

Sent: Fri, 25 Jul 2014 06:11:59 -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>, "Escudero, Adrian V." <adrian_v_escudero@ovp.eop.gov>, "Hornbrook, Alex" <alex_hornbrook@ovp.eop.gov>, "Kurren, Amy" <amy_m_kurren@ovp.eop.gov>, "Person, Anne Marie" <anne_m_person@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>, "Charles, A. Fromstein" <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." <elizabeth.regoli@whmo.mil>, "Hart, Liz" <elizabeth_a_hart@ovp.eop.gov>, "Schrum, Michael" <evan_m_schrum@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>, "Noblitt, Karly" <karly_m_noblitt@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" <kcoconnor@whmo.mil>, "Pietranton, Kelsey" <kelsey_i_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" <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

FOIA-6

/cn=recipients/cn=amin,faisalc7c">, "Lienemann, David C." </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /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">, "Person, Anne" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=person, anne.m.aae">, "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">, "Schrum, Evan" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=schrum, evan.m.schrum_ea9f">, "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, jeremy.c.15">, "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">, "Noblitt, Karly" </o=eop/ou=exchange administrative group /cn=recipients/cn=noblitt, karly.m.noblitt_ke6e">, "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">, "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 Friday, July 25, 2014

[VPNewsClips140725.doc](#)

[VPNewsClips140725.pdf](#)

TO: THE VICE PRESIDENT AND STAFF

DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 25, 2014 -- 6:15 AM EDT

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

BIDEN IN THE NEWS:

- + Biden, In Ohio, Urges Infrastructure, Job Training (AP)
- + Vice President Speaks To Delegates At National Urban League Conference (CINENQ)
- + What Cuyahoga County Executive Ed Fitzgerald Said In His Speech To The National Urban League (PLAINDLR)
- + VP Biden Set To Appear At Conference Downtown (WKRCTV)
- + Vice President Joe Biden Speaks At National Urban League Conference (WCPOTV)
- + Biden Stresses Jobs, Job Training At National Urban League Conference (WLWTTV)
- + Biden Encourages Infrastructure Development At Urban League Conference (WKSUFM)
- + Joe Biden: Voter ID Laws "An Attempt To Repress Minority Voting" (CBSNEWS)
- + Biden: GOP States Waging 'Assault' On Voting Rights (NBCNEWS)
- + Biden: State Ballots Threaten Gains Made (TOLB)
- + Biden: Blacks Have Not Made Enough Progress (WT)
- + Joe Biden: 'Businesses Are Hiring At Historic Rates' (WT)
- + Central American Presidents Want More US Investment In Security (MCT)
- + Central American Leaders Want Washington's Help With Immigration Crisis (WP)
- + Honduran Children May Be Allowed To Apply For U.S. Admission From Home (LAT)
- + Biden: Shoulda' Had One Republican Rich Kid (BLOOMCD)
- + Poll: Clinton Dominates 2016 Field In Florida (HILL)
- + Poll: Clinton Sweeps GOP In Florida (POLITICO)
- + Clinton Polling Well In Key Presidential Battleground (CNN)
- + Poll Shows Hillary Clinton Still Strong In Florida (ORLS)
- + Q Poll: Bush Leads GOP Field In Florida; Hillary Beats Them All (TAMPATIM)
- + Attorney General Biden sues Consumer Advocacy Assistance (DOVERPST)
- + Del. Child Predator Unit Makes Arrests (WHYYFM)

NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS:

- + Gaza's Mounting Death Toll (NYT)
- + The Phony 'Narrow Network' Scare (NYT)
- + Anything Goes In China's Food System (NYT)
- + Don't Teach Math, Coach It (NYT)
- + Saving Daughters From Mutilation (NYT)
- + The Shared Destiny Of Israel And Gaza (NYT)
- + Left Coast Rising (NYT)
- + A Chinese Gold Standard? (NYT)
- + Why Tony Abbott Axed Australia's Carbon Tax (NYT)
- + How I Passed The English Cricket Test (NYT)
- + Sen. John Walsh Should Stop Making Excuses For His Actions (WP)

- + Paul Ryan's Anti-poverty Plan Has Some Good Ideas That All Sides Can Support (WP)
- + If The West Doesn't Do More For Ukraine Now, It Might Soon Be Too Late (WP)
- + Corporations Are People. So What If People Were Corporations? (WP)
- + Israel Must Be Permitted To Crush Hamas (WP)
- + My Son Has Been Suspended Five Times. He's 3. (WP)
- + Supreme Court May Not Protect Obamacare This Time (WP)
- + Israel Is Acting As If It Is Free Of Moral Responsibilities. (WP)
- + The E.U. Is The World's Great No-show (WP)
- + The Vacant Presidency (WP)

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES:

- + 117 Immigrant Children Placed With Delaware Families (WILNJ)
- + Delaware Views Mirror Gaza Division (WILNJ)
- + Rep. Potter Speaks Out On Haynes Park Charity Event Where Shots Fired (WILNJ)
- + Del. Official's Wife Hurt In Va. Tornado Where 2 Died, 36 Injured (WILNJ)
- + Cape's Board Abolishes Entire Reading List (WILNJ)
- + Sallie Mae Profits Drop In 2nd Quarter (WILNJ)
- + WSFS Earnings Up In Second Quarter (WILNJ)
- + Gov. Markell Enjoys A Day At The Fair (WILNJ)
- + Wilmington Firefighters Light Flames Of Hope (WILNJ)

WILMINGTON JOURNAL NEWS EDITORIALS:

- + Asking Tough Questions Of Wilmington (WILNJ)
 - + Let's Bring The Imagination Library Program To Delaware (WILNJ)
-

BIDEN IN THE NEWS:

BIDEN, IN OHIO, URGES INFRASTRUCTURE, JOB TRAINING (AP)

Associated Press, July 25, 2014

CINCINNATI (AP) - Vice President Joe Biden said Thursday that more investment in infrastructure and job training is needed to increase economic opportunities in the nation's cities.

Biden spoke at the National Urban League conference, where the theme is "One Nation Underemployed." Biden said the keys to putting more people in better-paying jobs and spurring economic growth in cities are workforce training to meet today's business needs and improving roads, bridges and other transportation.

"This is a new era," Biden said. "We are better-positioned than anybody in the world, but we need to invest in infrastructure and skilled job training."

President Barack Obama's \$302 billion plan earlier this year to increase transportation spending and keep transit programs going for four years got a chilly reception from Republicans in Congress. House Speaker John Boehner, the Republican from a northern Cincinnati suburb, said in a statement Thursday that Biden should urge Democrats to work with House Republicans to help the economy by expanding energy production and cutting government red tape.

Sprinkling his speech with quotes from civil rights leaders such as the late Whitney Young and Martin Luther King Jr., Biden said minority gains both economically and in civil rights are "under siege." He blasted voter ID and other proposals he said would restrict voting in the guise of preventing fraud and corruption that doesn't happen. He made similar comments Wednesday to another major civil rights organization, the NAACP convention in Las Vegas.

"Name it for what it is - an attempt to repress minority voting," Biden said Thursday. He said that protecting voting "used to be a bipartisan thing."

Earlier, Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus assured attendees that the GOP is making a serious, determined effort to build ties with minority voters while saying blacks continue to lag in unemployment and other economic measures during the Obama administration. Blacks overwhelmingly supported Obama in his two presidential elections.

Republicans have added "black engagement" staffers in various states, including swing-state

Ohio, to help reach out to black voters, Priebus said.

"So we want you to know, desperately, that the Republican Party is listening, we want a relationship, we want to fight for everybody in this country," he said. "We're serious about doing things differently."

Urban League president Marc Morial said the nonpartisan organization likes a diverse discussion and wants to keep up a dialogue with Republicans.

Republican U.S. Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, who also has been reaching out to minorities as he considers a 2016 presidential bid, will speak at the conference Friday. Biden hasn't ruled out running for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016.

Some 8,500 people are in Cincinnati for the conference, which besides discussions about urban issues and civil rights will honor actor Forest Whitaker at its Saturday night dinner and features an advance screening of "Get On Up," the biopic about soul music star James Brown.

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

VICE PRESIDENT SPEAKS TO DELEGATES AT NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE CONFERENCE (CINENQ)

Cincinnati Enquirer, July 24, 2014

Seven to 10 years ago, Vice President Joe Biden told National Urban League delegates Thursday, he would not have been able to present such an optimistic message.

But today, Biden said, the United States is poised for job growth that will pay families a living wage, even as challenges remain to closing opportunity gaps.

"There have to be jobs to fill in order to meet the needs of the community," Biden said in a 40-minute address. "We are better positioned than any country in the world."

Thursday was the second of four days for the 104th conference of the National Urban League, expected to draw up to 8,700 at Duke Energy Convention Center. The convention marked the national group's first return to Cincinnati since it bowed out in 2003, honoring a boycott called to raise attention to racial issues.

Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley, mayors of other cities and Reince Priebus, chairman of the Republican National Committee, also spoke Thursday.

Biden opened by listing accomplishments made for African-Americans and low-income Americans since the Lyndon Johnson-era War on Poverty. He said 10 times as many African-Americans are in college and 10 times as many hold elected public office.

Then he turned his remarks to what he called "the franchise," the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

"There has been progress, but something happened on the way to the 2008 election," Biden said of the law that gave African-Americans the right to vote. "The franchise is under siege."

He said 83 efforts in 29 states have sought to "limit access to the ballot box. It's an attempt to suppress American voting rights disguised as an attempt to reduce voter fraud where there is none."

But most of the vice president's discussion focused on the nation's employment, and Biden rolled out a list of numbers including 668,000 manufacturing jobs created in recent years. Now, Biden said, he and President Barack Obama have two important tasks to accomplish to ensure more growth.

First, Biden praised Obama's \$302 billion plan earlier this year to increase transportation spending and keep transit programs going for four years.

"We need to modernize our infrastructure - our highways, airports, railroads and canals," he said.

"Every \$1 billion in investment creates 30,000 jobs, 14 percent which go to African-Americans."

Then he turned to the need for jobs training: "And to keep our manufacturing going we need a highly skilled workforce. They require new skills to build the same product they did five or 10 years ago."

Toward the end of his speech, the vice president congratulated the Urban League for its consistent history and mission of working toward economic equality.

"What you are all about is providing people with a sense of dignity," Biden said.

Priebus, Republican National Committee chair, said his party has offered solutions to increasing African-American employment.

"There's one very important bill that passed the House and Senate and was just signed by the

president," Priebus said. "The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act."

He cited comments recently made by National Urban League President Marc Morial, who said, "Millions of under-employed workers and urban youth and youth of color can receive the skills, training and support services they need to chart a path to a better future."

"That is good news for all of us," Priebus said. "We want you to know that the Republican Party is listening and fighting for you."

The Urban League is a nonpartisan organization, and Morial said it welcomes points of view and discussion from across the political spectrum.

The Urban League's annual report for 2014, released in April, titled "One Nation Underemployed: Jobs Rebuild America," noted that the underemployment rate for African-American workers was 20.5 percent, compared with 18.4 percent for Hispanic workers and 11.8 percent for white workers. Underemployment is defined as those who are jobless or working part-time jobs but desiring full-time work.

The report also said African-Americans are twice as likely to be unemployed as whites.

Metropolitan Cincinnati, which includes Hamilton and Middletown among five counties in Southwest Ohio, seven counties in Northern Kentucky and three in Southeast Indiana, has nearly the worst median household-income gap between blacks and whites compared to other metropolitan areas.

The Enquirer reported earlier this week that of the 77 cities analyzed by the National Urban League in its report, Greater Cincinnati ranks 73rd, with median black income at \$24,272, compared to \$57,481 for whites.

Seven mayors participated in a panel and offered local solutions to the growing jobs and economic gap nationally between whites and blacks. Among them:

Alvin Brown, mayor of Jacksonville, Florida, said his city had 25,000 uninsured young people but used an "all-hands-on-deck" solution to raise \$250,000 and get insurance for all of the uninsured students. "You can't learn if you're sick and not in school," Brown said.

Karen Freeman-Wilson, mayor of Gary, Indiana, said her city has aggressively recruited to keep home-grown talent in the city and working on its problems.

"If we all leave, what will happen to the city?" she said. "If you help solve these problems, you can go anywhere in the world and write your own (career) ticket."

Michael Coleman, mayor of Columbus, Ohio, said, "You have to create many kinds of jobs. They can't all be high end."

Read or Share this story: <http://cin.ci/1rDY5kv>

WHAT CUYAHOGA COUNTY EXECUTIVE ED FITZGERALD SAID IN HIS SPEECH TO THE NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE (PLAINDLR)

Cleveland Plain Dealer, July 25, 2014

CINCINNATI, Ohio - Ed FitzGerald, the Cuyahoga County executive and Democratic nominee for governor, addressed the National Urban League conference Thursday in Cincinnati. Earlier, attendees heard speeches from Vice President Joe Biden and Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus.

The theme of the conference: "One Nation, Underemployed."

FitzGerald, who faces Republican Gov. John Kasich in the fall, spoke briefly, according to Columbus Dispatch reporter Joe Vardon, who was there.

Here is the full text of FitzGerald's speech, as prepared for delivery:

"Thank you very much.

"I want to thank Marc Morial for that warm introduction and for the strong leadership he has provided as the President and CEO of the National Urban League.

"I am honored to be here today to welcome all of you to the Buckeye State, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, and to highlight the urgent challenges that remain here in Ohio and across the nation.

"The 1964 Civil Rights Act was not the end of the story. The struggle for justice - economic and political - continues to the current day. Every generation must adopt that struggle as its own. And unfortunately, there are those that are not just apathetic to the challenges still facing our urban communities, there are some who are actively attempting to turn back the clock.

"We must face reality. The aspirations of those who fought for civil rights in the 1960s have not

been met. The evidence for that is all around us, and is visible for anyone who doesn't turn away from it.

"Here in Ohio, the numbers are very troubling. Fifty percent of the state is living paycheck to paycheck, but that number is even higher among African Americans. Ten percent of the state is only making a minimum wage, but that number is even higher among African Americans. Nationally, the high school dropout rate is going down, but in Ohio, it's going up, and it's even higher among African Americans.

"In Ohio, we are trailing the rest of the country in terms of recovering from the Great Recession, but it's been even tougher on African Americans. There is an old saying that a rising tide lifts all boats, but in too many places in this country, the only boats that seem to be rising are yachts for millionaires, while most people are barely keeping their heads above water.

"And it's not just economic inequality I am referring to. In the poorest neighborhoods of Cleveland, the life expectancy is 20 years less than in the wealthiest suburbs of Ohio. That is not a reality that is worthy of the 1964 Civil Rights Act or the people who fought for it.

"Now, I know that this may seem grim, but the good news is, there are things that we can do, right now, to change course and build a more just society and start moving forward for everyone, young and old, black and white, urban and rural. And we are only going to get there if everyone moves forward together.

"Here are three things we can do right now:

"1. Invest in education, from early childhood education to higher education. As a County Executive, I have invested more money, in quality pre-kindergarten education, because we have a gap between children who start first grade; some start with a 500-word vocabulary, and some start with a 5,000-word vocabulary, and that gap makes all the difference in the world. Quality, universal pre-kindergarten is the answer, and we need it in every single school district, across the state and the country.

"We must create the expectation that a child needs more than a high school degree to make it in the economy today, and if that is not a college degree, then it should be vocational training. This year, my county became the first county in America to establish a college savings account for every single child who enters kindergarten. And that child can use that money for a two-year college, a four-year college, or for technical training. It sends children and their parents a powerful message early in their lives that we believe in their potential, and we will help them get there.

"2. We must spur growth, but we must not accept a two-tiered economy. Our economic growth has been so slow in part because we aren't investing in things like education, infrastructure, and public transportation. We won't create a more just society if entire segments of our population are locked out of the growth which does occur. That's why, in my county, we didn't just form a diverse administration, we announced just a few weeks ago a partnership with the Small Business Administration and the Urban League and local lending institutions to make capital more available to small businesses in our urban core.

"3. And finally, we will never have the education reform and the economic reform that we so desperately need until we reform our electoral system. A system that is awash in corporate money is never going to reform itself. We have too many leaders in this state, and in Congress, and in the courts, who believe in giving corporations more and more political rights while taking away voting rights from the people at the same time. Corporations are not people, they never have been, and they never will be. Why are corporations getting more rights while actual human beings are getting fewer rights?

"The shameful nationwide attempt to suppress voting rights is going on right here in Ohio, supported by our Secretary of State and our Governor. That is a chapter of American history that I thought my four children would have to read about in a history book, but instead they can see it in the pages of the daily newspaper. I'm proud that my county has not once but twice joined the legal actions in Federal court in Ohio which has now repeatedly said that these voter suppression tactics are a violation of our rights.

"But as shameful as those actions are, they are philosophically linked to one another. If you cut and defund public education, you are embracing one education system for the elite, and one for everyone else. If you don't open up economic growth and business development, you are embracing one economy for the well off, and one for everyone else. And if you employ the tactics of voter suppression and place the political rights of corporations over human beings, you are

creating a political system of two different sets of rules, one for insiders, and one for outsiders. "But if American history teaches us anything, it is that this battle isn't over yet. The first step is to uncover the truth, define the issues, and then mobilize to fight for what we believe in. And, ladies and gentlemen of the Urban League, for your role in doing just that, you have the gratitude of the people of Ohio. Thank you very much."

VP BIDEN SET TO APPEAR AT CONFERENCE DOWNTOWN (WKRCTV)

WKRC-TV Cincinnati, July 25, 2014

CINCINNATI (Adam Clements) - Vice President Joe Biden is in town and he'll address what is expected to be a large crowd at the National Urban League Conference that begins at 9:30 Thursday morning.

It's not clear the topic of the vice president's speech, but he is expected to keep it consistent with the theme of this conference, jobs and the challenges of finding employment for the young African American in the United States.

Urban League President Marc Morial said, "The important thing is how the leadership of a community responds. Whether they bury their head in the sand, pretend that there's no problems, act in a defensive posture, or if they work to confront that problem."

Right now it's unclear where exactly they will be bringing VP Biden in, but there will be very heavy security in the area surrounding the Duke Energy Center.

Follow Adam Clements on Twitter @aclementsWKRC and LIKE him on Facebook.

VP Biden set to appear at conference downtown

VICE PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN SPEAKS AT NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE CONFERENCE (WCPOTV)

WCPO-TV Cincinnati, July 25, 2014

CINCINNATI - The National Urban League conference took on a presidential air Thursday as Vice President Joe Biden arrived in the Queen City to speak at the event.

The conference's theme is "One Nation Underemployed," and Biden relayed the message that investment in infrastructure and job training is needed to increase economic opportunities in the nation's cities.

Biden told the crowd at Duke Energy Center the United States needs to increase its skilled workforce to meet new business needs and to improve roads, bridges and other transportation to spur growth.

"This is a new era," he said. "We are better-positioned than anybody in the world, but we need to invest in infrastructure and skilled job training."

His comments reflected the mission of President Barack Obama's \$302 billion plan earlier this year to increase transportation spending and keep transit programs going for four years.

The plan got a chilly reception from Republicans in Congress.

House Speaker John Boehner, a Republican from West Chester, said in a statement Thursday that Biden should urge Democrats to work with House Republicans to help the economy by expanding energy production and cutting government red tape.

In addition to talk of advancing investment in infrastructure, Biden blasted what he called a national Republican effort to restrict voting in the guise of preventing fraud and corruption that doesn't happen.

"Name it for what it is - an attempt to repress minority voting," said the vice president, who sprinkled in quotes from civil rights leaders during his half-hour speech. Biden said that protecting voting "used to be a bipartisan thing."

Biden's speech came a day after he spoke to the NAACP in Las Vegas, where he made similar criticisms of voter ID and other proposals that would "repress" minority voting.

The vice president hasn't ruled out a run for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016.

Earlier Thursday, Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus assured attendees the GOP is making a serious, determined effort to build ties with minority voters.

"So we want you to know, desperately, that the Republican Party is listening, we want a relationship, we want to fight for everybody in this country," he said, adding that the party has turned added "black engagement" staffers in various states, including Ohio, to help reach out to black voters.

"We're serious about doing things differently," Priebus said.

Biden and Priebus aren't the only political power players scheduled to take part in the event. Ohio Democratic gubernatorial candidate Ed FitzGerald also plans to speak Thursday. Republican U.S. Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, who's also been trying to reach out to minorities, will speak at the conference Friday.

Urban League president Marc Morial said the nonpartisan organization likes a diverse discussion and wants to keep up a dialogue with both sides of the political spectrum.

RELATED: Urban League convention says "We've turned a page"

While politics, voting rights and talks of advancements in transportation initiatives were bullet points in the vice president's address, jobs is the theme of the conference, which kicked off Wednesday.

Cincinnati Urban League CEO Donna Jones Baker welcomed attendees and reminded them that the league skipped Cincinnati 11 years ago.

Back then the city was embroiled in a controversy over police/community relations. Baker said attendees are in a different Cincinnati now.

"To say that we have turned it around is an understatement," Baker said.

Morial said it's not just about jobs, but about good paying jobs that will reverse years of economic decline.

"Jobs rebuild America. Jobs rebuild the nation. That a job is the best anti-poverty program there is," he said.

The group believes the topic is critical because unemployment among African-Americans is double the national average.

And the problem hits close to home.

Morial said, "And here's the truth: Four of the largest metro areas in the nation with black unemployment over 20 percent are right here in Ohio."

But there's room to grow on the economic front, which is why Morial thinks the four-day conference, with its numerous speakers and events, is so important.

Thursday's events also include a panel discussion with mayors from several U.S. cities, plus a career fair. Walmart chief executive officer William S. Simon attended a luncheon with attendees, as well.

The Expo Hall features hundreds of exhibitors, a health zone with free health screenings, in addition to live entertainment and performances. It will also feature a 3-on-3 basketball game with NBA players.

Al Sharpton spoke at 4 p.m. to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act.

Friday will feature a town hall meeting on education that features several speakers including Charles Ogeltree of Harvard University and UNCF CEO Michael Lomax. Sen. Paul is expected to speak on topics such as school choice, as well as criminal justice reform and economic freedom zones.

I'm not so sure there will be resistance

BIDEN STRESSES JOBS, JOB TRAINING AT NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE CONFERENCE (WLWTTV)

WLWT-TV Cincinnati, July 25, 2014

Looking trim and tenacious at 71, Vice President Joe Biden tore into the jobs issue Thursday, bounding with optimism about America's positioning for future economic growth.

Biden told the National Urban League about a recent survey of U.S. firms in China.

"Fifty-four percent said they're coming home or considering coming home to America," Biden said to applause from the crowd.

He noted the word "insourcing" is starting to be used a lot more than "outsourcing," indicating there is a new era dawning when it comes to job opportunities.

Biden ran down a laundry list of employment opportunities that don't require four-year or graduate degrees.

"These range from welding jobs that pay \$36,000 a year to machinists that pay \$40,000 a year - not requiring a doctorate degree, not even requiring a community college degree," Biden said.

The vice president challenged his audience to understand that there are two important steps to take in order to reap the advantage that is before the country.

He said the nation's infrastructure must be modernized and the workforce trained to meet the skills demanded of the 21st century.

The Urban League's CEO, Marc Morial, said career fairs, like the one at the convention, help spike awareness about opportunities. But more needs to be done by Congress.

"The training system in the country has to be radically transformed," Morial said.

"The way in which and the scale in which we train people for the available jobs is not there in the way it ought to be," Morial said.

The passage of the new Workforce Act last week was crucial, Morial said.

But he remarked that President Obama has also challenged individuals to learn about where the real job opportunities are and how to acquire them.

State Representative Alicia Reece was in town for the Biden address, noting the vice president talked about the importance of certificate programs.

"I think Cincinnati is on the cutting edge because Cincinnati State is moving towards certificate programs," Reece said.

It resonated with Kenya Leonard, of St. Louis, who thought of people getting certificates or specific training.

"They can take that and get immediately placed into jobs," Leonard said.

Biden said relative to the rest of the world, the U.S. is better positioned to meet the jobs challenge.

"We have the cheapest energy, we have the best court system, we protect intellectual property," Biden said.

Community leaders want career fairs, like the one at the convention, to spark a business focus on youth who need jobs, lack training and are missing the guideposts that lead to both.

"There are 100,000 manufacturing jobs right now, at this moment, going unfilled because of the lack of the right skills," Biden said as he checked his notes about a recent employment study.

He predicted America will cut its dependence on foreign energy in a few years and that people aren't as divided as our political system is.

"We just have to push our politicians to do better," conference attendee Melanie Campbell said.

BIDEN ENCOURAGES INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AT URBAN LEAGUE CONFERENCE (WKSUFM)

WKSU-FM Kent (OH), July 25, 2014

Vice President Joe Biden told the National Urban League Conference this morning in Cincinnati that the Obama administration is committed to job training and infrastructure repair.

The vice president said the initiatives are needed to put under-employed urban residents, particularly African-Americans, in better paying jobs.

And Biden said the nation needs to invest \$3.6 trillion to infrastructure repair between now and the year 2020.

JOE BIDEN: VOTER ID LAWS "AN ATTEMPT TO REPRESS MINORITY VOTING" (CBSNEWS) CBS News, July 25, 2014

Vice President Joe Biden urged a gathering of civil rights leaders on Thursday to fight back against Republican-led attempts to restrict voting rights, calling the push for voter identification requirements an "attempt to repress minority voting masquerading as an attempt to end corruption."

For several decades after the civil rights movement of the 1960s, both parties made progress in protecting and strengthening voting rights, Biden said during his address before the National Urban League in Cincinnati. "Expanding the protection of the franchise," he explained, "used to be a bipartisan thing."

But more recently, voting rights have come under attack, Biden warned, saying there have been 83 attempts this year to curtail voting rights in 29 states across the country.

Those efforts were made "in the name of preventing corruption where no corruption was found," Biden said. He noted that courts have found no evidence to substantiate Republican fears of widespread voter fraud and voter impersonation.

In a Wednesday speech before the NAACP in Las Vegas, Biden delivered a similar message, slamming the push for voter ID laws as "pure politics." He suggested that President Obama might have lost Florida, instead of narrowly carrying the state, if a voter ID law had been in place during

the 2012 election.

Biden also sounded an optimistic note on the economy during both speeches, saying America is better positioned than any other country to prosper in the 21st century. He urged Congress to address the nation's ailing infrastructure and fix its broken immigration system to strengthen the economy further.

Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus also addressed the National Urban League on Thursday, in the latest iteration of his push to bring the GOP message into traditionally Democratic constituencies.

"We want you to know that the Republican Party is listening and fighting for you," Priebus said in his prepared remarks, ticking through the party's outreach initiatives in minority communities. "As a party, we believe it's wrong for anyone to be overlooked or taken for granted in our political process. And that's what motivates me every day."

He recalled an RNC luncheon on the anniversary of the March on Washington last year, when he was approached by two people at the event.

"We're Democrats," he recalled them saying, "But we're here because we know if both parties don't fight like crazy for black voters, the other side takes our votes for granted."

Priebus did not address the push for voter ID laws by some Republican-controlled state legislatures, but he did hew closely to some Republican themes on education and unemployment that could resonate with black voters.

He pushed for an expansion of charter schools and vouchers to promote "school choice," saying, "The Republican Party believes that every parent in America should have the power to send their kids to the school of their choice. The other party thinks a ZIP code should make that choice."

And he called the unemployment rate among black Americans - more than 4 points higher than the national average of 6.1 percent - a "problem we must address," praising recent congressional action on job training and apprenticeships.

© 2014 CBS Interactive Inc. All Rights Reserved.

BIDEN: GOP STATES WAGING 'ASSAULT' ON VOTING RIGHTS (NBCNEWS)

NBC News, July 25, 2014

CINCINNATI, OHIO - Vice President Joe Biden said Republican-controlled states like Wisconsin were leading an "assault" on voting rights designed to "repress minority voting" through their passage of laws that require people to present a photo ID to vote.

"The fiction of widespread voter fraud continues to persist," Biden told a crowd of several hundred at the annual conference of the National Urban League.

Republicans have defended these laws, arguing that Americans should have to present an ID to vote, just as they do to enter many public buildings or fly on an airline. Democrats say the laws, which have been adopted by 31 states, most of which have Republican governors or legislators, are an attempt to make it harder for liberal-leaning people to vote.

African-Americans disproportionately lack government-issued identification.

The vice president's remarks continue a tense battle between the two parties on voting provisions, like voter ID but also limits on early voting that many Republican states have adopted.

Biden's appearance here, and at a conference sponsored by the NAACP earlier this week, comes as Democrats are increasingly focused on making sure blacks turn out to vote this fall in states with close Senate races like Georgia and North Carolina.

BIDEN: STATE BALLOTS THREATEN GAINS MADE (TOLB)

Toledo (OH) Blade, July 25, 2014

CINCINNATI - Vice President Joe Biden told a conference of the National Urban League on Thursday that gains made since passage of the civil and voting rights acts half a century ago are endangered by what he characterized as threats on the minority vote.

"We see renewed attacks on voting rights across the nation," he said. "This year alone there were 83 initiatives in 29 states to limit access to the ballot box in the name of preventing ... widespread fraud where none was occurring. ...

"But the fiction of widespread voter fraud continues to persist. Where I live, no American worth their salt could ever defend these new laws."

He talked about the backlash against laws passed in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin but did not

specifically mention Ohio, where U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder recently said he expects to get involved with a lawsuit filed by the NAACP and League of Women Voters against Republican-passed legislation reducing early and absentee voting opportunities.

On the heels of speaking to the NAACP convention in Las Vegas, the Democratic Vice President made the case in Ohio that at the same time such laws threaten the minority votes, a brightening economic picture offers new job opportunities for the same groups.

"It's not hyberbole," Mr. Biden said. "We are now in-sourcing [jobs] because, again, relative to the rest of the world, we're better positioned than any other nation."

But for more Americans to take advantage of those jobs, the United States must invest in work-force training, education, and its infrastructure.

"There are 100,000 manufacturing jobs right now going unfilled because of the lack of the right skills," Mr. Biden said. "... These range from welding jobs that pay \$36,000 a year to machinists that pay \$40,000 a year - not requiring a doctorate degree, not even requiring a community college degree.

"In energy, the epicenter of energy in the world ... is North America. It is already here. ... The United States, Canada, and Mexico, not the Arabian Peninsula. ... We'll be energy independent in the next several years, and North America will be in the next few years. There's a boom."

Republican Gov. John Kasich was invited to participate but instead made appearances at the Ohio State Fair and a career college graduation in Columbus. His Democratic opponent, Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald, spoke.

Republicans have been represented, however. Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus spoke on Thursday, and U.S. Sen. Rand Paul (R., Ky.) - a potential 2016 presidential contender - is expected to speak today during the three-day conference.

Mr. Priebus said the GOP is reaching out to minorities, saying some black Democrats believe they have been taken for granted by their party.

"If there's one thing I'm trying to change, it's to make us a national party in every community with full-time, paid, on-the-ground staff making our case," Mr. Priebus said. "... We have to be present year-round. We can't just show up a few months before an election, and we can't just be a U-Haul trailer of cash for our nominee."

He spoke of the party's support for job training, apprenticeships, and school vouchers as a means to allow students to escape struggling public schools. The last issue is particularly popular in the African-American community.

"America's underemployment, especially black America's underemployment, is a crisis," Mr. Priebus said. "But the commentators on TV tell us that the economy's getting better.

"That's because they don't see the whole picture. They don't see the people who are exhausted from looking for jobs that don't exist. They forget that the black unemployment rate isn't that national rate of 6.1 percent. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, it's 10.7 percent, and that's a problem we must address."

Contact Jim Provance at: jprovance@theblade.com or 614-221-0496.

BIDEN: BLACKS HAVE NOT MADE ENOUGH PROGRESS (WT)

By Dave Boyer

Washington Times, July 25, 2014

In an election-year push to motivate minority voters, Vice President Joseph R. Biden told the National Urban League Thursday that the black community "can't be satisfied with where we are now."

"On the civil rights front, we see renewed attacks on voting rights across the nation," Mr. Biden said at the group's annual meeting in Cincinnati. "On the economic front as well, there's been some tough times."

He said, "If we're honest with ourselves, we can't be satisfied with where we are now, on either civil rights or economic opportunities for African-Americans."

After recounting gains by blacks in the civil rights era, Mr. Biden said, "Something happened on the way to the 2008 election."

"The franchise is under siege," he said. "Both civil rights and economic rights, in the aftermath of the great recession that the president and I inherited, has devastated parts of the community."

Mr. Biden didn't mention that the black unemployment rate of 10.7 percent is more than double the

white jobless rate of 5.3 percent. But he said he is "optimistic" that the U.S. economy is positioned to lead the world.

"That's not because Barack Obama and Joe Biden are president and vice president - it's just the simple reality," he said.

Republicans countered Thursday that the 5-year-old economic recovery is the weakest in a half-century.

"A record number of people are unemployed or have left the workforce," said House Speaker John A. Boehner, Ohio Republican. "More have left the workforce than have found new jobs. Incomes for American families have declined under this president, while the cost of everything from gas to groceries has gone up."

As the vice president did in a speech to an NAACP audience Wednesday, Mr. Biden attacked Republicans' efforts across the country to approve voter ID laws, calling them an attempt to suppress minority voting rights.

"This year alone, there were 83 initiatives in 29 states to limit access to the ballot box in the name of preventing corruption, where no corruption was found; in the name of preventing widespread fraud, where none was occurring," the vice president said.

He added, "I don't think we've made it clear enough to the American people what these attempts are all about. Name it for what it is - it's an attempt to repress minority voting, masquerading as an attempt to end corruption."

Mr. Biden said Washington needs to spend more on rebuilding America's infrastructure and on job-retraining programs to fill what he said are hundreds of thousands of available jobs.

"This is a new era," he said. "We're back; we're coming back."

Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus assured participants at the conference Thursday that the GOP is making a strong effort to build ties with minority voters. He said Republicans have added staff in various states, including swing-state Ohio, to help reach out to black voters.

"So we want you to know, desperately, that the Republican Party is listening, we want a relationship, we want to fight for everybody in this country," Mr. Priebus said.

JOE BIDEN: 'BUSINESSES ARE HIRING AT HISTORIC RATES' (WT)

By Cheryl K. Chumley

Washington Times, July 25, 2014

Vice President Joseph R. Biden said in a task force report to President Obama that business growth in the United States has hit "historic rates" and that hiring is reaching new highs.

Specifically, the report said: "Businesses are hiring at historic rates, with 52 consecutive months of net private sector job growth. Manufacturing is back, with 668,000 new jobs in the past 52 months," National Review reported.

And yet, facts show the hiring claims may be a bit short of truth. As the National Review put it: "Biden is flat-out wrong."

The media outlet reported that the number of business hires per month as a percentage of the number of employed Americans, as well as the number of gross hires made by businesses on a monthly basis, were much healthier under the previous George W. Bush administration.

"In fact," National Review reported, "most of the Bush years handily outstripped the very best of the Obama years."

CENTRAL AMERICAN PRESIDENTS WANT MORE US INVESTMENT IN SECURITY (MCT)

By Brian Bennett

McClatchy, July 25, 2014

WASHINGTON - If the U.S. wants to stem the tide of children illegally crossing its Southwest border, it should increase investment in Central America to improve security and dismantle drug cartels, the presidents of Guatemala and Honduras said Thursday.

The two presidents met with lawmakers on Capitol Hill before speaking about the border crisis at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank. They are scheduled to meet with President Barack Obama on Friday.

Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez said he appreciated the attention the crisis has brought to economic conditions in Honduras, where 45 percent of the populace lives on less than

\$1 a day.

But the vast majority of children are fleeing violence and crime, he said. U.S. Department of Homeland Security maps he has seen show most Honduran children apprehended in the U.S. came from the 30 most violent cities and towns in Honduras.

"Where the greatest drug violence lies - that is where the most children are departing," he said. More than 57,000 unaccompanied children have been apprehended after crossing the border since Oct. 1, officials said. The number of children declined during the first two weeks of July as the U.S. launched a public awareness campaign about the dangers of the journey, and as hot summer weather deterred crossings.

Hernandez said he has been working to purge Honduras of corrupt officials and to extradite accused drug lords to the U.S. He recently launched an overhaul of the government's immigration department.

"The old immigration officials were in cahoots with the drug traffickers," he said.

In the past decade, the U.S. has poured billions of dollars into fighting drug cartels in Mexico and Colombia through programs like the Merida Initiative and Plan Colombia. But the money has largely passed over Central America, Hernandez said.

As a result, drug lords "poured into Central America and linked up with gangs in an unholy alliance," Hernandez said.

"We are picking up the pieces because they all came home to roost in Central America, and that is what we are dealing with," he said.

Since 2008, the State Department has spent more than \$642 million through a program called the Central American Regional Security Initiative. The money went to countries including Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

But the program has been too small to be effective, and more money is needed, Hernandez said.

"One dollar of investment in Central America is one dollar invested in U.S. security," Hernandez said.

Congress is unlikely to open the tap for these countries, said Rep. Ted Yoho, R-Fla., who met with ambassadors from Central American countries this week. He said he told them not to expect a flow of money from the U.S.

"I said, 'In case you don't remember, our government shut down last year'" over a budget dispute, he said.

Guatemala President Otto Perez Molina said his country is preparing to receive the children and families who will eventually be deported from the U.S.

But solving the crisis will require more attention and investment from the U.S., he said. Among countries investing in Guatemala, the U.S. ranks seventh, he said - below Canada, Russia and Colombia.

Perez Molina said the violence and crime in Guatemala is a by-product of the Cold War when the U.S. and the Soviet Union were funding opposite sides of civil wars in Central America to gain influence.

Perez Molina was a top intelligence officer in the Guatemalan military in the '80s and '90s.

"We were one of the hot spots in that war," he said. "The cost to Central America has been that we became a transit corridor and warehouse for drugs going to the U.S." In 2013, Guatemalan police seized 50,000 weapons that were traced back to the U.S., Perez Molina said.

Obama and Vice President Joe Biden will meet the two presidents, as well as President Salvador Sanchez Ceren of El Salvador, at the White House on Friday.

Biden will host the three leaders for lunch before the meeting. Biden met with the presidents of Guatemala and El Salvador in Guatemala City on June 20 to discuss the humanitarian crisis on the U.S. border. The president of Honduras skipped the meeting to watch the Honduran national team play a World Cup match in Brazil.

CENTRAL AMERICAN LEADERS WANT WASHINGTON'S HELP WITH IMMIGRATION CRISIS (WP)

By David Nakamura And Ed O'Keefe

Washington Post, July 24, 2014

Leaders of the Central American nations at the other end of the U.S. border crisis came to Washington on Thursday to discuss the response and placed much of the blame on the United

States.

"Your country has enormous responsibility for this," Honduras's Juan Orlando Hernández said in an interview with The Washington Post. "The problem of narco-trafficking generates violence, reduces opportunities, generates migration because this [the United States] is where there's the largest consumption of drugs. That's leaving us with such an enormous loss of life."

The criticism set the stage for a meeting Friday at the White House in which President Obama and Vice President Biden will host Hernández, Guatemala's Otto Pérez Molina and El Salvador's Salvador Sánchez Cerén for a face-to-face discussion of the crisis at the border. The White House said Obama also telephoned Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto on Thursday to discuss the possibility of "regional programs" that would improve security and the economy in Central America. More than 57,000 unaccompanied minors and an additional 55,000 parents with children, most of them from Central America, have been apprehended this year.

The Obama administration acknowledged Thursday that it is weighing a proposal to allow hundreds of Hondurans to enter the United States after applying for refu-gee visas in their home country. A senior White House official emphasized that the proposal is one of many policy options being considered and that no decision has been made on that specific proposal.

The proposal, if ever implemented, would be a relatively modest response given the scale of the problem: The initiative would provide fewer than 2,000 refu-gee visas to young Hondurans in the first year of what officials described as a pilot program. The New York Times first reported on the potential program, saying it could cost \$47 million over two years.

And the proposal would do nothing about the tens of thousands of migrants who have already reached the United States from Central America and have overwhelmed border security operations in recent months. Obama has requested that Congress provide \$3.7 billion in emergency funds to combat the crisis, but Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill have balked at that price tag. Both the Senate and House are preparing separate plans with lower funding levels.

But in an interview with The Post, Molina said that proposals to boost border patrols are shortsighted and do not address the real problem.

"If they want to attack the root of the problem, I think that they need to think about making investments in countries like Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras," he said, adding later: "With just 10 percent of the money that you're investing on the U.S. border, it could be spent at minimum in the three countries and I'm confident that it would be much more profitable than investing it on border security or border control with Mexico."

The Central American leaders met with members of Congress on Thursday to press their case for more economic assistance. Some Republican lawmakers have called for a decrease in aid to the region, along with Mexico, until those governments do more to curb the problem. GOP lawmakers have focused on strengthening enforcement operations at the border, including calling on the administration to send in National Guard troops.

Administration officials announced Thursday the deployment of a team of military and national security analysts to the Texas border to determine whether there is a productive role for the National Guard in response to the crisis. The move came just days after Texas Gov. Rick Perry (R) announced his plan to send 1,000 of his state's guardsmen to the border to assist local law enforcement operations..

Molina and Hernández pledged that they are determined to do their part to help curb the exodus of migrants.

But they also warned that U.S. politicians should not politicize the debate ahead of the midterm elections this fall.

"The United States is in the run-up to an electoral moment," Hernández said. "I would appeal to the leaders and to American people to understand this is a humanitarian crisis. We are neighbors and will remain neighbors, and it's best to be friends with your neighbors."

Hernández said that most of the children coming to the United States from Honduras are fleeing the 30 most violent areas of the country. He said Honduran girls were sexually abused by smugglers, who instructed them to take contraceptives that the smugglers told them were vitamins.

"Please remember we're talking about children," Hernández said. "These are human beings. As minors, they are the most vulnerable, the weakest among us." This should catch the attention and

pull at the heart strings of humanity at large."

The White House gathering will mark the first time an American president has hosted a group of Central American leaders in Washington since 1998, when President Bill Clinton welcomed regional leaders after Hurricane Mitch.

Senior administration officials said this week that each government has stepped up the apprehension of human smugglers and launched public campaigns to discourage illegal immigration since Biden visited the region last month. In Guatemala, the "Quedate" (or, "Stay") campaign has been led by the country's first lady, Rosa Leal de Perez. In the interview, Molina said that he thinks the campaign has contributed to the 50 percent reduction in illegal border crossings in the past two weeks.

Since signing an agreement with Central American countries and the Dominican Republic in 2008, the United States has spent about \$800 million on security and law enforcement assistance in the region, with roughly two-thirds of the money sent to Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.

Lawmakers and regional experts say that any new requests for aid are likely to be greeted with skepticism.

"There's deep concern about the violence in Central America," said Eric Olson, director for the Latin American Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center., "But people are asking hard questions about what is our money going to be used for?"

Marlon Correa contributed to this report.

HONDURAN CHILDREN MAY BE ALLOWED TO APPLY FOR U.S. ADMISSION FROM HOME (LAT)

By Brian Bennett

Los Angeles Times, July 25, 2014

The White House is considering a proposal that would allow Honduran children to apply for admission to the United States as refugees or on humanitarian grounds while still in their native country.

It is one of several plans under review to deter Central American kids from making the difficult and dangerous journey to the Southwest border, White House officials said Thursday. If successful, the program could be expanded to include other volatile nations, such as Guatemala and El Salvador. Under the plan, children fleeing dangerous street gangs plaguing cities in Honduras, or other threats, would be interviewed by American immigration officials and temporarily sheltered in Honduras while their cases are considered.

Supporters of the plan said it would help children who are genuinely in danger and reduce the number of minors traveling along smuggling routes through Mexico. Critics said it would only increase the number of refugees and worsen the current backlog of applications from Central America.

The idea is similar to a proposal from Arizona Sens. John McCain and Jeff Flake, both Republicans, to boost the number of visas by 5,000 for young people coming from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

Of the 57,000 unaccompanied minors apprehended at the Southwest border since Oct. 1, more than 45,000 have been from these three countries. Their numbers have overwhelmed social services and created a humanitarian crisis.

The presidents of Guatemala and Honduras, who were in Washington on Thursday, said changing the U.S. immigration system would be helpful, but insufficient. If the U.S. wants to stem the tide of children illegally crossing its Southwest border, it should increase investment in Central America to improve security and dismantle drug cartels, they said.

They met with lawmakers on Capitol Hill before speaking about the border crisis at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank. They are scheduled to meet with President Obama on Friday.

Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez said he appreciated the attention the crisis had brought to economic conditions in Honduras, where 45% of the populace lives on less than \$1 a day.

But the vast majority of children are fleeing violence and crime, he said. "Where the greatest drug violence lies - that is where the most children are departing," he said.

Hernandez said he had been working to purge Honduras of corrupt officials and to extradite

accused drug lords to the U.S. He recently launched an overhaul of the government's immigration department.

