain so as long as the death penalty exists. So in light of last month's debacle, and under no illusions that the court is about to engage in a fundamental debate over capital punishment, I decided to take a fresh look at an old case – the court's rejection in 2008 of a constitutional challenge to Kentucky's lethal injection protocol.

The case, *Baze v. Rees*, is usually noted for the opportunity it gave Justice Stevens to declare his opposition to the death penalty (although he actually joined the 7-to-2 majority in ruling for the state, out

of a desire, as he put it then, “to respect precedents that remain a part of our law.”) Less well remembered is what the court actually said about lethal injection.

There was no opinion for the court. The seven justices in the majority (Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and the now-retired Justice David H. Souter dissented) explained themselves in six separate opinions. Re-reading the opinions in light of current events was an eerie experience.

The court handed down *Baze v. Rees* almost exactly six years before the Oklahoma mess. The problems that some justices described in their opinions as unduly alarmist or unsubstantiated were the very problems that occurred last month. The dire warnings of the lawyers representing two Kentucky death row inmates – a team led by Donald B. Verrilli Jr., then a lawyer in private practice and now the Obama administration’s solicitor general – actually came true.

Law professors like to ask their students to “run the counterfactual” – assume a narrative opposite from what actually happened, and assess the implications. What really happened six years after *Baze v. Rees* is the ultimate counterfactual – except that it’s not hypothetical.

The case was not about the constitutionality of the death penalty or even about lethal injection as a means of carrying it out. Rather, the question as Mr. Verrilli framed it was whether the risk that something would go wrong in Kentucky’s administration of its three-drug protocol was so substantial as to violate the Eighth Amendment’s prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment.

He pointed out that if the first drug, a sedative, were to prove inadequate while the second drug, a paralyzing agent, worked as intended, the inmate would suffer excruciating pain from the third, heart-stopping drug while being unable to cry out or call for help. Mr. Verrilli argued the potential problem could be avoided by use of a single drug to bring about unconsciousness and death – the procedure that veterinarians use for animal euthanasia but that had not been used for human executions. (Texas, the most active death-penalty state, eventually adopted the single-drug procedure and currently uses it.

In a plurality opinion joined by Justices Anthony M. Kennedy and Samuel A. Alito Jr., Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. said the inmates’ lawyer hadn’t made his case. The risk of harm wasn’t sufficiently great or sufficiently imminent; the proposed alternative was only “slightly or marginally safer.” The chief justice said, “Permitting an Eighth Amendment violation to be established on such a showing would threaten to transform courts into boards of inquiry charged with determining ‘best practices’ for executions, with each ruling supplanted by another round of litigation touting a new and improved methodology.”

Mr. Verrilli had also argued that the intravenous line could fail, resulting in the sedating drug infiltrating the surrounding tissue instead of reaching the vein in amounts adequate to cause unconsciousness. While Kentucky’s protocol gave the execution team up to an hour to establish the I.V. line, Mr. Verrilli’s brief asserted that “more than 10 or 15 minutes of unsuccessful attempts is dangerous because the I.V. is almost certain to be unreliable.” The chief justice’s opinion rejected this argument, too, as overblown, noting that Kentucky’s medical experts had testified that any infiltration into tissue instead of the vein would be “very obvious” even to an untrained observer.

Of course, these arguments predicted almost exactly what was to go wrong six years later in Oklahoma. A medical technician in the execution chamber of the state prison in McAlester poked and prodded at Mr. Lockett for 51 minutes before finding what he thought was a usable vein in his groin, and no one noticed when the insertion went awry.

I don’t fault Chief Justice Roberts for lacking clairvoyance. I covered the case at the court, and I remember thinking that Kentucky did seem to know what it was doing. The state had what sounded like a plausible defense against an attack that was at best theoretical. And lethal injection did seem more

humane than execution by hanging, the electric chair or the firing squad by which Utah executed Gary Gilmore in 1977. His was the first execution after the Supreme Court permitted capital punishment to resume in states that had reformulated their death penalties to the justices' specifications.

Still, Justice Ginsburg got it. "Rare though errors may be," she wrote in the dissenting opinion that Justice Souter also signed, "the consequences of a mistake about the condemned inmate's consciousness are horrendous and effectively undetectable after injection of the second drug." She added: "If readily available measures can materially increase the likelihood that the protocol will cause no pain, a state fails to adhere to contemporary standards of decency if it declines to employ those measures."

Chief Justice Roberts and the justices who joined him acknowledged that placing a condemned inmate at risk of unnecessary pain and suffering, if the risk was great enough, would be unconstitutional. His opinion was a serious effort to thread a very small needle. By contrast, Justices Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia refused to sign the chief justice's opinion because, they said in their separate opinion, they believed that only the deliberate infliction of suffering would violate the Eighth Amendment.

During the seven months that the Baze case was pending before the Supreme Court, in 2007 and 2008, the number of executions plummeted as state officials and judges waited to see what rules would emerge. When none did, the numbers started climbing back up. Now Oklahoma and, just the other day, Louisiana have delayed pending executions while examining their lethal injection protocols. Early this month, President Obama ordered a federal review of how the death penalty was being carried out around the country. More tinkering? Perhaps.

The justices will most likely sit out this round. If they were to involve themselves again, I'm not sure what they would do. But they can't say they weren't warned.

Don't Force Google To 'Forget'

By Jonathan Zittrain

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — THE European Court of Justice ruled on Tuesday that Europeans have a limited "right to be forgotten" by search engines like Google. According to the ruling, an individual can compel Google to remove certain reputation-harming search results that are generated by Googling the individual's name. The court is trying to address an important problem — namely, the Internet's ability to preserve indefinitely all its information about you, no matter how unfortunate or misleading — but it has devised a poor solution.

The court's decision is both too broad and curiously narrow. It is too broad in that it allows individuals to impede access to facts about themselves found in public documents. This is a form of censorship, one that would most likely be unconstitutional if attempted in the United States. Moreover, the test for removal that search engines are expected to use is so vague — search results are to be excluded if they are "inadequate, irrelevant or no longer relevant" — that search engines are likely to err on the safe side and accede to most requests.

But the decision is oddly narrow in that it doesn't require that unwanted information be removed from the web. The court doesn't have a problem with web pages that mention the name of the plaintiff in this case (Mario Costeja González) and the thing he regrets (a property foreclosure); it has a problem only with search engines that list those pages — including this article and possibly the court's own ruling — as results to a query on the basis of Mr. González's name. So nothing is being "forgotten," despite the court's stated attempt to protect such a right.

How an individual's reputation is protected online is too important and subtle a policy matter to be legislated by a high court, which is institutionally mismatched to the evolving intricacies of the online world.

Progress has been limited perhaps by a shortfall of imagination by Google, Microsoft's Bing and the handful of other powerful intermediaries who stand between what we ask and what we're told is relevant. Search engines generally treat personal names as search terms like any others: Data is data. Google and company have not internalized just how significant that first page of search results has become to someone whose name has been queried. What they place on that page may do more than anything else in the world to define a stranger in others' estimations.

What if search engine companies were to think more creatively about how such searches might work? In 2007, Google admirably experimented in this area, introducing a feature to its Google News aggregator that allowed people quoted or mentioned in a news article indexed by Google News to add a comment next to that article in the search results. Such participants could offer readers of Google News an explanation, an apology, or a reason to discount whatever it was they were about to read. (Academics were among the first users of the feature, often adding a comment to contextualize something a newspaper reporter had quoted them as saying.) But Google ultimately abandoned the feature.

That's too bad. If search engines allowed for such comments generally, they might be able to give you more influence over the information about you online — without giving you the power to censor. Perhaps querying someone's name would result in an initial page of search results in which some form of curating was permitted for people sharing that name; the subsequent pages of results would provide the unvarnished material that a regular search now generates.

For those who believe in a right to "be forgotten," such a proposal would of course fall short. But I suspect that in many cases, the desire for such a right is merely the desire not to have your life presented to the world mechanistically and without review, with nothing more than a search term and a single click. This is a legitimate desire that the sort of proposal I have in mind would satisfy.

Whatever the solution, the status quo is no longer stable. In the wake of the decision by the European Court of Justice, search engine companies now face a potential avalanche of requests for redaction. And whatever the merits of the court's decision, Europe cannot expect to export its new approach to countries like the United States. (Even in Europe, search engine users will no doubt cultivate the same Internet "workarounds" that Chinese citizens use to see what their government doesn't want them to see.)

Google, Bing and Yahoo should devote their considerable resources to mitigating this problem. If they don't, search engine results may become increasingly dependent on where your keyboard is, rather than what you're looking for. And the search engines may find themselves in a cat-and-mouse game of censorship and evasion, leading only to a fragmentation, not an improvement, of the web.

Jonathan Zittrain, a professor of law and computer science at Harvard, is the author of "The Future of the Internet — And How to Stop It."

New Bad Old Times For Guatemala?

By Anita Isaacs

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

HAVERFORD, Penn. — It has been only a year since a court convicted Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt, a former president of Guatemala, of genocide, a step hailed as a breakthrough for the country's fragile

democracy. And yet Guatemala's hard-won progress is starting to falter; if nothing is done, it could easily slip back into authoritarianism, violence and disregard for basic human rights.

The trial of General Ríos Montt, who as the unelected president from 1982 to 1983 oversaw the murder of tens of thousands of Guatemalans, was the first time in history that a head of state anywhere was tried and convicted of genocide in a domestic courtroom. It was also supposed to be a major turning point for Guatemala's court system, which, until recently, punished only 2 percent of all crimes.

But less than two weeks later, the verdict was annulled on procedural grounds. The decision was a cruel disappointment for the victims of General Ríos Montt's regime, whose expectations had been raised by the trial, and a huge relief for former military leaders, who feared that they might stand trial next, and for powerful businesspeople who financed the country's civil war.

Nevertheless, as Guatemala faded from headlines, a flurry of political mobilization and maneuvering began. The poor, who had borne the brunt of General Ríos Montt's regime, were emboldened by the trial and demonstrated en masse when the verdict was annulled.

Despite the disappointing outcome, the country's indigenous majority believed the justice system might actually be made to work in their favor, that their voices had been heard and their rights respected. Since then, there have been sustained and increasingly defiant organizing and protests by peasants in rural areas of Guatemala, especially in regions plagued by land conflicts and growing tensions over the development of hydroelectric plants and subsoil mining.

But the country's elite, threatened by the idea of a justice system that might begin to work against them and by growing peasant activism, soon pushed back. The Guatemalan Bar Association first struck against the judge who ruled against General Ríos Montt, temporarily revoking her license to practice law. Then, last month, secret recordings surfaced in the Guatemalan press in which several politicians and lawyers could be heard bribing and blackmailing one another, in an effort to stack the supreme and appellate courts.

Business groups also maneuvered behind the scenes to pressure the constitutional court, and force Claudia Paz y Paz, the attorney general who had been a standard-bearer for the reformers by prosecuting gangsters and generals, out of office.

The commission that was established to nominate a new attorney general removed Ms. Paz y Paz from the list of contenders, even though its own assessment ranked her as the second-most qualified candidate. Asked whether politics intervened in the process, the commission president acknowledged, "It is possible."

Then, on May 10, the first anniversary of the genocide conviction, President Otto Pérez Molina appointed a lawyer named Thelma Aldana as the new attorney general. The move was a slap in the face to reformers: Ms. Aldana has been accused of having close ties to the political party once run by General Ríos Montt and to the current vice president, Roxana Baldetti, who has been exposed by the Guatemalan press for having used her office for personal enrichment.

Ms. Aldana's own statements are worrisome as well: She has been openly critical of her predecessor, Ms. Paz y Paz, whom she describes as having "favored the political left," and has stressed her willingness to consider granting amnesty to members of the Guatemalan military who participated in crimes of genocide during the civil war.

The government and the country's wealthy landowners, meanwhile, have wasted no time in violently putting peasants back in their place. Instead of entering into a dialogue with protesters, the president has openly branded them criminals and terrorists. In such a climate, it is no surprise that Guatemala is ranked the most dangerous place in the world to be a union activist: Eighteen human rights defenders, mostly

peasant activists, were killed this past year — the highest number of attacks on activist leaders since the end of the civil war.

In early April, security guards for a wealthy landowner shot six unarmed peasants protesting the construction of a hydroelectric dam. In a separate incident just two weeks later, armed assailants murdered a 16-year-old girl, who was the leader of an anti-mining youth movement, and critically wounded her father, who had organized his community to vote against a local mining project.

For all this, the rest of the world has been silent. Distracted by conflicts in Ukraine and Syria, the United States has not replaced its ambassador in Guatemala, a position that has been open since October.

A United Nations commission that has been instrumental in taking down organized crime bosses is nearing the end of its allotted time in the country, and there is nothing in line to replace it. President Molina, who in the past has lobbied the Guatemalan Congress to keep the commission in the country, has been silent this time, and neither the United States nor the United Nations has pressed him on it.

Abandoned and isolated, Guatemala's poor have been left to fend for themselves against the people who see any steps toward a fairer, more functional system as a threat to their fortunes and their legacies. Without a watchful eye from abroad, they have been able to revert to their old behavior, making sure the unjust structures that serve their needs stay in place, even at the expense of rising unrest, polarization and violence.

Anita Isaacs is a professor of political science at Haverford College and the author of the forthcoming book "From Victims to Citizens: The Politics of Transitional Justice in Postwar Guatemala."

The Battle Of The Okinawans

By Norihiro Kato

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

As President Barack Obama wound up his visit to Japan last month, the Japanese and American governments released a joint statement outlining the outcome of his talks with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Almost every newspaper article I saw focused on the same few issues — above all, the two leaders' failure to reach an agreement on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a 12-nation trade agreement. There was one exception: The Okinawan daily Ryukyu Shimpo ran on its front page the large headline, "U.S. Military Presence in Okinawa to Be Permanent."

Ryukyu Shimpo had picked up on a sentence in the joint statement that other papers had ignored: "The early relocation of Futenma Marine Corps Air Station to Camp Schwab and consolidation of bases in Okinawa will ensure a long-term sustainable presence for U.S. forces." Okinawans have been fighting for decades to have the Marines' air operations removed from the entire Ryukyu archipelago. In January, residents of Nago on Okinawa Island, where Camp Schwab is located, overwhelmingly re-elected a mayor who has vowed to block the plan to resettle Futenma there, rejecting a pro-relocation candidate strongly supported by Mr. Abe's party.

Okinawans are among the most downtrodden people in the region. In premodern times, the small Ryukyu Kingdom, as it was known then, was a tributary state of China and Japan simultaneously. Japan treated residents badly after fully annexing the islands in the 1870s. The Battle of Okinawa at the end of World War II killed one in four inhabitants. In the postwar period the United States turned the Ryukyu Islands into a military colony.

Even since the islands reverted to Japan in 1972, they have been exploited for military purposes as a result of agreements between the Japanese and American governments. The strategic importance of

Okinawa Prefecture to the two governments has increased recently owing to its proximity to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, to which both Japan and China lay claim.

This history has instilled tenacity in the inhabitants of the Ryukyu Islands. This was demonstrated by a man who met with representatives of the Abe administration in Tokyo just days before Mr. Obama's arrival there. Anzo Kedomori, the 72-year-old school superintendent of the small town of Taketomi, had been summoned by the Education Ministry for refusing to adopt a new, revisionist textbook in his district's ninth-grade class.

He was not cowed. Mr. Kedomori insisted that the textbook had not been selected according to the necessary procedures, and protested its failure to discuss Japan's callous treatment of Okinawa or the problems that the presence of American bases has caused.

The Education Ministry then summoned the superintendent for all secondary schools in Okinawa Prefecture. But he, too, declined to cooperate, saying he would respect the will of teachers in Taketomi.

People like these two men — and the mayor of Nago, who may yet succeed in derailing the government's plan to relocate Futenma — reveal the strength that comes to people who have been subordinated to greater powers for too long.

At the same time, in a sort of twisted way, they also embody the struggles of the Japanese government that is exploiting them as it tries to escape its reliance on the United States.

The Japanese government's 2013 budget allocated almost \$3.6 billion to cover costs associated with running American bases in Japan and providing for the 38,000 United States military personnel and their 43,000 dependents stationed there. This includes not only utility costs but also luxury housing, pools and golf courses. In 2008, the Japanese government built a middle school for 600 children of American troops at Kadena Air Base that cost twice as much, and was six times as large, as a school built nearby for 645 Japanese children.

According to a statement protesting the relocation of Futenma signed by prominent scholars and peace advocates in January, Okinawa Prefecture constitutes just 0.6 percent of the total land mass of Japan, yet it houses 73.8 percent of the American military bases in the country. The bases occupy almost one-fifth of Okinawa Island alone, including prime farming land. This part of Japan is, one might say, the netherworld to which the Japanese government has tried to banish its awareness of its subordination to the United States.

In 2009, while the Democratic Party of Japan was in power, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama attempted for the first time since the end of the war to move Japan away from its dependence on the United States, and to emphasize its ties with other Asian countries. His promise to move Futenma out of Okinawa Prefecture was the focus of this attempt. Although Mr. Hatoyama failed in this project, the issue of Futenma hasn't gone away; the Okinawan people still oppose hosting the bases.

And in their determination they may yet teach the Japanese government a thing or two about what successful resistance looks like.

Norihiro Kato is a literary scholar and a professor at Waseda University. This article was translated by Michael Emmerich from the Japanese.

Hong Kong's Rising Cry

By Michael Degolyer

[New York Times](#), May 15, 2014

HONG KONG — Since Hong Kong was handed over by the British to China in 1997, the territory's seven million residents have been free to govern themselves with relatively little interference from Beijing.

That freedom is now under threat, frustration with Beijing is mounting, and the possibility of violence is growing.

Although Beijing's hand can be felt in many areas, its increasing meddling in local politics is most troubling. The central government had promised Hong Kongers they could directly elect their leader in 2017, but it has yet to approve a process for nominating candidates. Beijing appears to want candidates screened by a Beijing-friendly nomination committee, thus dashing hopes for real electoral choice.

As a result, Hong Kongers are protesting against the central government with more frequency, segments of the pro-democracy camp are becoming more radicalized, and Beijing's patience is wearing thin. In this atmosphere, physical confrontations between Hong Kongers and the police are more likely.

Should violence break out, China would have an excuse to crack down in Hong Kong, which would be a huge setback for Hong Kongers and the territory's thriving economy — as well as an ominous sign of how China intends to use its influence around the world as it continues its economic surge.

Beijing and its local allies must give Hong Kongers more avenues for political participation — or the tension will keep rising. Just as important, the increasing numbers of Hong Kongers who seem intent on confronting Beijing, even if it means resorting to physical clashes with the local police, should re-channel their energies into peaceful protest.

A group of activists is planning for later this year what promises to be a large-scale demonstration for genuine universal suffrage. Known as "Occupy Central," the protest will aim to bring the city's financial center to a standstill through a nonviolent sit-in. According to the research by the Hong Kong Transition Project, two out of five Hong Kongers, despite fears of violence and economic damage, say they will support Occupy Central. Most of these people are under age 30.

But with increasing numbers of Hong Kongers, especially the young, unwilling to compromise on the question of how to nominate candidates for the 2017 election — Beijing wants to approve candidates, the democrats want the public to nominate candidates — the demonstration may very well turn violent.

The roots of frustration in Hong Kong go deeper than the conflict with Beijing over universal suffrage. Economic factors and strains put on Hong Kong's resources by mainland Chinese have fueled discontent in the territory for years. Beijing doesn't have to do much to make this already stressed situation explosive.

The gap between the haves and have-nots has widened over the past 20 years, led by the skyrocketing cost of housing. Mainland Chinese people and their money have pushed up prices in Hong Kong; at the same time, for locals wages have remained relatively low and opportunities scarce. Meanwhile, millions of mainland tourists come to Hong Kong to shop, overwhelming the infrastructure and crowding the streets. Aside from purchasing luxury items and books banned on the mainland, they clear the shelves of foodstuffs that they can be assured are genuine and safe.

Baby milk powder, for example, is in such high demand by mainlanders that the Hong Kong government restricted sales to make sure Hong Kong babies had enough to eat. Milk powder is no longer available on open store shelves; one has to purchase it from a locked case.

The current chief executive of Hong Kong, Leung Chun-ying, has made attempts to address some of the economic issues that are fueling the radicalization. He needs to accelerate those programs and take action on the points of conflict with mainlanders.

Mr. Leung tried to tamp down the conflict over the lack of affordable housing by setting aside homes for Hong Kongers only and increasing the taxes on home purchases. Prices have dropped slightly, but the government could also sell some public housing at giveaway prices to lower discontent.

Mr. Leung also needs to address the number of mainland tourists entering Hong Kong. The sheer press of bodies back and forth across the land borders is a stampede waiting to happen. Mainland officials, concerned over congestion and growing conflict with tourists in Hong Kong, appear to be stepping in to control the volumes even if Mr. Leung will not.

Mr. Leung should announce that he will not seek a second term in 2017. That would show that he is acting in good faith to work out a fair system for the election without bias toward his own future.

These actions could ease some of the tensions. But ultimately, Beijing needs to resolve Hong Kong's desire for universal suffrage.

Beijing would do well to continue talking about compromising on the question of how to nominate candidates. If the central government can set a moderate tone over the procedures for 2017, like the local government has been trying to do ("Let's Talk and Achieve Universal Suffrage" is the title of the public consultation paper), it will do better in the battle for public opinion. The Hong Kong radicals could then be ostracized by the moderate local democrats.

How Beijing handles Hong Kong's simmering frustrations will be a test of China's intentions and attitudes toward a freer way of life. If China's leaders kill political reform in Hong Kong, they are unlikely to start it on the mainland anytime soon. Nor are they likely to promote or protect such values as they move to replace the United States as the dominant power in Asia.

Michael DeGolyer is director of the Hong Kong Transition Project and professor of government and international studies at Hong Kong Baptist University.

Partisan Sabotage In The Senate Unplugs A Useful Bill

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

TO THOSE who believe that the partisan warfare dominating Congress is merely the result of a healthy clash of ideas, we present to you the sad low point the Senate hit on Monday.

For years, seemingly everyone in Congress has agreed that the country should waste less energy and that the federal government has a larger role to play in promoting efficiency. Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) wrote a modest, bipartisan bill that would help with that. It eschewed radical policy. Lawmakers from both parties got input. Congress-watchers kept the bill on the short list of things legislators might actually manage to send to President Obama. Yet on Monday the bill failed on a largely party-line vote.

That means, for now, that the federal government will not be required to push through upgrades to energy-gobbling computer systems, or to tighten model building codes to reduce the unconscionable amount of energy buildings waste, or to demand that federally backed home mortgages account for energy efficiency in the appraisal and underwriting process. Manufacturers, meanwhile, will not have stronger incentives to use energy-efficient electric motors and transformers.

These failed proposals were timid. A stronger plan would have required states to improve their building codes rather than just give them a better model code from which to work. The bill could also have been more creative: One proposal called for investing in a Race-to-the-Top-style plan that would have encouraged states to compete on energy reductions. Instead, Portman-Shaheen was least-common-denominator policy.

But all the careful watering-down could not save this consensus bill from partisan sabotage. Though many GOP senators had extensive influence on the shape of the bill, Republicans sought to add a slew of energy-related amendments on the floor — on divisive issues such as Environmental Protection Agency rules and natural gas exports. Democrats didn't want to risk dooming the bill by attaching

amendments that would have split their caucus or provoked a presidential veto. Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.) refused to allow votes on these sorts of changes. Enough Republicans, including several co-sponsors, bolted from the bill that it failed to obtain the 60 votes necessary to overcome a filibuster.

Mr. Reid should not have denied his fellow senators the opportunity to vote freely on energy policies when considering an energy bill, even if the debate would have been politically inconvenient. But once he refused to allow minority amendments, Republicans should have voted on the merits of the policy before them. Democrats wonder whether Republicans' underlying motivation was to deny Ms. Shaheen an election-year victory. That's very possible, just as it's very possible that Mr. Reid cared more about saving Democrats from taking politically difficult votes than about advancing decent policy. But the other explanation for the GOP's behavior — that Republicans petulantly filibustered after losing a procedural disagreement — is hardly any better.

Montgomery County's School-funding Gimmickry Buys A Year Of Peace

By Editorial Board

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

WITH THE aid of budgetary sleight of hand, Montgomery County has papered over the latest dispute over funding between the County Council, which holds the purse strings, and the school system, which accounts for more than half of the jurisdiction's spending. The school system got every penny of the \$2.3 billion it wanted — but with a catch that protects county taxpayers from a state law that locks in the increase in perpetuity.

The deal resolves for now what has become a venomous, perennial dispute between the county and the schools, the stakes of which have been driven higher by the senseless law, known as maintenance of effort. The law makes it all but impossible for counties to trim education spending during economic downturns — even if they have pumped up school spending in good times.

Understandably, that law — enacted by state legislators at the behest of the teachers union — has made council members in Montgomery extremely wary of exceeding per-pupil minimum spending mandated by Annapolis. Yet the county school system, by far Maryland's largest and one of the United States' 20 biggest, has kept up the pressure for budget increases that go beyond the state minimums.

When times were flush, Montgomery lavished funding on the schools year after year, to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars in excess of the state-mandated per-pupil minimums. Then the recession hit, and county officials had to battle Annapolis for permission to scale down spending.

This year, Schools Superintendent Joshua P. Starr's budget request was almost \$52 million above the state-mandated minimum. That left county officials bristling but nervous about a public brawl in an election year for the local and state legislatures. County Executive Isiah Leggett (D) proposed an increase that gave the schools most of what they wanted — some from the county, the rest from the schools' reserves.

The problem with Mr. Leggett's proposal is that it would set a new spending base from which the county would have trouble retreating in a new recession. Council President Craig Rice (D-Upcounty) rode to the rescue with a counterproposal that delivered the schools' full funding request but did not pad the per-pupil base.

Mr. Rice's method involves pumping up a county pension fund for retired teachers' health benefits, which allowed the schools to channel more of their own budget money for education. Yes, it's gimmickry — but gimmickry that buys another year of relative peace in the county-school funding wars. Mr. Starr,

Mr. Leggett, the school board and every member of the county council lined up behind what was essentially a truce.

That's progress. But the fundamental problem remains the maintenance-of-effort law, which needs to be rewritten to allow counties to pare back spending for schools — as they routinely do for other expenses — in a downturn. With that flexibility, counties would be able to do right by schools in good times and protect taxpayers in bad times.