"The old immigration officials were in cahoots with the drug traffickers," he said.

In the last decade, the U.S. has poured billions of dollars into fighting drug cartels in Mexico and Colombia through programs such as the Merida Initiative and Plan Colombia. But the money has largely passed over Central America, Hernandez said.

As a result, drug lords "poured into Central America and linked up with gangs in an unholy alliance," Hernandez said.

"We are picking up the pieces because they all came home to roost in Central America, and that is what we are dealing with," he said.

Since 2008, the State Department has spent more than \$642 million through a program called the Central American Regional Security Initiative. The money went to countries including Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

But the program has been too small to be effective, and more money is needed, Hernandez said.

"One dollar of investment in Central America is one dollar invested in U.S. security," Hernandez said.

Congress is unlikely to open the tap for these countries, said Rep. Ted Yoho (R-Fla.), who met with ambassadors from Central American countries this week. He said he told them not to expect a flow of money from the U.S.

"I said, 'In case you don't remember, our government shut down last year'" over a budget dispute, he said.

Guatemalan President Otto Perez Molina said his country was preparing to receive the children and families who will eventually be deported from the U.S.

But solving the crisis will require more attention and investment from the U.S., he said. Among countries investing in Guatemala, the U.S. ranks seventh, he said - below Canada, Russia and Colombia.

Perez Molina said the violence and crime in Guatemala is a byproduct of the Cold War, when the U.S. and the Soviet Union were funding opposite sides of civil wars in Central America to gain influence.

Perez Molina was a top intelligence officer in the Guatemalan military in the '80s and '90s.

"We were one of the hot spots in that war," he said. "The cost to Central America has been that we became a transit corridor and warehouse for drugs going to the U.S."

In 2013, Guatemalan police seized 50,000 weapons that were traced back to the U.S., Perez Molina said. Obama and Vice President Joe Biden will meet with Hernandez, Perez Molina and Salvadoran President Salvador Sanchez Ceren at the White House on Friday.

Biden will host the three leaders for lunch before the meeting. He met with Perez Molina and Sanchez Ceren in Guatemala City last month to discuss the humanitarian crisis on the U.S. border. Hernandez skipped the meeting to watch the Honduran national soccer team in the World Cup in Brazil.

For more reporting on border security follow me on Twitter @ByBrianBennett.

BIDEN: SHOULD' HAD ONE REPUBLICAN RICH KID (BLOOMCD)

Bloomberg, July 24, 2014

U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, center, buys an ice-cream at a shop as he tours a Hutong alley with his granddaughter Finnegan Biden, right, and son Hunter Biden, left on Dec. 5, 2013 in Beijing. "I should have had one Republican kid who'd grow up to make money," Vice President Joe Biden said today, spurred by his audience's laughter to add: "so when they put me in a home, I get a window with a view."

"You know what I mean?"

Biden has one son following in his political footsteps, Beau Biden, attorney general of Delaware, and he has a daughter, Ashley, who, as he noted today, is a social worker running a program for children at risk.

He also has one son, Hunter Biden, who's a member of Burisma Holdings' board of directors. That is Ukraine's largest private gas producer.

"Burisma's track record of innovation 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 at the company's

announcement of him.

The vice president was addressing the Urban League in Cincinnati today at a conference with a theme, "One Nation Underemployed."

Biden, who spent more than three decades in the Senate, has not amassed much personal wealth. At a recent White House summit on Working Families, he said: "Don't hold against me that I don't own - that I don't own a single stock or bond. Don't hold it - I have no savings accounts. But I got a great pension, and I got a good salary."

As we noted in these columns, however

, his official financial disclosure forms say something else about that savings account:

The form the vice president filed in mid-May shows calendar year 2013 holdings ranging from \$1,001 to \$15,000 in a U.S. Senate Federal Credit Union joint savings account, and the same in each of two checking accounts at Suntrust and M&T Bank. It also shows a joint holding of less than \$1,001 in a M&T Bank checking account.

More than "no account."

Not enough for that room with a view, though.

POLL: CLINTON DOMINATES 2016 FIELD IN FLORIDA (HILL)

By Rebecca Shabad

The Hill, July 24, 2014

Hillary Clinton easily tops the 2016 presidential field in the battleground state of Florida in a new poll, while in-state Sen. Marco Rubio is narrowing the GOP gap, as support wanes for former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush.

Just over two-thirds of Democratic voters in Florida back Clinton, who also beats her possible GOP competitors by margins of 7-21 percentage points, according to a Quinnipiac University survey released Thursday.

None of the possible candidates have announced a decision to run.

Florida voters back Clinton over Bush 49 percent to 42 percent, the poll found. They support Clinton over Rubio 53 percent to 39 percent, over Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) 51 percent to 38 percent, over Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) 53 percent to 37 percent and over Gov. Chris Christie (R-N.J.) 54 percent to 33 percent.

Support for Clinton in Florida has increased by 3 percentage points, since 64 percent said they back her in a May Quinnipiac poll.

The new survey found Vice President Biden and Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) trail Clinton distantly in Florida with 8 percent support each.

Bush, meanwhile, tops the potential GOP field with 21 percent. Eighteen percent said they support Rubio; 10 percent back Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas); 8 percent support Paul; 7 percent support former Gov. Mike Huckabee (R-Ark.) and 6 percent back Gov. Chris Christie (R-N.J.). Thirteen percent of Republicans remain undecided.

The survey from May also found Bush led the GOP pack with 27 percent support, but Paul came in second with 14 percent, and Rubio came in third with 11 percent.

Clinton received the highest favorability rating with 58 percent, compared with 48 percent who view Bush favorably, 43 percent who view Rubio favorably, 35 percent who view Christie favorably and 33 percent who view Rubio favorably.

The new poll surveyed 1,251 registered voters from July 17-21 with a 2.8 percentage point margin of error. The poll's survey included 451 Republicans and 457 Democrats with 4.6-point margins of error each.

POLL: CLINTON SWEEPS GOP IN FLORIDA (POLITICO)

By Jonathan Topaz

Politico, July 24, 2014

Hillary Clinton is leading all potential Republican 2016 presidential challengers in Florida, a new poll says.

According to a Quinnipiac University poll released Thursday, the former secretary of state holds at least a 7-percentage-point lead in match-ups against potential GOP challengers in the politically crucial Sunshine State.

Two Florida politicians - Sen. Marco Rubio and former Gov. Jeb Bush - were the top two vote-

getters in the Republican field, with Bush at 21 percent and Rubio at 18 percent. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas came in third, with 10 percent, while Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky followed with 8 percent, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee received 7 percent and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie 6 percent.

The Democratic contest - as it has in many other statewide and national polls - remains far more clear-cut than the Republican field. Sixty-seven percent of Democratic voters support Clinton, while Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Vice President Joe Biden each pulled in only 8 percent.

Bush provides the closest head-to-head match-up with Clinton, with the Democrat leading Bush 49 percent to 42 percent. Clinton holds a wider, 14-point lead over Rubio, a 16-point lead over Paul and a 19-point lead over Christie.

Florida women show strong support for Clinton, giving her a 20-point edge in a potential match-up with Bush.

The survey was conducted July 17-21 among 1,251 registered Florida voters. The margin of error is plus or minus 2.8 percentage points. The primary surveys had 451 Republicans and 457 Democrats; each had a margin of error of plus or minus 4.6 percentage points.

CLINTON POLLING WELL IN KEY PRESIDENTIAL BATTLEGROUND (CNN)

By

CNN, July 24, 2014

(CNN) - Hillary Clinton is the clear 2016 frontrunner in the nation's largest presidential battleground state, according to a new poll.

A Quinnipiac University survey of Florida voters indicates the former secretary of state, who's seriously considering a second bid for the White House, has leads from seven to 21 percentage points over potential GOP presidential candidates in possible 2016 showdowns.

Follow @politicalticker

"Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton may be taking some criticism recently in the news media and among some liberal Democratic precincts, but nothing has changed among average voters in Florida where she remains queen of the political prom," said Peter A. Brown, assistant director of the Quinnipiac University poll.

According to the survey, which was released Thursday morning, Clinton also has an overwhelming lead in the hunt for the Democratic nomination, with former two-term Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and the state's junior U.S. senator, Marco Rubio, leading the pack of potential GOP contenders.

Two-thirds of Sunshine State Democratic primary voters questioned in the survey say they'd back Clinton for their party's nomination, followed by Vice President Joe Biden and Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts each at eight percent. Biden is mulling another presidential bid while Warren has said numerous times that she's not running in 2016. Other potential candidates registered at one percent or less.

Twenty-one percent of Republicans say they'd back Bush in the primary, followed by Rubio at 18%. Bush was at 27% and Rubio at 11% among Florida Republicans in Quinnipiac's May poll. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas is at 10% in the new poll, with Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky standing at 8%, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee - who ran for the 2008 nomination - at 7%, and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie at 6%. None of the other possible contenders top 5%.

In hypothetical 2016 general election matchups, Sunshine State voters back Clinton over Bush 49%-42%. The poll indicates Clinton leads Ryan by 13 points, Rubio by 14 points, Paul by 16 points and Christie by 21 points.

A Quinnipiac poll in Colorado released last week, another swing state, indicated much closer 2016 general election showdowns between Clinton and potential GOP candidates.

As for the current occupant in the White House, the survey indicates President Barack Obama has a 44%-52% approval/disapproval rating among Florida votes, compared to 46%-50% in May.

The Quinnipiac University poll was conducted July 17-21, with 1,251 registered voters in Florida questioned by telephone. The survey's overall sampling error is plus or minus 2.8 percentage points.

CNN Political Editor Paul Steinhauser contributed to this report

POLL SHOWS HILLARY CLINTON STILL STRONG IN FLORIDA (ORLS)

By Anthony Man, Sun Sentinel
Orlando (FL) Sentinel, July 24, 2014

Her book sales are lousy, she's made a couple of gaffes, and she's taken a battering in recent weeks from Republicans and cable TV pundits, but a poll out Thursday shows Hillary Clinton is still a favorite of Floridians.

The Quinnipiac University poll of Florida voters found Clinton "dominates the 2016 presidential landscape, sweeping the Democratic field and topping former Gov. Jeb Bush and other possible Republican contenders by margins of 7 to 21 percentage points."

Despite the recent negatives - which included her lament that she and former President Bill Clinton left the White House "dead broke" and "struggled" financially - her favorability rating among Florida voters remains strong.

The new poll has her at 58 percent favorable and 38 percent unfavorable. In May she was 58/37, in June 2013 she was 57/38 and in March 2013 she was 62/33.

Sean Phillippi, a Democratic political consultant, said Clinton's Florida strength isn't a surprise. "She's always had very, very strong support in Florida, especially in South Florida," he said. "Her base is strong because she and her family have had roots down here for decades, and I don't think a few events will supersede a long history of standing for the values that Floridians share."

U.S. Rep. Ted Deutch, a Democrat whose district includes northwest Broward and southwest Palm Beach counties, said Clinton "remains the gold standard as we look ahead to 2016."

Deutch acknowledged she's had a rough patch. "I could point to any number of ostensibly leading Republican presidential candidates who have said and done things that are absolutely ripe for the picking for the political press, but Hillary Clinton is the leading Democrat that people are talking about. Of course they are going over every little thing."

He said people like her because "she is smart, she is thoughtful, she is strong, and she is committed to strengthening ... America at home and abroad."

Still, she's not loved by everyone.

The poll shows she's viewed favorably by 95 percent of Florida Democrats, 21 percent of Republicans, 57 percent of independents, 49 percent of men and 66 percent of women.

Mona Malbranche, a Democratic committeewoman and board member of the Kings Point Democratic Club, said she understands why women are such strong supporters. "A lot of women are looking at her and thinking: Wow, with all of these guys bashing at you like this and not get upset, there is a sincerity to the answers And to heck with all of you who don't believe me."

The youngest voters view her more positively than the oldest voters: 65 percent favorable among 18 to 29 year olds, 62 percent of 30 to 49 year olds, 55 percent of 50 to 64 year olds and 54 percent of people 65 and older.

Quinnipiac surveyed 1,251 registered voters from July 17-21. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

"Nothing has changed among average voters in Florida where she remains queen of the political prom," Peter A. Brown, assistant director of the Quinnipiac poll said in a statement. In Washington, "they may be talking about Mrs. Clinton's potential weaknesses should she run in 2016. But at this point in Florida, the nation's largest presidential swing state, her assets overwhelm any vulnerabilities."

That's bound to change, said Tom Truex, chairman of the Broward Republican Party.

He said many people like the Clintons, but she'll take a dip when Republicans have a candidate.

"There are so many facts that when you really get down to analyzing her record and some of the horrendous missteps that she's had, those are the acts that come out in a contested campaign."

"Certainly Republicans aren't going to like her either way," Truex said. "Even Democrats are going to pause a bit."

Anita Mitchell, chairwoman of the Palm Beach County Republican Party, also sees Clinton's advantage as fleeting.

"She's got high visibility. She's got high name recognition. But also the Republicans don't have a presidential candidate picked yet," Mitchell said. "It's so darned early. It doesn't surprise me because she's been out there." Clinton vs. Republicans

If the presidential election were held today, Quinnipiac found Florida voters would award her the state's 29 electoral votes - more than 10 percent of the total needed to win the White House.

She'd best Bush 49 percent to 42 percent and U.S. Sen Marco Rubio 53 percent to 39 percent.

Clinton leads Bush narrowly, 45 percent to 41 percent, among independents. Among women, she leads Bush 56 percent to 36 percent.

Like many political pros, Phillippi cautioned against reading too much into polling that's more than 27 months before the 2016 election.

However, he said, it might be somewhat telling in the Clinton-Bush and Clinton-Rubio matchups because all those candidates are familiar to Florida voters.

Terrie Rizzo, chairwoman of the Palm Beach County Democratic Party, has a more partisan take: "A lot of people believe in Hillary. With the bunch of knuckleheads that the Republicans have ... she stands tall."

Truex said it's far too early to see potential matchups as definitive. Democratic primary Clinton is the overwhelming favorite among Florida Democrats for the party's 2016 presidential nomination.

She has support of 67 percent of Democrats. "None of the others even makes it into double digits," Brown said.

Vice President Joseph Biden and U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts have 8 percent each.

Republican primary

Florida's home state candidates, Bush and Rubio, are at the top of Florida Republicans' lists.

Florida voters give Bush a 58 percent favorable to 37 percent unfavorable rating. Rubio's rating is 43 percent favorable and 35 percent unfavorable.

"My take is they are our favorite sons and they ought to be at the top of the heap," Mitchell said.

She said Bush was a "popular governor for a very long time."

Bush gets 21 percent in a Republican presidential primary in Florida, followed by Rubio with 18 percent.

U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas has 10 percent, U.S. Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky 8 percent, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee 7 percent and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie 6 percent. No other candidate tops 5 percent.

The surveys of Democrats only and Republicans only have a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percentage points. Obama

President Barack Obama is underwater with Florida voters, with 44 percent approving of his performance and 52 percent disapproval. That's a slight change dip from May when his approval was 46 percent and disapproval 50 percent.

He's viewed positively by 7 percent of Republicans, 40 percent of independents and 84 percent of Democrats, 48 percent of men and 49 percent of women.

Q POLL: BUSH LEADS GOP FIELD IN FLORIDA; HILLARY BEATS THEM ALL (TAMPATIM)

Tampa Bay (FL) Times, July 25, 2014

Jeb Bush leads a field of prospective GOP presidential candidates in Florida, topping Sen. Marco Rubio, Sen. Ted Cruz and others. But Hillary Clinton beats them all in head-to-head matchups, according to a poll released Thursday

"Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton may be taking some criticism recently in the news media and among some liberal Democratic precincts, but nothing has changed among average voters in Florida where she remains queen of the political prom," said Peter A. Brown, assistant director of the Quinnipiac University Poll.

In a 2016 Republican primary - keep in mind none of the candidates have said they are running - Bush gets 21 percent support followed by Rubio with 18 percent, Texas' Cruz with 10 percent, Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky with 8 percent, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee with 7 percent and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie with 6 percent.

In a May survey, Bush led with 27 percent, followed by Paul with 14 percent and Rubio with 11 percent. Either way, the field remains crowded and unsettled.

The Democratic side is another story with Clinton consistently leading the way over would-be Democratic rivals and beating Republicans.

Except for Bush, whom she leads by 7 points, 49-42, she beats other Republicans by double digits. Her lead over Rubio is 53-39.

Florida voters give President Barack Obama a negative 44 percent job approval rating, compared to a negative 46 percent May 1, the poll shows. Voters approve of the job Rubio is doing by 49

percent and give Democratic U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson a 45 percent approval rating. The poll was conducted July 17-21 and included 1,251 registered voters with a margin of error of 2.8 percentage points.

ATTORNEY GENERAL BIDEN SUES CONSUMER ADVOCACY ASSISTANCE (DOVERPOST)

By

Dover (DE) Post, July 24, 2014

Attorney General Beau Biden filed a lawsuit July 23 against Consumer Advocacy Assistance, a company which allegedly defrauded five Delaware homeowners of more than \$8,000 after claiming to be a mortgage rescue group.

Biden said in a news release that state agencies can offer free assistance to homeowners needing loan modification, and that Delawareans should "never pay a dime" to anyone for these services.

Delaware's lawsuit seeks restitution for the homeowners, the payment of civil penalties and a court order requiring the company to cease and desist its illegal activities.

For more information, visit attorneygeneral.delaware.gov.

Read more: http://www.doverpost.com/article/20140724/CCH_Content/140729861#ixzz38RuMtmrl

DEL. CHILD PREDATOR UNIT MAKES ARRESTS (WHYYFM)

WHYY-FM Philadelphia, July 25, 2014

General Beau Biden announced that separate undercover online investigations by the Delaware Child Predator Task Force led to their apprehension.

"The Child Predator Task Force is working to weed out the most dangerous predators - those who seek to sexually assault our children," Biden said in a statement Wednesday.

In the first case, Steve Moore responded to the profile of a 13-year-old girl on an online social dating site. The Dagsboro man, however, was communicating with a task force detective posing as the girl. According to Delaware's Dept. of Justice, Moore said "

in explicit terms" that he wanted to meet to have sex with the girl and set up a location, date and time to meet.

The 49-year-old was arrested as soon as he arrived at Tidbury Park on South State Street in Dover, Wednesday. Moore was charged with one count of Sexual Solicitation of a Child Under 18 and four counts of Obscenity.

In the second case, 51 year-old Mark Cavill of Bloomingdale, New Jersey, responded to the profile of a 14 year-old girl on an online social dating site. The DOJ said during several conversations with a task force detective posing as the girl Cavill indicated that he wanted to meet to have sex. Once the location, date and time were set, Cavill was arrested last Friday when he showed up, as agreed, at a fast food restaurant on the 1700 block of North Dupont Highway in Dover. As a result of the investigation Cavill was charged with one count of Sexual Solicitation of a Child Under 18. Both men's homes were searched and investigations related to their cases are ongoing.

Stronger penalties

These two arrests are the first made under the strengthened penalties established by House Bill 256

, which was signed into law last month. The legislation makes it a chargeable offense to sexually solicit a child online whether the suspect is soliciting an actual child or an undercover investigator posing as a child. The law also elevates the offense in cases in which the predator actually travels for "the meet."

"Thanks to legislation enacted this year which strengthens penalties against predators who travel to meet their victims we're in an even stronger position to take them off the streets for longer periods of time where they can no longer hurt kids," Biden said.

Delaware's Child Predator Task Force was created in 2007. The unit has four undercover investigators and two prosecutors.

NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS:

GAZA'S MOUNTING DEATH TOLL (NYT)

New York Times, July 25, 2014

These days, even a school - clearly identified as a shelter run by the United Nations - cannot protect Palestinian civilians in Gaza from deadly attacks. Located in the northern Gaza town of Beit Hanoun, it was struck multiple times on Thursday as people who had taken refuge there were gathering in the courtyard and preparing to flee. At least 16 of them were killed, bringing the total death toll in 17 days of war to more than 750, a vast majority being Palestinian civilians.

There are competing charges over who carried out the attack - Israel; Hamas, which controls Gaza; or one of Hamas's allies - and that could take time to sort out. What really matters now is that some way be found to stop this carnage.

The war is terrorizing innocent people on both sides of the border, fomenting more hatred, creating an ever larger appetite for vengeance and ensuring that the cycle of violence will be repeated, if not right away then surely at some point in the future. It is past time for an immediate cease-fire and for a political strategy that offers the hope of a more stable future for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Israeli officials say they have taken pains not to harm civilians. They also say they did not target the Beit Hanoun school, suggesting that Hamas may have struck the facility by mistake. Surely, Israel has reason to take strong military action against the barrage of rockets on its territory and to destroy Hamas's underground tunnels. Yet no one can be indifferent to the fact that innocents are paying an intolerable cost for being caught in the middle.

It is fair to ask whether Israel is doing enough to prevent that. According to a United Nations official in New York, at least 72 United Nations schools, hospitals and offices have been damaged in the fighting, even though they are clearly marked. At the same time, the United Nations did not enhance its own credibility and influence when its Human Rights Council focused entirely on Israel in a resolution on Wednesday, opening an inquiry into possible Gaza-related human rights violations.

Hamas also deserves scrutiny, as well as the strongest possible condemnation for storing and launching rockets in heavily populated areas, knowing full well they would draw Israeli fire to places where civilians live. Unlike Israel, Hamas has not built bomb shelters where civilians can seek refuge. And even as war rages and his people are exposed, Hamas's political leader, Khaled Meshal, has been safely ensconced at his exile home in Qatar.

Perversely, things seem to be going his way. The Times reported that Hamas, which is committed to Israel's destruction and was in a weakened political position before the war, is now being hailed among Palestinians in the West Bank as a champion. And, the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, a moderate, is being faulted for not achieving a Palestinian state in negotiations with Israel. Israel's interest would be ill-served if Mr. Abbas ends up being marginalized while the hard-liners are empowered. Any cease-fire should be structured to help strengthen Mr. Abbas's position. Secretary of State John Kerry has been working feverishly to get a cease-fire, but his mission is hugely complicated. Meanwhile, the killing goes on.

THE PHONY 'NARROW NETWORK' SCARE (NYT)

By The Editorial Board

New York Times, July 25, 2014

Republicans contend that the Affordable Care Act is a failure because many of the plans sold on the online health exchanges limit a consumer's choice of doctors and hospitals. Many plans do, indeed, limit choice - deliberately so, to keep premiums down. But a vast majority of consumers can almost always buy a plan with a broad array of doctors, hospitals and other providers if they are willing to pay more for the policies.

The issue is one of priorities: Is it more important to keep premiums low or to have access to a broad array of doctors to choose from? A poll in February showed that many people, especially the previously uninsured, think lower cost is more important.

There is no clear definition of what constitutes a "narrow network," the term used in public and political discourse, but there are protections built into the Affordable Care Act and federal regulations that require all networks to have enough doctors of various types to ensure that services can be provided "without unreasonable delay."

Most plans probably have the experts needed, but there are concerns that in the hectic rollout of the health exchanges the primary emphasis has been put on enrolling people, not on making sure that all networks were adequate.

Any shortcomings that have emerged can be addressed with better public education and regulatory fixes.

Some consumers have been surprised to find that their own doctor may accept the insurance company they are using but not the particular plan they have chosen from that insurer's offerings. Or that a new doctor they wanted to see, though listed as taking their plan's insurance, was not accepting new patients because the practice was already full.

These problems can be solved by requiring more accurate and up-to-date information about doctors in the plan, preferably posted on the government's website, not just on insurance company websites.

Some consumers may discover after the fact that a doctor who treated them in an emergency - a hospital anesthesiologist, for example - is not covered by their plan. Regulators in other states might well emulate New York's pioneering law requiring that patients be told when an out-of-network doctor will be treating them, and if they are not informed, they would not have to pay more than their usual co-pays. In that case, the insurer and the provider would fight to see who absorbs the cost.

The technique of using limited networks to control costs has been around for years. It became especially useful with the passage of health care reform, which eliminated or made illegal several other cost-control tactics, such as refusing to insure people with pre-existing conditions.

These and other reforms left insurers to compete on the basis of cost and the scope of the networks. To attract cost-conscious consumers, many plans have formed narrow networks of providers who agreed to accept low negotiated prices or who had a track record for delivering care at low cost. But those are hardly the only plans available.

One industry survey found that 90 percent of the individuals using the exchanges had access to a broad network plan, with no difference in quality between the broad and narrow plans. Another industry analysis found that narrow network plans had premiums 5 percent to 20 percent lower than broader plans. State and federal regulators need to monitor how well the plans are performing and if they fail to serve the needs of their customers.

ANYTHING GOES IN CHINA'S FOOD SYSTEM (NYT)

New York Times, July 25, 2014

The recent revelations that a Shanghai-based meat supplier to McDonald's, KFC and other chain restaurants used expired chicken and beef in its products serve as a stark reminder that China needs to do a lot more to improve its inadequate food safety system.

After tainted milk killed at least six babies and sickened thousands in 2008, Chinese officials overhauled the country's food safety laws and promised to crack down on negligent companies and corrupt bureaucrats.

The scandals have kept coming. Since April 2013, more than 155 people have died from a strain of avian influenza, a disease linked to poor sanitary conditions in poultry markets. Last year, officials found high levels of cadmium, which has been linked to organ failure and cancer, in rice at markets and restaurants in Guangdong Province. And, earlier this year, Walmart stores in China recalled packages of donkey meat that contained meat from other animals.

While the 2009 food law improved safety regulations - banning the use of unauthorized additives in food, for instance - inadequate enforcement remains a major problem. Many officials responsible for enforcing the law have not been properly trained to do their jobs, says John Yasuda, a fellow at the University of Pennsylvania's Center for the Study of Contemporary China.

The country's water and soil pollution problems have also hurt China's ability to clean up its food system, Yanzhong Huang, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote recently. Even the prime minister of China, Li Keqiang, said last year that the nation's food system has "a great deal of outstanding problems and potential hidden dangers."

Weak and uneven enforcement has encouraged an anything-goes culture among food producers, including at Shanghai Husi Food, the company accused of putting expired meat into fast-food meals. In a local TV broadcast, a manager at the Shanghai factory told government investigators that it was company policy to use expired meat and that the practice had gone on for years. TV reporters also showed footage of plant workers using chicken meat that was two weeks past its expiration date and beef that was six months past its use-by date. The meat was used to make chicken nuggets, sandwiches and other food. Some of the factory's production was exported to

Japan.

Chinese officials recently proposed changes to the 2009 law that would impose tougher civil and criminal penalties on companies and people who violate food safety regulations. These changes will only be effective if they are accompanied by stronger enforcement and a greater effort to deal with environmental degradation.

DON'T TEACH MATH, COACH IT (NYT)

By Jordan Ellenberg

New York Times, July 25, 2014

MADISON, Wis. - PEOPLE ask me all the time how they can get their kids excited about math.

That ought to be a softball for me, because I teach math for a living. I wake up excited about math. But it's not that simple. With the college students I teach, it's a straightforward transaction. They're paying me to teach them math, and my job is to cajole or incentivize them into doing the work that's necessary to learn the subject, whether they feel like it or not.

It's a different story with your own children. None of us want to be Leo Wiener. Yes, Wiener helped shape his son, Norbert, into a child prodigy who got a Ph.D. at Harvard at 18, and who later became a groundbreaking mathematician. But this was how Norbert recalled the process:

"He would begin the discussion in an easy, conversational tone. This lasted exactly until I made the first mathematical mistake. Then the gentle and loving father was replaced by the avenger of the blood. ... Father was raging, I was weeping, and my mother did her best to defend me, although hers was a losing battle."

No parents want this story told in their child's memoirs. But how can we encourage kids in a difficult task like math without doing so in a way they'll come to resent?

I found an answer in something my 8-year-old son, C. J., likes even better than math: baseball. Let me be clear here. My level of skill at baseball - actually, with every kind of ball - is pretty much the opposite of my mastery of math. I've reached 40 and I still throw in the way that we used to call, before they started showing college softball on TV, "like a girl."

But C. J. is a baseball fanatic. He lives and dies with the Milwaukee Brewers and he's pretty set on being one of them when he grows up. He plays Little League with a fierce concentration I seldom see at home. And I've learned a lot about what kind of math parent I want to be from an unexpected source - his coaches.

Baseball is a game. And math, for kids, is a game, too. Everything for them is a game. That's the great thing about being a kid. In Little League, you play hard and you play to win, but it doesn't actually matter who wins. And good coaches get this. They don't get mad and they don't throw you off the team. They don't tell you that you stink at baseball, even if you do - they tell you what you need to do to get better, which everybody can do.

What does it mean to coach math instead of teaching it? For C. J., it means I give him a "mystery number" to think about before bed. "I'm thinking of a mystery number, and when I multiply it by 2 and add 7, I get 29; what's the mystery number?" And already you're doing not just arithmetic but algebra.

For his little sister, who's 4, that's too formal. But say we're at the grocery store and we need four cans of soup and she brings me two, and I say, "so we need three more, right?" and she says "No, Daddy!" That's really funny when you're 4. It's a game, and it's math.

Lots of games are math. There are the classics you know about: chess, which builds the ability to follow a series of logical steps; Monopoly, which demands basic arithmetic and probabilistic reasoning; and Rubik's Cube, which is fundamentally an exercise in geometry and group theory. But there are new classics, too, that weren't around when you were a kid: Rush Hour, a board game about search algorithms; Set, a study in higher-dimensional geometry in the form of a viciously competitive card game; and DragonBox, an app for phone or tablet that teaches the formalisms of algebra. Every one of these games shows kids mathematical ideas in a spirit of play, which is a big and often hidden part of the true spirit of math.

These games are difficult, but also, for many kids, kind of addictive. Which means they also teach *sitzfleisch*, the ability to focus on a complicated skill for the length of time it takes to master it. Math needs that. (Baseball does, too.) It fits with the research of the psychologist Carol Dweck, which suggests that mentors should emphasize effort over native ability. We can't really teach kids to do things; we can only teach them to practice things.

There are many things we'd like to coach our kids to do. And we can't help playing favorites to some extent. I'll admit, I'd rather C. J. aimed to be a mathematician than a shortstop. I tried to open his eyes to some more realistic careers that could still satisfy his hunger for the major leagues. "You know," I told him, "you really like math, and all the teams now have people who work for them analyzing the players' statistics. You'd probably enjoy that!"

At this suggestion he became agreeably eager. "Daddy, that's a really good idea," he said. "Because almost all major league players have to retire by the time they're 40 - so then I could get a job analyzing the statistics!"

Well, I tried.

Jordan Ellenberg, a professor of mathematics at the University of Wisconsin, is the author of "How Not To Be Wrong: The Power of Mathematical Thinking."

SAVING DAUGHTERS FROM MUTILATION (NYT)

New York Times, July 25, 2014

An international conference focusing on a global scourge - female genital mutilation - made significant progress this week with an announcement from Prime Minister David Cameron of Britain that his government would prosecute parents who submit their daughters to that primitive abuse. The world can only wish for similar enlightenment in the 29 countries in Africa and in parts of Asia and the Middle East where genital mutilation is most common and where more than 130 million girls and women have been scarred for life.

"All girls have the right to live free from violence and coercion," Mr. Cameron declared, speaking as the co-host of a global Girl Summit in London dedicated to eradicating both female genital mutilation and child marriage within a generation. This is an enormous goal. More than 700 million women alive today worldwide were forced into marriage as children, according to Unicef, the event's co-sponsor.

Each year an estimated three million girls are at risk of genital mutilation, ranging in age from infancy to 15. The initiative by Mr. Cameron was driven by the growing realization in Britain that an estimated 20,000 girls, though born in the country, were at risk of genital mutilation by their parents, often immigrants fleeing countries in conflict where the practice is common, according to a report by City University London and the human rights group Equality Now. Researchers estimate up to 137,000 women and girls in Britain and Wales are victims of the practice, which was outlawed there in 1985 but is still prevalent in some communities. The stronger measure of prosecuting parents as criminals for cutting their daughters is to be accompanied by an aggressive education campaign by police and health officials.

The Girl Summit drew 500 government officials and mutilation victims and academics from around the world. The agenda included creating an "international charter" to enlist support from nations where abuses of young girls are most severe - a task more necessary than ever.

THE SHARED DESTINY OF ISRAEL AND GAZA (NYT)

By Roger Cohen

New York Times, July 25, 2014

LONDON - Freight cars full of bodies shot out of the sky make their way across Europe. After more than two weeks of fighting in Gaza, at least 150 Palestinian children are dead, according to the United Nations. Thousands of Hamas rockets have hit Israel, and 32 young Israeli soldiers have been killed fighting to end this terror. As the poet Seamus Heaney observed, "It is difficult at times to repress the thought that history is about as instructive as an abattoir."

When children die in these numbers, when the legitimate claim of the Jewish people to a sliver of earth is again contested, when the shrieking cacophony of each side declaiming its "truths" overwhelms, human progress seems a fickle fantasy. Truth, even before social media, was always the first victim of war.

Yet, against all evidence, people hope. They seek justice. It is in their nature.

Hamas establishes a stranglehold over 1.8 million Palestinians squeezed into what David Cameron, the British prime minister, once called the "open-air prison" of Gaza. It is a Jew-hating organization. It is ready, when need be, to use the lives of its own people as pawns. It pours concrete into a maze of tunnels rather than schools. Isolated before the latest violence, it revives by demonstrating a measure of military command and control, by hurting Israel, by appearing

resolute as Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, wavers. The demands of this reconstituted Hamas become the demands of the Palestinian people. Abbas is marginalized. This is not a strategic victory for Israel.

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, pursues a status-quo strategy that keeps Palestinians divided and Israel dominant. The price of the strategy is periodic violence. This is the third Gaza mini-war in six years. An oppressed people will rise up. That is in the nature of things. Some decades ago, Netanyahu denounced the efforts of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to reach peace with the Palestinians through the Oslo Accords. Rabin, who had once vowed to "break the bones" of Palestinians, sought peace not because he had changed his view of the enemy but because he saw no alternative. Like the men responsible for Israel's security interviewed in the movie "The Gatekeepers," he had concluded that endless dominion over another people was unsustainable and incompatible with the preservation of a Jewish and democratic state. Netanyahu compared Rabin to Neville Chamberlain. Rabin's widow never forgave him. This month, Netanyahu said that rockets from Gaza demonstrated how critical it was that "we don't get another Gaza in Judea and Samaria" - the West Bank. He declared: "I think the Israeli people understand now what I always say: that there cannot be a situation, under any agreement, in which we relinquish security control of the territory west of the river Jordan."

As David Horowitz observed in The Times of Israel, "That sentence, quite simply, spells the end to the notion of Netanyahu consenting to the establishment of a Palestinian state."

After the suspension of some flights into Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport due to Hamas rockets, Netanyahu's stance is immeasurably reinforced.

Inherent in Israeli policy are the eruptions of violence that in turn justify the policy that in turn spurs further violence. Vile Hamas revives itself. Palestinian statehood recedes.

Yet, people, in their majority, hope.

Netanyahu wants a majority Jewish state in the Holy Land. Abbas wants an end to the occupation, freedom and statehood for the Palestinians. Those two objectives are not mutually exclusive. In significant ways they are complementary. But they involve sacrifice of cherished national ambitions.

Two impossible things happened in my lifetime. My parents' South Africa ended apartheid without the bloodbath I'd heard was coming throughout my youth. Europe's division at the Berlin Wall dissolved, allowing freedom to spread eastward (if not quite far enough yet to spare those corpses in freight cars).

Sydney Kentridge, a classmate of my father's in Johannesburg and a lawyer for Nelson Mandela, once told me that he concluded at the 1956 treason trial that one day "both sides would realize that neither could win."

He was right. Hope is not always irrational.

On a recent visit to Israel, I passed through the Damascus Gate into Jerusalem's Old City. Palestinians emerging from Al Aqsa Mosque moved toward me in a vast throng. They ran straight into a group of ultra-Orthodox Jews headed toward the Western Wall, and at that moment, out of the Via Dolorosa, a crowd of Philippine Christians emerged, carrying a heavy wooden crucifix. It was an impossible scene, funny even: the three great monotheistic religions jostling in the alley, no way around each other.

Nobody is going away. The peoples of the Holy Land are condemned to each other. Without that realization, any truce, even any demilitarization of Gaza, will only be a way station to the next round of slaughter.

That's the likely but not inevitable scenario. Impossible things do happen.

LEFT COAST RISING (NYT)

By Paul Krugman

New York Times, July 25, 2014

The states, Justice Brandeis famously pointed out, are the laboratories of democracy. And it's still true. For example, one reason we knew or should have known that Obamacare was workable was the post-2006 success of Romneycare in Massachusetts. More recently, Kansas went all-in on supply-side economics, slashing taxes on the affluent in the belief that this would spark a huge boom; the boom didn't happen, but the budget deficit exploded, offering an object lesson to those willing to learn from experience.

And there's an even bigger if less drastic experiment under way in the opposite direction. California has long suffered from political paralysis, with budget rules that allowed an increasingly extreme Republican minority to hamstring a Democratic majority; when the state's housing bubble burst, it plunged into fiscal crisis. In 2012, however, Democratic dominance finally became strong enough to overcome the paralysis, and Gov. Jerry Brown was able to push through a modestly liberal agenda of higher taxes, spending increases and a rise in the minimum wage. California also moved enthusiastically to implement Obamacare.

I guess we're not in Kansas anymore. (Sorry, I couldn't help myself.)

Needless to say, conservatives predicted doom. A representative reaction: Daniel J. Mitchell of the Cato Institute declared that by voting for Proposition 30, which authorized those tax increases, "the looters and moochers of the Golden State" (yes, they really do think they're living in an Ayn Rand novel) were committing "economic suicide." Meanwhile, Avik Roy of the Manhattan Institute and Forbes claimed that California residents were about to face a "rate shock" that would more than double health insurance premiums.

What has actually happened? There is, I'm sorry to say, no sign of the promised catastrophe.

If tax increases are causing a major flight of jobs from California, you can't see it in the job numbers. Employment is up 3.6 percent in the past 18 months, compared with a national average of 2.8 percent; at this point, California's share of national employment, which was hit hard by the bursting of the state's enormous housing bubble, is back to pre-recession levels.

On health care, some people - basically healthy young men who were getting inexpensive insurance on the individual market and were too affluent to receive subsidies - did face premium increases, which we always knew would happen. Over all, however, the costs of health reform came in below expectations, while enrollment came in well above - more than triple initial predictions in the San Francisco area. A recent survey by the Commonwealth Fund suggests that California has already cut the percentage of its residents without health insurance in half. What's more, all indications are that further progress is in the pipeline, with more insurance companies entering the marketplace for next year.

And, yes, the budget is back in surplus.

Has there been any soul-searching among the prophets of California doom, asking why they were so wrong? Not that I'm aware of. Instead, I've been seeing many attempts to devalue the good news from California by pointing out that the state's job growth still lags that of Texas, which is true, and claiming that this difference is driven by differential tax rates, which isn't.

For the big difference between the two states, aside from the size of the oil and gas sector, isn't tax rates. It's housing prices. Despite the bursting of the bubble, home values in California are still double the national average, while in Texas they're 30 percent below that average. So a lot more people are moving to Texas even though wages and productivity are lower than they are in California.

And while some of this difference in housing prices reflects geography and population density - Houston is still spreading out, while Los Angeles, hemmed in by mountains, has reached its natural limits - it also reflects California's highly restrictive land-use policies, mostly imposed by local governments rather than the state. As Harvard's Edward Glaeser has pointed out, there is some truth to the claim that states like Texas are growing fast thanks to their anti-regulation attitude, "but the usual argument focuses on the wrong regulations." And taxes aren't important at all.

So what do we learn from the California comeback? Mainly, that you should take anti-government propaganda with large helpings of salt. Tax increases aren't economic suicide; sometimes they're a useful way to pay for things we need. Government programs, like Obamacare, can work if the people running them want them to work, and if they aren't sabotaged from the right. In other words, California's success is a demonstration that the extremist ideology still dominating much of American politics is nonsense.

A CHINESE GOLD STANDARD? (NYT)

By Kwasi Kwarteng

New York Times, July 25, 2014

LONDON - While the 70th anniversary of D-Day last month received a lot of attention, another event, in July 1944 - the Bretton Woods conference, named for the mountain resort in New

Hampshire where it was held - was perhaps even more significant in shaping the modern world. It not only led to the creation of what are now the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, but it also confirmed the central position of the United States dollar in the international monetary system.

Why does this matter for us now? Just as America displaced Britain as the world's pre-eminent economic power in the interwar period, so, too, the large debts and fiscal pressures confronting the West, and the rise of China and other economic powers, challenge us to think about the future of finance.

For most of the 19th century the British pound had been the world's "reserve currency," the currency in which trade and finance were denominated. "As sound as a pound" became a widely used expression. The pound was pegged to gold at a fixed rate of just under £4 per ounce. At the outbreak of World War I, Britain abandoned the gold standard. You could no longer exchange pounds for gold. The gold standard was reintroduced in 1925, but this, as John Maynard Keynes observed, proved to be an economic mistake.

British prices and, more crucially, wages, would have to be forced down by 10 percent to maintain the competitiveness of British exports. As American agricultural and industrial exports soared in the 1920s and 1930s, the dollar effectively replaced the pound. It was American bankers who helped out the financially strapped Weimar Republic in the 1920s. The British, as exporters of capital, were a diminished force.

By the time of Bretton Woods, the United States held roughly 60 percent of the world's gold supply. "Think of the gold in Fort Knox," America's chief negotiator at Bretton Woods, Harry Dexter White, said. "That is why we are in a powerful position." He added, "We have the wherewithal to buy any currency we want."

Bretton Woods fixed the dollar price of gold at \$35 per ounce, and all the other major currencies - the pound, the franc, the mark, the yen - were subsequently pegged to the dollar, even though they could not be exchanged directly for gold. This system lasted until 1971. By then, America was under the financial strain of the Vietnam War and Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society. With mounting deficits and an adverse balance of trade, America struggled to maintain gold convertibility at the old rate of \$35 an ounce. So President Richard M. Nixon abandoned the fixed dollar price of gold established at Bretton Woods (over the objections of the Federal Reserve chairman, Arthur F. Burns).

International critics said that the United States, by ending the dollar link to gold, was turning its back on its responsibilities as the guarantor of the international monetary system. Over the decades, the situation has gotten worse. The United States is \$17.6 trillion in debt owed to the public, and large trade deficits are the norm. Yet there is no scope for revisiting the international monetary system, despite great dissatisfaction by countries like China and the Persian Gulf states, which hold large foreign currency reserves. Americans themselves question the security of the dollar when their country faces such large trade and budget deficits.

China's nearly \$4 trillion in reserves - accumulated through its mercantilist trade policies - give it plenty of ammunition to claim leadership in the creation of a new monetary order. The Chinese, however, are most unlikely to bid for monetary hegemony in the near future. For the past 25 years they have pursued a policy of aggressive export growth to drive their economy. China successively devalued its currency, from 1.50 renminbi to the dollar in 1980, to 8.72 in 1994. (Today the renminbi trades at 6.20 to the dollar, which the United States still considers artificially low.)

Could China someday peg its currency to gold, as Britain did in 1821? China has the reserves to do this, and it could have the political will, if the dollar proved to be unreliable as a store of value in the future.

Of course, Britain's earlier adoption of the gold standard, in 1821, worsened a sharp deflationary period, during which, according to one calculation, consumer prices fell nearly 50 percent, between 1818 and 1822.

Nevertheless, to its supporters the gold standard ensured British fiscal and monetary dominance during the rest of the 19th century. As the British historian A.J.P. Taylor observed, 19th-century Britons believed that "a country could not flourish without a balanced budget and a gold currency." Since Keynes, the West has tried to deny this proposition, with our reliance on deficit spending and "fiat" money, backed mainly by the expectation that a government will not default on its debts. China is not as indebted as the West, but it is looking to "rebalance" its economy by raising

demand by consumers, who want to enjoy the standard of living enjoyed across the Western world. Since 2010, the renminbi has appreciated 14 percent without drastically hurting Chinese exports.

Having expanded its manufacturing base and captured international markets, China may well find a world hooked on its products. It could eventually - in, say, 20 years - peg the renminbi to gold, considering it preferable to the dollar as a store of value, because of its permanence and longevity. With a balanced budget and a gold-backed currency, China's economy could be even more formidable than it is today. Such a move would truly mark its return as the "Middle Kingdom." Hard as it may be to contemplate today, this scenario would, in many ways, be a more secure basis for an international monetary regime system than the system of floating exchange rates that Nixon inadvertently created in 1971, one that forever overturned the Bretton Woods order.

Kwasi Kwarteng, a Conservative member of Parliament, is the author of "War and Gold: A Five-Hundred-Year History of Empires, Adventures and Debt."

WHY TONY ABBOTT AXED AUSTRALIA'S CARBON TAX (NYT)

By Julia Baird

New York Times, July 25, 2014

SYDNEY, Australia - It will be remembered as one of the most ignoble moments in our history: On July 17, Australia became the first country to repeal a carbon tax.

The deputy leader of the Greens Party, Adam Bandt, said it was "the Australian Parliament's asbestos moment, our tobacco moment - when we knew what we were doing was harmful, but went ahead and did it anyway."

The tax, or carbon-pricing mechanism, had defined three elections, destabilized three prime ministers and dominated public debate in this country for eight toxic years. Finally, the leader of the center-right Liberal Party, Tony Abbott, won the last election in part by promising to "ax the tax."

Mr. Abbott is famous for his fitness and muscular approach. As a student at Oxford, he won a "blue" at boxing for the university and was known for his all-out, flailing attacks. When the carbon-pricing scheme became law in 2011, he vowed to lead a "people's revolt" and "fight this tax every second of every minute of every day."

His political success was not, in fact, a result of the failure of the policy. The scheme was, in at least the most important sense, working, since emissions were declining. The initial public opposition was fading, but the Labor government that introduced the policy failed to sell it. Critics portrayed it as a burden that would hurt businesses and cost households, instead of one that would cut pollution and ensure a more secure future for our children.

It was the misleading old cliché - the economy versus the environment - but politicians staked their careers on it, and won.

In 2010, the Labor prime minister, Julia Gillard, said she would look at carbon-pricing proposals, but also promised, "There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead." Then, under pressure to form a minority government, she made a deal with the Greens and agreed to legislate a carbon price: a tax by any other name.

The heat, anger and vitriol directed at her as a leader - and as Australia's first woman to be prime minister - coalesced around the promise and the tax. It grew strangely nasty: She was branded by a right-wing shockjock as "Ju-Liar," a moniker she struggled to shake. The political cynicism surrounding the carbon tax certainly reduced Ms. Gillard's political capital, but it was a perceived lack of conviction in the policy itself that damaged the pricing scheme's credibility.

Business leaders opposed what Mr. Abbott called a "useless, destructive tax," even though just 0.02 percent of Australia's three million businesses were affected (the top 500 polluters). But Australia is one of the world's biggest producers of coal, and the industry is worth about \$60 billion and supports an estimated 200,000 jobs.

A powerful triumvirate campaigned against the law: mining companies, the conservative coalition parties and Rupert Murdoch's newspapers. A study found that 82 percent of articles on the carbon tax in News Corporation's Australian papers were negative.

Ms. Gillard now believes she made a crucial error in framing. After losing office in June 2013, she wrote: "I erred by not contesting the label 'tax' for the fixed price period of the emissions trading scheme I introduced. I feared the media would end up playing constant silly word games with me,

trying to get me to say the word 'tax.'"

George Lakoff, a professor of linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley, agreed that "was a disaster." It wasn't just the T-word; even the term "carbon price" was a problem, too abstract and technical: "It does not evoke in the minds of the public the real human horrors and economic costs of climate disasters."

"I made the wrong choice," Ms. Gillard conceded, "and, politically, it hurt me terribly." With Labor plummeting in the polls, her leadership was challenged and she lost the vote to the party's previous leader, Kevin Rudd. (Mr. Rudd's victory was shortlived; less than three months later, he was defeated general election by Mr. Abbott.)

Opposition to the carbon tax trailed away after Ms. Gillard's ouster, and public concern about climate change has only grown. A recent poll found that almost two-thirds of Australians believe there should be carbon pricing for major emitters, but 42 percent agreed with the repeal of the tax (against 36 percent who did not). We did, after all, elect a government that promised to ax it. So we're a hot mess of contradictions.

Mr. Abbott's claim that households will be better off by 550 Australian dollars, or \$520, a year following the repeal has been greeted with skepticism. Electricity prices did go up after carbon pricing came in, but this was mostly because of investment in infrastructure. Consumers are likely to see no effect now - unless they're paying less simply by using less electricity. An Australian National University study reported that carbon emissions from the power generation sector had been cut by 1 to 2 percent as a result of the tax.

If carbon pricing was working, you might well ask why the law was repealed. The result is that Australia has no clear climate policy, though Mr. Abbott says he now believes climate change is occurring and he takes it "very seriously."

The prime minister's paramount concern, though, is still that taxing emissions should not "clobber the economy." His government has proposed an alternative to the carbon tax, the Direct Action Scheme, that would provide incentives for businesses to cut emissions. But it faces fierce criticism - even from within Mr. Abbott's own administration - because of loopholes, a lack of consequences for nonparticipants and its unfunded targets.

What's clear is that Australia has proved again that politicians rarely choose to take the lead on tackling climate change. When the public is conflicted, our leaders too often whip up fear, and reason and evidence go out the window. The shame is that when the tax was axed, so were the facts.

Julia Baird is a journalist and a television presenter with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and an author who is working on a biography of Queen Victoria.

HOW I PASSED THE ENGLISH CRICKET TEST (NYT)

By Kenan Malik

New York Times, July 25, 2014

LONDON - How times change. Last week, I was at Lord's Cricket Ground in London - the "home of cricket," as England's cricket officials like to boast - to see England play India. I was born in India, yet I was cheering England.

Thirty years ago, I certainly would not have been. I can remember the Indian cricket team touring England in 1986. India won that three-match series 2-0 (with one draw). I was ecstatic.

Why the change in attitude? Answering that question will, of course, reveal much about myself. It will reveal much about Britain. Perhaps most of all, it will reveal much about the nature of identity. We live in an age of constant soul-searching about the meaning of national identity. Public debates about what it is to be "English" or "British" have become a ritual almost as familiar as an England soccer team being humiliated at a World Cup. But these debates rarely grasp the realities of the ways in which people experience their identities.

In 2007, the last Labour government produced a green paper titled "The Governance of Britain," which bemoaned the fact that, compared with French or American citizens, Britons had a "less clear sense" of the "values that bind" the British people. It proposed "a British statement of values that will set out the ideals and principles that bind us together as a nation." Earlier this year, when an attempt to introduce an Islamist agenda into certain state schools in Birmingham was exposed, the coalition government's response was to insist that "Britishness" had to become part of the educational curriculum.

Craft a statement. Teach a lesson. Politicians may be the only people in the world who imagine that the creation of identities, or the forging of a sense of belonging, can be reduced to such simple formulas.

What most public debates ignore is the complexity, elasticity and sheer contrariness of identity. Whether personal or national, identities can never be singular or fixed because they are rooted largely in people's relationships with one another - not merely personal but social relationships, too - and such connections are always mutating.

Thirty years ago, Britain was a different place. And I was a different person. I grew up in a Britain where racism was woven into the fabric of society in a way that would be difficult to imagine today. Racism was vicious, visceral and sometimes fatal. Assaults and stabbings were common; firebombings of Asian houses were almost weekly events.

My parents were of a generation that accepted racism as part of life. I was of a generation that challenged it, politically and physically. We confronted far-right thugs, organized street patrols to protect black and Asian families, and stood up to police harassment. And this inevitably shaped our sense of who we were.

My generation did not think of itself as "Muslim" or "Hindu" or "Sikh." We wanted to be seen as British. When Britain told us, "You don't belong," we responded both by insisting on our Britishness and by identifying with those who challenged British identity. Such is the contradictory character of belonging.

So I refused to support any British team, still less an English one. (The relationship between Englishness and Britishness can seem as unfathomable as the rules of cricket; it is an issue to which I will return another time.) Whether in cricket, soccer, rugby or tiddlywinks, for me it was a case of "anyone but England."

Today, things are different. Neither racism nor racial violence has disappeared, and hostility to immigration has become a defining feature of British politics. Yet the savage, in-your-face racism that marked Britain a generation ago is, thankfully, relatively rare. The nature of Britishness has changed, too. No longer rooted in ideas of race and empire, it is defined as much by diversity as by jingoism. National identity is being recast in a host of new debates, from the fractious question of Scottish independence to the fraught relationship with the European Union.

Blacks and Asians have long since become an accepted part of Britain's identity, as well as its sporting tapestry. And I have dropped my "anyone but England" attitude. I, too, now feel the pain of penalty shootout defeats and the rare joy of cricket match victories. Yet, if I am now willing to wave the flag at a cricket field or in a soccer stadium, I will not necessarily do so in all contexts. I may be tribal about sports, but I am not patriotic about Britain.

Unthinking, irrational support for one team over another is an essential part of the experience of sports. Patriots wish us to be equally unthinking in our attachment to the nation in every arena, from culture to war. The myth of nationalism is that "Britishness," just like "Frenchness" or "Americanness," comes as a single package. But identity does not work like that.

There are many aspects of British life that I admire, and many that I despise. I only have to visit a London street market to be reminded how open Britain is to foods and goods and influences from all over the world; I only have to stand in line in passport control at Heathrow Airport to remember how deep the suspicion of foreigners runs. Many British traditions resonate with me; many I find abhorrent. This is the nation that produced the Levellers and the Suffragettes, radical movements that helped shape the world; it is also a nation that still clings to a monarchy and the unelected, feudal House of Lords.

Many non-British traditions, too, have helped shape my views, values and ideals. To erase this complexity with the myths of patriotism is to diminish the very meaning of belonging.

As for the cricket match, England was humiliated by India at Lord's. Some things, it seems, never change.

Kenan Malik, a writer, lecturer and broadcaster, is the author, most recently, of "The Quest for a Moral Compass: A Global History of Ethics."

SEN. JOHN WALSH SHOULD STOP MAKING EXCUSES FOR HIS ACTIONS (WP)

By Editorial Board

Washington Post, July 25, 2014

SEN. JOHN Walsh, a place-holding Democrat from Montana, already was deemed unlikely to win

a full term in this year's election. With revelations in the New York Times that he extensively plagiarized an academic paper, his prospects are even cloudier. But Mr. Walsh still has a chance at public service: He could apologize for his intellectual theft, acknowledge the seriousness of the offense and use the difficult episode as a learning opportunity for the young people of Montana. Thus far, Mr. Walsh has taken a different route. When first asked Tuesday outside his office whether he plagiarized his 2007 paper for his U.S. Army War College master's degree, he answered, "I don't believe I did, no." The next day, that denial turned into an admission of a "mistake," with a campaign spokeswoman asking that the "incorrect citations" be viewed in light of Mr. Walsh's "experience of post-deployment." The senator later revealed that he had been seeing two doctors to treat his post-traumatic stress disorder at the time. His campaign on Thursday released a statement highlighting his military accomplishments and insisted that any impropriety was "unintentional."

Unintentional? More than half of the 14-page paper, "The Case for Democracy as a Long Term National Strategy," was directly lifted from papers by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace experts and a Harvard scholar, or improperly attributed to other authors, the Times showed. For example, Mr. Walsh inserted almost verbatim these sentences from a Harvard paper by Sean M. Lynn-Jones, with original footnotes also included: "Many studies have found that there are virtually no historical cases of democracies going to war with one another. In an important two-part article published in 1983, Michael Doyle compares all international wars between 1816 and 1980 and a list of liberal states." The copying continues for more than a page.

The Army War College has rightly launched an investigation and pledged to hand down any appropriate punishments. Mr. Walsh should be subject to all the usual protocols that the college uses for plagiarism cases. He should also apologize to all scholars he copied from. Tom Carothers, a foreign policy expert whose work was plagiarized, told us he had not yet received a phone call from Mr. Walsh.

Mr. Walsh's plagiarism does not diminish his accomplishments in Iraq or the National Guard. By the same token, Mr. Walsh should not use his service to deflect criticism for his academic misdeeds. More than a third of undergraduates and a fourth of graduate students admit to plagiarizing in school. College plagiarism rates have risen, facilitated by widespread Internet access. There is widespread confusion about the line between plagiarism and paraphrasing. Rather than playing to that confusion, Mr. Walsh should forthrightly explain why claiming someone else's work as one's own is wrong. He can't erase his record, but he could seize this opportunity to discourage Montana students from following in his footsteps.

PAUL RYAN'S ANTI-POVERTY PLAN HAS SOME GOOD IDEAS THAT ALL SIDES CAN SUPPORT (WP)

By Editorial Board

Washington Post, July 25, 2014

HOUSE BUDGET Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) has produced his latest take on conservative anti-poverty policy. As is often the case with Mr. Ryan's proposals, this one, launched under the heading "Expanding Opportunity in America," is ambitious, thoughtful and not entirely persuasive.

Mr. Ryan's best idea is a substantial expansion of the earned-income tax credit, a wage supplement for low-income workers administered through the tax code. Currently the third-largest federal poverty-fighting program at \$59 billion per year, the EITC has a proven track record of lifting families out of poverty and stimulating work effort. But it offers only skimpy assistance to childless adult workers, which Mr. Ryan would remedy by doubling the maximum annual credit for such workers to \$1,005 and lowering the eligibility age from 25 to 21. It's nearly identical to a proposal in President Obama's 2015 budget that would have cost roughly \$60 billion over 10 years.

The other pillar of Mr. Ryan's plan is less satisfactory. He would not reduce the money Washington currently spends on some 11 anti-poverty programs - the largest of which include food stamps, public housing and cash welfare, known as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) - but would fold them into a single block grant, available to states that wish to operate their own consolidated aid programs for the poor. States that took the option would have to meet federal conditions, including a work requirement for recipients, in return for far greater flexibility in how

their agencies, public and private, meet the needs of individual clients for housing, drug treatment, training and the like. Mr. Ryan's model is the series of state-level pilot projects that preceded 1996 welfare reform, which ultimately trimmed caseloads nationwide.

No doubt this could reduce the bureaucracy and complexity associated with administering the government's myriad aid programs. Whether that necessarily translates into better outcomes for the disadvantaged is a different question. Mr. Ryan argues that the poor do better when grass-roots agencies, public and private, are in charge. Yet rolling food stamps into a single funding stream would seem to forfeit that program's usefully counter-cyclical feature (that is, it spends more when the economy turns down and less when it recovers). Mr. Ryan has only tentative proposals to address that. Even thornier, though, is the work requirement, which can't succeed unless jobs are plentiful. It's one thing to link a single source of aid - TANF - to work, as the welfare reform law did. It's quite another to make everything depend on it, including food. The thing to do, therefore, is focus on the most promising, most bipartisan part of Mr. Ryan's plan - the EITC increase. With support not only from Mr. Ryan and Mr. Obama but also, in different iterations, leading members on both sides of the aisle in the Senate, there should be no problem getting this passed. Heretofore the sticking point had been that the two parties could not agree on how to pay for the measure's relatively modest cost. Mr. Ryan says to cut corporate welfare - including the Democrats' pet green-energy grants. The Democrats say to close tax breaks for the rich such as the carried-interest deduction. We say both have a point. So do some of both and get on with it.

IF THE WEST DOESN'T DO MORE FOR UKRAINE NOW, IT MIGHT SOON BE TOO LATE (WP)
Washington Post, July 25, 2014

VLADIMIR PUTIN has responded to the international outrage over the destruction of a Malaysian airliner by his proxies in eastern Ukraine by escalating his aggression. According to U.S. officials, tanks, artillery and other heavy weapons have continued to cross from Russia to Ukraine after the passenger jet was shot down. On Wednesday, two more Ukrainian military jets were hit by anti-aircraft missiles, which Ukrainian officials said had been fired from Russia. The State Department also said Thursday that Russian artillery was firing at Ukrainian positions from across the border. The Russian president is clearly not impressed by Western responses to the killing of 298 innocent people and the subsequent attempt by his government and its proxies to deny and cover up the crime. And why should he be? After making a statement Monday that contained no tangible response and only a vague threat that "the costs for Russia's behavior" will increase, President Obama departed for three days of fundraising on the West Coast. The message to Mr. Putin - not to mention Israelis, Palestinians and Iraqis fighting their own wars - was that the president was not engaged enough by the crises to set aside the purely political activity of collecting checks from donors.

In Brussels, European Union officials met Thursday to discuss potential sanctions against Russia, including new measures against the banking, energy and arms industries. But no decisions will be made before next week, and even then Moscow will likely be given a new deadline for meeting a demand that it stop supplying the Ukrainian rebels. Previous deadlines to cease weapons deliveries have passed with no significant action.

While the West temporizes, a de facto Russian army is rapidly assembling in occupied portions of eastern Ukraine. A report in the Financial Times, sourced to U.S. intelligence officials, says it includes dozens of T-64 battle tanks, Grad rocket launchers, self-propelled guns, infantry combat vehicles with automatic cannons and armored personnel carriers, in addition to anti-aircraft systems like that which shot down the Malaysian plane. This force is commanded by Russian citizens who infiltrated Ukraine from Moscow, including a Russian secret police colonel, and manned in large part by fighters from Russia.

Incredibly, the European Union's position - tacitly supported by Mr. Obama - is that the Ukrainian government should stop attempting to expel the invaders from its territory and instead negotiate with them about the political future of Ukraine. Fortunately, newly elected President Petro Poroshenko has not capitulated to this appeasement strategy. However, his appeals for military aid from the United States and NATO, or at least more substantial sanctions, have so far been turned aside by Mr. Obama and the Europeans.

Frustration with Mr. Obama's weakness now extends to the top ranks of the Democratic Party. A

letter released Tuesday by three Senate committee chairs - Dianne Feinstein (Calif.), Carl Levin (Mich.) and Robert Menendez (N.J.) - called on Mr. Obama to "impose immediate broad sanctions" against Russia's defense sector, as well as broader measures against energy and financial industries, and to explore designating the rebels' political structure as a foreign terrorist organization. While cooperation with Europe is desirable, the senators said, "the United States must not limit its own national security strategy when swift action will help fulfill our strategic objectives."

Mr. Obama has already missed the opportunity for swift action to stop Mr. Putin's escalation. If he does not act soon, it may be too late to save Ukraine.

CORPORATIONS ARE PEOPLE. SO WHAT IF PEOPLE WERE CORPORATIONS? (WP)

By Catherine Rampell

Washington Post, July 24, 2014

"Checked the tax code," wrote a friend who's engaged to a woman from a low-tax country.

"Unfortunately, marrying [my fiancée] does not entitle me to a tax inversion like the big US companies are getting. Thanks for nothing IRS."

That got me thinking. Maybe we've been looking at this whole corporations-are-people-too foofaraw the wrong way. Critics complained when the Supreme Court granted companies rights to freedom of speech and religion under the legal fiction that corporations are people. But perhaps this precedent is good news for flesh-and-blood people like you and me (a.k.a. People Classic™). If companies are claiming the rights and privileges of people, maybe people should start claiming the rights and privileges of corporations. Rights harmonization, in other words, should flow in both directions, since we're now all indistinguishable, equally protected "persons" - in the court's eyes, anyway.

I spoke with a few legal and tax experts about what we humans stand to gain from my cutting-edge constitutional insight. Turns out corporations enjoy tons of rights and privileges that biological beings should be salivating over.

The most obvious place to start is taxes. Companies save billions from loopholes that don't apply to individuals - yet.

People, for example, pay taxes on their worldwide incomes. Corporations do not, as long as they don't bring the foreign profits back into the United States. And tax attorneys have come up with clever ways of booking an unexpectedly high share of corporate income abroad.

Businesses, for example, can transfer their "intangible" property - things like patents or trademarks - to holding companies in tax havens. That means a company such as Apple could assign ownership of its patents to a subsidiary in Bermuda, and any profits resulting from those patents would get taxed in Bermuda only. Unless and until those profits were repatriated to the States, Uncle Sam wouldn't get a cut.

If you think about it, humans have valuable intangible assets, too. Take, for instance, a college degree.

According to Martin Sullivan, the chief economist at Tax Analysts, if individuals were treated like corporations, I could set up an affiliate called "Catherine Rampell Bermuda," have it pay my college tuition and then declare that the affiliate owns the resulting degree. I could then tell the IRS that everything I earn above the average high school grad's wage should be recorded as income in Bermuda, since it's all derived from a Bermuda-based asset. Until I decide to repatriate those diploma-derived earnings, I've built myself a tax-free IRA.

Other goodies abound. On federal tax returns, individuals can deduct either the sales taxes they paid or their state income taxes, not both; for companies, these deductions are all-you-can-eat. If people were treated like companies, we could also start deducting the first dollar we spend on health care, rather than just the medical spending that exceeds 10 percent of our adjusted gross incomes.

Home-buying would also become more attractive. Right now there are limits to how much mortgage interest humans can deduct. But if you analogize your primary residence to a "corporate headquarters" and your vacation homes to "branch offices," you can deduct the full interest on every McMansion you ever buy.

The tax code isn't the only place where we might enjoy gaining our corporate brethren's rights.

If people were treated like corporations, perhaps we'd be able to "merge" with whomever we want

without worrying about restrictive marriage laws, noted Adam Winkler, a UCLA law professor. We could also choose to abide by the family law in whichever state we like best, regardless of where we live. Companies, after all, can incorporate in the jurisdiction with the most favorable corporate governance laws, regardless of where they operate, explained Kent Greenfield, a law professor at Boston College. That's one reason Delaware is home to more businesses than people.

But the best perk of being treated like an incorporeal corporation?

Even if you killed someone, stole a house, funded a genocidal regime or terrorize the global economy, you wouldn't go to jail. At worst, you'd pay a fine. Sure, you could be executed for your crimes - sort of - by having your charter revoked or by being driven to bankruptcy by onerous penalties, but you could always return from the dead with a different name but much of the same DNA. To err is human; to err and bounce back unscathed, you really need to be a company.

ISRAEL MUST BE PERMITTED TO CRUSH HAMAS (WP)

By Michael Oren

Washington Post, July 25, 2014

U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary of State John Kerry and the foreign ministers of Great Britain and France all are rushing to achieve a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas. Their motive - to end civilian suffering and restore stability to the area - is noble. The images of the wounded and dead resulting from the conflict are indeed agonizing. However, these senior statesmen can be most helpful now by doing nothing. To preserve the values they cherish and to send an unequivocal message to terrorist organizations and their state sponsors everywhere, Israel must be permitted to crush Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

This is the lesson of previous rounds of fighting between the Israeli Defense Forces and terrorist strongholds. In Lebanon in 2006 and in Gaza in 2008 and again in 2012, Israel responded to rocket attacks on its cities with fierce counteroffensives. Fighting against a deeply dug-in enemy that both blended in with the local population and used it as a shield, Israel's best efforts to avoid civilian casualties invariably proved limited. Incensed world opinion generated immense pressure on governments to convene the U.N. Security Council and empower human rights organizations to censure Israel and stop the carnage. These measures succeeded where the terrorists' rockets failed. Israel was compelled to back down.

And the terrorists, though badly mauled, won. Admittedly, their bar for claiming victory was exceptionally low. While Israel must achieve a clear battlefield success to win, the terrorists merely had to survive. But they did more than survive. Under the protection of cease-fires and, in some cases, international peacekeepers, they vastly expanded their arsenals to include more lethal and longer-range missiles. While reestablishing their rule in the streets, they burrowed beneath them to create a warren of bombproof bunkers and assault tunnels. Such measures enabled Hamas, as well as Hezbollah, to mount devastating attacks at the time of their choosing, confident that the international community would once again prevent Israel from exacting too heavy a price.

So the cycle continued. Allowed to fight for several weeks, at most, Israel was eventually condemned and hamstrung by cease-fires. The terrorists, by contrast, could emerge from their hideouts and begin to replenish and enhance their stockpiles. That is precisely the pattern established in the second Lebanon War and repeated in Operations Cast Lead and Pillar of Defense in Gaza. Hezbollah and Hamas sustained losses but, rescued and immunized by international diplomacy, they remained in power and became more powerful still. Israel, on the other hand, was forced to defend its right to defend itself. Jihadist organizations no different from the Islamic State and al-Qaeda gained regional legitimacy, while Israel lost it in the world. The cycle can end, now and decisively. As Operation Protective Edge enters its third week, responsible world leaders can give Israel the time and the leverage it needs to alter Hamas's calculus. They can let the Israeli army ferret Hamas out of its holes and make it pay a prohibitive cost for its attacks. They can create an outcome in which the organization, even if it remains in Gaza, is defanged and deprived of its heavy arms. Of course, Hamas will resist demilitarization, and more civilians will suffer, but by ending the cycle once and for all thousands of innocent lives will be saved.

Life in Gaza is miserable now, but if Israel is permitted to prevail, circumstances can improve markedly. U.S.- and Canadian-trained security forces of the Palestinian Authority can take over key crossings and patrol Gaza's porous border with Egypt. Rather than be funneled into Hamas's

war chest, international aid can be transferred directly to the civilian population to repair war damage and stimulate economic growth. Terrorist groups and their state patrons can be put on notice: The game has changed unalterably.

And by letting Israel regain its security with regard to Gaza - with all the pain it entails - the United States and its allies will be safeguarding their own. Though bitter, the fighting between Israel and Hamas raging in Gaza's alleyways is merely part of the far vaster struggle between rational nations and the al-Qaeda and Islamic State-like forces seeking their destruction. Relative to that global conflict, Operation Protective Edge may seem small, but it is nevertheless pivotal. To ensure that it concludes with a categorical Israeli win is in the world's fundamental interest. To guarantee peace, this war must be given a chance.

MY SON HAS BEEN SUSPENDED FIVE TIMES. HE'S 3. (WP)

By Tunette Powell

Washington Post, July 24, 2014

I received a call from my sons' school in March telling me that my oldest needed to be picked up early. He had been given a one-day suspension because he had thrown a chair. He did not hit anyone, but he could have, the school officials told me.

JJ was 4 at the time.

I agreed his behavior was inappropriate, but I was shocked that it resulted in a suspension.

For weeks, it seemed as if JJ was on the chopping block. He was suspended two more times, once for throwing another chair and then for spitting on a student who was bothering him at breakfast. Again, these are behaviors I found inappropriate, but I did not agree with suspension. Still, I kept quiet. I knew my history. I was the bad preschooler.

I was expelled from preschool and went on to serve more suspensions than I can remember. But I do remember my teachers' disparaging words. I remember being told I was bad and believing it. I remember just how long it took me to believe anything else about myself.

And even still, when my children were born, I promised myself that I would not let my negative school experiences affect them. I believed my experience was isolated. I searched for excuses. Maybe I was just a bad kid. Maybe it had something to do with my father's incarceration, which forced my mother to raise me and my brothers alone.

So I punished JJ at home and ignored my concerns. Then, two months later, I was called to pick up my 3-year-old son, Joah. Joah had hit a staff member on the arm. After that incident, they deemed him a "danger to the staff." Joah was suspended a total of five times. In 2014, my children have received eight suspensions.

Just like before, I tried to find excuses. I looked at myself. What was I doing wrong? My children are living a comfortable life. My husband is an amazing father to JJ and Joah. At home, they have given us very few problems; the same goes for time with babysitters.

I blamed myself, my past. And I would have continued to blame myself had I not taken the boys to a birthday party for one of JJ's classmates. At the party, the mothers congregated to talk about everyday parenting things, including preschool. As we talked, I admitted that JJ had been suspended three times. All of the mothers were shocked at the news.

"JJ?" one mother asked.

"My son threw something at a kid on purpose and the kid had to be rushed to the hospital," another parent said. "All I got was a phone call."

One after another, white mothers confessed the trouble their children had gotten into. Some of the behavior was similar to JJ's; some was much worse.

Most startling: None of their children had been suspended.

After that party, I read a study reflecting everything I was living.

Black children represent 18 percent of preschool enrollment but make up 48 percent of preschool children receiving more than one out-of-school suspension, according to the study released by the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights in March.

I immediately thought back to my own childhood. I thought back to the humiliating labels that greeted me before I could read. I thought back to the number of black friends and family members who also were suspended and expelled. I thought about my family and friends who had not overcome the detrimental effects of being suspended in preschool. I did not want that for JJ and Joah. I did not want it for any child.

But the next step was the hardest. At news of all of this, friends and relatives suggested that I pull my children out of the preschool program and move them into another. At first, I considered that. That move may have changed my kids' circumstances, but it would not have solved the problem. All across this country, black children are being suspended in preschool.

We can no longer put a Band-Aid on our nation's preschool-to-prison pipeline, which pushes children out of the education system and criminalizes relatively minor offenses. Moving my boys to another school would have provided a stopgap solution. It may have solved my problem, but it would not have solved the problem.

The problem is not that we have a bunch of racist teachers and administrators. I believe most educators want to help all children. But many aren't aware of the biases and prejudices that they, like all of us, harbor, and our current system offers very little diversity training to preschool staff. A recent study published by the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology found that the subjects - mostly white, female undergraduates - viewed black boys as older and less innocent than their white peers. When photos of children were paired with descriptions of crimes, the subjects judged the black children to be more culpable for their actions than their white or Latino counterparts and estimated that they were an average of 4.5 years older than they actually were. Authority figures strip black boys of their innocence at younger ages than white children. Diversity training for teachers and administrators would raise their awareness of how subconscious prejudices can drive racial discrepancies in disciplinary action.

I know that I am only one person and that it will be difficult for me to change the system. But I will do my part at my kids' preschool. I joined the parent advisory board and intend to work with it until I see change. I encourage other parents to join parent boards and attend school meetings that are open to parents. This is not the time to be silent. We must speak out. I cannot go back and undo what was done to me, but I refuse to let it be done to my children.

More from PostEverything:

Zero-tolerance policies are destroying the lives of black children

The education-reform movement is too white to do any good

This is what happened when I drove my Mercedes to pick up food stamps

SUPREME COURT MAY NOT PROTECT OBAMACARE THIS TIME (WP)

By Ruth Marcus

Washington Post, July 25, 2014

Don't be so sure that the Supreme Court is going to save Obamacare. Again.

The question is enormously important: Are health-care consumers entitled to subsidies if they buy coverage on insurance exchanges established by the federal government, as they are with insurance from state exchanges?

Two federal appeals courts have reached contradictory conclusions, at least so far. (The Obama administration plans to ask the full federal appeals court in Washington to review the three-judge panel ruling against the subsidies, and that court is newly stocked with liberals.) Cases are headed to two other appeals courts.

Which adds up to: coming eventually to a Supreme Court near you. The justices, particularly Chief Justice John Roberts, might prefer to duck the case - who needs the court embroiled in another Obamacare dispute? - but that might not be a realistic option.

The dispute involves perhaps the most consequential case of sloppy drafting in congressional history. The section of the law outlining how subsidies are calculated refers specifically to an exchange "established by the state." It doesn't mention subsidies for the federal exchanges set up in those states (now 36) that chose not to establish their own.

Preventing federal exchanges from offering subsidies would cripple the law, driving up premiums as healthy enrollees drop coverage and sicker ones remain. It is implausible to think that the Congress that created federal exchanges as a backup alternative to state marketplaces also intended them to fail. Yet the legislative language, taken alone, implies that outcome.

As the Richmond-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit conceded even as it upheld the subsidies, "If Congress did in fact intend to make the tax credits available to consumers on both state and federal exchanges, it would have been easy to write in broader language, as it did in other places in the statute."

Nonetheless, the stronger legal argument is with the government. In context - and even Justice

Antonin Scalia, the ultimate textualist, believes in looking at laws this way - it's clear that Congress could not have meant the provision to be so narrowly construed.

As you may have noticed, the stronger legal argument doesn't always win at this Supreme Court. The four liberal justices are reliable votes in the government's favor. Where is the fifth? Justice Anthony Kennedy believes the Affordable Care Act is unconstitutional, but he might be moved by the plight of millions of people suddenly without affordable insurance.

A more likely candidate is Roberts, who has already rewritten the statute once to save it, in the 2012 ruling upholding the constitutionality of the individual mandate because it was a tax, not a penalty. Would he ride again to Obamacare's rescue - not because he cares a whit about the law but to protect the court's reputation?

Some smart people think so. "A major lesson to be learned from the Court's previous decision . . . is that a majority of the justices do not want to determine the fate of a hugely important social issue," Supreme Court super-litigator Tom Goldstein wrote for *ScotusBlog*.

Ezra Klein of *Vox* agreed: "The Supreme Court simply isn't going to rip insurance from tens of millions of people in order to teach Congress a lesson about grammar."

Let's hope they're right, but I have my doubts. Certainly, Roberts zealously guards the court's institutional standing against accusations of overreaching. But only to a point. The Voting Rights Act offers an example. In 2009, Roberts, as with the Affordable Care Act, demonstrated his willingness to stretch the language of the statute to save it - temporarily. Four years later, he wrote the majority ruling striking down the law's key provision.

Importantly, Roberts's initial restraint in that case, as in his ruling upholding the Affordable Care Act, was based on constitutional considerations: the long-standing principle that the court, if possible, should avoid overturning the work of a co-equal branch of government.

In the looming case about federal subsidies, which involves statutory interpretation (actually, whether the court should accept a federal agency's interpretation of a statute), Roberts may be inclined to a less deferential stance.

Indeed, the two D.C. Circuit judges who invalidated the subsidies - Thomas Griffith and Raymond Randolph - cast their decision in terms of the "legislative supremacy" of Congress and the need for judges to respect statutory language, not to substitute their own surmise about what Congress intended.

Last time around, Roberts was protecting the court from appearing to overstep its constitutional muscle. This case is different, and so, I fear, could be the outcome.

Read more from Ruth Marcus's archive, follow her on Twitter or subscribe to her updates on Facebook.

ISRAEL IS ACTING AS IF IT IS FREE OF MORAL RESPONSIBILITIES. (WP)

By Eugene Robinson

Washington Post, July 24, 2014

The civilian death toll in Gaza from Israel's latest incursion is appalling. The right to self-defense is inalienable, but it is not free from moral constraints.

As of this writing, nearly 750 Palestinians, including dozens of children, have been killed since the Israeli assault began. On Thursday, a compound housing a United Nations school - crowded with Gaza residents who had fled their homes to seek shelter - was shelled in an incident still under investigation by the Israeli Defense Forces. Palestinian officials said 15 people were killed and scores injured.

I support Israel. I abhor Hamas. But unleashing such devastating firepower on a tiny, densely crowded enclave in which civilians are trapped - and thus destined to become casualties - is wrong by any reasonable moral standard.

The Israeli government's motivations in Gaza deserve to be taken seriously. But they do not justify the onslaught that is now in its third week. For Israeli military action to be justifiable, it must be proportionate. What we're witnessing is not.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday that Hamas is "targeting civilians and hiding behind civilians," which he called a "double war crime." He was referring to the fact that Hamas targets Israeli civilians with its rocket attacks and positions its military installations in residential neighborhoods or near schools and hospitals.

Netanyahu is right that these practices are reprehensible and that Israel has every right to

respond. But none of this absolves Israel from its own moral responsibility. A civilized nation does not repay every heinous act in kind.

Israel says it is taking great pains to avoid civilian deaths. Indeed, Israel has been warning people to leave - with leaflets, text messages and nonlethal "roof-knocking" bombs - before smashing into residential neighborhoods. It is also true that in many instances Hamas, even knowing that an attack was coming, has instructed Gazans to stay put.

I have seen no confirmed reports, however, of Hamas using force to keep people in targeted areas so they can serve as human shields - and perhaps sway world opinion by boosting the body count. When people decide they must leave their homes, they can do so. But where are these evacuees supposed to go? To the nearest school or hospital? Not if these, too, are considered legitimate targets by the Israeli Defense Forces.

Gazans cannot flee across the closed border with Egypt. They obviously do not have the option of escaping into Israel or sailing away across the Mediterranean Sea. Gaza's 1.8 million people are packed into an enclave measuring 139 square miles - an area and population roughly the size of Philadelphia.

Israeli officials say they would never consider attacking such targets as a school, a hospital or an apartment building unless Hamas were using these places - which should be off-limits in war - as military command posts, launch sites for rocket attacks and entry points for tunnels through which assassins and suicide bombers could enter Israel.

Again, however, there is the issue of proportionality. The military and political leadership of Hamas has much better intelligence about what the Israeli armed forces are doing and more options for refuge and shelter than the average Gazan. Indeed, we have not heard of any major Hamas figure being killed. So if you're an Israeli commander and you know that there's a Hamas military facility next to a medical clinic, but you're not completely sure the militants are still there, while the clinic is likely packed with injured civilians, do you still pull the trigger?

Hamas's rockets are much less of a threat than in the past because of Israel's Iron Dome missile-defense system, which has an impressive record. The tunnels are more worrisome because of their potential for use in future terrorism. Assume for the sake of argument that Israel had no choice but to act. What, then, would be a morally acceptable number of Palestinian civilian casualties?

Let me frame the question in practical terms: How many civilian casualties are needed to guarantee another generation of hatred and war?

The scale of death and destruction appears to be aimed not just at lessening the actual threat from Hamas but also at punishing Gazans for elevating Hamas to power in the first place. Netanyahu seems determined to teach them a lesson.

From all reports, however, the people of Gaza were already weary of Hamas. Netanyahu could have offered them an alternative future of free movement, economic development and peace. Instead, he gives them no choice.

Read more from Eugene Robinson's archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook. You can also join him Tuesdays at 1 p.m. for a live Q&A.

THE E.U. IS THE WORLD'S GREAT NO-SHOW (WP)

By Fareed Zakaria

Washington Post, July 25, 2014

The Ukraine crisis has shone a spotlight on one of the glaring gaps in the world: the lack of a strategic and purposeful Europe. The United States can and should lead on the response to this conflict, but nothing can really happen without Europe. The European Union is by far Russia's largest trading partner - it buys much of Russia's energy, is the major investor in Russian companies and is the largest destination for Russian capital. Some of President Obama's critics want him to scold Vladimir Putin. But ultimately, it is European actions that the Russian president will worry about.

Consider how Europe has dealt with Ukraine. For years, it could not really decide whether it wanted to encourage Ukrainian membership in the union, so it sent mixed signals to Kiev, which had the initial effect of disappointing pro-European Ukrainians, angering Russians and confusing everyone else.

In 2008, after Moscow sent troops into Georgia, Europe promised an "Eastern partnership" to the

countries along Europe's eastern fringe. But, as Neil MacFarlane and Anand Menon point out in the current issue of the journal *Survival*, "The Eastern partnership was a classic example of the EU's proclivity for responding to events by adding long-term and rhetorically impressive, but resource-poor, bolt-ons to existing policy."

European leaders were beginning to woo Ukraine without recognizing how this would be perceived in Russia. Moscow had its own plans for a customs union, to be followed by a Eurasian Union, which was meant to be a counter to the European Union. Ukraine was vital to Russia's plans and was dependent on Russia for cheap natural gas. Plus, of course, Ukrainians were divided over whether to move west or east.

Negotiations between the European Union and Ukraine for an association agreement meandered along, with the lawyers and translators taking a year to work out the text. In describing this tardiness as a mistake, Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said, "The same thing applies to the [European] Union as to the Vatican. God's mills grind slowly but surely." The deal that was offered to Ukraine was full of demands for reform and restructuring of its corrupt economy, but it had little in the way of aid to soften the blows and sweeten the pot. When then-President Viktor Yanukovich rejected Europe's offer and sided with Moscow, he set in motion a high-speed, high-stakes game that Europe was utterly unprepared for and could not respond to.

If Europe was trying to move Ukraine into its camp, it should have been more generous to Kiev and negotiated seriously with Moscow to assuage its concerns. Instead, Europe seemed to act almost unaware of the strategic consequences of its actions. Then when Russia began a campaign to destabilize Ukraine - which persists to this day - Europe remained a step behind, internally conflicted and unwilling to assert itself clearly and quickly. Those same qualities have been on display following the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17.

The European Union still has a chance to send a much clearer signal to Ukraine, Russia and the world. It could demand that Russia pressure the separatists to cooperate fully with the investigation of Flight 17 and allow the Ukrainian government - which Moscow recognizes - to take control of its own territory in eastern Ukraine. It could put forward a list of specific sanctions that would be implemented were those conditions not met within, say, two weeks.

In addition, Europe should announce longer-term plans on two fronts, first to gain greater energy independence from Russian oil and gas. European nations must also reverse a two-decade downward spiral in defense spending that has made the E.U. a paper tiger in geopolitical terms. Germany, for example, spends about 1.5 percent of its gross domestic product on defense, among the lowest rates in Europe and well below the 2 percent that is the target for all NATO members.

It's hard for a country's voice to be heard and feared when it speaks softly and carries a twig.

The problem is now being described as European cowardice and appeasement. It is better explained by an absence of coherence among the European Union's 28 very different countries, a lack of strategic direction and a parochial inward orientation that looks for the world's problems to go away. The result is a great global vacuum, with terrible consequences.

If we look back years from now and wonder why the liberal, open, rule-based international order weakened and eroded, we might well note that the world's most powerful political and economic unit, the European Union, with a population and economy larger than America's, was the great no-show on the international stage.

Read more from Fareed Zakaria's archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook.

THE VACANT PRESIDENCY (WP)

By Charles Krauthammer

Washington Post, July 24, 2014

The president's demeanor is worrying a lot of people. From the immigration crisis on the Mexican border to the Islamic State rising in Mesopotamia, Barack Obama seems totally detached from the world's convulsions. When he does interrupt his endless rounds of golf, fundraising and photo ops, it's for some affectless, mechanical, almost forced public statement.

Regarding Ukraine, his detachment - the rote, impassive voice - borders on dissociation. His U.N. ambassador, Samantha Power, delivers an impassioned denunciation of Russia. Obama cautions that we not "get out ahead of the facts," as if the facts of this case - Vladimir Putin's proxies shooting down a civilian airliner - are in doubt.

The preferred explanation for the president's detachment is psychological. He's checked out. Given up. Let down and disappointed by the world, he is in withdrawal. Perhaps.

But I'd propose an alternate theory, less psychological than intellectual, that gives him more credit: Obama's passivity stems from an idea. When Obama says Putin has placed himself on the wrong side of history in Ukraine, he actually believes it. He disdains realpolitik because he believes that, in the end, such primitive 19th-century notions as conquest are self-defeating. History sees to their defeat.

"The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice," said Obama in June 2009 (and many times since) regarding the Green Revolution in Iran.

Ultimately, injustice and aggression don't pay. The Soviets saw their 20th-century empire dissolve. More proximally, U.S. gains in Iraq and Afghanistan were, in time, liquidated. Ozymandias lies forever buried and forgotten in desert sands.

Remember when, at the beginning of the Ukraine crisis, Obama tried to construct for Putin "an offramp" from Crimea? Absurd as this idea was, I think Obama was sincere. He actually imagined that he'd be saving Putin from himself, that Crimea could only redound against Russia in the long run.

If you really believe this, then there is no need for forceful, potentially risky U.S. counteractions. Which explains everything since: Obama's pinprick sanctions; his failure to rally a craven Europe; his refusal to supply Ukraine with the weapons it has been begging for.

The shooting down of a civilian airliner seemed to validate Obama's passivity. "Violence and conflict inevitably lead to unforeseen consequences," explained Obama. See. You play with fire, it will blow up in your face. Just as I warned. Now world opinion will turn against Putin.

To which I say: So what? World opinion, by itself, is useless: malleable, ephemeral and, unless mobilized by leadership, powerless. History doesn't act autonomously. It needs agency.

Germany's Angela Merkel still doesn't want to jeopardize trade with Russia. France's François Hollande will proceed with delivery of a Mistral-class attack-helicopter carrier to Russia. And Obama speaks of future "costs" if Russia persists - a broken record since Crimea, carrying zero credibility.

Or did Obama think Putin - a KGB thug who rose to power by turning Chechnya to rubble - would be shamed into regret and restraint by the blood of 298 innocents? On the contrary. Putin's response has been brazen defiance: denying everything and unleashing a massive campaign of lies, fabrications and conspiracy theories blaming it all on Ukraine and the United States.

Putin doesn't give a damn about world opinion. He cares about domestic opinion, which has soared to more than 80 percent approval since Crimea. If anything, he's been emboldened. On Wednesday, his proxies shot down two more jets - a finger to the world and a declaration that his campaign continues.

A real U.S. president would give Kiev the weapons it needs, impose devastating sectoral sanctions on Moscow, reinstate our Central European missile-defense system and make a Reaganesque speech explaining why.

Obama has done none of these things. Why should he? He's on the right side of history.

Of course, in the long run nothing lasts. But history is lived in the here and now. The Soviets had only 70 years, Hitler a mere 12. Yet it was enough to murder millions and rain ruin on entire continents. Bashar al-Assad, too, will one day go. But not before having killed at least 100,000 people.

All domination must end. But after how much devastation? And if you leave it to the forces of history to repel aggression and redeem injustice, what's the point of politics, of leadership, in the first place?

The world is aflame and our leader is on the 14th green. The arc of history may indeed bend toward justice, Mr. President. But, as you say, the arc is long. The job of a leader is to shorten it, to intervene on behalf of "the fierce urgency of now." Otherwise, why do we need a president? And why did you seek to become ours?

Read more from Charles Krauthammer's archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook.