Read more about this issue: The Post's View: Montgomery County schools must attack the achievement gap Karin Chenoweth: Montgomery County schools dance around needed changes Dan Reed: The 'great' Montgomery County schools? Phil Andrews: When will Montgomery County stand up to Annapolis?

MERS Is Still A Mystery Virus

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

SAUDI ARABIA crossed a grim threshold Wednesday, announcing that the number of cases of Middle East respiratory syndrome, caused by a novel coronavirus, has exceeded 500 in the kingdom, with 157 deaths among them. The global number of MERS cases is now more than 570, with two of them recently reported in the United States.

At the same time, the World Health Organization declared that the disease has not yet reached the point of a “public health emergency of international concern.” The reason is that experts have not yet detected “evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission” of the kind that could lead to a pandemic. Clearly, there has been some transmission involving people in close contact with victims, such as relatives and health-care workers, but not rapidly and broadly.

The WHO decision should not lead to a sense of complacency; the announcement was studded with warnings.

Far too much is still unknown about this virus and how it works. For example, it appears that one reason for the escalating number of cases in Saudi Arabia in recent weeks was a breakdown in infection control. A visiting WHO team found lapses in such basics as hand washing, gloves and masks. Hospital conditions were “suboptimal.” How did the virus spread? Does it survive in the environment? That's an important factor in infection control for any hospital — whether in Jiddah or Orlando — that hasn't been answered.

Yet another big information gap has been the lack of a case-control study, which would compare those infected with a similar group of people that is not. Such a study could go a long way toward helping explain how the virus behaves and the risks of transmission and infection.

Comparing older genetic blueprints with recent ones has led experts to conclude there have not been modifications in the genome of the virus that would allow it to be transmitted from human to human more efficiently than before. That's reassuring, but the key will be a steady stream of genetic sequencing information to keep watch on the unpredictable evolutionary process.

The WHO emphasized that its concern has significantly increased in part because of “critical gaps in information.” That is putting it politely. A large share of the responsibility for this black hole must fall on Saudi Arabia, a closed society where the disease was not met with sufficient urgency for more than a year. While there are now signs of more openness, the world's toolkit for fighting MERS remains rather bare. There is no vaccine or effective antiviral. The WHO called for speeding up critical investigations, including case-control, serological, environmental and animal studies. The kingdom must do everything it can to expedite this vital research.

Right now, MERS seems like a nightmare far away from the United States. But it is not. Both infections arrived here being carried by air passengers who passed by hundreds of other people on their journey. The best defense today is a deeper understanding of the virus and its behavior — and the sooner, the better.

America Should Not Soften Its Nuclear Demands Of Iran

By Michael Singh

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

Michael Singh is managing director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. From 2005 to 2008, he worked on Middle East issues at the National Security Council. He is on Twitter: @MichaelSinghDC

Nuclear negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 powers — the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and China — resume this week in an atmosphere that is at once hopeful and grave. Officials from both sides have been surprisingly optimistic about their chances of reaching a long-term accord. Yet serious differences reportedly remain, and failure to resolve them would leave both sides to weigh the unpalatable alternatives to a diplomatic resolution.

Failure would be easy to recognize; what success would look like is less clear. Despite U.S. officials' insistence that "no deal is better than a bad deal," they are also keenly aware that promising diplomatic openings with Iran have been few and far between in the past 35 years, and likely worry that Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's ability to withstand domestic opposition to his economic and diplomatic initiatives may be fleeting.

Rouhani's purported weakness is paradoxically a source of Iranian advantage in these negotiations. While no political reformer, he is widely perceived as someone who is serious about resolving the nuclear dispute so that Iran can recover economically. U.S. and European observers hope that a nuclear deal could lead to a broader easing of tensions — though whether this is true is unclear — and conversely worry that failure to reach a deal could fatally undermine that chance.

Rouhani has correspondingly engendered sympathy for his constraints. Indeed, a "good deal" these days is often framed more in terms of Rouhani's capacity to deliver than our own requirements. Issues such as Syria and Iran's missile programs are often dismissed by observers as off the table because they are in the purview not of Rouhani but of the Revolutionary Guards, implying that we are negotiating not with the Iranian regime but merely one faction of it. But softening our nuclear demands in the hope of strengthening Rouhani would be a mistake, for several reasons.

First, a deal must satisfy not only U.S. negotiators but skeptical partners who question the Rouhani narrative and are unwilling to stake their security on it. The most important is Congress, which may refuse to lift sanctions if it believes an agreement leaves Iran with too great a residual nuclear capacity.

The administration could circumvent sanctions through waivers, but banks and others may hesitate to resume business with Iran without regulatory clarity. The crisis would remain unresolved, harming both Rouhani and the United States.

To advance U.S. interests in the Middle East, a deal should also be acceptable to U.S. allies there, for whom Iran's regional activities — which have continued apace under Rouhani — are of greater concern than its nuclear pursuits. If they deem a deal too lenient, these allies could respond both by confronting and accommodating Iran, perhaps simultaneously. They could ramp up sectarian activities or pursue their own nuclear capabilities, even as they cut side deals with Tehran inimical to U.S. desires.

Second, Rouhani may be eclipsed politically rather than strengthened once a nuclear accord is reached. Iranian presidents' power rarely lasts long, and Rouhani's utility to the regime — along with hopes of an easing of U.S.-Iran tensions — may fade once sanctions relief is obtained.

Even if Rouhani hangs on, one should not mistake his desire to ease Iran's isolation for an eagerness to turn westward. Iran will more likely pursue partners it sees as rivals to the United States or as non-aligned. In recent weeks, Iranian officials have endorsed Russia's position on Ukraine, visited Beijing to pursue deeper military ties and signed a transit agreement with India and Afghanistan as U.S. troops prepare to withdraw from the latter. Combined with increased tensions in traditional U.S. alliances as a result of a nuclear deal with Iran, the effect could be a sharp blow to America's position.

Thus, a weak agreement could prove a strategic setback in the guise of a tactical success. Any accord must be crafted to reassure skeptics and survive a change of leadership or of course in Tehran. Rouhani's presence across the table may make an agreement possible, but it should not dictate the substance of the deal.

The surest way to avoid strategic failure is to insist on strict limits on Iran's nuclear activities and intrusive inspections, and credibly threaten stiff penalties for cheating. But other steps are also important, even if such measures are negotiated.

First, a deal must not only bind Iran's civilian nuclear authorities, but also its security apparatus, which is most likely to spearhead a covert nuclear effort. One way of doing this would be to insist that Iran curtail its missile activity and come clean about its weaponization research, ensuring that Iran's entire nuclear program and not just one element of it is subject to the scrutiny of inspectors.

Second, sanctions relief can be phased so that one-off or reversible actions such as unfreezing assets are front-loaded, and less easily reversible steps such as lifting oil and financial sanctions are back-loaded. This would ensure Iran benefits from rolling back its nuclear program while guarding against a hardline resurgence and giving Congress time to judge Tehran's adherence to the deal before voting to remove sanctions.

Finally, the United States should complement nuclear negotiating efforts with an equally energetic campaign to bolster cooperation with our regional allies and counter Iran's support for terrorism and other destabilizing activities. This would ensure that Iran, and especially its hard-liners, continues to pay a high price for those activities, and signal to friends and foes alike that we remain committed to the region.

Is China No. 1?

By Robert J. Samuelson

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

It's probable that the U.S. economy is no longer the world's largest. New World Bank figures, notes economist Arvind Subramanian of the Peterson Institute, suggest that sometime in 2014 China will overtake the United States in gross domestic product — the production of goods and services.

We knew this day was coming, but if the World Bank figures are correct, it has arrived sooner than many experts predicted. Using those figures — which stop at 2011 — I estimate that China's GDP in 2014 will hit \$16.8 trillion compared with \$16.1 trillion for the United States. (All these figures are in "constant" 2011 dollars.)

This is a historic milestone, but its immediate significance is limited. It doesn't make the Chinese richer than Americans, because China's GDP is spread across many more people. Per capita GDP, a rough gauge of living standards, is about five times higher in the United States than in China, about \$50,000 per person compared with \$10,000. Similarly, China's status as an economic powerhouse is well

established, regardless of whether its GDP exceeds America's or not. In 2012, it became the world's largest trading nation, notes the McKinsey Global Institute.

Still, the World Bank figures are fascinating. In 2011, the U.S. economy still was larger than China's. To get my updated estimate for this year, I adjusted both countries' GDPs for economic growth in 2012 and 2013, plus a forecast for 2014. Because China is growing faster than the United States, its GDP overtakes America's in 2014.

These numbers reflect broad trends, because measuring economies at varying stages of development and with separate currencies is difficult. The technique used here (called "purchasing power parity") compares the value of similar items in different countries in an effort to get a common baseline. But huge variations "in tastes, cultures, climate, price structures [and] product availability" complicate the results, notes economist Timothy Taylor. Some economists use exchange rates to make comparisons, but this also involves serious distortions. By the math of exchange rates, China's economy still remains smaller than America's. (Taylor's Web site explains the measurement problems.)

The numbers also raise profound issues. Perhaps the biggest involves the nature of global geopolitics. The U.S. and Chinese worldviews contrast starkly.

The lesson that Americans drew from the Great Depression and World War II was that U.S. isolationism in the 1920s and the 1930s had contributed to both. Post-World War II American foreign policy has presumed that U.S. leadership is necessary for a more peaceful and prosperous world. The American idea is that if countries could become more like the United States — democratic and affluent — global conflicts would subside. U.S. military power, from the creation of NATO in 1949 to the "war on terrorism," has aimed to minimize security threats to this economic vision.

Unlike the United States, China does not seek to remake the world in its own image. China wants a global system that supports its strong domestic economic growth, which is viewed as crucial to maintaining the Communist Party's grip on power. Export markets should remain open; China should have easy access to the oil, grains and minerals its economy needs. "Beijing still sees its actions and policies from the narrow perspective of national self-interest rather than its role as a leader," writes Cornell University economist Eswar Prasad in the Wall Street Journal. For example, the United States hasn't won much Chinese support in its efforts to curb North Korea's and Iran's nuclear programs.

These two worldviews have coexisted uneasily, but as China becomes more prosperous, the competition is bound to intensify. Economic power — the ability to confer advantages or disadvantages on other countries and to influence global markets and investment flows — is slowly shifting in China's favor. Conflicts seem inevitable.

India Sees Hope In A Divisive Figure

By Simon Denyer

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

Simon Denyer, The Post's China bureau chief, has worked for most of the past decade as a journalist in India. He is the author of "Rogue Elephant: Harnessing the Power of India's Unruly Democracy."

On Friday, results are due from the world's largest-ever exercise in democracy. They are expected to elevate one of India's most controversial politicians to its highest executive office: making Narendra Modi prime minister, thereby giving power to a man whose hands carry the nation's hopes of economic revival but also, according to his critics, the blood of 2,000 innocent people.

Modi sat on those hands in 2002, when Hindu mobs rampaged through the state of Gujarat for three days in an orgy of violence, rape, arson and murder largely directed against Muslims while, his critics allege, his police force looked on or abetted the killers. As the state's chief minister, he continues to thrive on the prejudices of Gujarati Hindus toward the Muslim minority. How can India, a nation of breathtaking diversity, where people from countless different religions, castes, languages and classes have learned to live together largely in peace, be about to elect such a divisive figure?

The answer lies in the quiet trauma India suffered in the past decade, as the dreams of more than a billion people came crashing down. In 2004, it was on the crest of a wave, a superpower in the making, a nation talked about in the same breath as China, where the middle class flocked to gleaming shopping malls and the young flocked to jobs in IT — a nation that had begun to believe its own hype. Elections that year seemed to promise even greater glory, with the prime minister's office occupied by the very man who, as finance minister, had set the ball rolling in 1991. Manmohan Singh, India's most honest politician and its most economically qualified, was perfectly placed to help the nation deliver on its abundant promise.

Ten years later, China's economy has gone from strength to strength, while India's has sunk back into the ranks of the also-rans. Beijing wowed the world with the 2008 Olympics, while India's 2010 Commonwealth Games seemed to confirm all the old stereotypes: dirty, corrupt and disorganized. Singh watched impotently as reforms stuttered to a halt, growth slowed and corruption gnawed at the nation's heart. His strengths, his honesty and economic competence, became the mirror images of his government's greatest failings. As if to drive the point home, half the nation was plunged into darkness in the summer of 2012 in the biggest power blackout in global history.

In 2004, India had been looking forward to a demographic dividend as hundreds of millions of young people entered the workforce; in 2014, it risks a demographic disaster, if those young people join the growing ranks of the unemployed and the underemployed.

But the past decade also saw a political revival in India, as youth rose up and demanded change. Hundreds of thousands took to the streets to rail against corruption; more protests erupted after the gang rape and murder of a young, middle-class woman in Delhi at the end of 2012. An explosion in 24-hour news television tore down the walls of deference that had sheltered politicians. A Right to Information Act gave the poor masses power to demand accountability from the nation's vast bureaucracy. Even the traditionally apolitical middle class started to demand better governance. In contrast with the West, voter turnout in India is rising.

The likely beneficiary of this democratic awakening is, ironically, a man who seems to set little store in the checks and balances of democracy, a chest-thumping "strongman" who runs a state where dissent is suppressed and the media are cowed.