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES:

117 IMMIGRANT CHILDREN PLACED WITH DELAWARE FAMILIES (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 24, 2014

The federal government has placed 117 children who illegally immigrated alone into the U.S. with families in Delaware, Gov. Jack Markell told lawmakers in a letter on Thursday.

Markell, who previously said that Delaware had no facilities that could accommodate children illegally migrating alone to the U.S., also urged lawmakers to "remain mindful that we are called upon to provide for the least of our brothers and sisters."

He called the U.S. a "nation of immigrants," saying "the humanitarian crisis of unaccompanied minors fleeing dangerous situations at home does not just affect our border states; it impacts all of us as Americans. Whatever one's politics, we are a nation of immigrants."

In his letter, Markell said that his administration was prepared to work with nonprofits to ensure that child migrants who need services have their basic needs met, saying the presence of child migrants in Delaware may come at a cost for state taxpayers.

He said the children may enroll in Delaware schools while awaiting immigration processing, "as immigrant children ordinarily do." Markell said the Obama administration does not pay for food, clothing or the education of minors placed with families.

"I believe that the federal government should ensure that the children being placed with Delaware families are placed into safe environments and are receiving the services they need, including medical care," Markell wrote. "The education and other services come at a cost for the state, school districts and non-profit providers and I am asking federal officials to work with states to cover those costs and ensure that these children receive appropriate care."

Markell said the number of children currently housed in Delaware was provided by the Obama administration, and were accurate as of Tuesday. He did not specify in the letter whether the minors, who came across the southern border of the U.S. unaccompanied by their parents, were placed with members of their own family.

The letter noted generally that many unaccompanied minors "are placed with families they know in our country - preferably with close relatives." The federal government does not disclose the identity or location of families housing child migrants to protect their privacy of the families and the children, Markell said in his letter.

Markell said he wrote the letter to lawmakers after his office fielded "numerous requests" for information about the immigration crisis from members of the General Assembly. It was addressed to members of the leadership of both parties in the Legislature.

Senate Minority Whip Greg Lavelle, R-Sharples, who had questioned Markell about whether child migrants would be housed in Delaware, read the letter late Thursday and could not comment on the details.

"I'm glad he's informing Delaware," said Lavelle, who had publicly expressed concern about the cost to provide services to child migrants housed here. "I think there are still unanswered questions. I think it would be nice to hear from our federal delegation."

House Speaker Pete Schwartzkopf, a Rehoboth Democrat, said he received Markell's letter but hadn't read it.

More than 57,000 children have entered the U.S. illegally since Oct. 1, mostly from three Central American countries: Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, Markell said in his letter. Twenty percent of the child migrants are 12 years old or younger.

"Unfortunately, the debate around immigration has been marked too often by scare-mongering and xenophobia," Markell wrote. "I know you share my view that, in Delaware, that is not how we approach problems. If we can provide help, shelter and respite to these unaccompanied children, we will do so and remain mindful that we are called upon to provide for the least of our brothers and sisters."

Read: Markell's letter to lawmakers about the children

Markell said in his letter that the Obama administration has taken steps to address the flow of immigrants crossing the southern border.

The average time to deport unaccompanied adults illegally crossing the border has been reduced from 33 days to 4 days, and 3,500 immigrants are being returned to Central America weekly, Markell wrote.

Markell was first emailed on July 2 by an official in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services requesting help in housing child migrants crossing into the U.S. alone. Markell said in Thursday's letter that the Obama administration reached out to many states seeking assistance. The Health department required, however, that shelter be provided by an entity licensed to provide residential services to kids with an array of services. Markell said his administration is "not aware of licensed residential facilities in Delaware prepared to provide the required shelter and wrap-around services to a significant number of minors." That's partly, Markell said, because Delaware relies on foster care to meet the needs of the majority of children in state custody, as opposed to group residential settings. Contact Jonathan Starkey at 983-6756, on Twitter @jwstarkey or at jstarkey@delawareonline.com.
Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1mL142M>

DELAWARE VIEWS MIRROR GAZA DIVISION (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 24, 2014

The deadly conflict in Gaza piquing concern among global leaders also echoes in Delaware, where back-to-back rallies have drawn hundreds, spotlighting the dichotomy of opinion on the subject.

The situation escalated Thursday in the Mideast with deaths and injuries from Israeli shelling of a hospital in Gaza and a United Nations shelter for Palestinian refugees, amid ongoing negotiation attempts by the U.S. secretary of state and UN officials. Others are pressing Hamas leaders to accept an Egyptian-led cease fire.

As is the case around the world, emotion-charged opinions in Delaware are entrenched because each side holds the other responsible for continuing violence - especially killings of children and other non-military citizens. Both sides feel misunderstood as well as victimized by the other, said professor Stuart Kaufman, a University of Delaware political science and international relations expert.

Even suggesting to someone on one side that the other side may have valid reasons for its position may fall on unhearing ears, he said.

"Both sides are so sensitive, because they feel like victims, that it's hard to get them to be flexible," he said. "The hardest part is that they can't see things from the other side's point of view."

On Thursday, more than 100 people turned out for a demonstration in Wilmington planned by University of Delaware students.

Their lunchtime protest - outside the Market Street office of U.S. Sen. Chris Coons - came as part of a "National Day of Action for Gaza," by a group called the "U.S. Campaign to End the Occupation."

Organizers said their goal was to send a message: "Stop the unjust violence in Gaza & end all military aid to Israel." They also called on Israel to end what they called its "shocking violence and human rights abuses."

Madinah Wilson, president of the student group, said she hoped passersby would listen to demonstrators to shape informed opinions. "If you are not educated, you are complacent," Wilson said.

But Coons did not see the protest because he was in Washington, D.C. The night before, however, he joined more than 250 at the Siegel Jewish Community Center in Talleyville for a solidarity rally, "Together We Stand With Israel."

With Coons among its speakers, the event was held by the Jewish Federation of Delaware, the community center and Delaware Rabbinical and Cantors Association.

Rabbi Yair D. Robinson of Congregation Beth Emeth in Wilmington, who leads the Delaware Rabbis and Cantors Association, told The News Journal on Thursday night he is "pro-Palestinian." Robinson said he wants Palestinians to have a good life, but says Hamas - not Palestine, Palestinians or Israel - has made that impossible.

The Palestinian people are held hostage by Hamas, which destroyed the extensive and functioning infrastructure Israel left in Gaza, he said. Hamas diverted resources that could have helped ensure a better life in Palestine toward its mission of killing Jews, he said.

Hundreds of millions of dollars and 700,000 tons of concrete were used not for roads, factories, hospitals and schools but for tunnels into Israel solely for the purpose of murderous attacks on

Israeli citizens, said Robinson, who also spoke at Wednesday's solidarity rally.

The mouths of those tunnels intentionally are placed in homes and other non-military settings to use "civilians as human shields," he said.

But those outside the senator's office Thursday afternoon voiced a different view.

Omar Abuashi, 21, wore a T-shirt emblazoned with the slogan "Free Palestine," and his brother Mahmoud, 19, led the flag-waving crowd in chants of "Free, free Palestine," and "Not another nickel, not another dime, no more money for Israel's crime."

The brothers, both of Newark, hold Israel responsible for deaths of innocent children and families on the streets of their homeland.

"Kids are not terrorists," Omar said. "They kidnapped a 16-year-old boy, forced him to drink gasoline and set him on fire, and people are just watching. They were not doing anything. They are killing everybody in Gaza and the West Bank."

Peace activists Joan French and Phillip Bannowsky, who are married, said Thursday they were there for humanitarian reasons to protest the Israeli government's "rampant policy" of ethnic cleansing.

Organizers of the community center rally said the event was an opportunity to educate the community, show solidarity and emphasize that Israel's ongoing conflict is not with Palestine, but with the Hamas terrorist group, said Andrea M. Bock of the Jewish Federation of Delaware.

But labeling Hamas solely as terrorists, Kaufman said, is a tactic that negates the other side.

Hamas does engage in terrorism, he said, but also is an unrecognized government that provides hospitals and many services.

While each side may be willing to "give an inch" in negotiations, Kaufman said, "there always comes a point beyond which the sides aren't willing to go.

"Then, when that happens, that's when the totalizing language comes out: 'You guys are evil, you just want to destroy us.' There are so many emotional issues, that negotiation is like going into a mine field," he said.

Under Israeli sanctions, he said, Palestinian life "is absolutely horrible.... They have no options. They have no chance for life, liberty or the pursuit of happiness."

Hamas - which denies Jewish suffering in the Holocaust to irritate its enemies - resorted to violence after getting no benefit from being moderate, Kaufman said. "Their calculation becomes 'if we can't actually improve the lives of our people, our fallback plan is to score political points by killing Israelis,' because at least it's an ideological win even if it accomplishes nothing," he said.

A similar staunchness is reflected by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Kaufman said:

"The Israeli position on Hamas is they're terrorists and 'We don't talk to terrorists,' end of story."

And neither side wants to share Jerusalem, Kaufman said.

Because the U.S. is a longtime ally and supporter of Israel, opinion tends to favor Israel, he said, adding, "Palestinians aren't very popular in America." But, "if we side with the Israelis, we are siding with the Israelis not giving the Palestinians a decent life. If we side with the Palestinians, we are letting them get away with terrorism. What Americans need to do is think, which of those things is worse?"

Kaufman, who is Jewish, said he has come to believe that denying Palestinians "any possibility of having a decent life is morally worse than what the Palestinians are doing."

Israel - still the one solid U.S. ally in the region - remains the only democracy in the Middle East and, under attack by terrorists, is doing what it must to protect its own people and Palestinians as well, Robinson said.

While some extremists support the idea of Israel retaking Gaza, Robinson said he supports a plan proposed by a former Israeli defense minister to raise \$50 billion to rebuild Palestine after the conflict ends.

"I was happy that Israel pulled out of Gaza in 2005," he said. "It was the right thing to do."

But eying the current conflict, he said, "It plagues my heart ... that a generation of Gazans are being wiped out - if not physically, literally, then psychologically. Gaza is a place of despair and it doesn't have to be."

Staff reporter Terri Sanginiti contributed to this article.

Contact robin brown at (302) 324-2856 or rbrown@delawareonline.com. Find her on Facebook and follow her on Twitter @rbrowndelaware.

Latest casualties in Gaza

A U.N. school in Gaza crowded with hundreds of Palestinians seeking refuge from fierce fighting came under fire Thursday, killing at least 15 civilians and leaving a sad tableau of blood-spattered pillows, blankets and children's clothing scattered in the courtyard.

More than 250 people gathered Wednesday night at the Siegel Jewish Community Center in Talleyville for a solidarity rally called "Together We Stand With Israel." 7/24/14

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1rEFPHz>

REP. POTTER SPEAKS OUT ON HAYNES PARK CHARITY EVENT WHERE SHOTS FIRED (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 24, 2014

A state representative whose wife was fired as a top aide to Wilmington's mayor is questioning how electric power was provided to an unsanctioned charity event in a city park where a number of shots were fired Sunday.

"It is my understanding that the electricity was turned on in Haynes Park on Sunday, which, if true, would indicate that personnel in the Department of Parks and Recreation turned the electricity on, since that access is not available to the general public," state Rep. Charles Potter Jr. said in a letter to Mayor Dennis P. Williams. "It is also my understanding that city personnel were in attendance in the park that day."

A walk through the park Thursday found four active sockets in an electric box near the center of the park.

Potter, who was reached Thursday afternoon, said he was more concerned about residents.

"What I want to tell you is that there was an incident at the park and I want to ensure the safety of my people," he said. "That's it. Nothing more."

Potter's letter, which was obtained by The News Journal, also questions why the special event permit process was not enforced.

City spokeswoman Alexandra Coppadge said the administration is looking into Potter's allegations, but had no comment at this time.

The News Journal obtained a second letter Potter sent to state police Col. Nathaniel McQueen Jr. asking "for an increase in patrols" from his agency. The letter also said he contacted New Castle County police.

State police Sgt. Paul Shavack and county police Sgt. Jacob Andrews confirmed that Potter requested an increase in police patrols. A portion of Potter's district is covered by state and county police. Both agencies said they will review crime data to determine if a change in deployment is warranted.

"Haynes Park is in the Wilmington Police Department jurisdiction and any requests for increased patrols or presence by state police would be accomplished at the request of the Wilmington Police Department," Shavack added.

The News Journal is asking Williams' administration to explain who gave permission to turn park power on at the charity event organized to help Francine Wallace, who was seriously injured in a June 16 fire at her Bird Street home.

The event Sunday came to an end when a group of young men started shooting guns when the basketball courts were full and children were playing on nearby jungle gyms, police and witnesses said.

When asked if his letters had anything to do with his wife, Velda Jones-Potter, being fired by Williams's chief strategist, Potter insisted he was looking out for his constituents' safety.

She was let go for representing her son's business, Foxtail Fest, in meetings with other city leaders. This occurred despite Wilmington's policy prohibiting city employees from representing or assisting "any private enterprise with respect to any matter before the city."

Wilmington billed Foxtail Fest organizers \$7,000 for public resources devoted to the for-profit event.

Organizers of the Sept. 14 music festival filed a lawsuit in April arguing they are not responsible for those costs, adding there was no contract between the host company, What Scene? LLC, and the city for the event.

What Scene? owner Brandon Potter is son of state Rep. Charles Potter, who is the mayor's cousin.

The suit was dismissed by Chancery Court on May 9 for lack of jurisdiction. A new case was then

filed in Superior Court.

The charity event in Haynes Park did not have a permit to operate, city officials have said. The permit allows the city to put resources in place based on an event's size, type, time of day, location and other circumstances.

The permit application also outlines costs that may be required. Sunday's event would have cost organizers \$1,425, the city estimated earlier this week.

"As elected officials, it is our responsibility to ensure that our constituents are safe and protected, and that safeguards are in place to prevent violence like this from occurring," Potter ended his letter. "I have several ideas which I think may help, and I will share them at a later date."

Reporter Sean O'Sullivan contributed to this story.

Contact Esteban Parra at (302) 324-2299, eparra@delawareonline.com or Twitter @eparra3.

Shots interrupted a charity basketball tournament Sunday evening at Haynes Park, according to police. It appears no one was wounded in the chaotic situation. 7/21/14

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1mICkld>

DEL. OFFICIAL'S WIFE HURT IN VA. TORNADO WHERE 2 DIED, 36 INJURED (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 24, 2014

Two people were killed and at least 36 injured - including the wife of a New Castle County official - when a tornado swept through the Cherrystone Campground in Cheriton on Virginia's Eastern Shore on Thursday morning, officials said.

A tree fell on a tent at the campground, killing a couple from Jersey City, New Jersey - Lord Balatbat and Lolabeth Ortega, both 38, Virginia State Police said. Their 13-year-old son, who was in another tent nearby also hit by a tree, is in a hospital with life-threatening injuries.

Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital in Nassawadox, Virginia, treated 15 adults and 11 children after the tornado, according to spokesman Peter Glagola. Of that number, one adult was undergoing surgery; one was transferred to Medical College of Virginia in Richmond; and 13 adults were treated and released.

Dave Carpenter Jr., New Castle County's coordinator of emergency management, was vacationing with his wife Shelly and their son and daughter at the campground when the storm struck about 9 a.m. Thursday.

"We can confirm that Dave Carpenter, his wife, and their children were in Cherrystone Campground in Cheriton, Va., when a tornado reportedly hit this morning," said Antonio M. Prado, director of communications for the county.

"Carpenter contacted Director of Public Safety Joe Bryant to brief him of his situation.

Unfortunately, his wife suffered a dislocated hip and a fractured hipbone after their trailer was flipped over," Prado said. "She was transported to the hospital, with the expectation she would be transferred soon to an orthopedic hospital. Their children were unharmed, thankfully."

"As for Dave, he said his back was sore after the incident but that seemed to be the extent of things for him. We were sorry to hear of his wife's injury but glad to hear that his family was alright," Prado said in an email. "This was a serious storm, and our hearts go out to the victims who perished as a result of it."

Virginia State Police spokesperson Corrine Geller said the EF-1 tornado came off the bay from the southwest corner of the campground and cut a "V-pattern" through the facility where more than 1,300 people were staying. Geller said "deputies and troopers went to every tent and camper to make sure everyone was accounted for."

Two of the injured children were transferred from Shore Memorial to Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters in Norfolk; one child was admitted; and eight children were treated and released. Most of those being treated at Nassawadox suffered broken bones, cuts or lacerations, while the more seriously injured suffered head injuries or internal injuries, Glagola said.

Eastville volunteer firefighter Brittney Eder told The Associated Press, "It came in real quick. The sky turned jet black."

Eder said she left the campground before the full force of the storm hit.

Eder's father, Fire Chief David Eder, told her from the scene that the storm felled trees and flipped at least two campers.

Jordan Bertok tweeted two photos of damage at the campground, saying, "Just lived through a tornado."

The area was under a tornado warning from the National Weather Service until 9 a.m. after radar indicated a waterspout over the Chesapeake Bay.

U.S. 13 was littered with debris and hail that ranged from the size of a quarter to a golf ball, witnesses said.

In Cheriton, a tractor-trailer overturned on U.S. 13, with the driver trapped.

Those injured have all been transported to nearby hospitals. At least one person was critically injured.

The Coast Guard and Virginia Marine Police received a report of two vessels overturned in Oyster Bay, on the seaside of Northampton County, after a severe storm struck the area Thursday morning.

The boaters were rescued by Good Samaritans before the Coast Guard arrived on the scene, according to Fifth Coast Guard District spokesman Petty Officer David Weydert.

There were no injuries and information on the condition and types of their vessels was not immediately available.

Emergency personnel from Accomack and Northampton counties responded to multiple traumatic injuries at the campground, police said. An ambulance was also called to a Cheriton home.

Rescue squads from Virginia Beach were also meeting Eastern Shore ambulances at the visitor's center plaza at the northern end of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel to transport some of the injured.

Around 10 a.m., units were still finding injuries, officials at the scene said. Injuries reported so far include a priority one head injury. An injured child was transported to a Hampton Roads hospital. Just before 9 a.m., there was a report seeking help at Cherrystone Campground, where there reports of overturned campers and a fallen tree on a tent.

Cherrystone Campground, founded in 1964, has 725 sites, including cabins, cottages and deluxe campers.

The campground earlier this month was named as one of three top family RV parks for 2014 by the Good Sam RV Travel Guide.

Early reports

The site commander on the scene at Cherrystone Campground said at least 20 people are in a triage area there "and still finding more."

Joe Burbee with Bay Creek Golf Club in Cape Charles says there was lots of rain and lightning this morning.

"We got it pretty hard here for 15-20 minutes and it's gotten better," he said.

The golf course is about a mile from the campground.

Storm overturns truck on Route 13 on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

A tornado touched down on a campground in Northampton County in Virginia, killing two and injuring at least 20, according to police. Workers from the campground say panic and chaos quickly overtook the site early Thursday morning.

13News Now viewer Linda Weners Zaremski emailed a photo of large pieces of hail that fell at Marina Villages in Cape Charles.

"Debris was flying down the street - our chairs, beach balls. We lost power," she said.

The Northampton County Sheriff's Office told 13News Now that there was heavy rain falling.

Virginia State Police were called at 8:48 a.m. to an accident involving an overturned tractor-trailer on U.S. 13 near Cheriton. The driver was transported to a local hospital with minor injuries, according to police spokeswoman Corrine Geller.

Tornado coverage of Cherrystone Campground from WVEC

"We do have some campers overturned" at Cherrystone campground, Geller said.

A campground official denied access to reporters Thursday, saying, "Too much going on down there."

A traumatic injury call was also placed there where a male patient was cut by a window.

Marva Stratton of Cheriton wasn't hurt when a tree limb fell on her home.

Severe storm brought hail, caused numerous injuries at nearby campground.

A likely tornado tears through an eastern Virginia campground, killing three and injuring at least 20. Linda So reports.

Gannett-owned WVEC-13 contributed to this report.

Contact News Delivery Editor Jon P. Zaimas at (302) 324-2813 or jzaimas@delawareonline.com.

Cheriton storm brings hail, numerous injuries.
Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1mJ51ov>

CAPE'S BOARD ABOLISHES ENTIRE READING LIST (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 24, 2014

The Cape Henlopen School District's summer reading list for incoming high school freshmen will not include the controversial book, "The Miseducation of Cameron Post," - or any other book. The district school board voted 6-1 on Thursday night to return to the district's previous summer reading requirements, which demand college preparatory students read one book for the summer and honors students read two books.

Only board member Noble Prettyman voted against the motion on Thursday. Freshman board member Alison Meyer had earlier expressed support to restore the original list but voted for the final motion.

"This was the only way we could make each side somewhat happy," she said.

The board removed the book, which features foul language and a main character who is gay, from the list in June. Six board members cited the book's foul language, not sexual orientation, as the reason behind their vote.

Earlier story: Cape Henlopen to discuss book pulled from list

The board's decision may also avoid action from the American Civil Liberties Union of Delaware, which urged the board to overturn the June decision.

The ACLU argued the board had not properly notified the public before it voted to remove the book and could be violating both Delaware sunshine laws and the district's own policy.

While it's easy for the board to delete items from its agenda during a meeting, it is limited in its ability to add them, said Dave Williams, the district's legal counsel,

"You can take items off but you're so limited in adding items," he said. "It really doesn't work on the other side of the coin."

Thursday's meeting stirred up the board and brought ire from the public.

Board member Sandi Minard took offense at accusations that her decision in June was based on the book's content, rather than its language.

At one point, she began reading excerpts of the book featuring explicit language.

"This board's character has been judged, its integrity has been judged," she said. "It's up to the board to select material that is age appropriate. We're responsible for setting boundaries."

Members of the public were split on the board's final decision.

Rob Spicer, whose son, Matt, graduated from Cape Henlopen High School in 2013 and identifies as a gay alumnus, called the decision "a copout."

"The administrators did their job and provided a diverse list," he said. "The school board abdicated their responsibility, because the heat in the kitchen was too hot for them."

While Matt Spicer compared "Cameron Post" to "To Kill a Mockingbird," which also deals with rape, other members of the public argued the book's scenes were too graphic for 14-year-old readers.

Celeste Metcalfe, who wrote the original letter to the board concerning the summer reading list, applauded the board's decision on Thursday.

Cape parent Celeste Metcalfe supported the board's decision to remove the reading list. Metcalfe agreed with board member Andy Lewis, who suggested a policy for reviewing books.

"We have PG-13 movies and we need to have PG-13 books," she said.

Contact Leigh Giangreco at lgiangrec@dmg.gannett.com or on Twitter @LeighGiangreco

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1mLhBnn>

SALLIE MAE PROFITS DROP IN 2ND QUARTER (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 24, 2014

The profits at Sallie Mae decreased in the second quarter, the company reported in the first financial results report since it spun off its student loan servicing into a separate entity.

Sallie Mae, which maintains offices in Delaware, reported net income of \$44 million, compared to \$76 million in the second quarter last year.

The diluted earnings per share in the second quarter of 2014 were 9 cents per share, compared to 17 cents last year at this time.

The firm's 2013 earnings reflect the sale to an affiliate of \$71 million in loans. Comparing this year's results to 2013 earnings without the special loan-sale circumstances, Sallie Mae's earnings from continuing operations rose 38 percent from \$32 million to \$44 million.

Loan originations at Sallie Mae were up 3 percent compared to a year ago at the second quarter. Deposits at Sallie Mae Bank increased due to growth in money market accounts, the company reported, and there were total deposits of \$9.5 billion.

The operating expenses at Sallie Mae were up considerably in the second quarter, at \$75 million compared to \$67 million in last year's second quarter. The company reported that \$14 million of the current quarter operating expenses were attributed to the costs associated with spinning off part of the business to create a new, publicly traded company called Navient.

On April 30 Sallie Mae created the new company, which trades as NAVI, by breaking out the student loan servicing segment of the company.

In the second-quarter earnings statement released Thursday, the company noted that it would hang on to past-due loans longer under this arrangement. Prior to the spin-off the company would sell loans after they were at least 90 days behind on payments. The company will now wait 120 days before selling these delinquent loans, the company said.

Sallie Mae reported a 35 percent increase in interest income, and it noted that the private student loans it held in the second quarter was \$7.4 billion, up 40 percent from a year prior.

Contact Nichole Dobo at 324-2281 or ndobo@delawareonline.com. On Twitter @NicholeDobo.

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1rDFvZu>

WSFS EARNINGS UP IN SECOND QUARTER (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 24, 2014

The second-quarter earnings for WSFS Financial Corporation, the parent company of the state's largest independent community bank, show a 20 percent increase from the second quarter of 2013.

In earnings released Thursday, the bank reported net income of \$12.7 million in the second quarter of 2013, up from \$10.3 million at this time a year earlier. The diluted earnings per share were \$1.39 in this year's second quarter, up from \$1.16 per share in the second quarter a year earlier.

This continued a trend of strong financial performance by the bank, something that has not been universal in the nation's financial sector. The top-line growth posted by WSFS was attributed to quality of credit and an increase in fee income from services such as wealth management, originating mortgages and its ATM business.

"We are working hard to maintain the momentum," Stephen A. Fowle, executive vice president and CFO of the bank said Thursday in an interview with The News Journal.

This is the first earnings report since the bank announced a significant milestone was achieved in a deal to increase its market share in Delaware.

In mid-June, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency approved the application by WSFS to acquire First National Bank of Wyoming. This was the last regulatory approval needed to complete the deal.

"Strength in mortgage banking revenue reflects the addition of Array Financial, which joined with us nearly a year ago, and we look forward to our upcoming partnership with First National Bank of Wyoming," Mark A. Turner, president and CEO, said in a statement.

The deal is expected to be complete by Sept. 5. The conversion of FNB Wyoming locations to WSFS is planned to take place by Sept. 8.

Contact Nichole Dobo at 324-2281 or ndobo@delawareonline.com. On Twitter @NicholeDobo.

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1rEiZzW>

GOV. MARKELL ENJOYS A DAY AT THE FAIR (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 24, 2014

Gov. Jack Markell took a break on Thursday. He put on a pair of sneakers and climbed on big farm equipment. He took on young farmers in a watermelon eating contest and tossed an egg with Miss Delaware.

So goes Governor's Day at the Delaware State Fair, an annual must-attend event for the state's chief executive - regardless of whether they're trolling for votes.

"I love doing this stuff," said Markell, a second-term Democrat who is prohibited by Delaware's Constitution from seeking another term in the governor's office.

"The fair is a joyful place," he said. "It's nice to be in a joyful place."

Well before the masses arrived to consume fried Oreos, play carnival games and ride the Ferris wheel, Markell's Day at the fair began at 9 a.m., with the dedication of a poultry barn on site.

STORY: 117 immigrant children put with families in Delaware

He moved quickly to tour demonstrations prepared by Future Farmers of America participants at local schools, and on to the egg toss and watermelon eating contest with his partner, Miss Delaware, Brittany Lewis.

"This is what it's all about," Lewis said later about meeting Delawareans and touring the fairgrounds with Markell. "It's one of the most exciting parts about being Miss Delaware. It's definitely a break from the Miss America prep."

Lewis let the egg slip on the governor's fourth toss and the pair fell to Aubrie Jones, 15, and Devan Just, 16, of Delmar High School. "I didn't even know it was the governor," Just said when asked about toppling her more famous opponent.

In the nearby Dover Building on the fairgrounds, Ruth Potter, 80, of Magnolia, spoke to the governor about her prize-winning quilt. Potter, who learned to quilt with friends in a group they affectionately named "stitch and bitch," said the governor was impressed with her work on the queen-sized quilt, which took her "a few years" to complete.

"He congratulated me and said it was pretty amazing," Potter said.

Markell didn't skip all business while at the fair. He signed into law a measure that clarifies how many game birds Delaware hunters may legally possess and "removes archaic and irrelevant language relative to rabbit and muskrat possession."

The governor also joined Perdue chief executive Jim Perdue, and representatives from the DuPont Co.'s Pioneer seed unit, to announce that Perdue AgriBusiness would contract with Delaware farmers to produce 40,000 acres of soybeans that DuPont will use to produce its trans-fat free soybean oil.

That's up from 6,000 acres contracted to produce beans for DuPont's Plenish brand oil today.

"This state understands the importance of an agriculture economy," Perdue said during the announcement.

In his remarks, Markell praised Perdue, which has processing plants in Georgetown and Milford, where it produces organic chicken.

"Some people might think their headquarters is in Salisbury," Markell said. "But (Perdue) is a Delaware company. Perdue has more employees here than they do in that neighboring state."

Markell said Delawareans he met at the fair, like those he meets in his grocery store, were willing to walk up and express their thoughts about the job he's doing.

"This is the ultimate of sort of retail ... I wouldn't even call it politics," Markell said, noting he is not up for re-election. "People are just really straightforward about what's going well, what's not. It's great."

The governor was commended by at least two fair-goers for being willing to engage and listen.

Nick LaRussa and Roxanne Dvorak, who moved to Newark a few years back from Texas, met Markell on Thursday and said they were impressed that he was so accessible. "I love to meet politicians. And everybody here in Delaware is very approachable," Dvorak said.

Added LaRussa, "In Texas, they're in the car and gone. They really don't want to interact with the people."

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

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1rEosqk>

WILMINGTON FIREFIGHTERS LIGHT FLAMES OF HOPE (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 24, 2014

Some things just have a way of making you feel good.

The smell of your favorite meal - lasagna or spicy chili for me - coming from the kitchen.

The sound of Jackson Browne's "Running on Empty" coming out of the speakers just as you hit an open country road with rolling hills.

The sight of a puppy licking a smiling, giggling kid's face.

Another thing that's always made me feel good is getting a new coat for the winter. I remember one year in my younger punk days, I got a pea coat and engineer boots. I felt like I ruled the world. A self-absorbed teen, it didn't cross my mind at the time that there were thousands of less fortunate people, many of them children, who had never experienced that feeling. They had never put on a new winter coat that was all their own, zipped it up and admired themselves in the mirror. But thanks to an effort by the Wilmington Fire Department, Firefighters Local 1590 and monetary donations from you, dozens of needy children in the city were able to experience that feeling last year and will hopefully again this year.

The firefighters have partnered with Operation Warm and will be holding a fundraiser Sunday at the Blue Rocks game at Frawley Stadium as part of Firefighter Appreciation Day. Firefighters and a firetruck will be out front, and information will be available about this year's fundraising efforts. The firefighters provided 100 new coats to children last year and hope to double that this year. To do it, they need help from us. The coats, which are all made in America and help support American jobs, cost about \$32 each to make and ship. But any donation helps, according to Lt. Joe Leonetti Jr. of the Wilmington Fire Department and Local 1590.

You don't have to go to the game to donate. You can make your donation online or learn more about the effort at www.operationwarm.org/Wilmington.

A new coat provides more than warmth, according to Leonetti, who added, "a new coat is dignity and pride, core values we respect in the fire service and hope to promote to these children who too often develop low self-esteem."

An effort to be #delaproud of - and one you can join by donating.

Share in the Only in Delaware conversation 24/7 on [delawareonline](http://delawareonline.com). Contact Jeffrey Gentry at jgentry@delawareonline.com. Follow him on Twitter: @jeffreygentry

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1mJLogc>

WILMINGTON JOURNAL NEWS EDITORIALS:

ASKING TOUGH QUESTIONS OF WILMINGTON (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 24, 2014

Wilmington, like every other city in America, faces tough challenges in this post-industrial age. Jobs are hard to come by for many. The city struggles to find revenue to provide services. Crime scares off would-be residents and businesses. And the middle class battles to maintain a lifestyle conducive to raising children.

No city is without these challenges. And no city has solved all of its problems. The key is facing up to that fact and honestly assessing the city's pluses and minuses.

The good news is that Wilmington is beginning to do that. This week, the city revealed the first part of an assessment by an outside consultant. It promises to take a deeper look at Wilmington's strengths and weaknesses. Mayor Dennis Williams deserves credit for laying out the facts.

A public discussion this week focused on several of the negatives: crime, education and city government's often slow-moving services. Examining those problems does not take away from the city's positives: its location, its corporate structure and, of course, its people.

The preliminary report and subsequent discussions on its meaning give Wilmington residents and all Delaware residents something to ponder. The point here is that it pays to be honest. For example, business owners have complained for years about the city's slow permitting process. That the city government has a reputation for that slowness should catch no one by surprise, except, perhaps, for city officials.

That sort of problem can be solved. The process can be analyzed and fixed. Will it turn Wilmington's fortunes around overnight? Of course not. However, it will improve the business climate. More important, it will give businesses one less reason to avoid setting up shop in the city. Crime presents a different sort of problem. The downtown business district sees very little of the crime that is hitting some neighborhoods. Violence, however, affects all of us. That is why making neighborhoods safer, cutting down on the drug trafficking and, most of all, bringing economic development to these neighborhoods is a crucial challenge to the Williams administration, New Castle County, the state government, and the entire population of Wilmington.

This week's offering was only the first look at what the mayor is saying will be a comprehensive

economic development plan for the city. This is a positive development. It is imperative that the city have a vision of growth.

We do not expect this plan to be perfect. No plan ever is. Of course, the crucial test will be action. No matter how good an idea is, if it is not put into effect, it will remain merely a fragment of what might have been. The global economy has changed. Wilmington and Delaware are competing with not just nearby states, but with the world. Things can be made cheaper and, often, better elsewhere. Today's competitors must know their weaknesses and fix them.

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1mKBcUI>

LET'S BRING THE IMAGINATION LIBRARY PROGRAM TO DELAWARE (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 24, 2014

Dolly Parton, the wonderful singer, songwriter, actress and owner of Dollywood Entertainment Park in the East Tennessee mountains, started this valuable program in 1995. Her Dollywood Foundation gave a free, age-appropriate children's picture or storybook each month to every child born in her native Sevier County. Each child and her/his family received a free book a month for his first four years of age or until his fifth year and kindergarten age.

This program was so successful, it was expanded. In 2014, it is now in 46 of our 50 states and in Canada, England, Australia and Ireland. Since the Imagination Library program started, over 50 million books have been sent to these preschool children and their families. Delaware is 1 of 4 states not participating in this program. I am serving as a facilitator to form a supportive Delaware Imagination Library Coalition to bring it to our preschool children.

The strategy for bringing this program to our state is first to inform individual and organization leaders about the program and then have them endorse it and join the supportive coalition. There is no financial obligation for joining this coalition.

After forming the coalition, a coalition committee will be formed to contact organizations in our state and ask them to be sponsors and help fund the program. The Dollywood Foundation has sent me a package of information explaining how the program works in other states.

The foundation selects and mails the books. The cost of the books is \$30 per year for 12 books per child or \$120 for 48 books per child for the four-year period. This includes the cost of administering the program. I will keep individuals and organizations who join our coalition updated about this movement.

The Dollywood Foundation sent me a list of organizations in other states that have helped fund this program. It includes the following organizations: The United Way; local businesses; civic groups; local governments; private citizens; foundations; friends of the library; chambers of commerce and school systems.

A Delaware plan could start the program in each county by private funding sources establishing three county-administering offices in nonprofit organizations. My recommendation is to have these staff administering this program in Delaware to work in a public library in each of our counties. First, cover all preschool children in lower socioeconomic areas. Then, get state government to include grant funds from the approximately \$50 million given each year in grants to nonprofit community organizations. The total cost each year for this valuable statewide program will be about \$1.35 million.

This approach will ensure every one of our approximately 45,000 Delaware preschool children each year from infancy through age 4 will receive an age-appropriate book.

The Dollywood Foundation has many research studies, which reveal preschoolers in this program are much more successful in academic achievement after entering formal academic schooling.

This program makes a very important contribution to the development of human potential for children fortunate to benefit from this Imagination Library resource. Let's provide it for all of our future Delaware preschool children.

One of our nation's greatest intellects, the late Dr. Albert Einstein, wisely informed us, "Imagination is more important than intelligence."

This valuable research-proven program and cost-effective Imagination Library program will help improve both important abilities in our state's preschool children by increasing their reading confidence, competency along with developing a lifelong love of reading.

The Dollywood Foundation has sent me brochures that further explain this program. Upon request, I will mail a brochure to each person or organization interested in learning about joining our

supportive Delaware Imagination Library Coalition.

I consider this to be one of our more important civic responsibility opportunities.

I ask everyone reading this information to bring this to the attention of all Delaware organizations in which you are a member and ask all to understand and join our Delaware Imagination Library Coalition. Again, joining our coalition does not mean any financial obligation.

Charles S. McDowell can be reached at cmcdowell@potteranderson.com.

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1rEko9A>

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: FRIDAY, JULY 25, 2014 -- 6:15 AM EDT

TODAY'S EDITION

Biden In The News

Biden, In Ohio, Urges Infrastructure, Job Training (AP).....	2
Vice President Speaks To Delegates At National Urban League Conference (CINENQ).....	3
What Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald Said In His Speech To The National Urban League (PLAINDLR).....	4
VP Biden Set To Appear At Conference Downtown (WKRCTV).....	6
Vice President Joe Biden Speaks At National Urban League Conference (WCPOTV).....	6
Biden Stresses Jobs, Job Training At National Urban League Conference (WLWTTV).....	8
Biden Encourages Infrastructure Development At Urban League Conference (WKSUFM).....	9
Joe Biden: Voter ID Laws "An Attempt To Repress Minority Voting" (CBSNEWS).....	9
Biden: GOP States Waging 'Assault' On Voting Rights (NBCNEWS).....	10
Biden: State Ballots Threaten Gains Made (TOLB).....	10
Biden: Blacks Have Not Made Enough Progress (WT).....	12
Joe Biden: 'Businesses Are Hiring At Historic Rates' (WT).....	13
Central American Presidents Want More US Investment In Security (MCT).....	13
Central American Leaders Want Washington's Help With Immigration Crisis (WP).....	14
Honduran Children May Be Allowed To Apply For U.S. Admission From Home (LAT).....	16
Biden: Shoulda' Had One Republican Rich Kid (BLOOMCD).....	18
Poll: Clinton Dominates 2016 Field In Florida (HILL).....	18
Poll: Clinton Sweeps GOP In Florida (POLITICO).....	19
Clinton Polling Well In Key Presidential Battleground (CNN).....	20
Poll Shows Hillary Clinton Still Strong In Florida (ORLS).....	20
Q Poll: Bush Leads GOP Field In Florida; Hillary Beats Them All (TAMPATIM).....	23
Attorney General Biden sues Consumer Advocacy Assistance (DOVERPST).....	23
Del. Child Predator Unit Makes Arrests (WHYYFM).....	23

New York Times and Washington Post Op-Eds

Gaza's Mounting Death Toll (NYT).....	24
The Phony 'Narrow Network' Scare (NYT).....	25
Anything Goes In China's Food System (NYT).....	26
Don't Teach Math, Coach It (NYT).....	27
Saving Daughters From Mutilation (NYT).....	28

The Shared Destiny Of Israel And Gaza (NYT).....	29
Left Coast Rising (NYT).....	30
A Chinese Gold Standard? (NYT).....	32
Why Tony Abbott Axed Australia's Carbon Tax (NYT).....	33
How I Passed The English Cricket Test (NYT).....	35
Sen. John Walsh Should Stop Making Excuses For His Actions (WP).....	36
Paul Ryan's Anti-poverty Plan Has Some Good Ideas That All Sides Can Support (WP).....	37
If The West Doesn't Do More For Ukraine Now, It Might Soon Be Too Late (WP).....	38
Corporations Are People. So What If People Were Corporations? (WP).....	39
Israel Must Be Permitted To Crush Hamas (WP).....	40
My Son Has Been Suspended Five Times. He's 3. (WP).....	42
Supreme Court May Not Protect Obamacare This Time (WP).....	43
Israel Is Acting As If It Is Free Of Moral Responsibilities. (WP).....	45
The E.U. Is The World's Great No-show (WP).....	46
The Vacant Presidency (WP).....	47

Wilmington News Journal Stories

117 Immigrant Children Placed With Delaware Families (WILNJ).....	49
Delaware Views Mirror Gaza Division (WILNJ).....	50
Rep. Potter Speaks Out On Haynes Park Charity Event Where Shots Fired (WILNJ).....	53
Del. Official's Wife Hurt In Va. Tornado Where 2 Died, 36 Injured (WILNJ).....	54
Cape's Board Abolishes Entire Reading List (WILNJ).....	56
Sallie Mae Profits Drop In 2nd Quarter (WILNJ).....	57
WSFS Earnings Up In Second Quarter (WILNJ).....	58
Gov. Markell Enjoys A Day At The Fair (WILNJ).....	59
Wilmington Firefighters Light Flames Of Hope (WILNJ).....	60

Wilmington Journal News Editorials

Asking Tough Questions Of Wilmington (WILNJ).....	61
Let's Bring The Imagination Library Program To Delaware (WILNJ).....	61

Online Version

Visit <http://www.bulletinintelligence.com/vp> for searchable archive, interactive story index, and links to complete stories where appropriate.

BIDEN IN THE NEWS

Biden, In Ohio, Urges Infrastructure, Job Training

[Associated Press](#), July 25, 2014

CINCINNATI (AP) – Vice President Joe **Biden** said Thursday that more investment in infrastructure and job training is needed to increase economic opportunities in the nation's cities.

Biden spoke at the National Urban League conference, where the theme is "One Nation Underemployed." **Biden** said the keys to putting more people in better-paying jobs and spurring economic growth in cities are workforce training to meet today's business needs and improving roads, bridges and other transportation.

"This is a new era," **Biden** said. "We are better-positioned than anybody in the world, but we need to invest in infrastructure and skilled job training."

President Barack Obama's \$302 billion plan earlier this year to increase transportation spending and keep transit programs going for four years got a chilly reception from Republicans in Congress. House Speaker John Boehner, the Republican from a northern Cincinnati suburb, said in a statement Thursday that **Biden** should urge Democrats to work with House Republicans to help the economy by expanding energy production and cutting government red tape.

Sprinkling his speech with quotes from civil rights leaders such as the late Whitney Young and Martin Luther King Jr., **Biden** said minority gains both economically and in civil rights are "under siege." He blasted voter ID and other proposals he said would restrict voting in the guise of preventing fraud and corruption that doesn't happen. He made similar comments Wednesday to another major civil rights organization, the NAACP convention in Las Vegas.

"Name it for what it is — an attempt to repress minority voting," **Biden** said Thursday. He said that protecting voting "used to be a bipartisan thing."

Earlier, Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus assured attendees that the GOP is making a serious, determined effort to build ties with minority voters while saying blacks continue to lag in unemployment and other economic measures during the Obama administration. Blacks overwhelmingly supported Obama in his two presidential elections.

Republicans have added "black engagement" staffers in various states, including swing-state Ohio, to help reach out to black voters, Priebus said.

"So we want you to know, desperately, that the Republican Party is listening, we want a relationship, we want to fight for everybody in this country," he said. "We're serious about doing things differently."

Urban League president Marc Morial said the nonpartisan organization likes a diverse discussion and wants to keep up a dialogue with Republicans.

Republican U.S. Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, who also has been reaching out to minorities as he considers a 2016 presidential bid, will speak at the conference Friday. **Biden** hasn't ruled out running for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016.

Some 8,500 people are in Cincinnati for the conference, which besides discussions about urban issues and civil rights will honor actor Forest Whitaker at its Saturday night dinner and features an advance screening of "Get On Up," the biopic about soul music star James Brown.

Vice President Speaks To Delegates At National Urban League Conference

[Cincinnati Enquirer](#), July 24, 2014

Seven to 10 years ago, Vice President Joe **Biden** told National Urban League delegates Thursday, he would not have been able to present such an optimistic message.

But today, **Biden** said, the United States is poised for job growth that will pay families a living wage, even as challenges remain to closing opportunity gaps.

"There have to be jobs to fill in order to meet the needs of the community," **Biden** said in a 40-minute address. "We are better positioned than any country in the world."

Thursday was the second of four days for the 104th conference of the National Urban League, expected to draw up to 8,700 at Duke Energy Convention Center. The convention marked the national group's first return to Cincinnati since it bowed out in 2003, honoring a boycott called to raise attention to racial issues.

Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley, mayors of other cities and Reince Priebus, chairman of the Republican National Committee, also spoke Thursday.

Biden opened by listing accomplishments made for African-Americans and low-income Americans since the Lyndon Johnson-era War on Poverty. He said 10 times as many African-Americans are in college and 10 times as many hold elected public office.

Then he turned his remarks to what he called "the franchise," the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

"There has been progress, but something happened on the way to the 2008 election," **Biden** said of the law that gave African-Americans the right to vote. "The franchise is under siege."

He said 83 efforts in 29 states have sought to "limit access to the ballot box. It's an attempt to suppress American voting rights disguised as an attempt to reduce voter fraud where there is none."

But most of the vice president's discussion focused on the nation's employment, and **Biden** rolled out a list of numbers including 668,000 manufacturing jobs created in recent years. Now, **Biden** said, he and President Barack Obama have two important tasks to accomplish to ensure more growth.