By voting for Modi, many Indians hope to end years of underachievement under desperately weak leadership. Under his rule, Gujarat's economy has grown more than 10 percent a year and corruption has been kept in check. Poverty has fallen faster than the national average, electricity and clean drinking water are being delivered to villages and girls' dropout rates from school have dropped. It may not be the miracle that some of his supporters pretend, but Modi's economic achievements cannot be brushed aside.

Some Indians voted for Modi hoping that the realities of governing at the head of a coalition government, as leader of a nation and not just a state, will force him to keep his baser instincts in check. To woo them, Modi has attempted an image makeover, recasting himself as a man of humanity and

compassion. While the makeover is unconvincing, there remains the possibility that Modi will bend to the realities of national politics.

To many liberal Indians, Modi represents an assault on their nation's founding ideals. Yet to many young people, desperate for opportunities to match their vaulting aspirations, the riots of 2002 seem like the dim and distant past, while Modi's emphasis on governance and development offers hope for a brighter future.

Read more about this issue: The Post's View: Narendra Modi should build on his successes, not prejudicial rhetoric Anne Applebaum: Can Ukraine and India go beyond slogans? Fareed Zakaria: The Indian Spring Miranda Kennedy: How India's rapid changes are putting women at risk The Post's View: A political divide revealed by a diplomat's arrest

Jill Abramson 'unexpectedly' Out At New York Times

[Washington Post](#), May 14, 2014

New York Times Executive Editor Jill Abramson is "unexpectedly" leaving her post after leading the paper for 2 1/2 years, the Times reported this afternoon.

Senior editors at the newspaper were informed of the news at a 2 p.m. meeting, according to Politico reporter Dylan Byers. Her replacement, Managing Editor Dean Baquet, addressed the newsroom about 30 minutes later, according to posts to Twitter from Times journalists. Baquet is the first African-American executive editor of the New York Times.

Abramson has served as the paper's first female executive editor, a tenure that has received no small amount of scrutiny. A story in Politico last year said that she was on the "verge" of losing newsroom support. Though Abramson indeed alienated some co-workers with her management style, she also presided over the newspaper at a time of massive change: There were buyouts, a masthead trimming, a move toward video storytelling, just to name a few.

Stormy times aside, the move caught not only a universe of media watchers by surprise, but also the New York Times. In a spot news piece on the development, New York Times reporter Ravi Somaiya wrote, "The reasons for the switch were not immediately clear."

Jeff Zeleny, an ABC News Senior Washington Correspondent who left the New York Times under Abramson's reign, tweeted:

Abramson had this to say in a statement: "I've loved my run at The Times. I got to work with the best journalists in the world doing so much stand-up journalism. Holding powerful institutions accountable is the mission of The Times and the hallmark of my time as executive editor, whether stories about China, government secrecy, or powerful figures and corporations."

Arthur Sulzberger Jr., the publisher of the Times, said this about Baquet: "There is no journalist in our newsroom or elsewhere better qualified to take on the responsibilities of executive editor at this time than Dean Baquet. He is an exceptional reporter and editor with impeccable news judgment who enjoys the confidence and support of his colleagues around the world and across the organization."

The news was tightly held within the gossipy confines of the Times newsroom. It was only after the meeting among top editors had convened that the New York Times communications department informed the paper's own reporters that a management change was underway, according to a source at the paper. That was about a half-hour before the official announcement.

That the news took staffers by surprise surfaced on Twitter:

Bill Keller preceded Abramson as executive editor and served for eight years in the position. In a very brief chat with the Erik Wemple Blog this afternoon, Keller said he's following the news "just like

you.” “These are two people who are really good friends of mine. I don’t know what happened. I’m sad for Jill and hope for the best for Dean.” Keller now serves as editor of the Marshall Project, a nonprofit news site on criminal justice.

Before catching on with the Marshall Project, Keller served as a columnist for the paper — just the sort of emeritus role that top newsroom leaders often slide into after running the beast for a number of years. Abramson, however, isn’t doing any such thing. She is out the door. “She’s left the Times,” says New York Times spokeswoman Eileen Murphy. “She’s not here.” Murphy declined to comment on whether the clean break was the decision of Abramson, Sulzberger or a mutual thing.

Such arrangements would have been a good question for New York Times staffers to pose to Sulzberger, who addressed the newsroom at a 2:30 p.m. all-staff get-together. But Sulzberger didn’t take questions, as Murphy confirms. The newsroom is a sprawling place. “It’s not the appropriate forum for question-taking,” says Murphy.

Here’s the text of Sulzberger’s remarks to the newsroom:

Thank you all for gathering here on such short notice.

We are announcing right now, as we speak that Dean Baquet is our new executive editor.

So before I go further, let me take a moment to celebrate Dean. He is, without question, one of our finest. He spent a good part of his career with us in the 90s, first as an investigative reporter and later as our national editor before leaving for the LA Times, where he rather famously – heroically even – took a stand for maintaining a robust newsroom – a position that ended up costing him his job as executive editor.

Their loss was our gain as he returned in 2007 as Washington bureau chief before Jill named him managing editor almost three years ago.

It is my great honor today to appoint Dean as our new executive editor.

I will come back to Dean in a moment and you will hear from him as well. But first, let me try to answer a question that I am sure is on all your minds. What happened with Jill? Why this change?

I’ll start by saying what this is not about.

It is not about the quality of our journalism, which in my mind has never been better.

Jill did an outstanding job in preserving and extending the level of excellence of our news report during her time as executive editor and, before that, as managing editor and Washington bureau chief. She’s an accomplished journalist who contributed mightily to our reputation as the world’s most important news provider.

Further, this is not about any disagreement over the direction of our digital future or any of the steps we have taken recently to create and launch new digital products and services.

Jill and I agreed fundamentally about the need to embrace new platforms and new expressions of our journalism. She helped a great deal in moving The Times further into our digital future. She was an enthusiastic supporter of The UpShot, NYTNow, our soon-to-debut Cooking app and NYT5, among many other items in development.

This is also not about any sort of disagreement between the newsroom and the business side over the critical principle of an independent newsroom.

While we are all working more collaboratively, there is no one in the leadership of this Company – from me and Mark on down – who disagrees with the idea that our newsroom must remain independent with editorial decisions resting with the executive editor.

Rather, I choose to appoint a new leader for our newsroom because I believe that new leadership will improve some aspects of the management of the newsroom.

You will understand that there is nothing more I am going to say about this, but I want to assure all of you that there is nothing more at issue here.

We're in a terrific position to move forward. Both Jill and Dean were closely involved in the work of our newsroom innovation team over the past six months and Dean and I are in agreement that we need to proceed on many of their recommendations to best position us for future success. I am entirely confident that Dean – along with all of you – will build upon that foundation.

Now, let's turn this back to Dean. A nicer guy, you will not find, but that isn't what brought him to this point.

Bill Keller once said of Dean that he possesses "infectious enthusiasm and aggressive intelligence." I agree.

Combine that with a passion for journalism, investigative and otherwise; a fierce loyalty to the editors and reporters he leads; and a competitive spirit that inspires all around him to do better. That's Dean Baquet, the executive editor of The New York Times.

Dean Baquet's remarks to the newsroom:

May 14, 2014

It is humbling to be asked to lead the only newsroom in the country that is actually better than it was a generation ago, a newsroom that approaches the world with wonder and ambition every day.

A newsroom that exposes a bad cop and gets two people out of jail. A newsroom that breaks stories about the actions of government spies on the same day it crashes an elegant book review.

A newsroom where Adam Nossiter visits a village in Africa to capture the grief of mothers whose daughters have been stolen.

A newsroom that produces photography reminiscent of the old Life magazine. A newsroom that can publish something as knockout-beautiful as T, on the same day it chronicles upheaval in the Ukraine.

A newsroom that produces a print and web report of great style and design. A newsroom that decided it should do video, and went out and won awards for it.

A newsroom that is reinventing the journalism of precision with the Upshot and is already rebuilding itself for the mobile world.

There are too many people for me to thank for this 40-year career, too many people who helped support a young black southerner whose parents had only grade-school educations and who became addicted to newspapers through the daily accounts of the ups and downs – mostly downs – of the fledgling New Orleans Saints.

But let me thank a few people.

First and foremost, there is Arthur Sulzburger, who is most responsible for preserving this newsroom. Before I came back to the Times eight years ago, I fought with my heart and my soul to protect another newsroom that I loved. So I treasure the opportunity to work with a great publisher who understands we are more than a business and who values an independent-minded editor with a history of pushing back.

I owe Jill Abramson a tremendous amount. She made me her partner for three years and taught me the value of great ambition and what she always called the great backstory. I will miss her. She made the paper better, which is the greatest testament one can pay to any editor.

I am indebted to Janet Elder, who secretly runs the joint, and to a masthead Jill and I built together and that I will call upon to help me guide the paper.

I am indebted to Joe Lelyveld, who taught me to put the paper first, and to John Carroll, who taught me that great editors can be humane. They are the two greatest editors of a generation.

I would like to thank Andy Rosenthal, who believe it or not edited my last investigative story – the story of Hillary Clinton’s fortuitous commodities trade — and who has been a great friend across the divide.

I’d also like to thank Dylan Landis. It helps to have a writer in the house, one who has taught me there is sometimes more to learn from great fiction.

Mostly I thank the journalists of The New York Times – the reporters, editors, copy editors, producers, designers, photographers, videographers and graphics artists – who make this the greatest news operation in history.

Arthur, Bill, Jill and John Geddes propelled us toward a digital future. But we still have much work to do. As you know, a committee of the newsroom’s brightest came back with many recommendations for maximizing our digital report. I embrace those recommendations fully, and bringing them to fruition will be one of our primary goals of the year.

But tucked inside that report was one great lesson that we should never forget – our journalism rocks. Our job is to make sure everybody gets a chance to see it.

At this point there is no secret to the kinds of stories I love. I spent my career as an investigative reporter, so I value the hardest-hitting work.

Scoops reign. So in an age when readers have more freedom to pick and choose, we have to be first. But just as valuable is the fresh thought from Adam Liptak or James Stewart or Andrew Sorkin.

Lest you think that means a future of only hard news, know that nothing distinguishes The Times more than its critics, and its feature and culture sections.

Nothing lifts our pages like a Kimmelman, Kakutani, Cotter, Smith, Garner, or Maslin review. Or a Vogel-Flynn scoop on the art world. And rebuilding our Sunday magazine will be one of the great joys of our year.

Of course we will announce some changes in the coming weeks. But for now

I’d like to leave you with a few promises. I will listen hard. I will be hands-on, engaged, will walk the room. That’s the only way I know how to edit.

Let’s take risks, and not beat each other up when we fail. Let’s work together, but not get paralyzed by guessing what Dean or anyone else wants. Give it a shot. We will commit big ambitious journalism every day. And we will have an absolute

utter unadulterated blast while doing it.

Thomas Piketty Identifies An Important Ill Of Capitalism But Not Its Cure

By Charles Lane

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

The year 2014 marks the 50th anniversary of the Beatles’ arrival in the United States. The Allies liberated Paris 70 years ago. And, of course, it’s been 135 years since “Progress and Poverty,” by the American journalist Henry George, was published in 1879.

What’s that? Never heard of George or his treatise on the causes of inequality? It sold 3 million copies. Perhaps you missed “Progress and Poverty’s” anniversary while perusing this year’s equally improbable bestseller, “Capital in the Twenty-First Century “ by French economist Thomas Piketty.

With its sweeping review of historical data, culminating in a warning about capitalism’s inexorable, destabilizing, tendency toward inequality — to be cured by a global wealth tax — Piketty’s book has earned comparisons with “Das Kapital,” by Karl Marx.

Yet Piketty's project may have more in common with George's book than Marx's, and not only because each tome reached U.S. readers six years after a ruinous financial crisis — the Panic of 1873 for George, the 2008 collapse of Lehman Brothers for Piketty.

Analyzing the stagnant economy and rich-poor gap of his day, George blamed not free markets, which he considered efficient and fair, but their corruption by a privileged few.

Specifically, George argued, land owners commanded a high and growing share of U.S. income even though their claim to it was based on something as unproductive as mere ownership — as opposed to the laborer's work effort or the investor's risk-taking.

For George, the solution was to abolish all taxes except a "single tax" on the value of land. Since land could neither be created nor destroyed, taxing it would reduce neither society's total wealth nor owners' incentives to put property to productive use — buildings and other improvements wouldn't be taxed.

To the contrary, taxing land, and only land, to pay the government's bills would liberate labor and capital to seek their most productive use and thus to grow the economy. A huge source of unearned wealth would be curbed, if not eliminated. Capitalism would be redeemed and democracy saved.

"It is not enough that men and women should vote," George wrote (including a gender that could not, at that time, cast ballots). "They must have liberty to avail themselves of the opportunities and means of life; they must stand on equal terms with reference to the bounty of nature. . . . This is the lesson of the centuries. Unless its foundations be laid in justice, the social structure of the United States or any other country cannot stand."

Similarly, Piketty's concern about the tendency of the return on capital (which he defines to include real estate as well as financial wealth) to exceed economic growth is essentially a worry about growing unearned claims on society's resources.

To Piketty, like George an admirer of market efficiency and opponent of protectionism, the resulting accumulation of wealth in relatively few hands threatens economic fairness, economic dynamism — and democracy. "Extreme inequality makes it impossible to have proper working of democratic institutions," Piketty told a recent meeting at Washington's Urban Institute.