First, **Biden** praised Obama's \$302 billion plan earlier this year to increase transportation spending and keep transit programs going for four years.

"We need to modernize our infrastructure – our highways, airports, railroads and canals," he said. "Every \$1 billion in investment creates 30,000 jobs, 14 percent which go to African-Americans."

Then he turned to the need for jobs training: "And to keep our manufacturing going we need a highly skilled workforce. They require new skills to build the same product they did five or 10 years ago."

Toward the end of his speech, the vice president congratulated the Urban League for its consistent history and mission of working toward economic equality.

"What you are all about is providing people with a sense of dignity," **Biden** said.

Priebus, Republican National Committee chair, said his party has offered solutions to increasing African-American employment.

"There's one very important bill that passed the House and Senate and was just signed by the president," Priebus said. "The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act."

He cited comments recently made by National Urban League President Marc Morial, who said, "Millions of under-employed workers and urban youth and youth of color can receive the skills, training and support services they need to chart a path to a better future."

"That is good news for all of us," Priebus said. "We want you to know that the Republican Party is listening and fighting for you."

The Urban League is a nonpartisan organization, and Morial said it welcomes points of view and discussion from across the political spectrum.

The Urban League's annual report for 2014, released in April, titled "One Nation Underemployed: Jobs Rebuild America," noted that the underemployment rate for African-American workers was 20.5 percent, compared with 18.4 percent for Hispanic workers and 11.8 percent for white workers. Underemployment is defined as those who are jobless or working part-time jobs but desiring full-time work.

The report also said African-Americans are twice as likely to be unemployed as whites.

Metropolitan Cincinnati, which includes Hamilton and Middletown among five counties in Southwest Ohio, seven counties in Northern Kentucky and three in Southeast Indiana, has nearly the worst median household-income gap between blacks and whites compared to other metropolitan areas.

The Enquirer reported earlier this week that of the 77 cities analyzed by the National Urban League in its report, Greater Cincinnati ranks 73rd, with median black income at \$24,272, compared to \$57,481 for whites.

Seven mayors participated in a panel and offered local solutions to the growing jobs and economic gap nationally between whites and blacks. Among them:

Alvin Brown, mayor of Jacksonville, Florida, said his city had 25,000 uninsured young people but used an "all-hands-on-deck" solution to raise \$250,000 and get insurance for all of the uninsured students. "You can't learn if you're sick and not in school," Brown said.

Karen Freeman-Wilson, mayor of Gary, Indiana, said her city has aggressively recruited to keep home-grown talent in the city and working on its problems.

"If we all leave, what will happen to the city?" she said. "If you help solve these problems, you can go anywhere in the world and write your own (career) ticket."

Michael Coleman, mayor of Columbus, Ohio, said, "You have to create many kinds of jobs. They can't all be high end."

Read or Share this story: <http://cin.ci/1rDY5kv>

What Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald Said In His Speech To The National Urban League

[Cleveland Plain Dealer](#), July 25, 2014

CINCINNATI, Ohio – Ed FitzGerald, the Cuyahoga County executive and Democratic nominee for governor, addressed the National Urban League conference Thursday in Cincinnati. Earlier, attendees heard speeches from Vice President Joe **Biden** and Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus.

The theme of the conference: "One Nation, Underemployed."

FitzGerald, who faces Republican Gov. John Kasich in the fall, spoke briefly, according to Columbus Dispatch reporter Joe Vardon, who was there.

Here is the full text of FitzGerald's speech, as prepared for delivery:

"Thank you very much.

"I want to thank Marc Morial for that warm introduction and for the strong leadership he has provided as the President and CEO of the National Urban League.

"I am honored to be here today to welcome all of you to the Buckeye State, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, and to highlight the urgent challenges that remain here in Ohio and across the nation.

"The 1964 Civil Rights Act was not the end of the story. The struggle for justice – economic and political – continues to the current day. Every generation must adopt that struggle as its own. And unfortunately, there are those that are not just apathetic to the challenges still facing our urban communities, there are some who are actively attempting to turn back the clock.

"We must face reality. The aspirations of those who fought for civil rights in the 1960s have not been met. The evidence for that is all around us, and is visible for anyone who doesn't turn away from it.

"Here in Ohio, the numbers are very troubling. Fifty percent of the state is living paycheck to paycheck, but that number is even higher among African Americans. Ten percent of the state is only making a minimum wage, but that number is even higher among African Americans. Nationally, the high school dropout rate is going down, but in Ohio, it's going up, and it's even higher among African Americans.

"In Ohio, we are trailing the rest of the country in terms of recovering from the Great Recession, but it's been even tougher on African Americans. There is an old saying that a rising tide lifts all boats, but in too many places in this country, the only boats that seem to be rising are yachts for millionaires, while most people are barely keeping their heads above water.

"And it's not just economic inequality I am referring to. In the poorest neighborhoods of Cleveland, the life expectancy is 20 years less than in the wealthiest suburbs of Ohio. That is not a reality that is worthy of the 1964 Civil Rights Act or the people who fought for it.

"Now, I know that this may seem grim, but the good news is, there are things that we can do, right now, to change course and build a more just society and start moving forward for everyone, young and old, black and white, urban and rural. And we are only going to get there if everyone moves forward together.

"Here are three things we can do right now:

"1. Invest in education, from early childhood education to higher education. As a County Executive, I have invested more money, in quality pre-kindergarten education, because we have a gap between children who start first grade; some start with a 500-word vocabulary, and some start with a 5,000-word vocabulary, and that gap makes all the difference in the world. Quality, universal pre-kindergarten is the answer, and we need it in every single school district, across the state and the country.

"We must create the expectation that a child needs more than a high school degree to make it in the economy today, and if that is not a college degree, then it should be vocational training. This year, my county became the first county in America to establish a college savings account for every single child who enters kindergarten. And that child can use that money for a two-year college, a four-year college, or for technical training. It sends children and their parents a powerful message early in their lives that we believe in their potential, and we will help them get there.

"2. We must spur growth, but we must not accept a two-tiered economy. Our economic growth has been so slow in part because we aren't investing in things like education, infrastructure, and public transportation. We won't create a more just society if entire segments of our population are locked out of the growth which does occur. That's why, in my county, we didn't just form a diverse administration, we announced just a few weeks ago a partnership with the Small Business Administration and the Urban League and local lending institutions to make capital more available to small businesses in our urban core.

“3. And finally, we will never have the education reform and the economic reform that we so desperately need until we reform our electoral system. A system that is awash in corporate money is never going to reform itself. We have too many leaders in this state, and in Congress, and in the courts, who believe in giving corporations more and more political rights while taking away voting rights from the people at the same time. Corporations are not people, they never have been, and they never will be. Why are corporations getting more rights while actual human beings are getting fewer rights?”

“The shameful nationwide attempt to suppress voting rights is going on right here in Ohio, supported by our Secretary of State and our Governor. That is a chapter of American history that I thought my four children would have to read about in a history book, but instead they can see it in the pages of the daily newspaper. I’m proud that my county has not once but twice joined the legal actions in Federal court in Ohio which has now repeatedly said that these voter suppression tactics are a violation of our rights.

“But as shameful as those actions are, they are philosophically linked to one another. If you cut and defund public education, you are embracing one education system for the elite, and one for everyone else. If you don’t open up economic growth and business development, you are embracing one economy for the well off, and one for everyone else. And if you employ the tactics of voter suppression and place the political rights of corporations over human beings, you are creating a political system of two different sets of rules, one for insiders, and one for outsiders.

“But if American history teaches us anything, it is that this battle isn’t over yet. The first step is to uncover the truth, define the issues, and then mobilize to fight for what we believe in. And, ladies and gentlemen of the Urban League, for your role in doing just that, you have the gratitude of the people of Ohio. Thank you very much.”

VP Biden Set To Appear At Conference Downtown

[WKRC-TV Cincinnati](#), July 25, 2014

CINCINNATI (Adam Clements) – Vice President Joe **Biden** is in town and he’ll address what is expected to be a large crowd at the National Urban League Conference that begins at 9:30 Thursday morning.

It’s not clear the topic of the vice president’s speech, but he is expected to keep it consistent with the theme of this conference, jobs and the challenges of finding employment for the young African American in the United States.

Urban League President Marc Morial said, “The important thing is how the leadership of a community responds. Whether they bury their head in the sand, pretend that there’s no problems, act in a defensive posture, or if they work to confront that problem.”

Right now it’s unclear where exactly they will be bringing VP **Biden** in, but there will be very heavy security in the area surrounding the Duke Energy Center.

Follow Adam Clements on Twitter @aclementswwkrc and LIKE him on Facebook.

VP **Biden** set to appear at conference downtown

Vice President Joe Biden Speaks At National Urban League Conference

[WCPO-TV Cincinnati](#), July 25, 2014

CINCINNATI – The National Urban League conference took on a presidential air Thursday as Vice President Joe **Biden** arrived in the Queen City to speak at the event.

The conference’s theme is “One Nation Underemployed,” and **Biden** relayed the message that investment in infrastructure and job training is needed to increase economic opportunities in the nation’s cities.

Biden told the crowd at Duke Energy Center the United States needs to increase its skilled workforce to meet new business needs and to improve roads, bridges and other transportation to spur growth.

"This is a new era," he said. "We are better-positioned than anybody in the world, but we need to invest in infrastructure and skilled job training."

His comments reflected the mission of President Barack Obama's \$302 billion plan earlier this year to increase transportation spending and keep transit programs going for four years.

The plan got a chilly reception from Republicans in Congress.

House Speaker John Boehner, a Republican from West Chester, said in a statement Thursday that **Biden** should urge Democrats to work with House Republicans to help the economy by expanding energy production and cutting government red tape.

In addition to talk of advancing investment in infrastructure, **Biden** blasted what he called a national Republican effort to restrict voting in the guise of preventing fraud and corruption that doesn't happen.

"Name it for what it is — an attempt to repress minority voting," said the vice president, who sprinkled in quotes from civil rights leaders during his half-hour speech. **Biden** said that protecting voting "used to be a bipartisan thing."

Biden's speech came a day after he spoke to the NAACP in Las Vegas, where he made similar criticisms of voter ID and other proposals that would "repress" minority voting.

The vice president hasn't ruled out a run for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016.

Earlier Thursday, Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus assured attendees the GOP is making a serious, determined effort to build ties with minority voters.

"So we want you to know, desperately, that the Republican Party is listening, we want a relationship, we want to fight for everybody in this country," he said, adding that the party has turned added "black engagement" staffers in various states, including Ohio, to help reach out to black voters.

"We're serious about doing things differently," Priebus said.

Biden and Priebus aren't the only political power players scheduled to take part in the event.

Ohio Democratic gubernatorial candidate Ed FitzGerald also plans to speak Thursday. Republican U.S. Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, who's also been trying to reach out to minorities, will speak at the conference Friday.

Urban League president Marc Morial said the nonpartisan organization likes a diverse discussion and wants to keep up a dialogue with both sides of the political spectrum.

RELATED: Urban League convention says "We've turned a page"

While politics, voting rights and talks of advancements in transportation initiatives were bullet points in the vice president's address, jobs is the theme of the conference, which kicked off Wednesday.

Cincinnati Urban League CEO Donna Jones Baker welcomed attendees and reminded them that the league skipped Cincinnati 11 years ago.

Back then the city was embroiled in a controversy over police/community relations. Baker said attendees are in a different Cincinnati now.

"To say that we have turned it around is an understatement," Baker said.

Morial said it's not just about jobs, but about good paying jobs that will reverse years of economic decline.

"Jobs rebuild America. Jobs rebuild the nation. That a job is the best anti-poverty program there is," he said.

The group believes the topic is critical because unemployment among African-Americans is double the national average.

And the problem hits close to home.

Morial said, "And here's the truth: Four of the largest metro areas in the nation with black unemployment over 20 percent are right here in Ohio."

But there's room to grow on the economic front, which is why Morial thinks the four-day conference, with its numerous speakers and events, is so important.

Thursday's events also include a panel discussion with mayors from several U.S. cities, plus a career fair. Walmart chief executive officer William S. Simon attended a luncheon with attendees, as well.

The Expo Hall features hundreds of exhibitors, a health zone with free health screenings, in addition to live entertainment and performances. It will also feature a 3-on-3 basketball game with NBA players.

Al Sharpton spoke at 4 p.m. to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act.

Friday will feature a town hall meeting on education that features several speakers including Charles Ogeltree of Harvard University and UNCF CEO Michael Lomax. Sen. Paul is expected to speak on topics such as school choice, as well as criminal justice reform and economic freedom zones.

I'm not so sure there will be resistance

Biden Stresses Jobs, Job Training At National Urban League Conference

[WLWT-TV Cincinnati](#), July 25, 2014

Looking trim and tenacious at 71, Vice President Joe **Biden** tore into the jobs issue Thursday, bounding with optimism about America's positioning for future economic growth.

Biden told the National Urban League about a recent survey of U.S. firms in China.

"Fifty-four percent said they're coming home or considering coming home to America," **Biden** said to applause from the crowd.

He noted the word "insourcing" is starting to be used a lot more than "outsourcing," indicating there is a new era dawning when it comes to job opportunities.

Biden ran down a laundry list of employment opportunities that don't require four-year or graduate degrees.

"These range from welding jobs that pay \$36,000 a year to machinists that pay \$40,000 a year – not requiring a doctorate degree, not even requiring a community college degree," **Biden** said.

The vice president challenged his audience to understand that there are two important steps to take in order to reap the advantage that is before the country.

He said the nation's infrastructure must be modernized and the workforce trained to meet the skills demanded of the 21st century.

The Urban League's CEO, Marc Morial, said career fairs, like the one at the convention, help spike awareness about opportunities. But more needs to be done by Congress.

"The training system in the country has to be radically transformed," Morial said.

"The way in which and the scale in which we train people for the available jobs is not there in the way it ought to be," Morial said.

The passage of the new Workforce Act last week was crucial, Morial said.

But he remarked that President Obama has also challenged individuals to learn about where the real job opportunities are and how to acquire them.

State Representative Alicia Reece was in town for the **Biden** address, noting the vice president talked about the importance of certificate programs.

"I think Cincinnati is on the cutting edge because Cincinnati State is moving towards certificate programs," Reece said.

It resonated with Kenya Leonard, of St. Louis, who thought of people getting certificates or specific training.

"They can take that and get immediately placed into jobs," Leonard said.

Biden said relative to the rest of the world, the U.S. is better positioned to meet the jobs challenge.

"We have the cheapest energy, we have the best court system, we protect intellectual property," **Biden** said.

Community leaders want career fairs, like the one at the convention, to spark a business focus on youth who need jobs, lack training and are missing the guideposts that lead to both.

"There are 100,000 manufacturing jobs right now, at this moment, going unfilled because of the lack of the right skills," **Biden** said as he checked his notes about a recent employment study.

He predicted America will cut its dependence on foreign energy in a few years and that people aren't as divided as our political system is.

"We just have to push our politicians to do better," conference attendee Melanie Campbell said.

Biden Encourages Infrastructure Development At Urban League Conference

[WKSU-FM Kent \(OH\)](#), July 25, 2014

Vice President Joe **Biden** told the National Urban League Conference this morning in Cincinnati that the Obama administration is committed to job training and infrastructure repair.

The vice president said the initiatives are needed to put under-employed urban residents, particularly African-Americans, in better paying jobs.

And **Biden** said the nation needs to invest \$3.6 trillion to infrastructure repair between now and the year 2020.

Joe Biden: Voter ID Laws "An Attempt To Repress Minority Voting"

[CBS News](#), July 25, 2014

Vice President Joe **Biden** urged a gathering of civil rights leaders on Thursday to fight back against Republican-led attempts to restrict voting rights, calling the push for voter identification requirements an "attempt to repress minority voting masquerading as an attempt to end corruption."

For several decades after the civil rights movement of the 1960s, both parties made progress in protecting and strengthening voting rights, **Biden** said during his address before the National Urban League in Cincinnati. "Expanding the protection of the franchise," he explained, "used to be a bipartisan thing."

But more recently, voting rights have come under attack, **Biden** warned, saying there have been 83 attempts this year to curtail voting rights in 29 states across the country.

Those efforts were made "in the name of preventing corruption where no corruption was found," **Biden** said. He noted that courts have found no evidence to substantiate Republican fears of widespread voter fraud and voter impersonation.

In a Wednesday speech before the NAACP in Las Vegas, **Biden** delivered a similar message, slamming the push for voter ID laws as "pure politics." He suggested that President Obama might have lost Florida, instead of narrowly carrying the state, if a voter ID law had been in place during the 2012 election.

Biden also sounded an optimistic note on the economy during both speeches, saying America is better positioned than any other country to prosper in the 21st century. He urged Congress to address the nation's ailing infrastructure and fix its broken immigration system to strengthen the economy further.

Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus also addressed the National Urban League on Thursday, in the latest iteration of his push to bring the GOP message into traditionally Democratic constituencies.

"We want you to know that the Republican Party is listening and fighting for you," Priebus said in his prepared remarks, ticking through the party's outreach initiatives in minority communities. "As a party, we believe it's wrong for anyone to be overlooked or taken for granted in our political process. And that's what motivates me every day."

He recalled an RNC luncheon on the anniversary of the March on Washington last year, when he was approached by two people at the event.

"We're Democrats," he recalled them saying, "But we're here because we know if both parties don't fight like crazy for black voters, the other side takes our votes for granted."

Priebus did not address the push for voter ID laws by some Republican-controlled state legislatures, but he did hew closely to some Republican themes on education and unemployment that could resonate with black voters.

He pushed for an expansion of charter schools and vouchers to promote "school choice," saying, "The Republican Party believes that every parent in America should have the power to send their kids to the school of their choice. The other party thinks a ZIP code should make that choice."

And he called the unemployment rate among black Americans – more than 4 points higher than the national average of 6.1 percent – a "problem we must address," praising recent congressional action on job training and apprenticeships.

© 2014 CBS Interactive Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Biden: GOP States Waging 'Assault' On Voting Rights

[NBC News](#), July 25, 2014

CINCINNATI, OHIO – Vice President Joe **Biden** said Republican-controlled states like Wisconsin were leading an "assault" on voting rights designed to "repress minority voting" through their passage of laws that require people to present a photo ID to vote.

"The fiction of widespread voter fraud continues to persist," **Biden** told a crowd of several hundred at the annual conference of the National Urban League.

Republicans have defended these laws, arguing that Americans should have to present an ID to vote, just as they do to enter many public buildings or fly on an airline. Democrats say the laws, which have been adopted by 31 states, most of which have Republican governors or legislators, are an attempt to make it harder for liberal-leaning people to vote.

African-Americans disproportionately lack government-issued identification.

The vice president's remarks continue a tense battle between the two parties on voting provisions, like voter ID but also limits on early voting that many Republican states have adopted.

Biden's appearance here, and at a conference sponsored by the NAACP earlier this week, comes as Democrats are increasingly focused on making sure blacks turn out to vote this fall in states with close Senate races like Georgia and North Carolina.

Biden: State Ballots Threaten Gains Made

[Toledo \(OH\) Blade](#), July 25, 2014

CINCINNATI — Vice President Joe **Biden** told a conference of the National Urban League on Thursday that gains made since passage of the civil and voting rights acts half a century ago are endangered by what he characterized as threats on the minority vote.

“We see renewed attacks on voting rights across the nation,” he said. “This year alone there were 83 initiatives in 29 states to limit access to the ballot box in the name of preventing ... widespread fraud where none was occurring. ...

“But the fiction of widespread voter fraud continues to persist. Where I live, no American worth their salt could ever defend these new laws.”

He talked about the backlash against laws passed in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin but did not specifically mention Ohio, where U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder recently said he expects to get involved with a lawsuit filed by the NAACP and League of Women Voters against Republican-passed legislation reducing early and absentee voting opportunities.

On the heels of speaking to the NAACP convention in Las Vegas, the Democratic Vice President made the case in Ohio that at the same time such laws threaten the minority votes, a brightening economic picture offers new job opportunities for the same groups.

“It’s not hyperbole,” Mr. **Biden** said. “We are now in-sourcing [jobs] because, again, relative to the rest of the world, we’re better positioned than any other nation.”

But for more Americans to take advantage of those jobs, the United States must invest in work-force training, education, and its infrastructure.

“There are 100,000 manufacturing jobs right now going unfilled because of the lack of the right skills,” Mr. **Biden** said. “... These range from welding jobs that pay \$36,000 a year to machinists that pay \$40,000 a year — not requiring a doctorate degree, not even requiring a community college degree.

“In energy, the epicenter of energy in the world ... is North America. It is already here. ... The United States, Canada, and Mexico, not the Arabian Peninsula. ... We’ll be energy independent in the next several years, and North America will be in the next few years. There’s a boom.”

Republican Gov. John Kasich was invited to participate but instead made appearances at the Ohio State Fair and a career college graduation in Columbus. His Democratic opponent, Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald, spoke.

Republicans have been represented, however. Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus spoke on Thursday, and U.S. Sen. Rand Paul (R., Ky.) — a potential 2016 presidential contender — is expected to speak today during the three-day conference.

Mr. Priebus said the GOP is reaching out to minorities, saying some black Democrats believe they have been taken for granted by their party.

“If there’s one thing I’m trying to change, it’s to make us a national party in every community with full-time, paid, on-the-ground staff making our case,” Mr. Priebus said. “... We have to be present year-round. We can’t just show up a few months before an election, and we can’t just be a U-Haul trailer of cash for our nominee.”

He spoke of the party’s support for job training, apprenticeships, and school vouchers as a means to allow students to escape struggling public schools. The last issue is particularly popular in the African-American community.

“America’s underemployment, especially black America’s underemployment, is a crisis,” Mr. Priebus said. “But the commentators on TV tell us that the economy’s getting better.

"That's because they don't see the whole picture. They don't see the people who are exhausted from looking for jobs that don't exist. They forget that the black unemployment rate isn't that national rate of 6.1 percent. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, it's 10.7 percent, and that's a problem we must address."

Contact Jim Provance at: jprovance@theblade.com or 614-221-0496.

Biden: Blacks Have Not Made Enough Progress

By Dave Boyer

[Washington Times](#), July 25, 2014

In an election-year push to motivate minority voters, Vice President Joseph R. **Biden** told the National Urban League Thursday that the black community "can't be satisfied with where we are now."

"On the civil rights front, we see renewed attacks on voting rights across the nation," Mr. **Biden** said at the group's annual meeting in Cincinnati. "On the economic front as well, there's been some tough times."

He said, "If we're honest with ourselves, we can't be satisfied with where we are now, on either civil rights or economic opportunities for African-Americans."

After recounting gains by blacks in the civil rights era, Mr. **Biden** said, "Something happened on the way to the 2008 election."

"The franchise is under siege," he said. "Both civil rights and economic rights, in the aftermath of the great recession that the president and I inherited, has devastated parts of the community."

Mr. **Biden** didn't mention that the black unemployment rate of 10.7 percent is more than double the white jobless rate of 5.3 percent. But he said he is "optimistic" that the U.S. economy is positioned to lead the world.

"That's not because Barack Obama and Joe **Biden** are president and vice president — it's just the simple reality," he said.

Republicans countered Thursday that the 5-year-old economic recovery is the weakest in a half-century.

"A record number of people are unemployed or have left the workforce," said House Speaker John A. Boehner, Ohio Republican. "More have left the workforce than have found new jobs. Incomes for American families have declined under this president, while the cost of everything from gas to groceries has gone up."

As the vice president did in a speech to an NAACP audience Wednesday, Mr. **Biden** attacked Republicans' efforts across the country to approve voter ID laws, calling them an attempt to suppress minority voting rights.

"This year alone, there were 83 initiatives in 29 states to limit access to the ballot box in the name of preventing corruption, where no corruption was found; in the name of preventing widespread fraud, where none was occurring," the vice president said.

He added, "I don't think we've made it clear enough to the American people what these attempts are all about. Name it for what it is — it's an attempt to repress minority voting, masquerading as an attempt to end corruption."

Mr. **Biden** said Washington needs to spend more on rebuilding America's infrastructure and on job-retraining programs to fill what he said are hundreds of thousands of available jobs.

"This is a new era," he said. "We're back; we're coming back."

Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus assured participants at the conference Thursday that the GOP is making a strong effort to build ties with minority voters. He said Republicans have added staff in various states, including swing-state Ohio, to help reach out to black voters.

"So we want you to know, desperately, that the Republican Party is listening, we want a relationship, we want to fight for everybody in this country," Mr. Priebus said.

Joe Biden: 'Businesses Are Hiring At Historic Rates'

By Cheryl K. Chumley

[Washington Times](#), July 25, 2014

Vice President Joseph R. **Biden** said in a task force report to President Obama that business growth in the United States has hit "historic rates" and that hiring is reaching new highs.

Specifically, the report said: "Businesses are hiring at historic rates, with 52 consecutive months of net private sector job growth. Manufacturing is back, with 668,000 new jobs in the past 52 months," National Review reported.

And yet, facts show the hiring claims may be a bit short of truth. As the National Review put it: "**Biden** is flat-out wrong."

The media outlet reported that the number of business hires per month as a percentage of the number of employed Americans, as well as the number of gross hires made by businesses on a monthly basis, were much healthier under the previous George W. Bush administration.

"In fact," National Review reported, "most of the Bush years handily outstripped the very best of the Obama years."

Central American Presidents Want More US Investment In Security

By Brian Bennett

[McClatchy](#), July 25, 2014

WASHINGTON — If the U.S. wants to stem the tide of children illegally crossing its Southwest border, it should increase investment in Central America to improve security and dismantle drug cartels, the presidents of Guatemala and Honduras said Thursday.

The two presidents met with lawmakers on Capitol Hill before speaking about the border crisis at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank. They are scheduled to meet with President Barack Obama on Friday.

Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez said he appreciated the attention the crisis has brought to economic conditions in Honduras, where 45 percent of the populace lives on less than \$1 a day.

But the vast majority of children are fleeing violence and crime, he said. U.S. Department of Homeland Security maps he has seen show most Honduran children apprehended in the U.S. came from the 30 most violent cities and towns in Honduras.

"Where the greatest drug violence lies – that is where the most children are departing," he said.

More than 57,000 unaccompanied children have been apprehended after crossing the border since Oct. 1, officials said. The number of children declined during the first two weeks of July as the U.S. launched a public awareness campaign about the dangers of the journey, and as hot summer weather deterred crossings.

Hernandez said he has been working to purge Honduras of corrupt officials and to extradite accused drug lords to the U.S. He recently launched an overhaul of the government's immigration department.

"The old immigration officials were in cahoots with the drug traffickers," he said.

In the past decade, the U.S. has poured billions of dollars into fighting drug cartels in Mexico and Colombia through programs like the Merida Initiative and Plan Colombia. But the money has largely passed over Central America, Hernandez said.

As a result, drug lords “poured into Central America and linked up with gangs in an unholy alliance,” Hernandez said.

“We are picking up the pieces because they all came home to roost in Central America, and that is what we are dealing with,” he said.

Since 2008, the State Department has spent more than \$642 million through a program called the Central American Regional Security Initiative. The money went to countries including Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

But the program has been too small to be effective, and more money is needed, Hernandez said.

“One dollar of investment in Central America is one dollar invested in U.S. security,” Hernandez said.

Congress is unlikely to open the tap for these countries, said Rep. Ted Yoho, R-Fla., who met with ambassadors from Central American countries this week. He said he told them not to expect a flow of money from the U.S.

“I said, ‘In case you don’t remember, our government shut down last year’” over a budget dispute, he said.

Guatemala President Otto Perez Molina said his country is preparing to receive the children and families who will eventually be deported from the U.S.

But solving the crisis will require more attention and investment from the U.S., he said. Among countries investing in Guatemala, the U.S. ranks seventh, he said – below Canada, Russia and Colombia.

Perez Molina said the violence and crime in Guatemala is a by-product of the Cold War when the U.S. and the Soviet Union were funding opposite sides of civil wars in Central America to gain influence.

Perez Molina was a top intelligence officer in the Guatemalan military in the ‘80s and ‘90s.

“We were one of the hot spots in that war,” he said. “The cost to Central America has been that we became a transit corridor and warehouse for drugs going to the U.S.” In 2013, Guatemalan police seized 50,000 weapons that were traced back to the U.S., Perez Molina said.

Obama and Vice President Joe **Biden** will meet the two presidents, as well as President Salvador Sanchez Ceren of El Salvador, at the White House on Friday.

Biden will host the three leaders for lunch before the meeting. **Biden** met with the presidents of Guatemala and El Salvador in Guatemala City on June 20 to discuss the humanitarian crisis on the U.S. border. The president of Honduras skipped the meeting to watch the Honduran national team play a World Cup match in Brazil.

Central American Leaders Want Washington’s Help With Immigration Crisis

By David Nakamura And Ed O’Keefe

[Washington Post](#), July 24, 2014

Leaders of the Central American nations at the other end of the U.S. border crisis came to Washington on Thursday to discuss the response and placed much of the blame on the United States.

“Your country has enormous responsibility for this,” Honduras’s Juan Orlando Hernández said in an interview with The Washington Post. “The problem of narco-trafficking generates violence, reduces opportunities, generates migration because this [the United States] is where there’s the largest consumption of drugs. That’s leaving us with such an enormous loss of life .”

The criticism set the stage for a meeting Friday at the White House in which President Obama and Vice President **Biden** will host Hernández, Guatemala's Otto Pérez Molina and El Salvador's Salvador Sánchez Cerén for a face-to-face discussion of the crisis at the border. The White House said Obama also telephoned Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto on Thursday to discuss the possibility of "regional programs" that would improve security and the economy in Central America.

More than 57,000 unaccompanied minors and an additional 55,000 parents with children, most of them from Central America, have been apprehended this year.

The Obama administration acknowledged Thursday that it is weighing a proposal to allow hundreds of Hondurans to enter the United States after applying for refu-gee visas in their home country. A senior White House official emphasized that the proposal is one of many policy options being considered and that no decision has been made on that specific proposal.

The proposal, if ever implemented, would be a relatively modest response given the scale of the problem: The initiative would provide fewer than 2,000 refu-gee visas to young Hondurans in the first year of what officials described as a pilot program. The New York Times first reported on the potential program, saying it could cost \$47 million over two years.

And the proposal would do nothing about the tens of thousands of migrants who have already reached the United States from Central America and have overwhelmed border security operations in recent months. Obama has requested that Congress provide \$3.7 billion in emergency funds to combat the crisis, but Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill have balked at that price tag. Both the Senate and House are preparing separate plans with lower funding levels.

But in an interview with The Post, Molina said that proposals to boost border patrols are shortsighted and do not address the real problem.

"If they want to attack the root of the problem, I think that they need to think about making investments in countries like Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras," he said, adding later: "With just 10 percent of the money that you're investing on the U.S. border, it could be spent at minimum in the three countries and I'm confident that it would be much more profitable than investing it on border security or border control with Mexico."

The Central American leaders met with members of Congress on Thursday to press their case for more economic assistance. Some Republican lawmakers have called for a decrease in aid to the region, along with Mexico, until those governments do more to curb the problem. GOP lawmakers have focused on strengthening enforcement operations at the border, including calling on the administration to send in National Guard troops.

Administration officials announced Thursday the deployment of a team of military and national security analysts to the Texas border to determine whether there is a productive role for the National Guard in response to the crisis. The move came just days after Texas Gov. Rick Perry (R) announced his plan to send 1,000 of his state's guardsmen to the border to assist local law enforcement operations..

Molina and Hernández pledged that they are determined to do their part to help curb the exodus of migrants.

But they also warned that U.S. politicians should not politicize the debate ahead of the midterm elections this fall.

"The United States is in the run-up to an electoral moment," Hernández said. "I would appeal to the leaders and to American people to understand this is a humanitarian crisis. We are neighbors and will remain neighbors, and it's best to be friends with your neighbors."

Hernández said that most of the children coming to the United States from Honduras are fleeing the 30 most violent areas of the country. He said Honduran girls were sexually abused by smugglers, who instructed them to take contraceptives that the smugglers told them were vitamins.

"Please remember we're talking about children," Hernández said. "These are human beings. As minors, they are the most vulnerable, the weakest among us." This should catch the attention and pull at the heart strings of humanity at large."

The White House gathering will mark the first time an American president has hosted a group of Central American leaders in Washington since 1998, when President Bill Clinton welcomed regional leaders after Hurricane Mitch.

Senior administration officials said this week that each government has stepped up the apprehension of human smugglers and launched public campaigns to discourage illegal immigration since **Biden** visited the region last month. In Guatemala, the "Quedate" (or, "Stay") campaign has been led by the country's first lady, Rosa Leal de Perez. In the interview, Molina said that he thinks the campaign has contributed to the 50 percent reduction in illegal border crossings in the past two weeks.

Since signing an agreement with Central American countries and the Dominican Republic in 2008, the United States has spent about \$800 million on security and law enforcement assistance in the region, with roughly two-thirds of the money sent to Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.

Lawmakers and regional experts say that any new requests for aid are likely to be greeted with skepticism.

"There's deep concern about the violence in Central America," said Eric Olson, director for the Latin American Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center. "But people are asking hard questions about what is our money going to be used for?"

Marlon Correa contributed to this report.

Honduran Children May Be Allowed To Apply For U.S. Admission From Home

By Brian Bennett

[Los Angeles Times](#), July 25, 2014

The White House is considering a proposal that would allow Honduran children to apply for admission to the United States as refugees or on humanitarian grounds while still in their native country.

It is one of several plans under review to deter Central American kids from making the difficult and dangerous journey to the Southwest border, White House officials said Thursday. If successful, the program could be expanded to include other volatile nations, such as Guatemala and El Salvador.

Under the plan, children fleeing dangerous street gangs plaguing cities in Honduras, or other threats, would be interviewed by American immigration officials and temporarily sheltered in Honduras while their cases are considered.

Supporters of the plan said it would help children who are genuinely in danger and reduce the number of minors traveling along smuggling routes through Mexico. Critics said it would only increase the number of refugees and worsen the current backlog of applications from Central America.

The idea is similar to a proposal from Arizona Sens. John McCain and Jeff Flake, both Republicans, to boost the number of visas by 5,000 for young people coming from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

Of the 57,000 unaccompanied minors apprehended at the Southwest border since Oct. 1, more than 45,000 have been from these three countries. Their numbers have overwhelmed social services and created a humanitarian crisis.

The presidents of Guatemala and Honduras, who were in Washington on Thursday, said changing the U.S. immigration system would be helpful, but insufficient. If the U.S. wants to stem the tide of children illegally crossing its Southwest border, it should increase investment in Central America to improve security and dismantle drug cartels, they said.

They met with lawmakers on Capitol Hill before speaking about the border crisis at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank. They are scheduled to meet with President Obama on Friday.

Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez said he appreciated the attention the crisis had brought to economic conditions in Honduras, where 45% of the populace lives on less than \$1 a day.

But the vast majority of children are fleeing violence and crime, he said. "Where the greatest drug violence lies – that is where the most children are departing," he said.

Hernandez said he had been working to purge Honduras of corrupt officials and to extradite accused drug lords to the U.S. He recently launched an overhaul of the government's immigration department.

"The old immigration officials were in cahoots with the drug traffickers," he said.

In the last decade, the U.S. has poured billions of dollars into fighting drug cartels in Mexico and Colombia through programs such as the Merida Initiative and Plan Colombia. But the money has largely passed over Central America, Hernandez said.

As a result, drug lords "poured into Central America and linked up with gangs in an unholy alliance," Hernandez said.

"We are picking up the pieces because they all came home to roost in Central America, and that is what we are dealing with," he said.

Since 2008, the State Department has spent more than \$642 million through a program called the Central American Regional Security Initiative. The money went to countries including Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

But the program has been too small to be effective, and more money is needed, Hernandez said.

"One dollar of investment in Central America is one dollar invested in U.S. security," Hernandez said.

Congress is unlikely to open the tap for these countries, said Rep. Ted Yoho (R-Fla.), who met with ambassadors from Central American countries this week. He said he told them not to expect a flow of money from the U.S.

"I said, 'In case you don't remember, our government shut down last year'" over a budget dispute, he said.

Guatemalan President Otto Perez Molina said his country was preparing to receive the children and families who will eventually be deported from the U.S.

But solving the crisis will require more attention and investment from the U.S., he said. Among countries investing in Guatemala, the U.S. ranks seventh, he said – below Canada, Russia and Colombia.

Perez Molina said the violence and crime in Guatemala is a byproduct of the Cold War, when the U.S. and the Soviet Union were funding opposite sides of civil wars in Central America to gain influence.

Perez Molina was a top intelligence officer in the Guatemalan military in the '80s and '90s.

"We were one of the hot spots in that war," he said. "The cost to Central America has been that we became a transit corridor and warehouse for drugs going to the U.S."

In 2013, Guatemalan police seized 50,000 weapons that were traced back to the U.S., Perez Molina said. Obama and Vice President Joe **Biden** will meet with Hernandez, Perez Molina and Salvadoran President Salvador Sanchez Ceren at the White House on Friday.

Biden will host the three leaders for lunch before the meeting. He met with Perez Molina and Sanchez Ceren in Guatemala City last month to discuss the humanitarian crisis on the U.S. border. Hernandez skipped the meeting to watch the Honduran national soccer team in the World Cup in Brazil.

For more reporting on border security follow me on Twitter @ByBrianBennett.

Biden: Shoulda' Had One Republican Rich Kid

[Bloomberg](#), July 24, 2014

U.S. Vice President Joe **Biden**, center, buys an ice-cream at a shop as he tours a Hutong alley with his granddaughter Finnegan **Biden**, right, and son Hunter **Biden**, left on Dec. 5, 2013 in Beijing. "I should have had one Republican kid who'd grow up to make money," Vice President Joe **Biden** said today, spurred by his audience's laughter to add: "so when they put me in a home, I get a window with a view."

"You know what I mean?"

Biden has one son following in his political footsteps, Beau **Biden**, attorney general of Delaware, and he has a daughter, Ashley, who, as he noted today, is a social worker running a program for children at risk.

He also has one son, Hunter **Biden**, who's a member of Burisma Holdings' board of directors. That is Ukraine's largest private gas producer.

"Burisma's track record of innovation 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 at the company's announcement of him.

The vice president was addressing the Urban League in Cincinnati today at a conference with a theme, "One Nation Underemployed."

Biden, who spent more than three decades in the Senate, has not amassed much personal wealth. At a recent White House summit on Working Families, he said: "Don't hold against me that I don't own — that I don't own a single stock or bond. Don't hold it — I have no savings accounts. But I got a great pension, and I got a good salary."

As we noted in these columns, however

, his official financial disclosure forms say something else about that savings account:

The form the vice president filed in mid-May shows calendar year 2013 holdings ranging from \$1,001 to \$15,000 in a U.S. Senate Federal Credit Union joint savings account, and the same in each of two checking accounts at Suntrust and M&T Bank. It also shows a joint holding of less than \$1,001 in a M&T Bank checking account.

More than "no account."

Not enough for that room with a view, though.

Poll: Clinton Dominates 2016 Field In Florida

By Rebecca Shabad

[The Hill](#), July 24, 2014

Hillary Clinton easily tops the 2016 presidential field in the battleground state of Florida in a new poll, while in-state Sen. Marco Rubio is narrowing the GOP gap, as support wanes for former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush.

Just over two-thirds of Democratic voters in Florida back Clinton, who also beats her possible GOP competitors by margins of 7-21 percentage points, according to a Quinnipiac University survey released Thursday.

None of the possible candidates have announced a decision to run.

Florida voters back Clinton over Bush 49 percent to 42 percent, the poll found. They support Clinton over Rubio 53 percent to 39 percent, over Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) 51 percent to 38 percent, over Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) 53 percent to 37 percent and over Gov. Chris Christie (R-N.J.) 54 percent to 33 percent.

Support for Clinton in Florida has increased by 3 percentage points, since 64 percent said they back her in a May Quinnipiac poll.

The new survey found Vice President **Biden** and Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) trail Clinton distantly in Florida with 8 percent support each.

Bush, meanwhile, tops the potential GOP field with 21 percent. Eighteen percent said they support Rubio; 10 percent back Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas); 8 percent support Paul; 7 percent support former Gov. Mike Huckabee (R-Ark.) and 6 percent back Gov. Chris Christie (R-N.J.). Thirteen percent of Republicans remain undecided.

The survey from May also found Bush led the GOP pack with 27 percent support, but Paul came in second with 14 percent, and Rubio came in third with 11 percent.

Clinton received the highest favorability rating with 58 percent, compared with 48 percent who view Bush favorably, 43 percent who view Rubio favorably, 35 percent who view Christie favorably and 33 percent who view Rubio favorably.

The new poll surveyed 1,251 registered voters from July 17-21 with a 2.8 percentage point margin of error. The poll's survey included 451 Republicans and 457 Democrats with 4.6-point margins of error each.

Poll: Clinton Sweeps GOP In Florida

By Jonathan Topaz

[Politico](#), July 24, 2014

Hillary Clinton is leading all potential Republican 2016 presidential challengers in Florida, a new poll says.

According to a Quinnipiac University poll released Thursday, the former secretary of state holds at least a 7-percentage-point lead in match-ups against potential GOP challengers in the politically crucial Sunshine State.

Two Florida politicians — Sen. Marco Rubio and former Gov. Jeb Bush — were the top two vote-getters in the Republican field, with Bush at 21 percent and Rubio at 18 percent. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas came in third, with 10 percent, while Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky followed with 8 percent, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee received 7 percent and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie 6 percent.

The Democratic contest — as it has in many other statewide and national polls — remains far more clear-cut than the Republican field. Sixty-seven percent of Democratic voters support Clinton, while Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Vice President Joe **Biden** each pulled in only 8 percent.

Bush provides the closest head-to-head match-up with Clinton, with the Democrat leading Bush 49 percent to 42 percent. Clinton holds a wider, 14-point lead over Rubio, a 16-point lead over Paul and a 19-point lead over Christie.

Florida women show strong support for Clinton, giving her a 20-point edge in a potential match-up with Bush.

The survey was conducted July 17-21 among 1,251 registered Florida voters. The margin of error is plus or minus 2.8 percentage points. The primary surveys had 451 Republicans and 457 Democrats; each had a margin of error of plus or minus 4.6 percentage points.

Clinton Polling Well In Key Presidential Battleground

By

[CNN](#), July 24, 2014

(CNN) – Hillary Clinton is the clear 2016 frontrunner in the nation's largest presidential battleground state, according to a new poll.

A Quinnipiac University survey of Florida voters indicates the former secretary of state, who's seriously considering a second bid for the White House, has leads from seven to 21 percentage points over potential GOP presidential candidates in possible 2016 showdowns.

Follow @politicalticker

"Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton may be taking some criticism recently in the news media and among some liberal Democratic precincts, but nothing has changed among average voters in Florida where she remains queen of the political prom," said Peter A. Brown, assistant director of the Quinnipiac University poll.

According to the survey, which was released Thursday morning, Clinton also has an overwhelming lead in the hunt for the Democratic nomination, with former two-term Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and the state's junior U.S. senator, Marco Rubio, leading the pack of potential GOP contenders.

Two-thirds of Sunshine State Democratic primary voters questioned in the survey say they'd back Clinton for their party's nomination, followed by Vice President Joe **Biden** and Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts each at eight percent. **Biden** is mulling another presidential bid while Warren has said numerous times that she's not running in 2016. Other potential candidates registered at one percent or less.

Twenty-one percent of Republicans say they'd back Bush in the primary, followed by Rubio at 18%. Bush was at 27% and Rubio at 11% among Florida Republicans in Quinnipiac's May poll.

Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas is at 10% in the new poll, with Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky standing at 8%, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee – who ran for the 2008 nomination – at 7%, and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie at 6%. None of the other possible contenders top 5%.

In hypothetical 2016 general election matchups, Sunshine State voters back Clinton over Bush 49%-42%. The poll indicates Clinton leads Ryan by 13 points, Rubio by 14 points, Paul by 16 points and Christie by 21 points.

A Quinnipiac poll in Colorado released last week, another swing state, indicated much closer 2016 general election showdowns between Clinton and potential GOP candidates.

As for the current occupant in the White House, the survey indicates President Barack Obama has a 44%-52% approval/disapproval rating among Florida voters, compared to 46%-50% in May.

The Quinnipiac University poll was conducted July 17-21, with 1,251 registered voters in Florida questioned by telephone. The survey's overall sampling error is plus or minus 2.8 percentage points.

CNN Political Editor Paul Steinhauser contributed to this report

Poll Shows Hillary Clinton Still Strong In Florida

By Anthony Man, Sun Sentinel

[Orlando \(FL\) Sentinel](#), July 24, 2014

Her book sales are lousy, she's made a couple of gaffes, and she's taken a battering in recent weeks from Republicans and cable TV pundits, but a poll out Thursday shows Hillary Clinton is still a favorite of Floridians.