And so, updating Henry George's single tax, Piketty proposes a global wealth tax, making similar claims about its benefits for both equality and growth.

For Piketty and George, the bottom line, both moral and economic, is to socialize "rent" — rent, that is, not in the colloquial sense but in the economic sense of income disconnected from productivity.

It's an attractive vision: an egalitarian, productive society, purged of parasitical rent-seeking through the expedient of well-aimed taxes.

Alas, Piketty's global wealth tax and George's single tax suffer from the same defect, and it's not political impracticality — after all, George nearly got himself elected mayor of New York City in 1886.

It's the inherent difficulty of separating the productive, untaxed component of the return on land or capital from the unproductive, taxed part.

Clear in the pages of a treatise, the distinction is murkier in practice. The market price of a vacant lot can reflect potential productive uses, as well as the risk a buyer takes by betting on them. A similar analysis applies to the rate of return on capital.

As a result, it's hard to devise a tax on wealth that raises a significant amount of revenue but doesn't discourage at least some socially beneficial saving or entre-pre-neur-ship. The potential for adverse unintended consequences — economic and political — is greater than Piketty seems to realize.

Great private fortunes can indeed entitle their owners to an undue share of society's current income and political power. At times, however, private wealth can serve as a font of charity or, indeed, a bulwark against government overreach.

We've been debating the right balance since the 19th century and probably will be long after the 21st.

The Two GOP Establishments

By E.J. Dionne Jr.

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

The language commonly used to describe the battle going on inside the Republican Party is wrong and misleading. The fights this spring are not between "the grass roots" and "the establishment" but between two establishment factions spending vast sums to gain the upper hand.

Their confrontation has little to do with the long-term philosophical direction of the GOP. Very rich ideological donors, along with tea party groups, have been moving the party steadily rightward. Political correctness of an extremely conservative kind now rules.

This explains the indigestion some Republican politicians are experiencing as they are forced to eat old words acknowledging a human role in climate change. It's why party leaders keep repeating the word "Benghazi" as a quasi-religious incantation, why deal-making with President Obama is verboten and why they stick with their "repeal Obamacare" fixation.

The accounts of Tuesday's Republican primary in Nebraska for an open U.S. Senate seat are revealing. Ben Sasse, a university president who held a variety of jobs in George W. Bush's administration, won it handily. His success was broadly taken as a triumph for the tea party, which just a week ago was said to have suffered a defeat in North Carolina. There, Thom Tillis, the speaker of the state House of Representatives and the so-called establishment candidate, faced opponents perceived to be to his right. Yet Tillis will be one of the most right-wing candidates on any ballot this fall.

The more instructive way to look at the Nebraska result was suggested by a Wall Street Journal report on the outcome by Reid Epstein. Sometimes, news stories are like good poems that convey meaning through artful — if not always intentional — juxtaposition.

Epstein noted that Sasse was "backed by more than \$2.4 million in ad spending, either praising him or attacking his opponents, from organizations such as the small-government Club for Growth and the Senate Conservatives Fund, which targets Republicans it deems insufficiently conservative."

Yet in the very next paragraph, Epstein quoted a Facebook post from Sen. Ted Cruz, the tea party hero who supported Sasse. The Texas Republican declared that "Ben Sasse's decisive victory is a clear indication that the grass roots are rising up to make D.C. listen."

So, is this really the grass roots speaking to Washington? Or is it more accurately seen as a cadre of conservative groups, largely working out of Washington, rising up with a ton of cash to persuade voters to listen to them? It's hard to see Nebraska's primary as a mass revolt. The Nebraska secretary of state's Web site reported Wednesday morning that primary turnout (in both parties) came to 316,124 out of 1,152,180 registered Nebraskans. Sasse won with around 110,000 votes.

The grass-roots claim becomes more problematic when you consider that Sasse has rather a lot of Washington experience while one of his opponents, former state treasurer Shane Osborn, was the favorite of many Nebraska tea party groups. As Jim Newell noted in an insightful piece in Salon, FreedomWorks, one of the Washington-based operations that latched onto the tea party early, initially endorsed Osborn but switched to Sasse. The stated reason for the turnabout was the support Osborn got

from Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell who, for the time being, is cast by some on the right as an enemy.

Needless to say, the local tea party faithful who preferred Osborn resented the machinations of the big money groups headquartered in the nation's capital, whose competition resembles nothing so much as a "Game of Thrones" power struggle.

As for Sasse, his victory speech, as the conservative blogger Matt Lewis pointed out, made him sound more like the next Jack Kemp, the late conservative famed for his compassionate inclinations, than the hard-edged Cruz. Sasse's triumph reflected his skill at bringing the two GOP establishments together — he's the George W. guy with Harvard and Yale degrees whom Sarah Palin liked. The 42-year-old is on the verge of becoming the GOP's next new thing.

Thanks to Supreme Court decisions opening the way for unlimited and often anonymous campaign contributions, we are entering a time when "follow the money" is the proper rubric for understanding the internal dynamics of the Republican Party. Washington-based groups tied to various conservative interests and donors will throw their weight around all over the country, always claiming to speak for those "grass roots." Primary voters will be left with a choice between two establishments that, in the end, differ little on what they would do with power.

The Effect Of One-party Rule

By George F. Will

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

Democracy can be cruel because elections deprive the demos of the delight of alibis and the comfort of complaining. Illinois voters have used many elections to make theirs the worst-governed state, with about \$100 billion in unfunded public pension promises and \$6.7 billion in unpaid bills. The state is a stark illustration of the effect of prolonged one-party rule, conducted by politicians subservient to government employees unions.

A new Gallup poll shows that Illinois has the highest percentage — 50 percent — of residents who want to leave their state. If Illinois voters reelect Gov. Pat Quinn, they will reject Bruce Rauner, who vows to change the state's fundamental affliction — its political culture.

The state's strongest civic tradition is of governors going to jail. Four of the last nine have done so. Lt. Gov. Quinn ascended to the governorship in 2009 because Gov. Rod Blagojevich, of fragrant memory, tried to sell the Senate seat Barack Obama vacated. In 2010, Quinn defeated a downstate social conservative by 32,000 votes out of 3.7 million cast. Quinn's job approval today is about 35 percent.

Rauner, born a few blocks from Wrigley Field, grew up in a Chicago suburb — his father was an electrical engineer at Motorola; his mother was a nurse. He attended Dartmouth, earned a Harvard MBA and joined the private-equity firm GTCR, where he made enough money to buy his nine homes. When a reporter asked him if he is among the 1 percent, he cheerfully replied, "Oh, I'm probably .01 percent," an answer that was better arithmetic than politics.

Rauner spent \$6.5 million of his own money in winning the Republican primary, partly because Democratic-aligned unions spent millions trying to pick Quinn's opponent — attacking Rauner and supporting one of his GOP rivals. Quinn is, as Winston Churchill reportedly said of an adversary, a modest man with much to be modest about. Hence Quinn's campaign theme: Don't compare me to the Almighty; compare me to the alternative.

Concerning social issues, which energize much of the Republican base but repel many suburban voters in the “collar counties” around Chicago, Rauner is impeccably prudent, meaning disengaged. Abortion, he says, is “a tragedy” best left to women, not government. Gay marriage? Let each state decide by referendum “that particular contract between adults.”

Quinn, unable to work the “war on women” trope, must rely on contemporary liberalism’s only other idea, rage against the rich. But this becomes awkward.

Rauner’s support for more charter schools and school-choice voucher programs is one reason why he has been endorsed by the Rev. James Meeks, pastor for 15,000 members of the South Side’s Salem Baptist Church, Illinois’s largest black church. And one reason the teachers unions oppose him with ferocious disparagement of his wealth.

Which is amusing. Since 2000, the Teachers’ Retirement System, Illinois’s largest pension program, has invested \$120 million with GTCR and reaped an average annual return of 25 percent, much better than TRS’s other private-equity investments. For Karen Lewis, head of the Chicago Teachers Union, it suffices to say that Rauner is a “millionaire capitalist.” He replies, “Teachers hired me for years.” Public pension funds are by far the largest funders of private equity firms.

Illinois’s rate of population growth is the sixth-lowest among the states, and its 8.4 percent unemployment rate is exceeded only by Rhode Island’s, another Democratic-dominated state, and Nevada’s. Michigan’s unemployment rate, the Midwest’s second-highest, is nearly a full point lower than Illinois’s. Bewildered liberals will say the state’s stagnation is “despite” Democrats having raised the corporate tax rate from 7.3 percent to 9.5 percent and imposing a “temporary” income tax rate increase from 3 percent to 5 percent. Now, unsurprisingly, Quinn proposes making the temporary increase permanent. Two contiguous states with Republican governors — Michigan and Indiana — have cut corporate taxation.

“Cleanliness,” says Rauner, quoting former Illinois governor Adlai Stevenson, “is next to godliness, except in the Illinois legislature, where it is next to impossible.” Governors come and go in Springfield but state legislators linger, and real power resides in the speaker of the House, Michael Madigan (D), who has been a legislator since Richard Nixon was president (1971). Rauner helped to finance the gathering of signatures to get term limits for state legislators on the November ballot, thereby energizing the huge majority that favors limits. Illinois voters can choose Rauner and term limits or the acceleration of stagnation and the end of the pleasure of complaining.

Chris Christie Plays The Blame Game

By Dana Milbank

[Washington Post](#), May 15, 2014

Chris Christie’s presidential prospects are sagging — and it has nothing to do with those steel cables spanning the Hudson River.

The sprawling controversy, which began with bridge lane closures in Fort Lee, N.J., to punish a political foe, has given the governor a reputation for running New Jersey in a vindictive and even thuggish manner. But this would hurt him less in the 2016 Republican presidential primaries than the loss of the central rationale for his potential candidacy: that he returned New Jersey to fiscal health.

CBS News’s Bob Schieffer, assigned to interview Christie onstage Wednesday at the Peter G. Peterson Foundation’s annual “fiscal summit” in Washington, laid out the bad news: \$807 million budget shortfall; downgrades by credit-rating agencies; worry that the state can’t pay its pension obligations; and slow job growth.

"Not so long ago, people were talking about the New Jersey miracle," the genial newsman said. "Now suddenly the news is not so good about New Jersey."

Christie did what any strong leader would do when presented with such facts: He blamed the economists. "They overestimated our revenue," he said. "When I asked them, 'How could you be so wrong?' " he added, "they said, 'We just missed it.' You know, the great thing about economists is that's all they have to say: 'Governor, I'm sorry, we missed it.' Yeah, I'm sure you are, but I'm the one who has to fix your miss."

It was eerily similar to Christie's response to the bridge controversy: He was blameless. His staff let him down.

And what about the \$1.6 billion pension-plan payment the state may not be able to make? Christie couldn't blame the economists — so he blamed his predecessors. "A billion of it is for the unaccrued liability that my predecessors didn't pay for increased benefits," he explained. "Christie Whitman, Jim McGreevey, Dick Codey, Jon Corzine made no pension payments. None. Zero."

This was not helping Christie's image as a straight shooter. "Bob keeps asking me these questions as if I'm actually going to answer them," the governor said when Schieffer had the nerve to inquire about how Christie would pay the pension liability. "You're ruining my reputation."

It was bad luck that Christie's fiscal crisis had climaxed just as he gave a highly billed address to the fiscal summit. But for the governor, the bad luck keeps coming. The speaker immediately before Christie was Bill Clinton, who was folksy and funny as he rebutted questions raised about his wife's health by Karl Rove.

PBS's Gwen Ifill, Clinton's interviewer, asked about the suggestion by "Dr. Rove" that Hillary Rodham Clinton had suffered a brain injury.

"Consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds," the former president joked. "First they said she faked her concussion, and now they say she's auditioning for a part on 'The Walking Dead.' "

Clinton, who had to know that his wife's health would come up, had a few more lines prepared. "Now they say she's really got brain damage," he said. "If she does, I must be in really tough shape because she's still quicker than I am."

Six months ago, Christie and Hillary Clinton were in strong positions to be their respective parties' 2016 standard bearers. But the divergence in fortunes since then could be seen in the postures and presentations of the governor and the former president Wednesday.

Clinton, legs crossed, chin on fist, seemed to be enjoying himself as he defended his wife's handling of the Benghazi attacks as secretary of state. "Hillary did what she should have done," the former commander in chief said, floating a possible counterattack: "Most Americans don't even know how many American diplomatic personnel were killed when President Bush was president."

Christie, by contrast, sat gripping the armrests, his feet planted on the floor, frequently straightening his tie. When Schieffer asked about "Bridgegate," Christie suddenly became interested in his coffee mug, holding it upside down to show that it was empty. "It's a prop, obviously," Christie said.

What impact would the bridge flap have on his political future? "I think it will have none because I didn't do anything," Christie said, blaming the "circus" of Washington. "A couple of staff people do something that they shouldn't have done, I fire them, and all of a sudden this becomes the biggest story in the country for a couple of months," he said, "because I guess you guys weren't doing anything else down here."

Christie dismissed the bridge as "a footnote," and he returned to the topic of New Jersey's finances. "My future is going to be based upon the record" of his fiscal management, he said.

That's the problem.

Twitter: @Milbank

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES

Carey's Police Meddling Will Cost Dover \$300,000

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Dover will pay five high-ranking police officers a total of \$300,000 in a settlement that stems from complaints that former Mayor Carleton Carey violated employment and affirmative action policies and abused his authority by influencing the appointment of a deputy police chief.

The settlement agreement authorized by the City Council came after council members pressured Carey to resign last month over the five grievances. The complaints were filed shortly after he selected police Chief Paul Bernat to replace former chief James Hosfelt.

The officers claim that Carey, who has the power to select the city's top cop, influenced Bernat's decision to choose then-Lt. Marvin Mailey as his deputy.

The officers claim they were passed over because of race, and that Carey's influence was unprecedented. Mailey, the former head of the internal affairs unit, is African American. Four of the officers were Caucasian, and one was bi-racial, according to the settlement agreement.

The city, already facing a nearly \$7 million deficit over several years, now must find the money to pay the settlement.

Four officers — Capt. Tim Stump, Lts. Dan McKeown, Jason Pires and J. Eric Richardson — will receive \$50,000 each by the end of May. Capt. Robert Scott will be paid \$100,000, half by the end of this month, the other half in January 2015.

The payments may come from the city's budget, but officials are exploring whether the city's insurance will cover the settlement, Council President David Bonar said.

Council members reviewed the grievances in April and serious questions arose about whether Carey exceeded his authority and "orchestrated a series of events" to ensure Mailey was elevated to deputy chief.

They asked Carey to resign because of the city's potential exposure. A plan to shift oversight of the police department from mayor to the city manager was in the works well before the grievances were filed, Bonar said.

"The only thing we were told was that it was the chief's impression that he had kind of put him in the position where he was forced to hire someone else other than the people who filed the grievance," Bonar said.

Carey, in an interview Wednesday, denied the allegations. He said the only thing he did was appoint a police chief. The chief can appoint whomever he likes, Carey said.

"My goal was to do the best I could for the citizens of Dover. That's what I wanted to do, was willing to do and I have done," Carey said. "I certainly would have liked to continue."

He had no idea that council would speak publicly about the events. "I denied the accusations. That's as much as I could do," he said. "I just didn't think I should get involved in fighting the allegations at that point."

Dover's Police Department has faced controversy in the past year, with authorities still probing Cpl. Thomas Webster's Aug. 24 arrest of Lateef Dickerson on assault and other charges.

A Kent County Superior Court grand jury recently reviewed claims of police brutality after the department forwarded the matter to the state Attorney General's Office, but did not issue an indictment.

The incident prompted outcry from the city's African-American community and relations have been tense in the past few years, the state's president of the NAACP has said.

Officials said they are behind Bernat, Mailey and the rest of the department.

Contact Jon Offredo at (302) 678-4271 or at joffredo@delawareonline.com or on Twitter @jonoffredo.

Bill Would Permit Possession Of Heroin Overdose Drug

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

The Delaware Senate will consider a bill that makes a drug available without a prescription that supporters argue will save the life of someone overdosing on heroin or other opioids.

The legislation, which cleared a Senate committee Wednesday, allows Delaware's Department of Health and Social Services to distribute Naloxone without a prescription and at little or no cost to anyone who completes a training program.. Officials say the legislation is a tool to combat the growing heroin and opioid epidemic facing the state.

"This legislation will save lives," said the bill's sponsor Sen. Bethany Hall-Long, D-Middletown.

Delaware law currently allows friends and family members to purchase the drug when a prescription is written for a person with the addiction. One brand of the drug, Narcan, is available as a nasal spray. In April, the Food and Drug Administration approved an autoinjector-like device for administration of the drug, but the cost of it is unknown.

It could have saved David Humes's son, Greg, who died of an overdose in 2012. Humes remembers police telling him that his son could have survived if the state had a 911 Good Samaritan or Narcan law.

He lives those words every day of his life, he told the Senate Health and Social Services Committee on Wednesday. Gov. Jack Markell signed the Samaritan law last year.

"Time matters. Give other parents a life-saving tool that I didn't have," he said.

It's not clear how the community-based training program would work, but officials from DHSS are looking at best practices across the nation, said Debbie Gottschalk, the department's chief policy adviser.

The idea is to get the drug in the hands of more people who are likely to come across overdoses, whether they are community group members, friends or family members, Gottschalk said. Training is needed to help people understand how to administer the medicine, she added.

For Diann Jones, of Middletown, the legislation offers peace of mind.

Her daughter, 22, has been in and out of treatment for heroin and opioid addiction in the past two years. It's a constant struggle to fight the disease, but the legislation would allow her to help immediately, even if her daughter didn't seek a prescription, she said.

They recently took a drive to North Carolina, but she would have been powerless if the worst had happened.

"I have no idea what I would have done," she said.

Emergency Medical Service units in Delaware have administered Naloxone for several years now and 900 unresponsive people were given the drug in 2013. Three hundred were revived, but it is unknown how many had overdosed on opioids.

A pilot project started in March that allows Basic Life Support units to carry the drug in high heroin use areas has already seen results. Units have administered it five times, reviving three people. The drug

is administered before police officers arrive at the scene in the vast majority of instances where emergency responders use it.

The legislation provides a front-line defense to a heroin and opioid epidemic, said Joe Connor, president of Addictions Coalition Delaware. Treatment for addiction comes in many forms: abstinence, medicine, education.

"This is kind of the 911 of treatment," he said. "It brings someone back from an overdose and gives them another opportunity to get treatment."

Contact Jon Offredo at (302) 678-4271 or at joffredo@delawareonline.com or on Twitter @jonoffredo.

Smyrna Receives Sparkling Start

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

SMYRNA – John Richardson pitched nine innings against Salesianum on Saturday.

Photo Gallery: Smyrna 3, A.I. du Pont 1

Prep Notes: Several spring tournament fields set

The Smyrna right-hander won that one, and he had plenty left against A.I. du Pont on Wednesday. Richardson pitched a two-hitter, and the Eagles scored all of their runs in the first two innings and held on for a 3-1 victory over the third-ranked Tigers.

Last SlideNext Slide

"Mostly, I just couldn't let the team down," Richardson said. "I wanted to keep going. We're kind of underestimated in the state, and we've put ourselves on the map. I didn't want to give up on the team."

Richardson said he had all four pitches – fastball, curveball, changeup and slider – working well. He was far from overpowering (only two strikeouts), but kept the ball so low the Tigers would have been better off swinging 4-irons.

"He's a bulldog," Smyrna coach Mike Henderson said. "He's not your typical No. 1 [starter]. He's not going to some big college like a lot of people's No. 1s. But he pitched well against St. Mark's, beat Salesianum, beat A.I. du Pont, beat Polytech – all top-notch teams."

The Eagles (14-4) loaded the bases with no outs in the first, as Corey Everage was hit by a pitch and Ryan Seymour and Jared Gillis followed with singles. Everage scored on an error, and Nick Macey lifted a sacrifice fly to left to score Seymour for a 2-0 lead.

Smyrna hit the board again in the second when Justin Jones was hit by a pitch, scooted to second on an error and scored on a single by Everage.

That was all Richardson (5-2) needed, although he ran into trouble in the fourth. Matthew Geist and Peter Gillette singled, and the Tigers loaded the bases with no outs when Geist beat the throw to third on a sacrifice bunt by Kyle Phillips. But Richardson coaxed a 6-4-3 double play that allowed one run to score, and got out of the jam when A.I.'s Cory Alaburda lined out to third.

"Spot the ball, and good defense," Richardson said. "That's all you need."

Richardson got five groundball outs in the next two innings, then received a huge boost when Smyrna left fielder Justin Jones made a sliding, shoestring catch in the seventh.

"His efficiency is just ridiculous," Henderson said. "He averages 13 pitches per inning. We wouldn't be here without him."

The Tigers pitched three straight shutouts against Concord, Glasgow and Appoquinimink last week, but lost their second straight after falling to Hodgson 7-2 on Monday.

"We've just run into some bad luck the last week and a half or so. We haven't been able to swing the sticks," A.I. coach Darren Brodie said. "We've faced some really good pitching. Their kid on the mound was outstanding. He did his job."

Contact Brad Myers at (302) 324-2807 or bmyers@delawareonline.com

NAACP Remarks 'Not Being Racist,' Wilson Says

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Sam Wilson says he regrets nothing.

On Tuesday, he was called a "racist and a bigot," among other things, after he took issue with the word "colored" in the NAACP's name at the weekly Sussex County Council meeting.

His comments drew strong responses. A colleague on Council said Wilson showed "poor judgment."

"People are hung up too much on who they are or what color they are. I don't get hung up on it," Wilson said Wednesday. "It's certainly not being racist to ask the question."

Wilson touched off the controversy when he objected to giving a county grant to the Lower Sussex Branch NAACP Youth Council.

"I'm not going to give anything. Unless you can describe what that says," he told a county staffer who was reciting to Council which organizations were asking for grants this week. "What's NAACP stand for?"

The group's acronym stands for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Wilson, in the Council meeting, indicated the phrase "colored people" signified the NAACP must be involved in "discrimination."

Vance Phillips, another councilman, said he agreed with Wilson and would not give the Youth Council any money from his discretionary fund either.

On Wednesday, amplifying comments, Wilson said he believed the NAACP advocated only for black people to the exclusion of white people.

"How do you think it would fly if I said, 'This is for the NAAWP?' I don't think it would fly, either," Wilson said. "It's not my goal to say the blacks are over there and the whites are over here. That's not what I want to do and I didn't intend to do that."

The history of the NAACP is not of a blacks-only club. Started in 1909 to combat lynchings, the group was founded by several dozen people, only seven of whom were African-American.

Its first president was a white lawyer, Moorfield Storey. One of the best-known black activists of the time, W.E.B. DuBois, was the only black member of the original board of directors. All of the group's executives in the modern era have been black.

"The councilman is incorrect in his assumption that the NAACP is an organization that would reject anyone from joining because of race," said Jotaka Eaddy, senior director of the group's voting rights project. "Anyone who wants to work with us toward our mission, we're ready and willing to work with them."

Wilson, a Republican and farmer of land just outside Georgetown, said he's had only supportive calls and messages from constituents about his comments.

"I've had people call me who said that I said the right thing, asked the right questions. I've never had people call who disagreed," he said. "I know a lot of black folks who would probably agree with me."

Richard Smith, president of the Delaware chapter of the NAACP, said Tuesday that Wilson and Phillips "seem to be racists and bigots" after he heard the exchange.

Of that criticism, Wilson said: "To be honest with you, he's more of a racist and a bigot than I am."

Local black leaders strenuously disagreed with Wilson, who has staked out strongly held positions on social issues before.

When the state was debating gay marriage in 2013, Wilson used a Council meeting to say allowing same-sex marriage was “legislating immorality,” and warned that allowing it “leads back to child abuse.”

Later that year, when a Sussex school board voted not to add an elective high school course on Bible literacy, Wilson told a radio host it was because “one of them is a lesbian,” and “they’re not very strong on the Bible.”

“Taking into consideration the things Sam has said, I’m not shocked, but I am surprised,” said Jane Hovington, the Lower Sussex Branch NAACP president. “But people are incensed.”

Right-leaning talk radio in Sussex County took Wilson’s side on Wednesday.

“Good for Sam for speaking up,” Jared Morris, a host for Delaware 105.9, wrote in a blog entry suggesting Wilson was wise to distance himself from the NAACP because “the media elite” would someday soon “decide that supporting an organization that uses a ‘racist’ term like colored people is, in itself, racist.”

Only in Delaware: ‘Racists and bigots’ and prayers, oh my

After Wilson and Phillips objected to contributing \$100 in their names to the Youth Council’s customary \$500 annual grant from the county, George Cole, a GOP council member from Ocean View, tried to smooth things over. Cole made a motion to give the group \$500 this year without touching Wilson’s and Phillips’ discretionary accounts, and that motion passed quickly.

On Wednesday, Cole said he didn’t want constituents to think the entire County Council had a problem with the NAACP.

“It was really just the two of them showing poor judgment, in my opinion,” Cole said. “It reflects on the whole County Council. But no, the whole County Council did not do that.” Cole also said it was unwise for the Council’s only democrat, Joan Deaver, to deliver a retort to Phillips and Wilson that referenced the Ku Klux Klan. Deaver did not return a call for comment Wednesday.

Wilson said he was not bothered by the controversy his remarks caused.

“My dad used to say, the more you stir the pot, the worse it stinks,” Wilson said. “And I think I stirred it pretty well yesterday.”

Contact James Fisher at 983-6772, on Twitter @JamesFisherTNJ or jfisher@delawareonline.com.

Earlier story: Councilmen oppose NAACP grants

Medical Examiner Callery ‘Absent’ Much Of Time

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

DOVER Delaware’s chief medical examiner, Richard T. Callery, used his state office, including state employees, to run a private consulting business, state prosecutor Kathleen Jennings told lawmakers during a joint committee hearing in Legislative Hall on Wednesday.

The hearing was called by Sen. Robert Marshall, a Wilmington Democrat and chair of the Senate Public Safety Committee, to learn more about how drugs went missing from the state’s Controlled Substances Laboratory, which is housed in the chief medical examiner’s office.

Prosecutors have notified 75 defendants that drug evidence in their cases may have been tampered with or gone missing, including five defendants in federal prosecutions.