The Quinnipiac University poll of Florida voters found Clinton “dominates the 2016 presidential landscape, sweeping the Democratic field and topping former Gov. Jeb Bush and other possible Republican contenders by margins of 7 to 21 percentage points.”

Despite the recent negatives — which included her lament that she and former President Bill Clinton left the White House “dead broke” and “struggled” financially — her favorability rating among Florida voters remains strong.

The new poll has her at 58 percent favorable and 38 percent unfavorable. In May she was 58/37, in June 2013 she was 57/38 and in March 2013 she was 62/33.

Sean Phillippi, a Democratic political consultant, said Clinton’s Florida strength isn’t a surprise.

“She’s always had very, very strong support in Florida, especially in South Florida,” he said. “Her base is strong because she and her family have had roots down here for decades, and I don’t think a few events will supersede a long history of standing for the values that Floridians share.”

U.S. Rep. Ted Deutch, a Democrat whose district includes northwest Broward and southwest Palm Beach counties, said Clinton “remains the gold standard as we look ahead to 2016.”

Deutch acknowledged she’s had a rough patch. “I could point to any number of ostensibly leading Republican presidential candidates who have said and done things that are absolutely ripe for the picking for the political press, but Hillary Clinton is the leading Democrat that people are talking about. Of course they are going over every little thing.”

He said people like her because “she is smart, she is thoughtful, she is strong, and she is committed to strengthening ... America at home and abroad.”

Still, she’s not loved by everyone.

The poll shows she’s viewed favorably by 95 percent of Florida Democrats, 21 percent of Republicans, 57 percent of independents, 49 percent of men and 66 percent of women.

Mona Malbranche, a Democratic committeewoman and board member of the Kings Point Democratic Club, said she understands why women are such strong supporters. “A lot of women are looking at her and thinking: Wow, with all of these guys bashing at you like this and not get upset, there is a sincerity to the answers And to heck with all of you who don’t believe me.”

The youngest voters view her more positively than the oldest voters: 65 percent favorable among 18 to 29 year olds, 62 percent of 30 to 49 year olds, 55 percent of 50 to 64 year olds and 54 percent of people 65 and older.

Quinnipiac surveyed 1,251 registered voters from July 17–21. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

“Nothing has changed among average voters in Florida where she remains queen of the political prom,” Peter A. Brown, assistant director of the Quinnipiac poll said in a statement. In Washington, “they may be talking about Mrs. Clinton’s potential weaknesses should she run in 2016. But at this point in Florida, the nation’s largest presidential swing state, her assets overwhelm any vulnerabilities.”

That’s bound to change, said Tom Truex, chairman of the Broward Republican Party.

He said many people like the Clintons, but she’ll take a dip when Republicans have a candidate. “There are so many facts that when you really get down to analyzing her record and some of the horrendous missteps that she’s had, those are the acts that come out in a contested campaign.”

“Certainly Republicans aren’t going to like her either way,” Truex said. “Even Democrats are going to pause a bit.”

Anita Mitchell, chairwoman of the Palm Beach County Republican Party, also sees Clinton’s advantage as fleeting.

"She's got high visibility. She's got high name recognition. But also the Republicans don't have a presidential candidate picked yet," Mitchell said. "It's so darned early. It doesn't surprise me because she's been out there." Clinton vs. Republicans

If the presidential election were held today, Quinnipiac found Florida voters would award her the state's 29 electoral votes — more than 10 percent of the total needed to win the White House.

She'd best Bush 49 percent to 42 percent and U.S. Sen Marco Rubio 53 percent to 39 percent.

Clinton leads Bush narrowly, 45 percent to 41 percent, among independents. Among women, she leads Bush 56 percent to 36 percent.

Like many political pros, Phillippi cautioned against reading too much into polling that's more than 27 months before the 2016 election.

However, he said, it might be somewhat telling in the Clinton-Bush and Clinton-Rubio matchups because all those candidates are familiar to Florida voters.

Terrie Rizzo, chairwoman of the Palm Beach County Democratic Party, has a more partisan take: "A lot of people believe in Hillary. With the bunch of knuckleheads that the Republicans have ... she stands tall."

Truex said it's far too early to see potential matchups as definitive. Democratic primary

Clinton is the overwhelming favorite among Florida Democrats for the party's 2016 presidential nomination.

She has support of 67 percent of Democrats. "None of the others even makes it into double digits," Brown said.

Vice President Joseph **Biden** and U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts have 8 percent each.

Republican primary

Florida's home state candidates, Bush and Rubio, are at the top of Florida Republicans' lists.

Florida voters give Bush a 58 percent favorable to 37 percent unfavorable rating. Rubio's rating is 43 percent favorable and 35 percent unfavorable.

"My take is they are our favorite sons and they ought to be at the top of the heap," Mitchell said. She said Bush was a "popular governor for a very long time."

Bush gets 21 percent in a Republican presidential primary in Florida, followed by Rubio with 18 percent.

U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas has 10 percent, U.S. Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky 8 percent, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee 7 percent and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie 6 percent. No other candidate tops 5 percent.

The surveys of Democrats only and Republicans only have a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percentage points. Obama

President Barack Obama is underwater with Florida voters, with 44 percent approving of his performance and 52 percent disapproval. That's a slight change dip from May when his approval was 46 percent and disapproval 50 percent.

He's viewed positively by 7 percent of Republicans, 40 percent of independents and 84 percent of Democrats, 48 percent of men and 49 percent of women.

Q Poll: Bush Leads GOP Field In Florida; Hillary Beats Them All

[Tampa Bay \(FL\) Times](#), July 25, 2014

Jeb Bush leads a field of prospective GOP presidential candidates in Florida, topping Sen. Marco Rubio, Sen. Ted Cruz and others. But Hillary Clinton beats them all in head-to-head matchups, according to a poll released Thursday

“Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton may be taking some criticism recently in the news media and among some liberal Democratic precincts, but nothing has changed among average voters in Florida where she remains queen of the political prom,” said Peter A. Brown, assistant director of the Quinnipiac University Poll.

In a 2016 Republican primary — keep in mind none of the candidates have said they are running — Bush gets 21 percent support followed by Rubio with 18 percent, Texas’ Cruz with 10 percent, Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky with 8 percent, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee with 7 percent and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie with 6 percent.

In a May survey, Bush led with 27 percent, followed by Paul with 14 percent and Rubio with 11 percent. Either way, the field remains crowded and unsettled.

The Democratic side is another story with Clinton consistently leading the way over would-be Democratic rivals and beating Republicans.

Except for Bush, whom she leads by 7 points, 49-42, she beats other Republicans by double digits. Her lead over Rubio is 53-39.

Florida voters give President Barack Obama a negative 44 percent job approval rating, compared to a negative 46 percent May 1, the poll shows. Voters approve of the job Rubio is doing by 49 percent and give Democratic U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson a 45 percent approval rating.

The poll was conducted July 17-21 and included 1,251 registered voters with a margin of error of 2.8 percentage points.

Attorney General Biden sues Consumer Advocacy Assistance

By

[Dover \(DE\) Post](#), July 24, 2014

Attorney General Beau **Biden** a filed a lawsuit July 23 against Consumer Advocacy Assistance, a company which allegedly defrauded five Delaware homeowners of more than \$8,000 after claiming to be a mortgage rescue group.

Biden said in a news release that state agencies can offer free assistance to homeowners needing loan modification, and that Delawareans should “never pay a dime” to anyone for these services.

Delaware’s lawsuit seeks restitution for the homeowners, the payment of civil penalties and a court order requiring the company to cease and desist its illegal activities.

For more information, visit attorneygeneral.delaware.gov.

Read more: <http://www.doverpost.com/article/20140724/CCH Content/140729861#xzz38RuMtmrl>

Del. Child Predator Unit Makes Arrests

[WHYY-FM Philadelphia](#), July 25, 2014

General Beau **Biden** announced that separate undercover online investigations by the Delaware Child Predator Task Force led to their apprehension.

“The Child Predator Task Force is working to weed out the most dangerous predators – those who seek to sexually assault our children,” **Biden** said in a statement Wednesday.

In the first case, Steve Moore responded to the profile of a 13-year-old girl on an online social dating site. The Dagsboro man, however, was communicating with a task force detective posing as the girl. According to Delaware’s Dept. of Justice, Moore said “

in explicit terms” that he wanted to meet to have sex with the girl and set up a location, date and time to meet.

The 49-year-old was arrested as soon as he arrived at Tidbury Park on South State Street in Dover, Wednesday. Moore was charged with one count of Sexual Solicitation of a Child Under 18 and four counts of Obscenity.

In the second case, 51 year-old Mark Cavill of Bloomingdale, New Jersey, responded to the profile of a 14 year-old girl on an online social dating site. The DOJ said during several conversations with a task force detective posing as the girl Cavill indicated that he wanted to meet to have sex.

Once the location, date and time were set, Cavill was arrested last Friday when he showed up, as agreed, at a fast food restaurant on the 1700 block of North Dupont Highway in Dover. As a result of the investigation Cavill was charged with one count of Sexual Solicitation of a Child Under 18.

Both men’s homes were searched and investigations related to their cases are ongoing.

Stronger penalties

These two arrests are the first made under the strengthened penalties established by House Bill 256 , which was signed into law last month. The legislation makes it a chargeable offense to sexually solicit a child online whether the suspect is soliciting an actual child or an undercover investigator posing as a child. The law also elevates the offense in cases in which the predator actually travels for “the meet.”

“Thanks to legislation enacted this year which strengthens penalties against predators who travel to meet their victims we’re in an even stronger position to take them off the streets for longer periods of time where they can no longer hurt kids,” **Biden** said.

Delaware’s Child Predator Task Force was created in 2007. The unit has four undercover investigators and two prosecutors.

NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS

Gaza’s Mounting Death Toll

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

These days, even a school — clearly identified as a shelter run by the United Nations — cannot protect Palestinian civilians in Gaza from deadly attacks. Located in the northern Gaza town of Beit Hanoun, it was struck multiple times on Thursday as people who had taken refuge there were gathering in the courtyard and preparing to flee. At least 16 of them were killed, bringing the total death toll in 17 days of war to more than 750, a vast majority being Palestinian civilians.

There are competing charges over who carried out the attack — Israel; Hamas, which controls Gaza; or one of Hamas’s allies — and that could take time to sort out. What really matters now is that some way be found to stop this carnage.

The war is terrorizing innocent people on both sides of the border, fomenting more hatred, creating an ever larger appetite for vengeance and ensuring that the cycle of violence will be repeated, if not right away then surely at some point in the future. It is past time for an immediate cease-fire and for a political strategy that offers the hope of a more stable future for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Israeli officials say they have taken pains not to harm civilians. They also say they did not target the Beit Hanoun school, suggesting that Hamas may have struck the facility by mistake. Surely, Israel has reason to take strong military action against the barrage of rockets on its territory and to destroy Hamas’s underground tunnels. Yet no one can be indifferent to the fact that innocents are paying an intolerable cost for being caught in the middle.

It is fair to ask whether Israel is doing enough to prevent that. According to a United Nations official in New York, at least 72 United Nations schools, hospitals and offices have been damaged in the fighting, even though they are clearly marked. At the same time, the United Nations did not enhance its own credibility and influence when its Human Rights Council focused entirely on Israel in a resolution on Wednesday, opening an inquiry into possible Gaza-related human rights violations.

Hamas also deserves scrutiny, as well as the strongest possible condemnation for storing and launching rockets in heavily populated areas, knowing full well they would draw Israeli fire to places where civilians live. Unlike Israel, Hamas has not built bomb shelters where civilians can seek refuge. And even as war rages and his people are exposed, Hamas's political leader, Khaled Meshal, has been safely ensconced at his exile home in Qatar.

Perversely, things seem to be going his way. The Times reported that Hamas, which is committed to Israel's destruction and was in a weakened political position before the war, is now being hailed among Palestinians in the West Bank as a champion. And, the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, a moderate, is being faulted for not achieving a Palestinian state in negotiations with Israel.

Israel's interest would be ill-served if Mr. Abbas ends up being marginalized while the hard-liners are empowered. Any cease-fire should be structured to help strengthen Mr. Abbas's position.

Secretary of State John Kerry has been working feverishly to get a cease-fire, but his mission is hugely complicated. Meanwhile, the killing goes on.

The Phony 'Narrow Network' Scare

By The Editorial Board

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

Republicans contend that the Affordable Care Act is a failure because many of the plans sold on the online health exchanges limit a consumer's choice of doctors and hospitals. Many plans do, indeed, limit choice — deliberately so, to keep premiums down. But a vast majority of consumers can almost always buy a plan with a broad array of doctors, hospitals and other providers if they are willing to pay more for the policies.

The issue is one of priorities: Is it more important to keep premiums low or to have access to a broad array of doctors to choose from? A poll in February showed that many people, especially the previously uninsured, think lower cost is more important.

There is no clear definition of what constitutes a "narrow network," the term used in public and political discourse, but there are protections built into the Affordable Care Act and federal regulations that require all networks to have enough doctors of various types to ensure that services can be provided "without unreasonable delay."

Most plans probably have the experts needed, but there are concerns that in the hectic rollout of the health exchanges the primary emphasis has been put on enrolling people, not on making sure that all networks were adequate.

Any shortcomings that have emerged can be addressed with better public education and regulatory fixes.

Some consumers have been surprised to find that their own doctor may accept the insurance company they are using but not the particular plan they have chosen from that insurer's offerings. Or that a new doctor they wanted to see, though listed as taking their plan's insurance, was not accepting new patients because the practice was already full.

These problems can be solved by requiring more accurate and up-to-date information about doctors in the plan, preferably posted on the government's website, not just on insurance company websites.

Some consumers may discover after the fact that a doctor who treated them in an emergency — a hospital anesthesiologist, for example — is not covered by their plan. Regulators in other states might well emulate New York's pioneering law requiring that patients be told when an out-of-network doctor will be treating them, and if they are not informed, they would not have to pay more than their usual co-pays. In that case, the insurer and the provider would fight to see who absorbs the cost.

The technique of using limited networks to control costs has been around for years. It became especially useful with the passage of health care reform, which eliminated or made illegal several other cost-control tactics, such as refusing to insure people with pre-existing conditions.

These and other reforms left insurers to compete on the basis of cost and the scope of the networks. To attract cost-conscious consumers, many plans have formed narrow networks of providers who agreed to accept low negotiated prices or who had a track record for delivering care at low cost. But those are hardly the only plans available.

One industry survey found that 90 percent of the individuals using the exchanges had access to a broad network plan, with no difference in quality between the broad and narrow plans. Another industry analysis found that narrow network plans had premiums 5 percent to 20 percent lower than broader plans. State and federal regulators need to monitor how well the plans are performing and if they fail to serve the needs of their customers.

Anything Goes In China's Food System

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

The recent revelations that a Shanghai-based meat supplier to McDonald's, KFC and other chain restaurants used expired chicken and beef in its products serve as a stark reminder that China needs to do a lot more to improve its inadequate food safety system.

After tainted milk killed at least six babies and sickened thousands in 2008, Chinese officials overhauled the country's food safety laws and promised to crack down on negligent companies and corrupt bureaucrats.

The scandals have kept coming. Since April 2013, more than 155 people have died from a strain of avian influenza, a disease linked to poor sanitary conditions in poultry markets. Last year, officials found high levels of cadmium, which has been linked to organ failure and cancer, in rice at markets and restaurants in Guangdong Province. And, earlier this year, Walmart stores in China recalled packages of donkey meat that contained meat from other animals.

While the 2009 food law improved safety regulations — banning the use of unauthorized additives in food, for instance — inadequate enforcement remains a major problem. Many officials responsible for enforcing the law have not been properly trained to do their jobs, says John Yasuda, a fellow at the University of Pennsylvania's Center for the Study of Contemporary China.

The country's water and soil pollution problems have also hurt China's ability to clean up its food system, Yanzhong Huang, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote recently. Even the prime minister of China, Li Keqiang, said last year that the nation's food system has "a great deal of outstanding problems and potential hidden dangers."

Weak and uneven enforcement has encouraged an anything-goes culture among food producers, including at Shanghai Husi Food, the company accused of putting expired meat into fast-food meals. In a local TV broadcast, a manager at the Shanghai factory told government investigators that it was company policy to use expired meat and that the practice had gone on for years. TV reporters also showed footage of plant workers using chicken meat that was two weeks past its expiration date and

beef that was six months past its use-by date. The meat was used to make chicken nuggets, sandwiches and other food. Some of the factory's production was exported to Japan.

Chinese officials recently proposed changes to the 2009 law that would impose tougher civil and criminal penalties on companies and people who violate food safety regulations. These changes will only be effective if they are accompanied by stronger enforcement and a greater effort to deal with environmental degradation.

Don't Teach Math, Coach It

By Jordan Ellenberg

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

MADISON, Wis. — PEOPLE ask me all the time how they can get their kids excited about math. That ought to be a softball for me, because I teach math for a living. I wake up excited about math.

But it's not that simple. With the college students I teach, it's a straightforward transaction. They're paying me to teach them math, and my job is to cajole or incentivize them into doing the work that's necessary to learn the subject, whether they feel like it or not.

It's a different story with your own children. None of us want to be Leo Wiener. Yes, Wiener helped shape his son, Norbert, into a child prodigy who got a Ph.D. at Harvard at 18, and who later became a groundbreaking mathematician. But this was how Norbert recalled the process:

"He would begin the discussion in an easy, conversational tone. This lasted exactly until I made the first mathematical mistake. Then the gentle and loving father was replaced by the avenger of the blood. ... Father was raging, I was weeping, and my mother did her best to defend me, although hers was a losing battle."

No parents want this story told in their child's memoirs. But how can we encourage kids in a difficult task like math without doing so in a way they'll come to resent?

I found an answer in something my 8-year-old son, C. J., likes even better than math: baseball. Let me be clear here. My level of skill at baseball — actually, with every kind of ball — is pretty much the opposite of my mastery of math. I've reached 40 and I still throw in the way that we used to call, before they started showing college softball on TV, "like a girl."

But C. J. is a baseball fanatic. He lives and dies with the Milwaukee Brewers and he's pretty set on being one of them when he grows up. He plays Little League with a fierce concentration I seldom see at home. And I've learned a lot about what kind of math parent I want to be from an unexpected source — his coaches.

Baseball is a game. And math, for kids, is a game, too. Everything for them is a game. That's the great thing about being a kid. In Little League, you play hard and you play to win, but it doesn't actually matter who wins. And good coaches get this. They don't get mad and they don't throw you off the team. They don't tell you that you stink at baseball, even if you do — they tell you what you need to do to get better, which everybody can do.

What does it mean to coach math instead of teaching it? For C. J., it means I give him a "mystery number" to think about before bed. "I'm thinking of a mystery number, and when I multiply it by 2 and add 7, I get 29; what's the mystery number?" And already you're doing not just arithmetic but algebra.

For his little sister, who's 4, that's too formal. But say we're at the grocery store and we need four cans of soup and she brings me two, and I say, "so we need three more, right?" and she says "No, Daddy!" That's really funny when you're 4. It's a game, and it's math.

Lots of games are math. There are the classics you know about: chess, which builds the ability to follow a series of logical steps; Monopoly, which demands basic arithmetic and probabilistic reasoning; and Rubik's Cube, which is fundamentally an exercise in geometry and group theory.

But there are new classics, too, that weren't around when you were a kid: Rush Hour, a board game about search algorithms; Set, a study in higher-dimensional geometry in the form of a viciously competitive card game; and DragonBox, an app for phone or tablet that teaches the formalisms of algebra. Every one of these games shows kids mathematical ideas in a spirit of play, which is a big and often hidden part of the true spirit of math.

These games are difficult, but also, for many kids, kind of addictive. Which means they also teach *sitzfleisch*, the ability to focus on a complicated skill for the length of time it takes to master it. Math needs that. (Baseball does, too.) It fits with the research of the psychologist Carol Dweck, which suggests that mentors should emphasize effort over native ability. We can't really teach kids to do things; we can only teach them to practice things.

There are many things we'd like to coach our kids to do. And we can't help playing favorites to some extent. I'll admit, I'd rather C. J. aimed to be a mathematician than a shortstop. I tried to open his eyes to some more realistic careers that could still satisfy his hunger for the major leagues. "You know," I told him, "you really like math, and all the teams now have people who work for them analyzing the players' statistics. You'd probably enjoy that!"

At this suggestion he became agreeably eager. "Daddy, that's a really good idea," he said. "Because almost all major league players have to retire by the time they're 40 — so then I could get a job analyzing the statistics!"

Well, I tried.

Jordan Ellenberg, a professor of mathematics at the University of Wisconsin, is the author of "How Not To Be Wrong: The Power of Mathematical Thinking."

Saving Daughters From Mutilation

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

An international conference focusing on a global scourge — female genital mutilation — made significant progress this week with an announcement from Prime Minister David Cameron of Britain that his government would prosecute parents who submit their daughters to that primitive abuse. The world can only wish for similar enlightenment in the 29 countries in Africa and in parts of Asia and the Middle East where genital mutilation is most common and where more than 130 million girls and women have been scarred for life.

"All girls have the right to live free from violence and coercion," Mr. Cameron declared, speaking as the co-host of a global Girl Summit in London dedicated to eradicating both female genital mutilation and child marriage within a generation. This is an enormous goal. More than 700 million women alive today worldwide were forced into marriage as children, according to Unicef, the event's co-sponsor.

Each year an estimated three million girls are at risk of genital mutilation, ranging in age from infancy to 15. The initiative by Mr. Cameron was driven by the growing realization in Britain that an estimated 20,000 girls, though born in the country, were at risk of genital mutilation by their parents, often immigrants fleeing countries in conflict where the practice is common, according to a report by City University London and the human rights group Equality Now. Researchers estimate up to 137,000 women and girls in Britain and Wales are victims of the practice, which was outlawed there in 1985 but is still prevalent in some communities. The stronger measure of prosecuting parents as criminals for cutting their daughters is to be accompanied by an aggressive education campaign by police and health officials.

The Girl Summit drew 500 government officials and mutilation victims and academics from around the world. The agenda included creating an “international charter” to enlist support from nations where abuses of young girls are most severe — a task more necessary than ever.

The Shared Destiny Of Israel And Gaza

By Roger Cohen

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

LONDON — Freight cars full of bodies shot out of the sky make their way across Europe. After more than two weeks of fighting in Gaza, at least 150 Palestinian children are dead, according to the United Nations. Thousands of Hamas rockets have hit Israel, and 32 young Israeli soldiers have been killed fighting to end this terror. As the poet Seamus Heaney observed, “It is difficult at times to repress the thought that history is about as instructive as an abattoir.”

When children die in these numbers, when the legitimate claim of the Jewish people to a sliver of earth is again contested, when the shrieking cacophony of each side declaiming its “truths” overwhelms, human progress seems a fickle fantasy. Truth, even before social media, was always the first victim of war.

Yet, against all evidence, people hope. They seek justice. It is in their nature.

Hamas establishes a stranglehold over 1.8 million Palestinians squeezed into what David Cameron, the British prime minister, once called the “open-air prison” of Gaza. It is a Jew-hating organization. It is ready, when need be, to use the lives of its own people as pawns. It pours concrete into a maze of tunnels rather than schools. Isolated before the latest violence, it revives by demonstrating a measure of military command and control, by hurting Israel, by appearing resolute as Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, wavers.

The demands of this reconstituted Hamas become the demands of the Palestinian people. Abbas is marginalized. This is not a strategic victory for Israel.

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, pursues a status-quo strategy that keeps Palestinians divided and Israel dominant. The price of the strategy is periodic violence. This is the third Gaza mini-war in six years. An oppressed people will rise up. That is in the nature of things.

Some decades ago, Netanyahu denounced the efforts of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to reach peace with the Palestinians through the Oslo Accords. Rabin, who had once vowed to “break the bones” of Palestinians, sought peace not because he had changed his view of the enemy but because he saw no alternative. Like the men responsible for Israel’s security interviewed in the movie “The Gatekeepers,” he had concluded that endless dominion over another people was unsustainable and incompatible with the preservation of a Jewish and democratic state. Netanyahu compared Rabin to Neville Chamberlain. Rabin’s widow never forgave him.

This month, Netanyahu said that rockets from Gaza demonstrated how critical it was that “we don’t get another Gaza in Judea and Samaria” — the West Bank. He declared: “I think the Israeli people understand now what I always say: that there cannot be a situation, under any agreement, in which we relinquish security control of the territory west of the river Jordan.”

As David Horowitz observed in The Times of Israel, “That sentence, quite simply, spells the end to the notion of Netanyahu consenting to the establishment of a Palestinian state.”

After the suspension of some flights into Tel Aviv’s Ben Gurion airport due to Hamas rockets, Netanyahu’s stance is immeasurably reinforced.

Inherent in Israeli policy are the eruptions of violence that in turn justify the policy that in turn spurs further violence. Vile Hamas revives itself. Palestinian statehood recedes.

Yet, people, in their majority, hope.

Netanyahu wants a majority Jewish state in the Holy Land. Abbas wants an end to the occupation, freedom and statehood for the Palestinians. Those two objectives are not mutually exclusive. In significant ways they are complementary. But they involve sacrifice of cherished national ambitions.

Two impossible things happened in my lifetime. My parents' South Africa ended apartheid without the bloodbath I'd heard was coming throughout my youth. Europe's division at the Berlin Wall dissolved, allowing freedom to spread eastward (if not quite far enough yet to spare those corpses in freight cars).

Sydney Kentridge, a classmate of my father's in Johannesburg and a lawyer for Nelson Mandela, once told me that he concluded at the 1956 treason trial that one day "both sides would realize that neither could win."

He was right. Hope is not always irrational.

On a recent visit to Israel, I passed through the Damascus Gate into Jerusalem's Old City. Palestinians emerging from Al Aqsa Mosque moved toward me in a vast throng. They ran straight into a group of ultra-Orthodox Jews headed toward the Western Wall, and at that moment, out of the Via Dolorosa, a crowd of Philippine Christians emerged, carrying a heavy wooden crucifix. It was an impossible scene, funny even: the three great monotheistic religions jostling in the alley, no way around each other.

Nobody is going away. The peoples of the Holy Land are condemned to each other. Without that realization, any truce, even any demilitarization of Gaza, will only be a way station to the next round of slaughter.

That's the likely but not inevitable scenario. Impossible things do happen.

Left Coast Rising

By Paul Krugman

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

The states, Justice Brandeis famously pointed out, are the laboratories of democracy. And it's still true. For example, one reason we knew or should have known that Obamacare was workable was the post-2006 success of Romneycare in Massachusetts. More recently, Kansas went all-in on supply-side economics, slashing taxes on the affluent in the belief that this would spark a huge boom; the boom didn't happen, but the budget deficit exploded, offering an object lesson to those willing to learn from experience.

And there's an even bigger if less drastic experiment under way in the opposite direction. California has long suffered from political paralysis, with budget rules that allowed an increasingly extreme Republican minority to hamstring a Democratic majority; when the state's housing bubble burst, it plunged into fiscal crisis. In 2012, however, Democratic dominance finally became strong enough to overcome the paralysis, and Gov. Jerry Brown was able to push through a modestly liberal agenda of higher taxes, spending increases and a rise in the minimum wage. California also moved enthusiastically to implement Obamacare.

I guess we're not in Kansas anymore. (Sorry, I couldn't help myself.)

Needless to say, conservatives predicted doom. A representative reaction: Daniel J. Mitchell of the Cato Institute declared that by voting for Proposition 30, which authorized those tax increases, "the looters and moochers of the Golden State" (yes, they really do think they're living in an Ayn Rand novel) were committing "economic suicide." Meanwhile, Avik Roy of the Manhattan Institute and Forbes claimed that California residents were about to face a "rate shock" that would more than double health insurance premiums.

What has actually happened? There is, I'm sorry to say, no sign of the promised catastrophe.

If tax increases are causing a major flight of jobs from California, you can't see it in the job numbers. Employment is up 3.6 percent in the past 18 months, compared with a national average of 2.8 percent; at this point, California's share of national employment, which was hit hard by the bursting of the state's enormous housing bubble, is back to pre-recession levels.

On health care, some people — basically healthy young men who were getting inexpensive insurance on the individual market and were too affluent to receive subsidies — did face premium increases, which we always knew would happen. Over all, however, the costs of health reform came in below expectations, while enrollment came in well above — more than triple initial predictions in the San Francisco area. A recent survey by the Commonwealth Fund suggests that California has already cut the percentage of its residents without health insurance in half. What's more, all indications are that further progress is in the pipeline, with more insurance companies entering the marketplace for next year.

And, yes, the budget is back in surplus.

Has there been any soul-searching among the prophets of California doom, asking why they were so wrong? Not that I'm aware of. Instead, I've been seeing many attempts to devalue the good news from California by pointing out that the state's job growth still lags that of Texas, which is true, and claiming that this difference is driven by differential tax rates, which isn't.

For the big difference between the two states, aside from the size of the oil and gas sector, isn't tax rates. It's housing prices. Despite the bursting of the bubble, home values in California are still double the national average, while in Texas they're 30 percent below that average. So a lot more people are moving to Texas even though wages and productivity are lower than they are in California.

And while some of this difference in housing prices reflects geography and population density — Houston is still spreading out, while Los Angeles, hemmed in by mountains, has reached its natural limits — it also reflects California's highly restrictive land-use policies, mostly imposed by local governments rather than the state. As Harvard's Edward Glaeser has pointed out, there is some truth to the claim that states like Texas are growing fast thanks to their anti-regulation attitude, "but the usual argument focuses on the wrong regulations." And taxes aren't important at all.

So what do we learn from the California comeback? Mainly, that you should take anti-government propaganda with large helpings of salt. Tax increases aren't economic suicide; sometimes they're a useful way to pay for things we need. Government programs, like Obamacare, can work if the people running them want them to work, and if they aren't sabotaged from the right. In other words, California's success is a demonstration that the extremist ideology still dominating much of American politics is nonsense.

A Chinese Gold Standard?

By Kwasi Kwarteng

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

LONDON — While the 70th anniversary of D-Day last month received a lot of attention, another event, in July 1944 — the Bretton Woods conference, named for the mountain resort in New Hampshire where it was held — was perhaps even more significant in shaping the modern world. It not only led to the creation of what are now the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, but it also confirmed the central position of the United States dollar in the international monetary system.

Why does this matter for us now? Just as America displaced Britain as the world's pre-eminent economic power in the interwar period, so, too, the large debts and fiscal pressures confronting the West, and the rise of China and other economic powers, challenge us to think about the future of finance.

For most of the 19th century the British pound had been the world's "reserve currency," the currency in which trade and finance were denominated. "As sound as a pound" became a widely used expression. The pound was pegged to gold at a fixed rate of just under £4 per ounce.

At the outbreak of World War I, Britain abandoned the gold standard. You could no longer exchange pounds for gold. The gold standard was reintroduced in 1925, but this, as John Maynard Keynes observed, proved to be an economic mistake.

British prices and, more crucially, wages, would have to be forced down by 10 percent to maintain the competitiveness of British exports. As American agricultural and industrial exports soared in the 1920s and 1930s, the dollar effectively replaced the pound. It was American bankers who helped out the financially strapped Weimar Republic in the 1920s. The British, as exporters of capital, were a diminished force.

By the time of Bretton Woods, the United States held roughly 60 percent of the world's gold supply. "Think of the gold in Fort Knox," America's chief negotiator at Bretton Woods, Harry Dexter White, said. "That is why we are in a powerful position." He added, "We have the wherewithal to buy any currency we want."

Bretton Woods fixed the dollar price of gold at \$35 per ounce, and all the other major currencies — the pound, the franc, the mark, the yen — were subsequently pegged to the dollar, even though they could not be exchanged directly for gold. This system lasted until 1971. By then, America was under the financial strain of the Vietnam War and Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society. With mounting deficits and an adverse balance of trade, America struggled to maintain gold convertibility at the old rate of \$35 an ounce. So President Richard M. Nixon abandoned the fixed dollar price of gold established at Bretton Woods (over the objections of the Federal Reserve chairman, Arthur F. Burns).

International critics said that the United States, by ending the dollar link to gold, was turning its back on its responsibilities as the guarantor of the international monetary system. Over the decades, the situation has gotten worse. The United States is \$17.6 trillion in debt owed to the public, and large trade deficits are the norm. Yet there is no scope for revisiting the international monetary system, despite great dissatisfaction by countries like China and the Persian Gulf states, which hold large foreign currency reserves. Americans themselves question the security of the dollar when their country faces such large trade and budget deficits.

China's nearly \$4 trillion in reserves — accumulated through its mercantilist trade policies — give it plenty of ammunition to claim leadership in the creation of a new monetary order. The Chinese, however, are most unlikely to bid for monetary hegemony in the near future. For the past 25 years they have pursued a policy of aggressive export growth to drive their economy. China successively devalued its currency, from 1.50 renminbi to the dollar in 1980, to 8.72 in 1994. (Today the renminbi trades at 6.20 to the dollar, which the United States still considers artificially low.)

Could China someday peg its currency to gold, as Britain did in 1821? China has the reserves to do this, and it could have the political will, if the dollar proved to be unreliable as a store of value in the future.

Of course, Britain's earlier adoption of the gold standard, in 1821, worsened a sharp deflationary period, during which, according to one calculation, consumer prices fell nearly 50 percent, between 1818 and 1822.

Nevertheless, to its supporters the gold standard ensured British fiscal and monetary dominance during the rest of the 19th century. As the British historian A.J.P. Taylor observed, 19th-century Britons believed that "a country could not flourish without a balanced budget and a gold currency." Since Keynes,

the West has tried to deny this proposition, with our reliance on deficit spending and “fiat” money, backed mainly by the expectation that a government will not default on its debts.

China is not as indebted as the West, but it is looking to “rebalance” its economy by raising demand by consumers, who want to enjoy the standard of living enjoyed across the Western world. Since 2010, the renminbi has appreciated 14 percent without drastically hurting Chinese exports.

Having expanded its manufacturing base and captured international markets, China may well find a world hooked on its products. It could eventually — in, say, 20 years — peg the renminbi to gold, considering it preferable to the dollar as a store of value, because of its permanence and longevity. With a balanced budget and a gold-backed currency, China's economy could be even more formidable than it is today. Such a move would truly mark its return as the “Middle Kingdom.” Hard as it may be to contemplate today, this scenario would, in many ways, be a more secure basis for an international monetary regime system than the system of floating exchange rates that Nixon inadvertently created in 1971, one that forever overturned the Bretton Woods order.

Kwasi Kwarteng, a Conservative member of Parliament, is the author of “War and Gold: A Five-Hundred-Year History of Empires, Adventures and Debt.”

Why Tony Abbott Axed Australia's Carbon Tax

By Julia Baird

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

SYDNEY, Australia — It will be remembered as one of the most ignoble moments in our history: On July 17, Australia became the first country to repeal a carbon tax.

The deputy leader of the Greens Party, Adam Bandt, said it was “the Australian Parliament's asbestos moment, our tobacco moment — when we knew what we were doing was harmful, but went ahead and did it anyway.”

The tax, or carbon-pricing mechanism, had defined three elections, destabilized three prime ministers and dominated public debate in this country for eight toxic years. Finally, the leader of the center-right Liberal Party, Tony Abbott, won the last election in part by promising to “ax the tax.”

Mr. Abbott is famous for his fitness and muscular approach. As a student at Oxford, he won a “blue” at boxing for the university and was known for his all-out, flailing attacks. When the carbon-pricing scheme became law in 2011, he vowed to lead a “people's revolt” and “fight this tax every second of every minute of every day.”

His political success was not, in fact, a result of the failure of the policy. The scheme was, in at least the most important sense, working, since emissions were declining. The initial public opposition was fading, but the Labor government that introduced the policy failed to sell it. Critics portrayed it as a burden that would hurt businesses and cost households, instead of one that would cut pollution and ensure a more secure future for our children.

It was the misleading old cliché — the economy versus the environment — but politicians staked their careers on it, and won.

In 2010, the Labor prime minister, Julia Gillard, said she would look at carbon-pricing proposals, but also promised, “There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead.” Then, under pressure to form a minority government, she made a deal with the Greens and agreed to legislate a carbon price: a tax by any other name.

The heat, anger and vitriol directed at her as a leader — and as Australia's first woman to be prime minister — coalesced around the promise and the tax. It grew strangely nasty: She was branded by a

right-wing shockjock as “Ju-Liar,” a moniker she struggled to shake. The political cynicism surrounding the carbon tax certainly reduced Ms. Gillard’s political capital, but it was a perceived lack of conviction in the policy itself that damaged the pricing scheme’s credibility.

Business leaders opposed what Mr. Abbott called a “useless, destructive tax,” even though just 0.02 percent of Australia’s three million businesses were affected (the top 500 polluters). But Australia is one of the world’s biggest producers of coal, and the industry is worth about \$60 billion and supports an estimated 200,000 jobs.

A powerful triumvirate campaigned against the law: mining companies, the conservative coalition parties and Rupert Murdoch’s newspapers. A study found that 82 percent of articles on the carbon tax in News Corporation’s Australian papers were negative.

Ms. Gillard now believes she made a crucial error in framing. After losing office in June 2013, she wrote: “I erred by not contesting the label ‘tax’ for the fixed price period of the emissions trading scheme I introduced. I feared the media would end up playing constant silly word games with me, trying to get me to say the word ‘tax.’”

George Lakoff, a professor of linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley, agreed that “was a disaster.” It wasn’t just the T-word; even the term “carbon price” was a problem, too abstract and technical: “It does not evoke in the minds of the public the real human horrors and economic costs of climate disasters.”

“I made the wrong choice,” Ms. Gillard conceded, “and, politically, it hurt me terribly.” With Labor plummeting in the polls, her leadership was challenged and she lost the vote to the party’s previous leader, Kevin Rudd. (Mr. Rudd’s victory was shortlived; less than three months later, he was defeated general election by Mr. Abbott.)

Opposition to the carbon tax trailed away after Ms. Gillard’s ouster, and public concern about climate change has only grown. A recent poll found that almost two-thirds of Australians believe there should be carbon pricing for major emitters, but 42 percent agreed with the repeal of the tax (against 36 percent who did not). We did, after all, elect a government that promised to ax it. So we’re a hot mess of contradictions.

Mr. Abbott’s claim that households will be better off by 550 Australian dollars, or \$520, a year following the repeal has been greeted with skepticism. Electricity prices did go up after carbon pricing came in, but this was mostly because of investment in infrastructure. Consumers are likely to see no effect now — unless they’re paying less simply by using less electricity. An Australian National University study reported that carbon emissions from the power generation sector had been cut by 1 to 2 percent as a result of the tax.

If carbon pricing was working, you might well ask why the law was repealed. The result is that Australia has no clear climate policy, though Mr. Abbott says he now believes climate change is occurring and he takes it “very seriously.”

The prime minister’s paramount concern, though, is still that taxing emissions should not “clobber the economy.” His government has proposed an alternative to the carbon tax, the Direct Action Scheme, that would provide incentives for businesses to cut emissions. But it faces fierce criticism — even from within Mr. Abbott’s own administration — because of loopholes, a lack of consequences for nonparticipants and its unfunded targets.

What’s clear is that Australia has proved again that politicians rarely choose to take the lead on tackling climate change. When the public is conflicted, our leaders too often whip up fear, and reason and evidence go out the window. The shame is that when the tax was axed, so were the facts.

Julia Baird is a journalist and a television presenter with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and an author who is working on a biography of Queen Victoria.

How I Passed The English Cricket Test

By Kenan Malik

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

LONDON — How times change. Last week, I was at Lord's Cricket Ground in London — the “home of cricket,” as England's cricket officials like to boast — to see England play India. I was born in India, yet I was cheering England.

Thirty years ago, I certainly would not have been. I can remember the Indian cricket team touring England in 1986. India won that three-match series 2-0 (with one draw). I was ecstatic.

Why the change in attitude? Answering that question will, of course, reveal much about myself. It will reveal much about Britain. Perhaps most of all, it will reveal much about the nature of identity.

We live in an age of constant soul-searching about the meaning of national identity. Public debates about what it is to be “English” or “British” have become a ritual almost as familiar as an England soccer team being humiliated at a World Cup. But these debates rarely grasp the realities of the ways in which people experience their identities.

In 2007, the last Labour government produced a green paper titled “The Governance of Britain,” which bemoaned the fact that, compared with French or American citizens, Britons had a “less clear sense” of the “values that bind” the British people. It proposed “a British statement of values that will set out the ideals and principles that bind us together as a nation.” Earlier this year, when an attempt to introduce an Islamist agenda into certain state schools in Birmingham was exposed, the coalition government's response was to insist that “Britishness” had to become part of the educational curriculum.

Craft a statement. Teach a lesson. Politicians may be the only people in the world who imagine that the creation of identities, or the forging of a sense of belonging, can be reduced to such simple formulas.

What most public debates ignore is the complexity, elasticity and sheer contrariness of identity. Whether personal or national, identities can never be singular or fixed because they are rooted largely in people's relationships with one another — not merely personal but social relationships, too — and such connections are always mutating.

Thirty years ago, Britain was a different place. And I was a different person. I grew up in a Britain where racism was woven into the fabric of society in a way that would be difficult to imagine today. Racism was vicious, visceral and sometimes fatal. Assaults and stabbings were common; firebombings of Asian houses were almost weekly events.

My parents were of a generation that accepted racism as part of life. I was of a generation that challenged it, politically and physically. We confronted far-right thugs, organized street patrols to protect black and Asian families, and stood up to police harassment. And this inevitably shaped our sense of who we were.

My generation did not think of itself as “Muslim” or “Hindu” or “Sikh.” We wanted to be seen as British. When Britain told us, “You don't belong,” we responded both by insisting on our Britishness and by identifying with those who challenged British identity. Such is the contradictory character of belonging.

So I refused to support any British team, still less an English one. (The relationship between Englishness and Britishness can seem as unfathomable as the rules of cricket; it is an issue to which I will return another time.) Whether in cricket, soccer, rugby or tiddlywinks, for me it was a case of “anyone but England.”

Today, things are different. Neither racism nor racial violence has disappeared, and hostility to immigration has become a defining feature of British politics. Yet the savage, in-your-face racism that marked Britain a generation ago is, thankfully, relatively rare. The nature of Britishness has changed, too. No longer rooted in ideas of race and empire, it is defined as much by diversity as by jingoism. National identity is being recast in a host of new debates, from the fractious question of Scottish independence to the fraught relationship with the European Union.

Blacks and Asians have long since become an accepted part of Britain's identity, as well as its sporting tapestry. And I have dropped my "anyone but England" attitude. I, too, now feel the pain of penalty shootout defeats and the rare joy of cricket match victories. Yet, if I am now willing to wave the flag at a cricket field or in a soccer stadium, I will not necessarily do so in all contexts. I may be tribal about sports, but I am not patriotic about Britain.

Unthinking, irrational support for one team over another is an essential part of the experience of sports. Patriots wish us to be equally unthinking in our attachment to the nation in every arena, from culture to war. The myth of nationalism is that "Britishness," just like "Frenchness" or "Americanness," comes as a single package. But identity does not work like that.

There are many aspects of British life that I admire, and many that I despise. I only have to visit a London street market to be reminded how open Britain is to foods and goods and influences from all over the world; I only have to stand in line in passport control at Heathrow Airport to remember how deep the suspicion of foreigners runs. Many British traditions resonate with me; many I find abhorrent. This is the nation that produced the Levellers and the Suffragettes, radical movements that helped shape the world; it is also a nation that still clings to a monarchy and the unelected, feudal House of Lords.

Many non-British traditions, too, have helped shape my views, values and ideals. To erase this complexity with the myths of patriotism is to diminish the very meaning of belonging.

As for the cricket match, England was humiliated by India at Lord's. Some things, it seems, never change.

Kenan Malik, a writer, lecturer and broadcaster, is the author, most recently, of "The Quest for a Moral Compass: A Global History of Ethics."

Sen. John Walsh Should Stop Making Excuses For His Actions

By Editorial Board

[Washington Post](#), July 25, 2014

SEN. JOHN Walsh, a place-holding Democrat from Montana, already was deemed unlikely to win a full term in this year's election. With revelations in the New York Times that he extensively plagiarized an academic paper, his prospects are even cloudier. But Mr. Walsh still has a chance at public service: He could apologize for his intellectual theft, acknowledge the seriousness of the offense and use the difficult episode as a learning opportunity for the young people of Montana.

Thus far, Mr. Walsh has taken a different route. When first asked Tuesday outside his office whether he plagiarized his 2007 paper for his U.S. Army War College master's degree, he answered, "I don't believe I did, no." The next day, that denial turned into an admission of a "mistake," with a campaign spokeswoman asking that the "incorrect citations" be viewed in light of Mr. Walsh's "experience of post-deployment." The senator later revealed that he had been seeing two doctors to treat his post-traumatic stress disorder at the time. His campaign on Thursday released a statement highlighting his military accomplishments and insisted that any impropriety was "unintentional."

Unintentional? More than half of the 14-page paper, "The Case for Democracy as a Long Term National Strategy," was directly lifted from papers by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace experts and a Harvard scholar, or improperly attributed to other authors, the Times showed.

For example, Mr. Walsh inserted almost verbatim these sentences from a Harvard paper by Sean M. Lynn-Jones, with original footnotes also included: "Many studies have found that there are virtually no historical cases of democracies going to war with one another. In an important two-part article published in 1983, Michael Doyle compares all international wars between 1816 and 1980 and a list of liberal states." The copying continues for more than a page.

The Army War College has rightly launched an investigation and pledged to hand down any appropriate punishments. Mr. Walsh should be subject to all the usual protocols that the college uses for plagiarism cases. He should also apologize to all scholars he copied from. Tom Carothers, a foreign policy expert whose work was plagiarized, told us he had not yet received a phone call from Mr. Walsh.

Mr. Walsh's plagiarism does not diminish his accomplishments in Iraq or the National Guard. By the same token, Mr. Walsh should not use his service to deflect criticism for his academic misdeeds. More than a third of undergraduates and a fourth of graduate students admit to plagiarizing in school. College plagiarism rates have risen, facilitated by widespread Internet access. There is widespread confusion about the line between plagiarism and paraphrasing.

Rather than playing to that confusion, Mr. Walsh should forthrightly explain why claiming someone else's work as one's own is wrong. He can't erase his record, but he could seize this opportunity to discourage Montana students from following in his footsteps.

Paul Ryan's Anti-poverty Plan Has Some Good Ideas That All Sides Can Support

By Editorial Board

[Washington Post](#), July 25, 2014

HOUSE BUDGET Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) has produced his latest take on conservative anti-poverty policy. As is often the case with Mr. Ryan's proposals, this one, launched under the heading "Expanding Opportunity in America," is ambitious, thoughtful and not entirely persuasive.

Mr. Ryan's best idea is a substantial expansion of the earned-income tax credit, a wage supplement for low-income workers administered through the tax code. Currently the third-largest federal poverty-fighting program at \$59 billion per year, the EITC has a proven track record of lifting families out of poverty and stimulating work effort. But it offers only skimpy assistance to childless adult workers, which Mr. Ryan would remedy by doubling the maximum annual credit for such workers to \$1,005 and lowering the eligibility age from 25 to 21. It's nearly identical to a proposal in President Obama's 2015 budget that would have cost roughly \$60 billion over 10 years.

The other pillar of Mr. Ryan's plan is less satisfactory. He would not reduce the money Washington currently spends on some 11 anti-poverty programs — the largest of which include food stamps, public housing and cash welfare, known as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) — but would fold them into a single block grant, available to states that wish to operate their own consolidated aid programs for the poor. States that took the option would have to meet federal conditions, including a work requirement for recipients, in return for far greater flexibility in how their agencies, public and private, meet the needs of individual clients for housing, drug treatment, training and the like. Mr. Ryan's model is the series of state-level pilot projects that preceded 1996 welfare reform, which ultimately trimmed caseloads nationwide.

No doubt this could reduce the bureaucracy and complexity associated with administering the government's myriad aid programs. Whether that necessarily translates into better outcomes for the disadvantaged is a different question. Mr. Ryan argues that the poor do better when grass-roots agencies, public and private, are in charge. Yet rolling food stamps into a single funding stream would seem to forfeit that program's usefully counter-cyclical feature (that is, it spends more when the economy turns down and less when it recovers). Mr. Ryan has only tentative proposals to address that. Even thornier, though, is the work requirement, which can't succeed unless jobs are plentiful. It's one thing to link a single source of aid — TANF — to work, as the welfare reform law did. It's quite another to make everything depend on it, including food.

The thing to do, therefore, is focus on the most promising, most bipartisan part of Mr. Ryan's plan — the EITC increase. With support not only from Mr. Ryan and Mr. Obama but also, in different iterations, leading members on both sides of the aisle in the Senate, there should be no problem getting this passed. Heretofore the sticking point had been that the two parties could not agree on how to pay for the measure's relatively modest cost. Mr. Ryan says to cut corporate welfare — including the Democrats' pet green-energy grants. The Democrats say to close tax breaks for the rich such as the carried-interest deduction. We say both have a point. So do some of both and get on with it.

If The West Doesn't Do More For Ukraine Now, It Might Soon Be Too Late

[Washington Post](#), July 25, 2014

VLADIMIR PUTIN has responded to the international outrage over the destruction of a Malaysian airliner by his proxies in eastern Ukraine by escalating his aggression. According to U.S. officials, tanks, artillery and other heavy weapons have continued to cross from Russia to Ukraine after the passenger jet was shot down. On Wednesday, two more Ukrainian military jets were hit by anti-aircraft missiles, which Ukrainian officials said had been fired from Russia. The State Department also said Thursday that Russian artillery was firing at Ukrainian positions from across the border.

The Russian president is clearly not impressed by Western responses to the killing of 298 innocent people and the subsequent attempt by his government and its proxies to deny and cover up the crime. And why should he be? After making a statement Monday that contained no tangible response and only a vague threat that "the costs for Russia's behavior" will increase, President Obama departed for three days of fundraising on the West Coast. The message to Mr. Putin — not to mention Israelis, Palestinians and Iraqis fighting their own wars — was that the president was not engaged enough by the crises to set aside the purely political activity of collecting checks from donors.

In Brussels, European Union officials met Thursday to discuss potential sanctions against Russia, including new measures against the banking, energy and arms industries. But no decisions will be made before next week, and even then Moscow will likely be given a new deadline for meeting a demand that it stop supplying the Ukrainian rebels. Previous deadlines to cease weapons deliveries have passed with no significant action.

While the West temporizes, a de facto Russian army is rapidly assembling in occupied portions of eastern Ukraine. A report in the Financial Times, sourced to U.S. intelligence officials, says it includes dozens of T-64 battle tanks, Grad rocket launchers, self-propelled guns, infantry combat vehicles with automatic cannons and armored personnel carriers, in addition to anti-aircraft systems like that which shot down the Malaysian plane. This force is commanded by Russian citizens who infiltrated Ukraine from Moscow, including a Russian secret police colonel, and manned in large part by fighters from Russia.

Incredibly, the European Union's position — tacitly supported by Mr. Obama — is that the Ukrainian government should stop attempting to expel the invaders from its territory and instead negotiate with them about the political future of Ukraine. Fortunately, newly elected President Petro Poroshenko has not capitulated to this appeasement strategy. However, his appeals for military aid from the United States and NATO, or at least more substantial sanctions, have so far been turned aside by Mr. Obama and the Europeans.

Frustration with Mr. Obama's weakness now extends to the top ranks of the Democratic Party. A letter released Tuesday by three Senate committee chairs — Dianne Feinstein (Calif.), Carl Levin (Mich.) and Robert Menendez (N.J.) — called on Mr. Obama to "impose immediate broad sanctions" against Russia's defense sector, as well as broader measures against energy and financial industries, and to explore designating the rebels' political structure as a foreign terrorist organization. While cooperation with Europe is desirable, the senators said, "the United States must not limit its own national security strategy when swift action will help fulfill our strategic objectives."

Mr. Obama has already missed the opportunity for swift action to stop Mr. Putin's escalation. If he does not act soon, it may be too late to save Ukraine.

Corporations Are People. So What If People Were Corporations?

By Catherine Rampell

[Washington Post](#), July 24, 2014

"Checked the tax code," wrote a friend who's engaged to a woman from a low-tax country. "Unfortunately, marrying [my fiancée] does not entitle me to a tax inversion like the big US companies are getting. Thanks for nothing IRS."

That got me thinking. Maybe we've been looking at this whole corporations-are-people-too foofaraw the wrong way. Critics complained when the Supreme Court granted companies rights to freedom of speech and religion under the legal fiction that corporations are people. But perhaps this precedent is good news for flesh-and-blood people like you and me (a.k.a. People Classic™).

If companies are claiming the rights and privileges of people, maybe people should start claiming the rights and privileges of corporations. Rights harmonization, in other words, should flow in both directions, since we're now all indistinguishable, equally protected "persons" — in the court's eyes, anyway.

I spoke with a few legal and tax experts about what we humans stand to gain from my cutting-edge constitutional insight. Turns out corporations enjoy tons of rights and privileges that biological beings should be salivating over.

The most obvious place to start is taxes. Companies save billions from loopholes that don't apply to individuals — yet.

People, for example, pay taxes on their worldwide incomes. Corporations do not, as long as they don't bring the foreign profits back into the United States. And tax attorneys have come up with clever ways of booking an unexpectedly high share of corporate income abroad.

Businesses, for example, can transfer their "intangible" property — things like patents or trademarks — to holding companies in tax havens. That means a company such as Apple could assign ownership of its patents to a subsidiary in Bermuda, and any profits resulting from those patents would get taxed in Bermuda only. Unless and until those profits were repatriated to the States, Uncle Sam wouldn't get a cut.

If you think about it, humans have valuable intangible assets, too. Take, for instance, a college degree.

According to Martin Sullivan, the chief economist at Tax Analysts, if individuals were treated like corporations, I could set up an affiliate called “Catherine Rampell Bermuda,” have it pay my college tuition and then declare that the affiliate owns the resulting degree. I could then tell the IRS that everything I earn above the average high school grad’s wage should be recorded as income in Bermuda, since it’s all derived from a Bermuda-based asset. Until I decide to repatriate those diploma-derived earnings, I’ve built myself a tax-free IRA.

Other goodies abound. On federal tax returns, individuals can deduct either the sales taxes they paid or their state income taxes, not both; for companies, these deductions are all-you-can-eat. If people were treated like companies, we could also start deducting the first dollar we spend on health care, rather than just the medical spending that exceeds 10 percent of our adjusted gross incomes.

Home-buying would also become more attractive. Right now there are limits to how much mortgage interest humans can deduct. But if you analogize your primary residence to a “corporate headquarters” and your vacation homes to “branch offices,” you can deduct the full interest on every McMansion you ever buy.

The tax code isn’t the only place where we might enjoy gaining our corporate brethren’s rights.

If people were treated like corporations, perhaps we’d be able to “merge” with whomever we want without worrying about restrictive marriage laws, noted Adam Winkler, a UCLA law professor. We could also choose to abide by the family law in whichever state we like best, regardless of where we live. Companies, after all, can incorporate in the jurisdiction with the most favorable corporate governance laws, regardless of where they operate, explained Kent Greenfield, a law professor at Boston College. That’s one reason Delaware is home to more businesses than people.

But the best perk of being treated like an incorporeal corporation?

Even if you killed someone, stole a house, funded a genocidal regime or terrorize the global economy, you wouldn’t go to jail. At worst, you’d pay a fine. Sure, you could be executed for your crimes — sort of — by having your charter revoked or by being driven to bankruptcy by onerous penalties, but you could always return from the dead with a different name but much of the same DNA. To err is human; to err and bounce back unscathed, you really need to be a company.

Israel Must Be Permitted To Crush Hamas

By Michael Oren

[Washington Post](#), July 25, 2014

U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary of State John Kerry and the foreign ministers of Great Britain and France all are rushing to achieve a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas. Their motive — to end civilian suffering and restore stability to the area — is noble. The images of the wounded and dead resulting from the conflict are indeed agonizing. However, these senior statesmen can be most helpful now by doing nothing. To preserve the values they cherish and to send an unequivocal message to terrorist organizations and their state sponsors everywhere, Israel must be permitted to crush Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

This is the lesson of previous rounds of fighting between the Israeli Defense Forces and terrorist strongholds. In Lebanon in 2006 and in Gaza in 2008 and again in 2012, Israel responded to rocket attacks on its cities with fierce counteroffensives. Fighting against a deeply dug-in enemy that both blended in with the local population and used it as a shield, Israel’s best efforts to avoid civilian casualties invariably proved limited. Incensed world opinion generated immense pressure on governments to convene the U.N. Security Council and empower human rights organizations to censure Israel and stop

the carnage. These measures succeeded where the terrorists' rockets failed. Israel was compelled to back down.

And the terrorists, though badly mauled, won. Admittedly, their bar for claiming victory was exceptionally low. While Israel must achieve a clear battlefield success to win, the terrorists merely had to survive. But they did more than survive. Under the protection of cease-fires and, in some cases, international peacekeepers, they vastly expanded their arsenals to include more lethal and longer-range missiles. While reestablishing their rule in the streets, they burrowed beneath them to create a warren of bombproof bunkers and assault tunnels. Such measures enabled Hamas, as well as Hezbollah, to mount devastating attacks at the time of their choosing, confident that the international community would once again prevent Israel from exacting too heavy a price.

So the cycle continued. Allowed to fight for several weeks, at most, Israel was eventually condemned and hamstrung by cease-fires. The terrorists, by contrast, could emerge from their hideouts and begin to replenish and enhance their stockpiles. That is precisely the pattern established in the second Lebanon War and repeated in Operations Cast Lead and Pillar of Defense in Gaza. Hezbollah and Hamas sustained losses but, rescued and immunized by international diplomacy, they remained in power and became more powerful still. Israel, on the other hand, was forced to defend its right to defend itself. Jihadist organizations no different from the Islamic State and al-Qaeda gained regional legitimacy, while Israel lost it in the world.

The cycle can end, now and decisively. As Operation Protective Edge enters its third week, responsible world leaders can give Israel the time and the leverage it needs to alter Hamas's calculus. They can let the Israeli army ferret Hamas out of its holes and make it pay a prohibitive cost for its attacks. They can create an outcome in which the organization, even if it remains in Gaza, is defanged and deprived of its heavy arms. Of course, Hamas will resist demilitarization, and more civilians will suffer, but by ending the cycle once and for all thousands of innocent lives will be saved.

Life in Gaza is miserable now, but if Israel is permitted to prevail, circumstances can improve markedly. U.S.- and Canadian-trained security forces of the Palestinian Authority can take over key crossings and patrol Gaza's porous border with Egypt. Rather than be funneled into Hamas's war chest, international aid can be transferred directly to the civilian population to repair war damage and stimulate economic growth. Terrorist groups and their state patrons can be put on notice: The game has changed unalterably.

And by letting Israel regain its security with regard to Gaza — with all the pain it entails — the United States and its allies will be safeguarding their own. Though bitter, the fighting between Israel and Hamas raging in Gaza's alleyways is merely part of the far vaster struggle between rational nations and the al-Qaeda and Islamic State-like forces seeking their destruction. Relative to that global conflict, Operation Protective Edge may seem small, but it is nevertheless pivotal. To ensure that it concludes with a categorical Israeli win is in the world's fundamental interest. To guarantee peace, this war must be given a chance.

My Son Has Been Suspended Five Times. He's 3.

By Tunette Powell

[Washington Post](#), July 24, 2014

I received a call from my sons' school in March telling me that my oldest needed to be picked up early. He had been given a one-day suspension because he had thrown a chair. He did not hit anyone, but he could have, the school officials told me.

JJ was 4 at the time.

I agreed his behavior was inappropriate, but I was shocked that it resulted in a suspension.

For weeks, it seemed as if JJ was on the chopping block. He was suspended two more times, once for throwing another chair and then for spitting on a student who was bothering him at breakfast. Again, these are behaviors I found inappropriate, but I did not agree with suspension.

Still, I kept quiet. I knew my history. I was the bad preschooler.

I was expelled from preschool and went on to serve more suspensions than I can remember. But I do remember my teachers' disparaging words. I remember being told I was bad and believing it. I remember just how long it took me to believe anything else about myself.

And even still, when my children were born, I promised myself that I would not let my negative school experiences affect them. I believed my experience was isolated. I searched for excuses. Maybe I was just a bad kid. Maybe it had something to do with my father's incarceration, which forced my mother to raise me and my brothers alone.

So I punished JJ at home and ignored my concerns. Then, two months later, I was called to pick up my 3-year-old son, Joah. Joah had hit a staff member on the arm. After that incident, they deemed him a "danger to the staff." Joah was suspended a total of five times. In 2014, my children have received eight suspensions.

Just like before, I tried to find excuses. I looked at myself. What was I doing wrong? My children are living a comfortable life. My husband is an amazing father to JJ and Joah. At home, they have given us very few problems; the same goes for time with babysitters.

I blamed myself, my past. And I would have continued to blame myself had I not taken the boys to a birthday party for one of JJ's classmates. At the party, the mothers congregated to talk about everyday parenting things, including preschool. As we talked, I admitted that JJ had been suspended three times. All of the mothers were shocked at the news.

"JJ?" one mother asked.

"My son threw something at a kid on purpose and the kid had to be rushed to the hospital," another parent said. "All I got was a phone call."

One after another, white mothers confessed the trouble their children had gotten into. Some of the behavior was similar to JJ's; some was much worse.

Most startling: None of their children had been suspended.

After that party, I read a study reflecting everything I was living.

Black children represent 18 percent of preschool enrollment but make up 48 percent of preschool children receiving more than one out-of-school suspension, according to the study released by the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights in March.

I immediately thought back to my own childhood. I thought back to the humiliating labels that greeted me before I could read. I thought back to the number of black friends and family members who also were suspended and expelled. I thought about my family and friends who had not overcome the detrimental effects of being suspended in preschool. I did not want that for JJ and Joah. I did not want it for any child.

But the next step was the hardest. At news of all of this, friends and relatives suggested that I pull my children out of the preschool program and move them into another. At first, I considered that. That move may have changed my kids' circumstances, but it would not have solved the problem. All across this country, black children are being suspended in preschool.

We can no longer put a Band-Aid on our nation's preschool-to-prison pipeline, which pushes children out of the education system and criminalizes relatively minor offenses. Moving my boys to

another school would have provided a stopgap solution. It may have solved my problem, but it would not have solved the problem.

The problem is not that we have a bunch of racist teachers and administrators. I believe most educators want to help all children. But many aren't aware of the biases and prejudices that they, like all of us, harbor, and our current system offers very little diversity training to preschool staff.

A recent study published by the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology found that the subjects — mostly white, female undergraduates — viewed black boys as older and less innocent than their white peers. When photos of children were paired with descriptions of crimes, the subjects judged the black children to be more culpable for their actions than their white or Latino counterparts and estimated that they were an average of 4.5 years older than they actually were.

Authority figures strip black boys of their innocence at younger ages than white children. Diversity training for teachers and administrators would raise their awareness of how subconscious prejudices can drive racial discrepancies in disciplinary action.

I know that I am only one person and that it will be difficult for me to change the system. But I will do my part at my kids' preschool. I joined the parent advisory board and intend to work with it until I see change. I encourage other parents to join parent boards and attend school meetings that are open to parents. This is not the time to be silent. We must speak out. I cannot go back and undo what was done to me, but I refuse to let it be done to my children.

More from PostEverything:

Zero-tolerance policies are destroying the lives of black children

The education-reform movement is too white to do any good

This is what happened when I drove my Mercedes to pick up food stamps

Supreme Court May Not Protect Obamacare This Time

By Ruth Marcus

[Washington Post](#), July 25, 2014

Don't be so sure that the Supreme Court is going to save Obamacare. Again.

The question is enormously important: Are health-care consumers entitled to subsidies if they buy coverage on insurance exchanges established by the federal government, as they are with insurance from state exchanges?

Two federal appeals courts have reached contradictory conclusions, at least so far. (The Obama administration plans to ask the full federal appeals court in Washington to review the three-judge panel ruling against the subsidies, and that court is newly stocked with liberals.) Cases are headed to two other appeals courts.

Which adds up to: coming eventually to a Supreme Court near you. The justices, particularly Chief Justice John Roberts, might prefer to duck the case — who needs the court embroiled in another Obamacare dispute? — but that might not be a realistic option.

The dispute involves perhaps the most consequential case of sloppy drafting in congressional history. The section of the law outlining how subsidies are calculated refers specifically to an exchange “established by the state.” It doesn't mention subsidies for the federal exchanges set up in those states (now 36) that chose not to establish their own.

Preventing federal exchanges from offering subsidies would cripple the law, driving up premiums as healthy enrollees drop coverage and sicker ones remain. It is implausible to think that the Congress that created federal exchanges as a backup alternative to state marketplaces also intended them to fail. Yet the legislative language, taken alone, implies that outcome.

As the Richmond-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit conceded even as it upheld the subsidies, “If Congress did in fact intend to make the tax credits available to consumers on both state and federal exchanges, it would have been easy to write in broader language, as it did in other places in the statute.”

Nonetheless, the stronger legal argument is with the government. In context — and even Justice Antonin Scalia, the ultimate textualist, believes in looking at laws this way — it’s clear that Congress could not have meant the provision to be so narrowly construed.

As you may have noticed, the stronger legal argument doesn’t always win at this Supreme Court. The four liberal justices are reliable votes in the government’s favor. Where is the fifth? Justice Anthony Kennedy believes the Affordable Care Act is unconstitutional, but he might be moved by the plight of millions of people suddenly without affordable insurance.

A more likely candidate is Roberts, who has already rewritten the statute once to save it, in the 2012 ruling upholding the constitutionality of the individual mandate because it was a tax, not a penalty. Would he ride again to Obamacare’s rescue — not because he cares a whit about the law but to protect the court’s reputation?

Some smart people think so. “A major lesson to be learned from the Court’s previous decision . . . is that a majority of the justices do not want to determine the fate of a hugely important social issue,” Supreme Court super-litigator Tom Goldstein wrote for *ScotusBlog*.

Ezra Klein of *Vox* agreed: “The Supreme Court simply isn’t going to rip insurance from tens of millions of people in order to teach Congress a lesson about grammar.”

Let’s hope they’re right, but I have my doubts. Certainly, Roberts zealously guards the court’s institutional standing against accusations of overreaching. But only to a point. The Voting Rights Act offers an example. In 2009, Roberts, as with the Affordable Care Act, demonstrated his willingness to stretch the language of the statute to save it — temporarily. Four years later, he wrote the majority ruling striking down the law’s key provision.

Importantly, Roberts’s initial restraint in that case, as in his ruling upholding the Affordable Care Act, was based on constitutional considerations: the long-standing principle that the court, if possible, should avoid overturning the work of a co-equal branch of government.

In the looming case about federal subsidies, which involves statutory interpretation (actually, whether the court should accept a federal agency’s interpretation of a statute), Roberts may be inclined to a less deferential stance.

Indeed, the two D.C. Circuit judges who invalidated the subsidies — Thomas Griffith and Raymond Randolph — cast their decision in terms of the “legislative supremacy” of Congress and the need for judges to respect statutory language, not to substitute their own surmise about what Congress intended.

Last time around, Roberts was protecting the court from appearing to overstep its constitutional muscle. This case is different, and so, I fear, could be the outcome.

Read more from Ruth Marcus’s archive, follow her on Twitter or subscribe to her updates on Facebook.

Israel Is Acting As If It Is Free Of Moral Responsibilities.

By Eugene Robinson

[Washington Post](#), July 24, 2014

The civilian death toll in Gaza from Israel’s latest incursion is appalling. The right to self-defense is inalienable, but it is not free from moral constraints.

As of this writing, nearly 750 Palestinians, including dozens of children, have been killed since the Israeli assault began. On Thursday, a compound housing a United Nations school — crowded with Gaza residents who had fled their homes to seek shelter — was shelled in an incident still under investigation by the Israeli Defense Forces. Palestinian officials said 15 people were killed and scores injured.

I support Israel. I abhor Hamas. But unleashing such devastating firepower on a tiny, densely crowded enclave in which civilians are trapped — and thus destined to become casualties — is wrong by any reasonable moral standard.

The Israeli government's motivations in Gaza deserve to be taken seriously. But they do not justify the onslaught that is now in its third week. For Israeli military action to be justifiable, it must be proportionate. What we're witnessing is not.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday that Hamas is "targeting civilians and hiding behind civilians," which he called a "double war crime." He was referring to the fact that Hamas targets Israeli civilians with its rocket attacks and positions its military installations in residential neighborhoods or near schools and hospitals.

Netanyahu is right that these practices are reprehensible and that Israel has every right to respond. But none of this absolves Israel from its own moral responsibility. A civilized nation does not repay every heinous act in kind.

Israel says it is taking great pains to avoid civilian deaths. Indeed, Israel has been warning people to leave — with leaflets, text messages and nonlethal "roof-knocking" bombs — before smashing into residential neighborhoods. It is also true that in many instances Hamas, even knowing that an attack was coming, has instructed Gazans to stay put.

I have seen no confirmed reports, however, of Hamas using force to keep people in targeted areas so they can serve as human shields — and perhaps sway world opinion by boosting the body count. When people decide they must leave their homes, they can do so. But where are these evacuees supposed to go? To the nearest school or hospital? Not if these, too, are considered legitimate targets by the Israeli Defense Forces.

Gazans cannot flee across the closed border with Egypt. They obviously do not have the option of escaping into Israel or sailing away across the Mediterranean Sea. Gaza's 1.8 million people are packed into an enclave measuring 139 square miles — an area and population roughly the size of Philadelphia.

Israeli officials say they would never consider attacking such targets as a school, a hospital or an apartment building unless Hamas were using these places — which should be off-limits in war — as military command posts, launch sites for rocket attacks and entry points for tunnels through which assassins and suicide bombers could enter Israel.

Again, however, there is the issue of proportionality. The military and political leadership of Hamas has much better intelligence about what the Israeli armed forces are doing and more options for refuge and shelter than the average Gazan. Indeed, we have not heard of any major Hamas figure being killed. So if you're an Israeli commander and you know that there's a Hamas military facility next to a medical clinic, but you're not completely sure the militants are still there, while the clinic is likely packed with injured civilians, do you still pull the trigger?

Hamas's rockets are much less of a threat than in the past because of Israel's Iron Dome missile-defense system, which has an impressive record. The tunnels are more worrisome because of their potential for use in future terrorism. Assume for the sake of argument that Israel had no choice but to act. What, then, would be a morally acceptable number of Palestinian civilian casualties?

Let me frame the question in practical terms: How many civilian casualties are needed to guarantee another generation of hatred and war?

The scale of death and destruction appears to be aimed not just at lessening the actual threat from Hamas but also at punishing Gazans for elevating Hamas to power in the first place. Netanyahu seems determined to teach them a lesson.

From all reports, however, the people of Gaza were already weary of Hamas. Netanyahu could have offered them an alternative future of free movement, economic development and peace. Instead, he gives them no choice.

Read more from Eugene Robinson's archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook. You can also join him Tuesdays at 1 p.m. for a live Q&A.

The E.U. Is The World's Great No-show

By Fareed Zakaria

[Washington Post](#), July 25, 2014

The Ukraine crisis has shone a spotlight on one of the glaring gaps in the world: the lack of a strategic and purposeful Europe. The United States can and should lead on the response to this conflict, but nothing can really happen without Europe. The European Union is by far Russia's largest trading partner — it buys much of Russia's energy, is the major investor in Russian companies and is the largest destination for Russian capital. Some of President Obama's critics want him to scold Vladimir Putin. But ultimately, it is European actions that the Russian president will worry about.

Consider how Europe has dealt with Ukraine. For years, it could not really decide whether it wanted to encourage Ukrainian membership in the union, so it sent mixed signals to Kiev, which had the initial effect of disappointing pro-European Ukrainians, angering Russians and confusing everyone else.

In 2008, after Moscow sent troops into Georgia, Europe promised an "Eastern partnership" to the countries along Europe's eastern fringe. But, as Neil MacFarlane and Anand Menon point out in the current issue of the journal *Survival*, "The Eastern partnership was a classic example of the EU's proclivity for responding to events by adding long-term and rhetorically impressive, but resource-poor, bolt-ons to existing policy."

European leaders were beginning to woo Ukraine without recognizing how this would be perceived in Russia. Moscow had its own plans for a customs union, to be followed by a Eurasian Union, which was meant to be a counter to the European Union. Ukraine was vital to Russia's plans and was dependent on Russia for cheap natural gas. Plus, of course, Ukrainians were divided over whether to move west or east.

Negotiations between the European Union and Ukraine for an association agreement meandered along, with the lawyers and translators taking a year to work out the text. In describing this tardiness as a mistake, Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said, "The same thing applies to the [European] Union as to the Vatican. God's mills grind slowly but surely." The deal that was offered to Ukraine was full of demands for reform and restructuring of its corrupt economy, but it had little in the way of aid to soften the blows and sweeten the pot. When then-President Viktor Yanukovich rejected Europe's offer and sided with Moscow, he set in motion a high-speed, high-stakes game that Europe was utterly unprepared for and could not respond to.

If Europe was trying to move Ukraine into its camp, it should have been more generous to Kiev and negotiated seriously with Moscow to assuage its concerns. Instead, Europe seemed to act almost unaware of the strategic consequences of its actions. Then when Russia began a campaign to

destabilize Ukraine — which persists to this day — Europe remained a step behind, internally conflicted and unwilling to assert itself clearly and quickly. Those same qualities have been on display following the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17.

The European Union still has a chance to send a much clearer signal to Ukraine, Russia and the world. It could demand that Russia pressure the separatists to cooperate fully with the investigation of Flight 17 and allow the Ukrainian government — which Moscow recognizes — to take control of its own territory in eastern Ukraine. It could put forward a list of specific sanctions that would be implemented were those conditions not met within, say, two weeks.

In addition, Europe should announce longer-term plans on two fronts, first to gain greater energy independence from Russian oil and gas. European nations must also reverse a two-decade downward spiral in defense spending that has made the E.U. a paper tiger in geopolitical terms. Germany, for example, spends about 1.5 percent of its gross domestic product on defense, among the lowest rates in Europe and well below the 2 percent that is the target for all NATO members. It's hard for a country's voice to be heard and feared when it speaks softly and carries a twig.

The problem is now being described as European cowardice and appeasement. It is better explained by an absence of coherence among the European Union's 28 very different countries, a lack of strategic direction and a parochial inward orientation that looks for the world's problems to go away. The result is a great global vacuum, with terrible consequences.

If we look back years from now and wonder why the liberal, open, rule-based international order weakened and eroded, we might well note that the world's most powerful political and economic unit, the European Union, with a population and economy larger than America's, was the great no-show on the international stage.

Read more from Fareed Zakaria's archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook.

The Vacant Presidency

By Charles Krauthammer

[Washington Post](#), July 24, 2014

The president's demeanor is worrying a lot of people. From the immigration crisis on the Mexican border to the Islamic State rising in Mesopotamia, Barack Obama seems totally detached from the world's convulsions. When he does interrupt his endless rounds of golf, fundraising and photo ops, it's for some affectless, mechanical, almost forced public statement.

Regarding Ukraine, his detachment — the rote, impassive voice — borders on dissociation. His U.N. ambassador, Samantha Power, delivers an impassioned denunciation of Russia. Obama cautions that we not “get out ahead of the facts,” as if the facts of this case — Vladimir Putin's proxies shooting down a civilian airliner — are in doubt.

The preferred explanation for the president's detachment is psychological. He's checked out. Given up. Let down and disappointed by the world, he is in withdrawal.

Perhaps.

But I'd propose an alternate theory, less psychological than intellectual, that gives him more credit: Obama's passivity stems from an idea. When Obama says Putin has placed himself on the wrong side of history in Ukraine, he actually believes it. He disdains realpolitik because he believes that, in the end, such primitive 19th-century notions as conquest are self-defeating. History sees to their defeat.

“The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice,” said Obama in June 2009 (and many times since) regarding the Green Revolution in Iran.

Ultimately, injustice and aggression don't pay. The Soviets saw their 20th-century empire dissolve. More proximally, U.S. gains in Iraq and Afghanistan were, in time, liquidated. Ozymandias lies forever buried and forgotten in desert sands.

Remember when, at the beginning of the Ukraine crisis, Obama tried to construct for Putin "an offramp" from Crimea? Absurd as this idea was, I think Obama was sincere. He actually imagined that he'd be saving Putin from himself, that Crimea could only rebound against Russia in the long run.

If you really believe this, then there is no need for forceful, potentially risky U.S. counteractions. Which explains everything since: Obama's pinprick sanctions; his failure to rally a craven Europe; his refusal to supply Ukraine with the weapons it has been begging for.

The shooting down of a civilian airliner seemed to validate Obama's passivity. "Violence and conflict inevitably lead to unforeseen consequences," explained Obama. See. You play with fire, it will blow up in your face. Just as I warned. Now world opinion will turn against Putin.

To which I say: So what? World opinion, by itself, is useless: malleable, ephemeral and, unless mobilized by leadership, powerless. History doesn't act autonomously. It needs agency.

Germany's Angela Merkel still doesn't want to jeopardize trade with Russia. France's François Hollande will proceed with delivery of a Mistral-class attack-helicopter carrier to Russia. And Obama speaks of future "costs" if Russia persists — a broken record since Crimea, carrying zero credibility.

Or did Obama think Putin — a KGB thug who rose to power by turning Chechnya to rubble — would be shamed into regret and restraint by the blood of 298 innocents? On the contrary. Putin's response has been brazen defiance: denying everything and unleashing a massive campaign of lies, fabrications and conspiracy theories blaming it all on Ukraine and the United States.

Putin doesn't give a damn about world opinion. He cares about domestic opinion, which has soared to more than 80 percent approval since Crimea. If anything, he's been emboldened. On Wednesday, his proxies shot down two more jets — a finger to the world and a declaration that his campaign continues.

A real U.S. president would give Kiev the weapons it needs, impose devastating sectoral sanctions on Moscow, reinstate our Central European missile-

defense system and make a Reaganesque speech explaining why.

Obama has done none of these things. Why should he? He's on the right side of history.

Of course, in the long run nothing lasts. But history is lived in the here and now. The Soviets had only 70 years, Hitler a mere 12. Yet it was enough to murder millions and rain ruin on entire continents. Bashar al-Assad, too, will one day go. But not before having killed at least 100,000 people.

All domination must end. But after how much devastation? And if you leave it to the forces of history to repel aggression and redeem injustice, what's the point of politics, of leadership, in the first place?

The world is aflame and our leader is on the 14th green. The arc of history may indeed bend toward justice, Mr. President. But, as you say, the arc is long. The job of a leader is to shorten it, to intervene on behalf of "the fierce urgency of now." Otherwise, why do we need a president? And why did you seek to become ours?

Read more from Charles Krauthammer's archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook.

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES

117 Immigrant Children Placed With Delaware Families

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

The federal government has placed 117 children who illegally immigrated alone into the U.S. with families in Delaware, Gov. Jack Markell told lawmakers in a letter on Thursday.

Markell, who previously said that Delaware had no facilities that could accommodate children illegally migrating alone to the U.S., also urged lawmakers to “remain mindful that we are called upon to provide for the least of our brothers and sisters.”

He called the U.S. a “nation of immigrants,” saying “the humanitarian crisis of unaccompanied minors fleeing dangerous situations at home does not just affect our border states; it impacts all of us as Americans. Whatever one’s politics, we are a nation of immigrants.”

In his letter, Markell said that his administration was prepared to work with nonprofits to ensure that child migrants who need services have their basic needs met, saying the presence of child migrants in Delaware may come at a cost for state taxpayers.

He said the children may enroll in Delaware schools while awaiting immigration processing, “as immigrant children ordinarily do.” Markell said the Obama administration does not pay for food, clothing or the education of minors placed with families.

“I believe that the federal government should ensure that the children being placed with Delaware families are placed into safe environments and are receiving the services they need, including medical care,” Markell wrote. “The education and other services come at a cost for the state, school districts and non-profit providers and I am asking federal officials to work with states to cover those costs and ensure that these children receive appropriate care.”

Markell said the number of children currently housed in Delaware was provided by the Obama administration, and were accurate as of Tuesday. He did not specify in the letter whether the minors, who came across the southern border of the U.S. unaccompanied by their parents, were placed with members of their own family.

The letter noted generally that many unaccompanied minors “are placed with families they know in our country – preferably with close relatives.” The federal government does not disclose the identity or location of families housing child migrants to protect their privacy of the families and the children, Markell said in his letter.

Markell said he wrote the letter to lawmakers after his office fielded “numerous requests” for information about the immigration crisis from members of the General Assembly. It was addressed to members of the leadership of both parties in the Legislature.

Senate Minority Whip Greg Lavelle, R-Sharples, who had questioned Markell about whether child migrants would be housed in Delaware, read the letter late Thursday and could not comment on the details.

“I’m glad he’s informing Delaware,” said Lavelle, who had publicly expressed concern about the cost to provide services to child migrants housed here. “I think there are still unanswered questions. I think it would be nice to hear from our federal delegation.”

House Speaker Pete Schwartkopf, a Rehoboth Democrat, said he received Markell’s letter but hadn’t read it.

More than 57,000 children have entered the U.S. illegally since Oct. 1, mostly from three Central American countries: Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, Markell said in his letter. Twenty percent of the child migrants are 12 years old or younger.

"Unfortunately, the debate around immigration has been marked too often by scare-mongering and xenophobia," Markell wrote. "I know you share my view that, in Delaware, that is not how we approach problems. If we can provide help, shelter and respite to these unaccompanied children, we will do so and remain mindful that we are called upon to provide for the least of our brothers and sisters."

Read: Markell's letter to lawmakers about the children

Markell said in his letter that the Obama administration has taken steps to address the flow of immigrants crossing the southern border.

The average time to deport unaccompanied adults illegally crossing the border has been reduced from 33 days to 4 days, and 3,500 immigrants are being returned to Central America weekly, Markell wrote.

Markell was first emailed on July 2 by an official in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services requesting help in housing child migrants crossing into the U.S. alone.

Markell said in Thursday's letter that the Obama administration reached out to many states seeking assistance. The Health department required, however, that shelter be provided by an entity licensed to provide residential services to kids with an array of services.

Markell said his administration is "not aware of licensed residential facilities in Delaware prepared to provide the required shelter and wrap-around services to a significant number of minors."

That's partly, Markell said, because Delaware relies on foster care to meet the needs of the majority of children in state custody, as opposed to group residential settings.

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

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1mL142M>

Delaware Views Mirror Gaza Division

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

The deadly conflict in Gaza piquing concern among global leaders also echoes in Delaware, where back-to-back rallies have drawn hundreds, spotlighting the dichotomy of opinion on the subject.

The situation escalated Thursday in the Mideast with deaths and injuries from Israeli shelling of a hospital in Gaza and a United Nations shelter for Palestinian refugees, amid ongoing negotiation attempts by the U.S. secretary of state and UN officials. Others are pressing Hamas leaders to accept an Egyptian-led cease fire.

As is the case around the world, emotion-charged opinions in Delaware are entrenched because each side holds the other responsible for continuing violence – especially killings of children and other non-military citizens. Both sides feel misunderstood as well as victimized by the other, said professor Stuart Kaufman, a University of Delaware political science and international relations expert.

Even suggesting to someone on one side that the other side may have valid reasons for its position may fall on unhearing ears, he said.

"Both sides are so sensitive, because they feel like victims, that it's hard to get them to be flexible," he said. "The hardest part is that they can't see things from the other side's point of view."

On Thursday, more than 100 people turned out for a demonstration in Wilmington planned by University of Delaware students.

Their lunchtime protest – outside the Market Street office of U.S. Sen. Chris Coons – came as part of a "National Day of Action for Gaza," by a group called the "U.S. Campaign to End the Occupation."

Organizers said their goal was to send a message: "Stop the unjust violence in Gaza & end all military aid to Israel." They also called on Israel to end what they called its "shocking violence and human rights abuses."

Madinah Wilson, president of the student group, said she hoped passersby would listen to demonstrators to shape informed opinions. "If you are not educated, you are complacent," Wilson said.

But Coons did not see the protest because he was in Washington, D.C. The night before, however, he joined more than 250 at the Siegel Jewish Community Center in Talleyville for a solidarity rally, "Together We Stand With Israel."

With Coons among its speakers, the event was held by the Jewish Federation of Delaware, the community center and Delaware Rabbinical and Cantors Association.

Rabbi Yair D. Robinson of Congregation Beth Emeth in Wilmington, who leads the Delaware Rabbis and Cantors Association, told The News Journal on Thursday night he is "pro-Palestinian."

Robinson said he wants Palestinians to have a good life, but says Hamas – not Palestine, Palestinians or Israel – has made that impossible.

The Palestinian people are held hostage by Hamas, which destroyed the extensive and functioning infrastructure Israel left in Gaza, he said. Hamas diverted resources that could have helped ensure a better life in Palestine toward its mission of killing Jews, he said.

Hundreds of millions of dollars and 700,000 tons of concrete were used not for roads, factories, hospitals and schools but for tunnels into Israel solely for the purpose of murderous attacks on Israeli citizens, said Robinson, who also spoke at Wednesday's solidarity rally.

The mouths of those tunnels intentionally are placed in homes and other non-military settings to use "civilians as human shields," he said.

But those outside the senator's office Thursday afternoon voiced a different view.

Omar Abuashi, 21, wore a T-shirt emblazoned with the slogan "Free Palestine," and his brother Mahmoud, 19, led the flag-waving crowd in chants of "Free, free Palestine," and "Not another nickel, not another dime, no more money for Israel's crime."

The brothers, both of Newark, hold Israel responsible for deaths of innocent children and families on the streets of their homeland.

"Kids are not terrorists," Omar said. "They kidnapped a 16-year-old boy, forced him to drink gasoline and set him on fire, and people are just watching. They were not doing anything. They are killing everybody in Gaza and the West Bank."

Peace activists Joan French and Phillip Bannowsky, who are married, said Thursday they were there for humanitarian reasons to protest the Israeli government's "rampant policy" of ethnic cleansing.

Organizers of the community center rally said the event was an opportunity to educate the community, show solidarity and emphasize that Israel's ongoing conflict is not with Palestine, but with the Hamas terrorist group, said Andrea M. Bock of the Jewish Federation of Delaware.

But labeling Hamas solely as terrorists, Kaufman said, is a tactic that negates the other side. Hamas does engage in terrorism, he said, but also is an unrecognized government that provides hospitals and many services.

While each side may be willing to "give an inch" in negotiations, Kaufman said, "there always comes a point beyond which the sides aren't willing to go.

"Then, when that happens, that's when the totalizing language comes out: 'You guys are evil, you just want to destroy us.' There are so many emotional issues, that negotiation is like going into a mine field," he said.

Under Israeli sanctions, he said, Palestinian life “is absolutely horrible.... They have no options. They have no chance for life, liberty or the pursuit of happiness.”

Hamas – which denies Jewish suffering in the Holocaust to irritate its enemies – resorted to violence after getting no benefit from being moderate, Kaufman said. “Their calculation becomes ‘if we can’t actually improve the lives of our people, our fallback plan is to score political points by killing Israelis,’ because at least it’s an ideological win even if it accomplishes nothing,” he said.

A similar staunchness is reflected by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Kaufman said: “The Israeli position on Hamas is they’re terrorists and ‘We don’t talk to terrorists,’ end of story.”

And neither side wants to share Jerusalem, Kaufman said.

Because the U.S. is a longtime ally and supporter of Israel, opinion tends to favor Israel, he said, adding, “Palestinians aren’t very popular in America.” But, “if we side with the Israelis, we are siding with the Israelis not giving the Palestinians a decent life. If we side with the Palestinians, we are letting them get away with terrorism. What Americans need to do is think, which of those things is worse?”

Kaufman, who is Jewish, said he has come to believe that denying Palestinians “any possibility of having a decent life is morally worse than what the Palestinians are doing.”

Israel – still the one solid U.S. ally in the region – remains the only democracy in the Middle East and, under attack by terrorists, is doing what it must to protect its own people and Palestinians as well, Robinson said.

While some extremists support the idea of Israel retaking Gaza, Robinson said he supports a plan proposed by a former Israeli defense minister to raise \$50 billion to rebuild Palestine after the conflict ends.

“I was happy that Israel pulled out of Gaza in 2005,” he said. “It was the right thing to do.”

But eying the current conflict, he said, “It plagues my heart ... that a generation of Gazans are being wiped out – if not physically, literally, then psychologically. Gaza is a place of despair and it doesn’t have to be.”

Staff reporter Terri Sanginiti contributed to this article.

Contact robin brown at (302) 324-2856 or rbrown@delawareonline.com. Find her on Facebook and follow her on Twitter @rbrowndelaware.

Latest casualties in Gaza

A U.N. school in Gaza crowded with hundreds of Palestinians seeking refuge from fierce fighting came under fire Thursday, killing at least 15 civilians and leaving a sad tableau of blood-spattered pillows, blankets and children’s clothing scattered in the courtyard.

More than 250 people gathered Wednesday night at the Siegel Jewish Community Center in Talleyville for a solidarity rally called “Together We Stand With Israel.” 7/24/14

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1rEFPHz>

Rep. Potter Speaks Out On Haynes Park Charity Event Where Shots Fired

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

A state representative whose wife was fired as a top aide to Wilmington’s mayor is questioning how electric power was provided to an unsanctioned charity event in a city park where a number of shots were fired Sunday.