The drug scandal has “compromised” 146 cases, resulting in plea deals or dismissals, Jennings told lawmakers on Wednesday. Marijuana, heroin, Oxycontin and cocaine are among the missing drugs.

Story: Police say twin was shaken to death

Story: Drug kingpin's sentencing delayed by theatrics

Delaware's public defender has filed more than 420 motions since April 30 seeking to reopen and overturn drug convictions due to security lapses in the drug lab and thefts of drug evidence.

During testimony Wednesday, Jennings blamed Callery for creating a culture in the medical examiner's office that led to unsupervised work and, ultimately, the drugs going missing.

She said Callery, who remains the subject of a Delaware State Police criminal investigation, for the potential misuse of state resources, was "absent for large, large periods of time consulting and testifying in other states."

The News Journal has detailed the those absences and problems that led to the missing drug evidence in a series of stories.

For years, Callery has worked side jobs as an expert witness for defendants in cases out of state., as well as some prosecutions He also worked as a contract pathologist for the state of Rhode Island for at least a decade while employed full time for the state of Delaware.

"It's not rocket science that this would happen if someone isn't there supervising what is going on," Jennings said. "It's inevitable that bad things happen in a culture like that."

Callery remains on suspension but continues to collect his \$198,000-a-year salary while investigations continue. He is also the subject of a an internal human resources investigation at the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services.

Another member of the office, forensic investigator James Woodson, also has been suspended with pay while investigations continue.

State officials shuttered the state's drug lab on Feb. 25 after learning of the missing evidence. Investigators have since pored through 25,000 pieces of drug evidence – including more than 9,270 in the evidence locker in the chief medical examiner's office – for signs of tampering. Investigators have since pored through 25,000 pieces of drug evidence for signs of tampering and more than 9,270 in the evidence locker in the chief medical examiner's office.

The Delaware State Police and other police agencies across the state have reported evidence problems in material they received back from the medical examiner's office, Jennings said, including departments agencies in Wilmington, New Castle County, Dover, Middletown, Milford and Bridgeville.

Since the February closure of the drug lab, law enforcement agencies have been sending drug evidence for testing to a contractor's lab in Willow Grove, Pa., at cost of to the state thus far of \$102,000, thus far.

Gov. Jack Markell and administration officials took their first formal steps Wednesday to reorganize the medical examiner's office in response to the missing drug scandal. A proposal presented at Wednesday's hearing would make the office under law enforcement control as a new division in the state Department of Safety and Homeland Security.

The administration plan would rename the office the Division of Forensic Science, create a Forensic Science Commission to oversee it, the new division and make the division director more accountable to top administration officials. Lawmakers must approve any such change.

Any reorganization could have impacts on the state budget. Lewis Schiliro, secretary of Homeland Security, said the move will come with a cost, but is necessary to reopen the state's drug lab and restart evidence processing.

"There will be some costs attached to it," Schiliro told lawmakers. "There is no other way to do this. In my view, we will not be able to accept evidence back there until we have a system in there that can attest to the credibility."

Lawmakers and Jennings blamed Callery for leaving the medical examiner's office without a consistent supervisor.

Callery is serving a 10-year term as chief medical examiner, with his term scheduled to run through 2017. He has "due-process" rights, HSS Secretary Rita Landgraf told lawmakers Wednesday, and is not easily fired.

"I know you are in a very difficult position," Sen. Greg Lavelle, a Sharpley Republican, told administration officials. "Boy it would be nice if he would resign, wouldn't it, and take responsibility for his failures in that office."

Rep. Michael Mulrooney, a Newark DemocratD-Pennwood, said it's past time for Callery to lose his job.

"Enough is enough," Mulrooney said. "Heads gotta roll. I'm just an old electrician. I know if I messed up a job this big, I'd be gone. I don't see why any government official has to be any different."

Reporter Sean O'Sullivan contributed to this story.

Contact Jonathan Starkey at (302) 983-6756, on Twitter @jwstarkey or at jstarkey@delawareonline.com

Medimmune, Incyte Partner In Drug Trial

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Wilmington biopharmaceutical firm Incyte and MedImmune, AstraZeneca's biologics and research development arm, are teaming up for the first time in a clinical study designed to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of a combination cancer treatment.

The first phase of the trial will seek to establish a recommended dose of two investigational compounds – MedImmune's MEDI4736 and Incyte's INCB24360 – which AstraZeneca describes as "part of a new class of cancer treatments known as immunotherapies, which use the body's own immune system to help fight cancer."

"Preclinical evidence suggests that the combination of these two agents may lead to an enhanced anti-tumor immune response," AstraZeneca said.

The second phase of the study will measure the safety and effectiveness of the treatment.

Story:: AstraZeneca positions vulnerable amid merger discussion

The MedImmune therapy blocks the signals that tumors use to help avoid detection by the immune system, according to AstraZeneca. Called a "human monoclonal antibody," it is a protein derived from a single human cell, rather than from an animal or created in a test tube, said AstraZeneca spokeswoman Alisha Martin. The proteins are then altered for efficacy and safety and cloned in large numbers to be used in therapy.

Meanwhile, the Incyte compound strengthens the ability of immune cells to fight tumors.

The collaboration is being done on a non-exclusive basis, so either firm may pursue additional trials of the therapies. AstraZeneca could not provide the cost of the study, but it will be co-funded equally by MedImmune and Incyte, which will conduct the trial.

The treatment will address multiple solid tumors, AstraZeneca said, "including metastatic melanoma, non-small cell lung cancer, squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck and pancreatic cancer."

The study is "open label," meaning both the researchers and participants are aware of the therapy being administered, so the companies will receive data in real time, Martin said.

Because of the nature of the study, she said, it's unknown how long it will take, but the companies expect to enroll the first patient this year and plan to present interim data at scientific conferences.

"Immuno-oncology is one of the most exciting areas in our industry, and we are progressing our strong pipeline as rapidly as possible," said Dr. Bahija Jallal, executive vice president of MedImmune, which AstraZeneca acquired for \$15 billion in 2007.

It now represents nearly half of AstraZeneca's R&D pipeline.

"Our partnership with Incyte is further evidence of our belief that combination therapies have the potential to be one of the most effective ways of treating cancer."

Said Incyte President and CEO Hervé Hoppenot: "Research collaborations that evaluate combinations of novel immunotherapies across a broad range of indications have the potential to accelerate our understanding of this rapidly evolving field, to identify new areas of opportunity for immunotherapies and to more rapidly address the unmet needs of patients with a wide range of cancers."

Contact Suzanne Herel at (302) 324-2876 or sherel@delawareonline.com.

Coons: Pfizer-AZ Raises Antitrust Concerns

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Pfizer's proposed acquisition of AstraZeneca could hurt competition in the pharmaceutical industry, and if it moves forward, it should be reviewed by U.S. antitrust regulators, Sen. Chris Coons wrote in a letter to the U.S. Federal Trade Commission and Justice Department.

Pfizer has a history of acquiring drug companies and slashing jobs, including research sites, Coons wrote in the letter, dated Wednesday. An acquisition of AstraZeneca threatens to lead to "fewer drugs and diminished consumer welfare," he wrote.

Pfizer wants to buy AstraZeneca, but the British pharma has spurned the offers, saying Pfizer undervalues its pipeline. Pfizer this week hinted it would further sweeten its \$106 billion bid in advance of a May 26 deadline by the British government or might consider a hostile takeover bid by going directly to shareholders.

Earlier story: Pfizer urged to keep AstraZeneca jobs in Delaware

Story:: AstraZeneca positions vulnerable amid merger discussion

Story: AstraZeneca profit misses estimates

Related: Medimmune, Incyte partner in drug trial

Such a combined company would represent the largest pharmaceutical firm in the world.

And by reincorporating in the United Kingdom, Pfizer would realize tax savings estimated at \$1 billion.

Coons wrote such an approach would allow it to operate as a U.S. company without paying U.S. taxes.

"We do not believe that this transfer from U.S. taxpayers to Pfizer constitutes a pro-competitive justification for the merger and encourage your careful review to ensure consumers, patients and the marketplace are protected from anticompetitive harm," Coons wrote.

The market "concentration" created by such a merger "will be sufficient to raise significant competitive concerns, beginning with certain prescription drugs" like AstraZeneca's Crestor and Pfizer's Lipitor, both cholesterol drugs.

Coons noted that following its 2009 acquisition of Wyeth, Pfizer shuttered six of 20 research sites around the globe and cut research and development to half of what it had collectively spent the previous

year. Since 2009, the consolidated drug industry has resulted in about 156,000 job losses in this country, Coons wrote.

AstraZeneca, which has its North American headquarters in Delaware, employs about 2,600 in the state as well as 3,100 at MedImmune, its biologics and research development arm, in Maryland.

“Any efficiencies claimed to justify this merger may be vastly outweighed by the significant competitive harm to consumers and patients,” Coons wrote.

Coons, D-Del., included the signatures of five other senators on his letter.

Broken Parts Extend Salem Nuclear Reactor Shutdown

By Jeff Montgomery

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Eight thumb-sized, broken bolt-heads have sidetracked PSEG Nuclear’s plans for restarting its Salem Unit 2 nuclear reactor, as investigators work to find the breakaway spots and reasons for failure.

Discovery of the broken reactor coolant pump parts during a routine refueling outage prompted the company to extend the shutdown, which began April 14. It was the latest in a string of problems at the Salem/Hope Creek nuclear complex.

Company spokesman Joe Delmar said Wednesday afternoon that PSEG was being conservative in delaying its restart to allow “additional internal inspections of the coolant pumps and make any repairs as needed.”

Nuclear Regulatory Commission spokesman Neil Sheehan said the bolt tops, each about an inch in diameter and 3 inches long, are likely from the area of one of four reactor coolant pump’s impeller vanes, or blades.

Investigators consider “stress-corrosion cracking,” – a kind of failure that occurs in some types of metals exposed to particular types of stress, temperature and corrosive conditions – as one of the potential causes for the breaks, Sheehan said.

“The concern is that if bolts holding the turning vane failed, the vane could drop and impact the rotating pump internals,” Sheehan said.

Worldwide, Sheehan said, only Salem Unit 2 and the Surry nuclear plant in Virginia use the type of reactor pump where the bolts were found – with four of the pumps installed at Salem and six at Surry.

PSEG operates three reactors at its Artificial Island site along the Delaware River in New Jersey southeast of Port Penn, owning all of the Hope Creek reactor and 57 percent of Salem Units 1, with energy giant Exelon owning the remaining 43 percent.

Unit 2 shut down for refueling April 14 and was expected to return to service around mid-May.

Salem Unit 1 has reported three unplanned shutdowns this year, potentially subjecting the operation to increased oversight.

Salem/Hope Creek ranks as the nation’s second-largest nuclear generating complex and is part of the nation’s most densely populated cluster of multiple, overlapping reactor emergency planning areas. Nearly 54,000 people live inside the 10-mile evacuation planning zone for the complex, about 80 percent in Delaware. Some 5.5 million in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania live within 50 miles of the facility.

Newark Co-op Joins National Network

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Newark Natural Foods has joined the National Cooperative Grocers Association, a national organization that spans 38 states and 142 co-ops with a combined sales of more than \$1.6 billion.

The grocery store, www.newarknaturalfoods.com, is located in the same town as the University of Delaware. It was founded in 1967 as a “food-buying club,” and it was incorporated in 1975, according to the grocers association announcement. There are more than 3,400 active members in the co-op today, according to the association, and the grocer has more than \$5 million in annual sales.

“We’re delighted to welcome our new member and associate co-ops and the communities they serve,” C.E. Pugh, chief operating officer for National Cooperative Grocers Association said in a statement included in the announcement. “The management and staff of these co-ops have done a fantastic job of growing their businesses and we’re excited for their participation with NCGA. Our association is enhanced as they join other food co-ops across the country to provide healthier food, better services, and stronger communities.”

The grocers association, www.ncga.coop, is a cooperative that provides business services, including purchasing and marketing, to members.

Chobani Incorporates In Delaware, Sparking IPO Talk

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Chobani, the popular Greek yogurt maker founded by Turkish immigrant Hamdi Ulukaya, has incorporated in Delaware, according to a March 6 filing with the state Division of Corporations.

The move is widely suspected to foreshadow an initial public offering for the private Norwich, New York, company, which last month secured a \$750 million investment from TPG Capital.

More than half of the publicly traded companies in the U.S. are incorporated in the First State, according to the Division of Corporations – including 64 percent of Fortune 500 companies. They’re drawn by the state’s business-friendly corporation law, which the group describes as “the most advanced and flexible business formation statute in the nation.”

Contacted Wednesday, Chobani declined to comment on the prospect of an IPO.

In an emailed statement, the company said, “Our home remains in New York, where Chobani was founded, where our yogurt is made and where our company is headquartered. Like many companies based around the country, Chobani registered in Delaware earlier this year to permit greater flexibility in operating and growing the business.”

That’s good news for the New York Senate, which on May 6 – after being lobbied by a fourth-grade class – voted to make yogurt the state’s official snack.

A move to Delaware would have been low-hanging fruit for comedians like Jon Stewart and David Letterman, who already have lampooned the debate over the bill, which included the following exchange, according to the Associated Press:

“What exactly are we defining as a snack?” asked Sen. Gustavo Rivera, a Democrat from the Bronx.

“I think it’s self-explanatory. I mean, you have breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and then you have snacks,” said the bill’s Republican sponsor, Sen. Michael Ranzenhofer.

Rivera responded, “Did you consider, say, the potato chip?”

NAACP Remarks ‘Not Being Racist,’ Wilson Says

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Sam Wilson says he regrets nothing.

On Tuesday, he was called a “racist and a bigot,” among other things, after he took issue with the word “colored” in the NAACP’s name at the weekly Sussex County Council meeting.

His comments drew strong responses. A colleague on Council said Wilson showed “poor judgment.”

"People are hung up too much on who they are or what color they are. I don't get hung up on it," Wilson said Wednesday. "It's certainly not being racist to ask the question."

Wilson touched off the controversy when he objected to giving a county grant to the Lower Sussex Branch NAACP Youth Council.

"I'm not going to give anything. Unless you can describe what that says," he told a county staffer who was reciting to Council which organizations were asking for grants this week. "What's NAACP stand for?"

The group's acronym stands for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Wilson, in the Council meeting, indicated the phrase "colored people" signified the NAACP must be involved in "discrimination."

Vance Phillips, another councilman, said he agreed with Wilson and would not give the Youth Council any money from his discretionary fund either.

On Wednesday, amplifying comments, Wilson said he believed the NAACP advocated only for black people to the exclusion of white people.

"How do you think it would fly if I said, 'This is for the NAAWP?' I don't think it would fly, either," Wilson said. "It's not my goal to say the blacks are over there and the whites are over here. That's not what I want to do and I didn't intend to do that."

The history of the NAACP is not of a blacks-only club. Started in 1909 to combat lynchings, the group was founded by several dozen people, only seven of whom were African-American.

Its first president was a white lawyer, Moorfield Storey. One of the best-known black activists of the time, W.E.B. DuBois, was the only black member of the original board of directors. All of the group's executives in the modern era have been black.

"The councilman is incorrect in his assumption that the NAACP is an organization that would reject anyone from joining because of race," said Jotaka Eaddy, senior director of the group's voting rights project. "Anyone who wants to work with us toward our mission, we're ready and willing to work with them."

Wilson, a Republican and farmer of land just outside Georgetown, said he's had only supportive calls and messages from constituents about his comments.

"I've had people call me who said that I said the right thing, asked the right questions. I've never had people call who disagreed," he said. "I know a lot of black folks who would probably agree with me."

Richard Smith, president of the Delaware chapter of the NAACP, said Tuesday that Wilson and Phillips "seem to be racists and bigots" after he heard the exchange.

Of that criticism, Wilson said: "To be honest with you, he's more of a racist and a bigot than I am."

Local black leaders strenuously disagreed with Wilson, who has staked out strongly held positions on social issues before.

When the state was debating gay marriage in 2013, Wilson used a Council meeting to say allowing same-sex marriage was "legislating immorality," and warned that allowing it "leads back to child abuse."

Later that year, when a Sussex school board voted not to add an elective high school course on Bible literacy, Wilson told a radio host it was because "one of them is a lesbian," and "they're not very strong on the Bible."

"Taking into consideration the things Sam has said, I'm not shocked, but I am surprised," said Jane Hovington, the Lower Sussex Branch NAACP president. "But people are incensed."

Right-leaning talk radio in Sussex County took Wilson's side on Wednesday.

"Good for Sam for speaking up," Jared Morris, a host for Delaware 105.9, wrote in a blog entry suggesting Wilson was wise to distance himself from the NAACP because "the media elite" would

someday soon “decide that supporting an organization that uses a ‘racist’ term like colored people is, in itself, racist.”

Only in Delaware: ‘Racists and bigots’ and prayers, oh my

After Wilson and Phillips objected to contributing \$100 in their names to the Youth Council’s customary \$500 annual grant from the county, George Cole, a GOP council member from Ocean View, tried to smooth things over. Cole made a motion to give the group \$500 this year without touching Wilson’s and Phillips’ discretionary accounts, and that motion passed quickly.

On Wednesday, Cole said he didn’t want constituents to think the entire County Council had a problem with the NAACP.

“It was really just the two of them showing poor judgment, in my opinion,” Cole said. “It reflects on the whole County Council. But no, the whole County Council did not do that.” Cole also said it was unwise for the Council’s only democrat, Joan Deaver, to deliver a retort to Phillips and Wilson that referenced the Ku Klux Klan. Deaver did not return a call for comment Wednesday.

Wilson said he was not bothered by the controversy his remarks caused.

“My dad used to say, the more you stir the pot, the worse it stinks,” Wilson said. “And I think I stirred it pretty well yesterday.”

Contact James Fisher at 983-6772, on Twitter @JamesFisherTNJ or jfisher@delawareonline.com.

Earlier story: Councilmen oppose NAACP grants

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL EDITORIALS

Revised Forensic Division Welcome

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Delaware now has a plan that could strengthen the state’s criminal investigation system. The proposal also could prevent future crime lab scandals, such as the one now threatening to set free convicted criminals because of tainted evidence.

On Wednesday, Lewis Schiliro, secretary of the Department of Safety and Homeland Security, and Rita Landgraf, secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services, called for the reorganization of the Medical Examiner’s Office. They want to create a new Division of Forensic Science.

The new division would be under the Homeland Security Department. A special commission would oversee it. The proposal would combine some operations and enforce professional standards.

Investigators are looking closely at the current Medical Examiner’s Office because of reports of stolen drugs and bungled evidence control.

The Schiliro-Landgraf proposal includes a requirement that a director with expertise in forensic sciences head the division. The combination of the reorganization and the oversight commission could improve the professionalism of the state’s forensic services.

The Legislature must approve the Schiliro-Landgraf proposal. We urge legislators to consider this plan carefully and seriously. The quicker they get a professional unit up and running, the better for all of Delaware.

The state should show it is serious about fighting crime and protecting the rights of the accused.

A Casino Bailout Would Equal A Fisker Bailout Every Year

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Although it is unfortunate to hear of Dover Downs and the other casinos doing poorly, it was not unexpected at all from a group that has had a monopoly for over 15 years, blew it and now wants a \$20 million annual cut in fees and taxes.

They have been classically mismanaged: 1) They have run up their debts; 2) been bled of their funds by excessive dividends, outlandish executive compensation and worse; 3) made other poor non-related investments, most not even in Delaware or casino related. Would “good partners” do that? These financial screw-ups have made them ill-prepared for the reality of competition from Maryland and Pennsylvania despite knowing it was coming.

Funny, isn't this what we did to New Jersey in the 1990s?

Bad ongoing management, not competition, is the problem. This proposed fiscal irresponsibility is so crazy, particularly with the state's current fiscal condition, I don't know if we should ask for an intervention or an investigation. Currently in just one new, properly built and run casino in Maryland, they make just as much as all three of ours combined; how pathetic. Remember, “All casinos have two things in common, no windows and no clocks, which creates a make-believe world.” Folks, we have no “make-believe” here sadly.

Think, why do people drive to Atlantic City or fly across the continent to Las Vegas? It's simple; they have more fun there.

Making matters worse, our existing casinos want: 1) No strings on the fee cuts and money that they want from the taxpayers; 2) No executive salary or dividend caps; 3) No job guarantees (at this time, most of their employees are working part time with no benefits and many are eligible for Medicaid and welfare, all on the taxpayers' dime); and 4) The existing casinos still outlandishly want their M-O-N-O-P-O-L-Y! So much for being a fully competing “Sandwich Shop” as Sen. Brian Bushweller describes them.

Remember, if they do go bankrupt they will not collapse into a sinkhole, the banks will simply run them until they find a competent buyer/operator. Frankly, with no overwhelming debt, they will all be stronger and then they can live within the fee structure that currently exists, which by the way is cheaper than the bordering states.

In full disclosure, I am an attorney in Wilmington, originally from Seaford, who represents one of the companies proposing two new gambling sites in Delaware. One for Sussex, since it does not have one, and another for New Castle County. Incidentally, all of the new proposed sites can and will live within the existing fee structure and will spend hundreds of millions of their own dollars and plan to build facilities that include entertainment as well as shopping, so as to make the new sites true destinations that people will want to frequent.

Tell your legislators to say no to this outlandish bailout. Are your readers getting a bailout? Let's spend the money where it is needed: ambulance/fire companies, roads or bridges and schools. All are better bets.

Finally, don't take our tax money or raise other taxes; instead, if the casinos need help and are this desperate, then lower the rates, eliminate their failed monopoly, allow two more gambling sites, auction off each license (\$15 million minimum) to make the state some money and refill our Treasury when we are running low, and protect current employees who apply to the new facilities. More jobs will ultimately be produced, and the state will make more money.

Darrell J. Baker is a Wilmington lawyer.

Sussex County Council Should Not Switch Prayers

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

A recent U.S. Supreme Court decision said it was OK for local governments to recite prayers as long as they do not “coerce participation by non-adherents.” It was not one of the court’s clearest decisions. It is raising questions around the country, including in Sussex County.

Some members of the county council admit they are considering an attempt to bring prayer back to its public meetings. Republican Councilman Sam Wilson said, “What’s wrong with The Lord’s Prayer?” Nothing, of course. But why change?

STORY: Sussex Council may say Lord’s Prayer again

The reference was to a previous practice of the council’s: Starting each meeting with The Lord’s Prayer. Supporters of the prayer described it as universal and non-sectarian. Depending on how you define the word “sectarian,” those descriptions might or might not be correct. However, the prayer led to a court fight and, under an agreement, the council agreed to what is described as the “less-sectarian” 23rd Psalm.

The council spent 25 minutes at a meeting this week discussing the return of The Lord’s Prayer.

We would suggest a little more meditation on the matter. Such a movement might be immediately popular, but it might cause unforeseen consequences, such as another costly lawsuit. A fight for the sake of a fight will not serve the county’s citizens well. The current arrangement appears to be working well – council members do not appear any less wise than in the old Lord’s Prayer days. Why start a new fight?

China Has 7 Million Graduates And No Jobs Available

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), May 14, 2014

Even during China’s most feudal phases, higher education has offered a reliable means of meritocratic advancement. Well into the 1990s, the limited number of university graduates meant that all of them were virtually assured places among the economic elite.

As China tries to evolve from “the workshop of the world” into a more technologically advanced service economy, however, a swelling glut of graduates is threatening this age-old compact. This year alone, Chinese universities are expected to produce a record 7 million degree holders, more than seven times the number 15 years ago. This rapid expansion has vastly outstripped demand: Unemployment among recent graduates has rocketed to 16 percent, four times the norm, while the wage premium they receive has plummeted by 19 percentage points. In some cities, semiskilled factory workers now make more than university graduates in office jobs.

High youth unemployment has spurred social unrest in many countries – including Spain, where joblessness among young people is double the national average, as well as Egypt and Tunisia. In China, the situation is even more fraught. For decades, the Communist Party has offered citizens a trade-off: economic opportunity in exchange for political docility. If the first is closed off, the whole bargain starts to look a lot less attractive.

Given the intensifying scramble for good jobs, connections have begun to matter more than merit. Party links in particular are a key deciding factor as businesses seek to build ties with influential officials by hiring their offspring.

The news media’s attention has been focused on high-profile Western banks, which allegedly recruited the children of top party officials in an effort to build guanxi, or close personal relationships, with the Chinese leadership. But the problem extends right down the scale: One study of the career prospects of college graduates found that the children of even low-level party officials were able to secure starting

salaries that were 15 percent higher than for those without such connections. No wonder graduates themselves have become the most rapidly expanding demographic within the party: The share of students who choose to join has risen to more than 11 percent today from less than 1 percent in 1990.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, wealth now matters as much as connections do in landing jobs. Some banks blatantly set conditions for coveted internships: “The parents must have a fixed-term deposit of at least 500,000 yuan at the branch,” reads one advertisement. Job seekers are forced to offer “gifts” in exchange for government positions.

Obviously the government needs to generate more high-skill jobs in order to soak up the flood of graduates. Slowing growth will make that difficult. Yet Chinese leaders could at least lift roadblocks to job creation – from restrictions on internal migration to regulations that favor industry over services.

In the United States, for instance, young college graduates are highly mobile; about half of them live outside their state of birth. By contrast, Chinese graduates are trapped in their home cities or provinces by a strict household registration system that discourages them from moving to where the jobs are. This generates unemployment in marginal cities while leaving important vacancies unfilled in the megacities that drive China’s economy.

At the same time, China favors industry over services by subsidizing the price of industrial land, with local governments keeping prices artificially low in hopes of attracting additional investment. As a result, from 2000 to 2010, the average price of commercial land rose from three times that of industrial land to almost nine times, dramatically raising the relative cost of business for service firms. Because services tend to be more labor-intensive and require more educated employees, this bias has slowed job growth for college graduates.

The policy of encouraging more Chinese to get a university education was meant to strengthen China, to help build it into a creative and modern service economy. Instead, the push is creating new and worrying vulnerabilities. It’s too late to turn back, which means solutions must focus on stimulating demand for graduates and changing the skill mix of those students. As President Xi Jinping works to root out corrupt practices, large and small, he should also focus on the bribe taking that’s becoming prevalent in the hiring process.

The alternative is a rising sense of injustice and frustration among tens of thousands of educated youth. That’s hardly a future he or China’s other leaders can afford to contemplate.

Yukon Huang is a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, where Canyon Bosler is a junior fellow.