“It is my understanding that the electricity was turned on in Haynes Park on Sunday, which, if true, would indicate that personnel in the Department of Parks and Recreation turned the electricity on, since that access is not available to the general public,” state Rep. Charles Potter Jr. said in a letter to Mayor

Dennis P. Williams. "It is also my understanding that city personnel were in attendance in the park that day."

A walk through the park Thursday found four active sockets in an electric box near the center of the park.

Potter, who was reached Thursday afternoon, said he was more concerned about residents.

"What I want to tell you is that there was an incident at the park and I want to ensure the safety of my people," he said. "That's it. Nothing more."

Potter's letter, which was obtained by The News Journal, also questions why the special event permit process was not enforced.

City spokeswoman Alexandra Coppadge said the administration is looking into Potter's allegations, but had no comment at this time.

The News Journal obtained a second letter Potter sent to state police Col. Nathaniel McQueen Jr. asking "for an increase in patrols" from his agency. The letter also said he contacted New Castle County police.

State police Sgt. Paul Shavack and county police Sgt. Jacob Andrews confirmed that Potter requested an increase in police patrols. A portion of Potter's district is covered by state and county police. Both agencies said they will review crime data to determine if a change in deployment is warranted.

"Haynes Park is in the Wilmington Police Department jurisdiction and any requests for increased patrols or presence by state police would be accomplished at the request of the Wilmington Police Department," Shavack added.

The News Journal is asking Williams' administration to explain who gave permission to turn park power on at the charity event organized to help Francine Wallace, who was seriously injured in a June 16 fire at her Bird Street home.

The event Sunday came to an end when a group of young men started shooting guns when the basketball courts were full and children were playing on nearby jungle gyms, police and witnesses said.

When asked if his letters had anything to do with his wife, Velda Jones-Potter, being fired by Williams's chief strategist, Potter insisted he was looking out for his constituents' safety.

She was let go for representing her son's business, Foxtail Fest, in meetings with other city leaders. This occurred despite Wilmington's policy prohibiting city employees from representing or assisting "any private enterprise with respect to any matter before the city."

Wilmington billed Foxtail Fest organizers \$7,000 for public resources devoted to the for-profit event.

Organizers of the Sept. 14 music festival filed a lawsuit in April arguing they are not responsible for those costs, adding there was no contract between the host company, What Scene? LLC, and the city for the event.

What Scene? owner Brandon Potter is son of state Rep. Charles Potter, who is the mayor's cousin.

The suit was dismissed by Chancery Court on May 9 for lack of jurisdiction. A new case was then filed in Superior Court.

The charity event in Haynes Park did not have a permit to operate, city officials have said. The permit allows the city to put resources in place based on an event's size, type, time of day, location and other circumstances.

The permit application also outlines costs that may be required. Sunday's event would have cost organizers \$1,425, the city estimated earlier this week.

"As elected officials, it is our responsibility to ensure that our constituents are safe and protected, and that safeguards are in place to prevent violence like this from occurring," Potter ended his letter. "I have several ideas which I think may help, and I will share them at a later date."

Reporter Sean O'Sullivan contributed to this story.

Contact Esteban Parra at (302) 324-2299, eparra@delawareonline.com or Twitter @eparra3.

Shots interrupted a charity basketball tournament Sunday evening at Haynes Park, according to police. It appears no one was wounded in the chaotic situation. 7/21/14

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1mICkld>

Del. Official's Wife Hurt In Va. Tornado Where 2 Died, 36 Injured

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

Two people were killed and at least 36 injured – including the wife of a New Castle County official – when a tornado swept through the Cherrystone Campground in Cheriton on Virginia's Eastern Shore on Thursday morning, officials said.

A tree fell on a tent at the campground, killing a couple from Jersey City, New Jersey — Lord Balatbat and Lolabeth Ortega, both 38, Virginia State Police said. Their 13-year-old son, who was in another tent nearby also hit by a tree, is in a hospital with life-threatening injuries.

Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital in Nassawadox, Virginia, treated 15 adults and 11 children after the tornado, according to spokesman Peter Glagola. Of that number, one adult was undergoing surgery; one was transferred to Medical College of Virginia in Richmond; and 13 adults were treated and released.

Dave Carpenter Jr., New Castle County's coordinator of emergency management, was vacationing with his wife Shelly and their son and daughter at the campground when the storm struck about 9 a.m. Thursday.

"We can confirm that Dave Carpenter, his wife, and their children were in Cherrystone Campground in Cheriton, Va., when a tornado reportedly hit this morning," said Antonio M. Prado, director of communications for the county.

"Carpenter contacted Director of Public Safety Joe Bryant to brief him of his situation. Unfortunately, his wife suffered a dislocated hip and a fractured hipbone after their trailer was flipped over," Prado said. "She was transported to the hospital, with the expectation she would be transferred soon to an orthopedic hospital. Their children were unharmed, thankfully."

"As for Dave, he said his back was sore after the incident but that seemed to be the extent of things for him. We were sorry to hear of his wife's injury but glad to hear that his family was alright," Prado said in an email. "This was a serious storm, and our hearts go out to the victims who perished as a result of it."

Virginia State Police spokesperson Corrine Geller said the EF-1 tornado came off the bay from the southwest corner of the campground and cut a "V-pattern" through the facility where more than 1,300 people were staying. Geller said "deputies and troopers went to every tent and camper to make sure everyone was accounted for."

Two of the injured children were transferred from Shore Memorial to Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters in Norfolk; one child was admitted; and eight children were treated and released.

Most of those being treated at Nassawadox suffered broken bones, cuts or lacerations, while the more seriously injured suffered head injuries or internal injuries, Glagola said.

Eastville volunteer firefighter Brittney Eder told The Associated Press, "It came in real quick. The sky turned jet black."

Eder said she left the campground before the full force of the storm hit.

Eder's father, Fire Chief David Eder, told her from the scene that the storm felled trees and flipped at least two campers.

Jordan Bertok tweeted two photos of damage at the campground, saying, "Just lived through a tornado."

The area was under a tornado warning from the National Weather Service until 9 a.m. after radar indicated a waterspout over the Chesapeake Bay.

U.S. 13 was littered with debris and hail that ranged from the size of a quarter to a golf ball, witnesses said.

In Cheriton, a tractor-trailer overturned on U.S. 13, with the driver trapped.

Those injured have all been transported to nearby hospitals. At least one person was critically injured.

The Coast Guard and Virginia Marine Police received a report of two vessels overturned in Oyster Bay, on the seaside of Northampton County, after a severe storm struck the area Thursday morning.

The boaters were rescued by Good Samaritans before the Coast Guard arrived on the scene, according to Fifth Coast Guard District spokesman Petty Officer David Weydert.

There were no injuries and information on the condition and types of their vessels was not immediately available.

Emergency personnel from Accomack and Northampton counties responded to multiple traumatic injuries at the campground, police said. An ambulance was also called to a Cheriton home.

Rescue squads from Virginia Beach were also meeting Eastern Shore ambulances at the visitor's center plaza at the northern end of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel to transport some of the injured.

Around 10 a.m., units were still finding injuries, officials at the scene said. Injuries reported so far include a priority one head injury. An injured child was transported to a Hampton Roads hospital.

Just before 9 a.m., there was a report seeking help at Cherrystone Campground, where there reports of overturned campers and a fallen tree on a tent.

Cherrystone Campground, founded in 1964, has 725 sites, including cabins, cottages and deluxe campers.

The campground earlier this month was named as one of three top family RV parks for 2014 by the Good Sam RV Travel Guide.

Early reports

The site commander on the scene at Cherrystone Campground said at least 20 people are in a triage area there "and still finding more."

Joe Burbee with Bay Creek Golf Club in Cape Charles says there was lots of rain and lightning this morning.

"We got it pretty hard here for 15-20 minutes and it's gotten better," he said.

The golf course is about a mile from the campground.

Storm overturns truck on Route 13 on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

A tornado touched down on a campground in Northampton County in Virginia, killing two and injuring at least 20, according to police. Workers from the campground say panic and chaos quickly overtook the site early Thursday morning.

13News Now viewer Linda Weners Zaremski emailed a photo of large pieces of hail that fell at Marina Villages in Cape Charles.

"Debris was flying down the street – our chairs, beach balls. We lost power," she said.

The Northampton County Sheriff's Office told 13News Now that there was heavy rain falling.

Virginia State Police were called at 8:48 a.m. to an accident involving an overturned tractor-trailer on U.S. 13 near Cheriton. The driver was transported to a local hospital with minor injuries, according to police spokeswoman Corrine Geller.

Tornado coverage of Cherrystone Campground from WVEC

"We do have some campers overturned" at Cherrystone campground, Geller said.

A campground official denied access to reporters Thursday, saying, "Too much going on down there."

A traumatic injury call was also placed there where a male patient was cut by a window.

Marva Stratton of Cheriton wasn't hurt when a tree limb fell on her home.

Severe storm brought hail, caused numerous injuries at nearby campground.

A likely tornado tears through an eastern Virginia campground, killing three and injuring at least 20. Linda So reports.

Gannett-owned WVEC-13 contributed to this report.

Contact News Delivery Editor Jon P. Zaimes at (302) 324-2813 or jzaimes@delawareonline.com.

Cheriton storm brings hail, numerous injuries.

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1mJ51ov>

Cape's Board Abolishes Entire Reading List

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

The Cape Henlopen School District's summer reading list for incoming high school freshmen will not include the controversial book, "The Miseducation of Cameron Post," – or any other book.

The district school board voted 6-1 on Thursday night to return to the district's previous summer reading requirements, which demand college preparatory students read one book for the summer and honors students read two books.

Only board member Noble Prettyman voted against the motion on Thursday. Freshman board member Alison Meyer had earlier expressed support to restore the original list but voted for the final motion.

"This was the only way we could make each side somewhat happy," she said.

The board removed the book, which features foul language and a main character who is gay, from the list in June. Six board members cited the book's foul language, not sexual orientation, as the reason behind their vote.

Earlier story: Cape Henlopen to discuss book pulled from list

The board's decision may also avoid action from the American Civil Liberties Union of Delaware, which urged the board to overturn the June decision.

The ACLU argued the board had not properly notified the public before it voted to remove the book and could be violating both Delaware sunshine laws and the district's own policy.

While it's easy for the board to delete items from its agenda during a meeting, it is limited in its ability to add them, said Dave Williams, the district's legal counsel,

"You can take items off but you're so limited in adding items," he said. "It really doesn't work on the other side of the coin."

Thursday's meeting stirred up the board and brought ire from the public.

Board member Sandi Minard took offense at accusations that her decision in June was based on the book's content, rather than its language.

At one point, she began reading excerpts of the book featuring explicit language.

"This board's character has been judged, its integrity has been judged," she said. "It's up to the board to select material that is age appropriate. We're responsible for setting boundaries."

Members of the public were split on the board's final decision.

Rob Spicer, whose son, Matt, graduated from Cape Henlopen High School in 2013 and identifies as a gay alumnus, called the decision "a copout."

"The administrators did their job and provided a diverse list," he said. "The school board abdicated their responsibility, because the heat in the kitchen was too hot for them."

While Matt Spicer compared "Cameron Post" to "To Kill a Mockingbird," which also deals with rape, other members of the public argued the book's scenes were too graphic for 14-year-old readers.

Celeste Metcalfe, who wrote the original letter to the board concerning the summer reading list, applauded the board's decision on Thursday.

Cape parent Celeste Metcalfe supported the board's decision to remove the reading list. Metcalfe agreed with board member Andy Lewis, who suggested a policy for reviewing books.

"We have PG-13 movies and we need to have PG-13 books," she said.

Contact Leigh Giangreco at lgiangrec@dmg.gannett.com or on Twitter @LeighGiangreco

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1mLhBnn>

Sallie Mae Profits Drop In 2nd Quarter

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

The profits at Sallie Mae decreased in the second quarter, the company reported in the first financial results report since it spun off its student loan servicing into a separate entity.

Sallie Mae, which maintains offices in Delaware, reported net income of \$44 million, compared to \$76 million in the second quarter last year.

The diluted earnings per share in the second quarter of 2014 were 9 cents per share, compared to 17 cents last year at this time.

The firm's 2013 earnings reflect the sale to an affiliate of \$71 million in loans. Comparing this year's results to 2013 earnings without the special loan-sale circumstances, Sallie Mae's earnings from continuing operations rose 38 percent from \$32 million to \$44 million.

Loan originations at Sallie Mae were up 3 percent compared to a year ago at the second quarter. Deposits at Sallie Mae Bank increased due to growth in money market accounts, the company reported, and there were total deposits of \$9.5 billion.

The operating expenses at Sallie Mae were up considerably in the second quarter, at \$75 million compared to \$67 million in last year's second quarter. The company reported that \$14 million of the current quarter operating expenses were attributed to the costs associated with spinning off part of the business to create a new, publicly traded company called Navient.

On April 30 Sallie Mae created the new company, which trades as NAVI, by breaking out the student loan servicing segment of the company.

In the second-quarter earnings statement released Thursday, the company noted that it would hang on to past-due loans longer under this arrangement. Prior to the spin-off the company would sell loans after they were at least 90 days behind on payments. The company will now wait 120 days before selling these delinquent loans, the company said.

Sallie Mae reported a 35 percent increase in interest income, and it noted that the private student loans it held in the second quarter was \$7.4 billion, up 40 percent from a year prior.

Contact Nichole Dobo at 324-2281 or ndobo@delawareonline.com. On Twitter @NicholeDobo.

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1rDFvZu>

WSFS Earnings Up In Second Quarter

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

The second-quarter earnings for WSFS Financial Corporation, the parent company of the state's largest independent community bank, show a 20 percent increase from the second quarter of 2013.

In earnings released Thursday, the bank reported net income of \$12.7 million in the second quarter of 2013, up from \$10.3 million at this time a year earlier. The diluted earnings per share were \$1.39 in this year's second quarter, up from \$1.16 per share in the second quarter a year earlier.

This continued a trend of strong financial performance by the bank, something that has not been universal in the nation's financial sector. The top-line growth posted by WSFS was attributed to quality of credit and an increase in fee income from services such as wealth management, originating mortgages and its ATM business.

"We are working hard to maintain the momentum," Stephen A. Fowle, executive vice president and CFO of the bank said Thursday in an interview with The News Journal.

This is the first earnings report since the bank announced a significant milestone was achieved in a deal to increase its market share in Delaware.

In mid-June, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency approved the application by WSFS to acquire First National Bank of Wyoming. This was the last regulatory approval needed to complete the deal.

"Strength in mortgage banking revenue reflects the addition of Array Financial, which joined with us nearly a year ago, and we look forward to our upcoming partnership with First National Bank of Wyoming," Mark A. Turner, president and CEO, said in a statement.

The deal is expected to be complete by Sept. 5. The conversion of FNB Wyoming locations to WSFS is planned to take place by Sept. 8.

Contact Nichole Dobo at 324-2281 or ndobo@delawareonline.com. On Twitter @NicholeDobo.

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1rEiZzW>

Gov. Markell Enjoys A Day At The Fair

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

Gov. Jack Markell took a break on Thursday. He put on a pair of sneakers and climbed on big farm equipment. He took on young farmers in a watermelon eating contest and tossed an egg with Miss Delaware.

So goes Governor's Day at the Delaware State Fair, an annual must-attend event for the state's chief executive — regardless of whether they're trolling for votes.

"I love doing this stuff," said Markell, a second-term Democrat who is prohibited by Delaware's Constitution from seeking another term in the governor's office.

"The fair is a joyful place," he said. "It's nice to be in a joyful place."

Well before the masses arrived to consume fried Oreos, play carnival games and ride the Ferris wheel, Markell's Day at the fair began at 9 a.m., with the dedication of a poultry barn on site.

STORY: 117 immigrant children put with families in Delaware

He moved quickly to tour demonstrations prepared by Future Farmers of America participants at local schools, and on to the egg toss and watermelon eating contest with his partner, Miss Delaware, Brittany Lewis.

"This is what it's all about," Lewis said later about meeting Delawareans and touring the fairgrounds with Markell. "It's one of the most exciting parts about being Miss Delaware. It's definitely a break from the Miss America prep."

Lewis let the egg slip on the governor's fourth toss and the pair fell to Aubrie Jones, 15, and Devan Just, 16, of Delmar High School. "I didn't even know it was the governor," Just said when asked about toppling her more famous opponent.

In the nearby Dover Building on the fairgrounds, Ruth Potter, 80, of Magnolia, spoke to the governor about her prize-winning quilt. Potter, who learned to quilt with friends in a group they affectionately named "stitch and bitch," said the governor was impressed with her work on the queen-sized quilt, which took her "a few years" to complete.

"He congratulated me and said it was pretty amazing," Potter said.

Markell didn't skip all business while at the fair. He signed into law a measure that clarifies how many game birds Delaware hunters may legally possess and "removes archaic and irrelevant language relative to rabbit and muskrat possession."

The governor also joined Perdue chief executive Jim Perdue, and representatives from the DuPont Co.'s Pioneer seed unit, to announce that Perdue AgriBusiness would contract with Delaware farmers to produce 40,000 acres of soybeans that DuPont will use to produce its trans-fat free soybean oil.

That's up from 6,000 acres contracted to produce beans for DuPont's Plenish brand oil today.

"This state understands the importance of an agriculture economy," Perdue said during the announcement.

In his remarks, Markell praised Perdue, which has processing plants in Georgetown and Milford, where it produces organic chicken.

"Some people might think their headquarters is in Salisbury," Markell said. "But (Perdue) is a Delaware company. Perdue has more employees here than they do in that neighboring state."

Markell said Delawareans he met at the fair, like those he meets in his grocery store, were willing to walk up and express their thoughts about the job he's doing.

"This is the ultimate of sort of retail ... I wouldn't even call it politics," Markell said, noting he is not up for re-election. "People are just really straightforward about what's going well, what's not. It's great."

The governor was commended by at least two fair-goers for being willing to engage and listen.

Nick LaRussa and Roxanne Dvorak, who moved to Newark a few years back from Texas, met Markell on Thursday and said they were impressed that he was so accessible. "I love to meet politicians. And everybody here in Delaware is very approachable," Dvorak said.

Added LaRussa, "In Texas, they're in the car and gone. They really don't want to interact with the people."

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

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1rEosqk>

Wilmington Firefighters Light Flames Of Hope

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

Some things just have a way of making you feel good.

The smell of your favorite meal – lasagna or spicy chili for me – coming from the kitchen.

The sound of Jackson Browne's "Running on Empty" coming out of the speakers just as you hit an open country road with rolling hills.

The sight of a puppy licking a smiling, giggling kid's face.

Another thing that's always made me feel good is getting a new coat for the winter. I remember one year in my younger punk days, I got a pea coat and engineer boots. I felt like I ruled the world.

A self-absorbed teen, it didn't cross my mind at the time that there were thousands of less fortunate people, many of them children, who had never experienced that feeling. They had never put on a new winter coat that was all their own, zipped it up and admired themselves in the mirror.

But thanks to an effort by the Wilmington Fire Department, Firefighters Local 1590 and monetary donations from you, dozens of needy children in the city were able to experience that feeling last year and will hopefully again this year.

The firefighters have partnered with Operation Warm and will be holding a fundraiser Sunday at the Blue Rocks game at Frawley Stadium as part of Firefighter Appreciation Day. Firefighters and a firetruck will be out front, and information will be available about this year's fundraising efforts.

The firefighters provided 100 new coats to children last year and hope to double that this year. To do it, they need help from us. The coats, which are all made in America and help support American jobs, cost about \$32 each to make and ship. But any donation helps, according to Lt. Joe Leonetti Jr. of the Wilmington Fire Department and Local 1590.

You don't have to go to the game to donate. You can make your donation online or learn more about the effort at www.operationwarm.org/Wilmington.

A new coat provides more than warmth, according to Leonetti, who added, "a new coat is dignity and pride, core values we respect in the fire service and hope to promote to these children who too often develop low self-esteem."

An effort to be #delaproud of – and one you can join by donating.

Share in the Only in Delaware conversation 24/7 on [delawareonline](http://delawareonline.com). Contact Jeffrey Gentry at jgentry@delawareonline.com. Follow him on Twitter: [@jeffreygentry](https://twitter.com/jeffreygentry)

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1mJLogc>

WILMINGTON JOURNAL NEWS EDITORIALS

Asking Tough Questions Of Wilmington

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

Wilmington, like every other city in America, faces tough challenges in this post-industrial age. Jobs are hard to come by for many. The city struggles to find revenue to provide services. Crime scares off would-be residents and businesses. And the middle class battles to maintain a lifestyle conducive to raising children.

No city is without these challenges. And no city has solved all of its problems. The key is facing up to that fact and honestly assessing the city's pluses and minuses.

The good news is that Wilmington is beginning to do that. This week, the city revealed the first part of an assessment by an outside consultant. It promises to take a deeper look at Wilmington's strengths and weaknesses. Mayor Dennis Williams deserves credit for laying out the facts.

A public discussion this week focused on several of the negatives: crime, education and city government's often slow-moving services. Examining those problems does not take away from the city's positives: its location, its corporate structure and, of course, its people.

The preliminary report and subsequent discussions on its meaning give Wilmington residents and all Delaware residents something to ponder. The point here is that it pays to be honest. For example, business owners have complained for years about the city's slow permitting process. That the city government has a reputation for that slowness should catch no one by surprise, except, perhaps, for city officials.

That sort of problem can be solved. The process can be analyzed and fixed. Will it turn Wilmington's fortunes around overnight? Of course not. However, it will improve the business climate. More important, it will give businesses one less reason to avoid setting up shop in the city.

Crime presents a different sort of problem. The downtown business district sees very little of the crime that is hitting some neighborhoods. Violence, however, affects all of us. That is why making neighborhoods safer, cutting down on the drug trafficking and, most of all, bringing economic development to these neighborhoods is a crucial challenge to the Williams administration, New Castle County, the state government, and the entire population of Wilmington.

This week's offering was only the first look at what the mayor is saying will be a comprehensive economic development plan for the city. This is a positive development. It is imperative that the city have a vision of growth.

We do not expect this plan to be perfect. No plan ever is. Of course, the crucial test will be action.

No matter how good an idea is, if it is not put into effect, it will remain merely a fragment of what might have been. The global economy has changed. Wilmington and Delaware are competing with not just nearby states, but with the world. Things can be made cheaper and, often, better elsewhere. Today's competitors must know their weaknesses and fix them.

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1mKBcUI>

Let's Bring The Imagination Library Program To Delaware

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

Dolly Parton, the wonderful singer, songwriter, actress and owner of Dollywood Entertainment Park in the East Tennessee mountains, started this valuable program in 1995. Her Dollywood Foundation gave a free, age-appropriate children's picture or storybook each month to every child born in her native Sevier County. Each child and her/his family received a free book a month for his first four years of age or until his fifth year and kindergarten age.

This program was so successful, it was expanded. In 2014, it is now in 46 of our 50 states and in Canada, England, Australia and Ireland. Since the Imagination Library program started, over 50 million books have been sent to these preschool children and their families. Delaware is 1 of 4 states not participating in this program. I am serving as a facilitator to form a supportive Delaware Imagination Library Coalition to bring it to our preschool children.

The strategy for bringing this program to our state is first to inform individual and organization leaders about the program and then have them endorse it and join the supportive coalition. There is no financial obligation for joining this coalition.

After forming the coalition, a coalition committee will be formed to contact organizations in our state and ask them to be sponsors and help fund the program. The Dollywood Foundation has sent me a package of information explaining how the program works in other states.

The foundation selects and mails the books. The cost of the books is \$30 per year for 12 books per child or \$120 for 48 books per child for the four-year period. This includes the cost of administering the program. I will keep individuals and organizations who join our coalition updated about this movement.

The Dollywood Foundation sent me a list of organizations in other states that have helped fund this program. It includes the following organizations: The United Way; local businesses; civic groups; local governments; private citizens; foundations; friends of the library; chambers of commerce and school systems.

A Delaware plan could start the program in each county by private funding sources establishing three county-administering offices in nonprofit organizations. My recommendation is to have these staff administering this program in Delaware to work in a public library in each of our counties.

First, cover all preschool children in lower socioeconomic areas. Then, get state government to include grant funds from the approximately \$50 million given each year in grants to nonprofit community organizations. The total cost each year for this valuable statewide program will be about \$1.35 million.

This approach will ensure every one of our approximately 45,000 Delaware preschool children each year from infancy through age 4 will receive an age-appropriate book.

The Dollywood Foundation has many research studies, which reveal preschoolers in this program are much more successful in academic achievement after entering formal academic schooling.

This program makes a very important contribution to the development of human potential for children fortunate to benefit from this Imagination Library resource. Let's provide it for all of our future Delaware preschool children.

One of our nation's greatest intellects, the late Dr. Albert Einstein, wisely informed us, "Imagination is more important than intelligence."

This valuable research-proven program and cost-effective Imagination Library program will help improve both important abilities in our state's preschool children by increasing their reading confidence, competency along with developing a lifelong love of reading.

The Dollywood Foundation has sent me brochures that further explain this program. Upon request, I will mail a brochure to each person or organization interested in learning about joining our supportive Delaware Imagination Library Coalition.

I consider this to be one of our more important civic responsibility opportunities.

I ask everyone reading this information to bring this to the attention of all Delaware organizations in which you are a member and ask all to understand and join our Delaware Imagination Library Coalition. Again, joining our coalition does not mean any financial obligation.

Charles S. McDowell can be reached at cmcdowell@potteranderson.com.

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1rEko9A>

VICE PRESIDENTIAL *News Clips*

PRODUCED FOR THE OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

TO: THE VICE PRESIDENT AND STAFF
DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 25, 2014 -- 6:15 AM EDT

TODAY'S EDITION

Biden In The News

Biden, In Ohio, Urges Infrastructure, Job Training (AP)	2
Vice President Speaks To Delegates At National Urban League Conference (CINENQ)	3
What Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald Said In His Speech To The National Urban League (PLAINDLR)	4
VP Biden Set To Appear At Conference Downtown (WKRCTV) ..	6
Vice President Joe Biden Speaks At National Urban League Conference (WCPOTV).....	6
Biden Stresses Jobs, Job Training At National Urban League Conference (WLWTTV).....	8
Biden Encourages Infrastructure Development At Urban League Conference (WKSUFM)	9
Joe Biden: Voter ID Laws "An Attempt To Repress Minority Voting" (CBSNEWS)	9
Biden: GOP States Waging 'Assault' On Voting Rights (NBCNEWS)	10
Biden: State Ballots Threaten Gains Made (TOLB).....	10
Biden: Blacks Have Not Made Enough Progress (WT)	12
Joe Biden: 'Businesses Are Hiring At Historic Rates' (WT)	13
Central American Presidents Want More US Investment In Security (MCT).....	13
Central American Leaders Want Washington's Help With Immigration Crisis (WP).....	14
Honduran Children May Be Allowed To Apply For U.S. Admission From Home (LAT).....	16
Biden: Shoulda' Had One Republican Rich Kid (BLOOMCD)	18
Poll: Clinton Dominates 2016 Field In Florida (HILL)	18
Poll: Clinton Sweeps GOP In Florida (POLITICO).....	19
Clinton Polling Well In Key Presidential Battleground (CNN)	20
Poll Shows Hillary Clinton Still Strong In Florida (ORLS)	20
Q Poll: Bush Leads GOP Field In Florida; Hillary Beats Them All (TAMPATIM).....	23
Attorney General Biden sues Consumer Advocacy Assistance (DOVERPST)	23
Del. Child Predator Unit Makes Arrests (WHYYFM).....	23

New York Times and Washington Post Op-Eds

Gaza's Mounting Death Toll (NYT)	24
The Phony 'Narrow Network' Scare (NYT)	25
Anything Goes In China's Food System (NYT).....	26
Don't Teach Math, Coach It (NYT)	27
Saving Daughters From Mutilation (NYT)	28
The Shared Destiny Of Israel And Gaza (NYT)	29

Left Coast Rising (NYT).....	30
A Chinese Gold Standard? (NYT)	32
Why Tony Abbott Axed Australia's Carbon Tax (NYT)	33
How I Passed The English Cricket Test (NYT)	35
Sen. John Walsh Should Stop Making Excuses For His Actions (WP).....	36
Paul Ryan's Anti-poverty Plan Has Some Good Ideas That All Sides Can Support (WP)	37
If The West Doesn't Do More For Ukraine Now, It Might Soon Be Too Late (WP).....	38
Corporations Are People. So What If People Were Corporations? (WP).....	39
Israel Must Be Permitted To Crush Hamas (WP)	40
My Son Has Been Suspended Five Times. He's 3. (WP)	42
Supreme Court May Not Protect Obamacare This Time (WP) ..	43
Israel Is Acting As If It Is Free Of Moral Responsibilities. (WP) ..	45
The E.U. Is The World's Great No-show (WP)	46
The Vacant Presidency (WP)	47

Wilmington News Journal Stories

117 Immigrant Children Placed With Delaware Families (WILNJ).....	49
Delaware Views Mirror Gaza Division (WILNJ)	50
Rep. Potter Speaks Out On Haynes Park Charity Event Where Shots Fired (WILNJ)	53
Del. Official's Wife Hurt In Va. Tornado Where 2 Died, 36 Injured (WILNJ).....	54
Cape's Board Abolishes Entire Reading List (WILNJ)	56
Sallie Mae Profits Drop In 2nd Quarter (WILNJ).....	57
WSFS Earnings Up In Second Quarter (WILNJ)	58
Gov. Markell Enjoys A Day At The Fair (WILNJ)	59
Wilmington Firefighters Light Flames Of Hope (WILNJ)	60

Wilmington Journal News Editorials

Asking Tough Questions Of Wilmington (WILNJ)	61
Let's Bring The Imagination Library Program To Delaware (WILNJ).....	61

Online Version

Visit <http://www.bulletinintelligence.com/vp> for searchable archive, interactive story index, and links to complete stories where appropriate.

BIDEN IN THE NEWS

Biden, In Ohio, Urges Infrastructure, Job Training

[Associated Press](#), July 25, 2014

CINCINNATI (AP) – Vice President Joe **Biden** said Thursday that more investment in infrastructure and job training is needed to increase economic opportunities in the nation's cities.

Biden spoke at the National Urban League conference, where the theme is "One Nation Underemployed." **Biden** said the keys to putting more people in better-paying jobs and spurring economic growth in cities are workforce training to meet today's business needs and improving roads, bridges and other transportation.

"This is a new era," **Biden** said. "We are better-positioned than anybody in the world, but we need to invest in infrastructure and skilled job training."

President Barack Obama's \$302 billion plan earlier this year to increase transportation spending and keep transit programs going for four years got a chilly reception from Republicans in Congress. House Speaker John Boehner, the Republican from a northern Cincinnati suburb, said in a statement Thursday that **Biden** should urge Democrats to work with House Republicans to help the economy by expanding energy production and cutting government red tape.

Sprinkling his speech with quotes from civil rights leaders such as the late Whitney Young and Martin Luther King Jr., **Biden** said minority gains both economically and in civil rights are "under siege." He blasted voter ID and other proposals he said would restrict voting in the guise of preventing fraud and corruption that doesn't happen. He made similar comments Wednesday to another major civil rights organization, the NAACP convention in Las Vegas.

"Name it for what it is — an attempt to repress minority voting," **Biden** said Thursday. He said that protecting voting "used to be a bipartisan thing."

Earlier, Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus assured attendees that the GOP is making a serious, determined effort to build ties with minority voters while saying blacks continue to lag in unemployment and other economic measures during the Obama administration. Blacks overwhelmingly supported Obama in his two presidential elections.

Republicans have added "black engagement" staffers in various states, including swing-state Ohio, to help reach out to black voters, Priebus said.

"So we want you to know, desperately, that the Republican Party is listening, we want a relationship, we want to fight for everybody in this country," he said. "We're serious about doing things differently."

Urban League president Marc Morial said the nonpartisan organization likes a diverse discussion and wants to keep up a dialogue with Republicans.

Republican U.S. Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, who also has been reaching out to minorities as he considers a 2016 presidential bid, will speak at the conference Friday. **Biden** hasn't ruled out running for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016.

Some 8,500 people are in Cincinnati for the conference, which besides discussions about urban issues and civil rights will honor actor Forest Whitaker at its Saturday night dinner and features an advance screening of "Get On Up," the biopic about soul music star James Brown.

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

Vice President Speaks To Delegates At National Urban League Conference

[Cincinnati Enquirer](#), July 24, 2014

Seven to 10 years ago, Vice President Joe **Biden** told National Urban League delegates Thursday, he would not have been able to present such an optimistic message.

But today, **Biden** said, the United States is poised for job growth that will pay families a living wage, even as challenges remain to closing opportunity gaps.

"There have to be jobs to fill in order to meet the needs of the community," **Biden** said in a 40-minute address. "We are better positioned than any country in the world."

Thursday was the second of four days for the 104th conference of the National Urban League, expected to draw up to 8,700 at Duke Energy Convention Center. The convention marked the national group's first return to Cincinnati since it bowed out in 2003, honoring a boycott called to raise attention to racial issues.

Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley, mayors of other cities and Reince Priebus, chairman of the Republican National Committee, also spoke Thursday.

Biden opened by listing accomplishments made for African-Americans and low-income Americans since the Lyndon Johnson-era War on Poverty. He said 10 times as many African-Americans are in college and 10 times as many hold elected public office.

Then he turned his remarks to what he called "the franchise," the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

"There has been progress, but something happened on the way to the 2008 election," **Biden** said of the law that gave African-Americans the right to vote. "The franchise is under siege."

He said 83 efforts in 29 states have sought to "limit access to the ballot box. It's an attempt to suppress American voting rights disguised as an attempt to reduce voter fraud where there is none."

But most of the vice president's discussion focused on the nation's employment, and **Biden** rolled out a list of numbers including 668,000 manufacturing jobs created in recent years. Now, **Biden** said, he and President Barack Obama have two important tasks to accomplish to ensure more growth.

First, **Biden** praised Obama's \$302 billion plan earlier this year to increase transportation spending and keep transit programs going for four years.

"We need to modernize our infrastructure – our highways, airports, railroads and canals," he said. "Every \$1 billion in investment creates 30,000 jobs, 14 percent which go to African-Americans."

Then he turned to the need for jobs training: "And to keep our manufacturing going we need a highly skilled workforce. They require new skills to build the same product they did five or 10 years ago."

Toward the end of his speech, the vice president congratulated the Urban League for its consistent history and mission of working toward economic equality.

"What you are all about is providing people with a sense of dignity," **Biden** said.

Priebus, Republican National Committee chair, said his party has offered solutions to increasing African-American employment.

"There's one very important bill that passed the House and Senate and was just signed by the president," Priebus said. "The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act."

He cited comments recently made by National Urban League President Marc Morial, who said, "Millions of under-employed workers and urban youth and youth of color can receive the skills, training and support services they need to chart a path to a better future."

"That is good news for all of us," Priebus said. "We want you to know that the Republican Party is listening and fighting for you."

The Urban League is a nonpartisan organization, and Morial said it welcomes points of view and discussion from across the political spectrum.

The Urban League's annual report for 2014, released in April, titled "One Nation Underemployed: Jobs Rebuild America," noted that the underemployment rate for African-American workers was 20.5 percent, compared with 18.4 percent for Hispanic workers and 11.8 percent for white workers. Underemployment is defined as those who are jobless or working part-time jobs but desiring full-time work.

The report also said African-Americans are twice as likely to be unemployed as whites.

Metropolitan Cincinnati, which includes Hamilton and Middletown among five counties in Southwest Ohio, seven counties in Northern Kentucky and three in Southeast Indiana, has nearly the worst median household-income gap between blacks and whites compared to other metropolitan areas.

The Enquirer reported earlier this week that of the 77 cities analyzed by the National Urban League in its report, Greater Cincinnati ranks 73rd, with median black income at \$24,272, compared to \$57,481 for whites.

Seven mayors participated in a panel and offered local solutions to the growing jobs and economic gap nationally between whites and blacks. Among them:

Alvin Brown, mayor of Jacksonville, Florida, said his city had 25,000 uninsured young people but used an "all-hands-on-deck" solution to raise \$250,000 and get insurance for all of the uninsured students. "You can't learn if you're sick and not in school," Brown said.

Karen Freeman-Wilson, mayor of Gary, Indiana, said her city has aggressively recruited to keep home-grown talent in the city and working on its problems.

"If we all leave, what will happen to the city?" she said. "If you help solve these problems, you can go anywhere in the world and write your own (career) ticket."

Michael Coleman, mayor of Columbus, Ohio, said, "You have to create many kinds of jobs. They can't all be high end."

Read or Share this story: <http://cin.ci/1rDY5kv>

What Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald Said In His Speech To The National Urban League

[Cleveland Plain Dealer](#), July 25, 2014

CINCINNATI, Ohio – Ed FitzGerald, the Cuyahoga County executive and Democratic nominee for governor, addressed the National Urban League conference Thursday in Cincinnati. Earlier, attendees heard speeches from Vice President Joe **Biden** and Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus.

The theme of the conference: "One Nation, Underemployed."

FitzGerald, who faces Republican Gov. John Kasich in the fall, spoke briefly, according to Columbus Dispatch reporter Joe Vardon, who was there.

Here is the full text of FitzGerald's speech, as prepared for delivery:

"Thank you very much.

"I want to thank Marc Morial for that warm introduction and for the strong leadership he has provided as the President and CEO of the National Urban League.

"I am honored to be here today to welcome all of you to the Buckeye State, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, and to highlight the urgent challenges that remain here in Ohio and across the nation.

"The 1964 Civil Rights Act was not the end of the story. The struggle for justice – economic and political – continues to the current day. Every generation must adopt that struggle as its own. And unfortunately, there are those that are not just apathetic to the challenges still facing our urban communities, there are some who are actively attempting to turn back the clock.

"We must face reality. The aspirations of those who fought for civil rights in the 1960s have not been met. The evidence for that is all around us, and is visible for anyone who doesn't turn away from it.

"Here in Ohio, the numbers are very troubling. Fifty percent of the state is living paycheck to paycheck, but that number is even higher among African Americans. Ten percent of the state is only making a minimum wage, but that number is even higher among African Americans. Nationally, the high school dropout rate is going down, but in Ohio, it's going up, and it's even higher among African Americans.

"In Ohio, we are trailing the rest of the country in terms of recovering from the Great Recession, but it's been even tougher on African Americans. There is an old saying that a rising tide lifts all boats, but in too many places in this country, the only boats that seem to be rising are yachts for millionaires, while most people are barely keeping their heads above water.

"And it's not just economic inequality I am referring to. In the poorest neighborhoods of Cleveland, the life expectancy is 20 years less than in the wealthiest suburbs of Ohio. That is not a reality that is worthy of the 1964 Civil Rights Act or the people who fought for it.

"Now, I know that this may seem grim, but the good news is, there are things that we can do, right now, to change course and build a more just society and start moving forward for everyone, young and old, black and white, urban and rural. And we are only going to get there if everyone moves forward together.

"Here are three things we can do right now:

"1. Invest in education, from early childhood education to higher education. As a County Executive, I have invested more money, in quality pre-kindergarten education, because we have a gap between children who start first grade; some start with a 500-word vocabulary, and some start with a 5,000-word vocabulary, and that gap makes all the difference in the world. Quality, universal pre-kindergarten is the answer, and we need it in every single school district, across the state and the country.

"We must create the expectation that a child needs more than a high school degree to make it in the economy today, and if that is not a college degree, then it should be vocational training. This year, my county became the first county in America to establish a college savings account for every single child who enters kindergarten. And that child can use that money for a two-year college, a four-year college, or for technical training. It sends children and their parents a powerful message early in their lives that we believe in their potential, and we will help them get there.

"2. We must spur growth, but we must not accept a two-tiered economy. Our economic growth has been so slow in part because we aren't investing in things like education, infrastructure, and public transportation. We won't create a more just society if entire segments of our population are locked out of the growth which does occur. That's why, in my county, we didn't just form a diverse administration, we announced just a few weeks ago a partnership with the Small Business Administration and the Urban League and local lending institutions to make capital more available to small businesses in our urban core.

"3. And finally, we will never have the education reform and the economic reform that we so desperately need until we reform our electoral system. A system that is awash in corporate money is never going to reform itself. We have too many leaders in this state, and in Congress, and in the courts,

who believe in giving corporations more and more political rights while taking away voting rights from the people at the same time. Corporations are not people, they never have been, and they never will be. Why are corporations getting more rights while actual human beings are getting fewer rights?

“The shameful nationwide attempt to suppress voting rights is going on right here in Ohio, supported by our Secretary of State and our Governor. That is a chapter of American history that I thought my four children would have to read about in a history book, but instead they can see it in the pages of the daily newspaper. I’m proud that my county has not once but twice joined the legal actions in Federal court in Ohio which has now repeatedly said that these voter suppression tactics are a violation of our rights.

“But as shameful as those actions are, they are philosophically linked to one another. If you cut and defund public education, you are embracing one education system for the elite, and one for everyone else. If you don’t open up economic growth and business development, you are embracing one economy for the well off, and one for everyone else. And if you employ the tactics of voter suppression and place the political rights of corporations over human beings, you are creating a political system of two different sets of rules, one for insiders, and one for outsiders.

“But if American history teaches us anything, it is that this battle isn’t over yet. The first step is to uncover the truth, define the issues, and then mobilize to fight for what we believe in. And, ladies and gentlemen of the Urban League, for your role in doing just that, you have the gratitude of the people of Ohio. Thank you very much.”

VP Biden Set To Appear At Conference Downtown

[WKRC-TV Cincinnati](#), July 25, 2014

CINCINNATI (Adam Clements) – Vice President Joe **Biden** is in town and he’ll address what is expected to be a large crowd at the National Urban League Conference that begins at 9:30 Thursday morning.

It’s not clear the topic of the vice president’s speech, but he is expected to keep it consistent with the theme of this conference, jobs and the challenges of finding employment for the young African American in the United States.

Urban League President Marc Morial said, “The important thing is how the leadership of a community responds. Whether they bury their head in the sand, pretend that there’s no problems, act in a defensive posture, or if they work to confront that problem.”

Right now it’s unclear where exactly they will be bringing VP **Biden** in, but there will be very heavy security in the area surrounding the Duke Energy Center.

Follow Adam Clements on Twitter @aclementswwkrc and LIKE him on Facebook.

VP **Biden** set to appear at conference downtown

Vice President Joe Biden Speaks At National Urban League Conference

[WCPO-TV Cincinnati](#), July 25, 2014

CINCINNATI – The National Urban League conference took on a presidential air Thursday as Vice President Joe **Biden** arrived in the Queen City to speak at the event.

The conference’s theme is “One Nation Underemployed,” and **Biden** relayed the message that investment in infrastructure and job training is needed to increase economic opportunities in the nation’s cities.

Biden told the crowd at Duke Energy Center the United States needs to increase its skilled workforce to meet new business needs and to improve roads, bridges and other transportation to spur growth.

"This is a new era," he said. "We are better-positioned than anybody in the world, but we need to invest in infrastructure and skilled job training."

His comments reflected the mission of President Barack Obama's \$302 billion plan earlier this year to increase transportation spending and keep transit programs going for four years.

The plan got a chilly reception from Republicans in Congress.

House Speaker John Boehner, a Republican from West Chester, said in a statement Thursday that **Biden** should urge Democrats to work with House Republicans to help the economy by expanding energy production and cutting government red tape.

In addition to talk of advancing investment in infrastructure, **Biden** blasted what he called a national Republican effort to restrict voting in the guise of preventing fraud and corruption that doesn't happen.

"Name it for what it is — an attempt to repress minority voting," said the vice president, who sprinkled in quotes from civil rights leaders during his half-hour speech. **Biden** said that protecting voting "used to be a bipartisan thing."

Biden's speech came a day after he spoke to the NAACP in Las Vegas, where he made similar criticisms of voter ID and other proposals that would "repress" minority voting.

The vice president hasn't ruled out a run for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016.

Earlier Thursday, Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus assured attendees the GOP is making a serious, determined effort to build ties with minority voters.

"So we want you to know, desperately, that the Republican Party is listening, we want a relationship, we want to fight for everybody in this country," he said, adding that the party has turned added "black engagement" staffers in various states, including Ohio, to help reach out to black voters.

"We're serious about doing things differently," Priebus said.

Biden and Priebus aren't the only political power players scheduled to take part in the event.

Ohio Democratic gubernatorial candidate Ed FitzGerald also plans to speak Thursday. Republican U.S. Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, who's also been trying to reach out to minorities, will speak at the conference Friday.

Urban League president Marc Morial said the nonpartisan organization likes a diverse discussion and wants to keep up a dialogue with both sides of the political spectrum.

RELATED: Urban League convention says "We've turned a page"

While politics, voting rights and talks of advancements in transportation initiatives were bullet points in the vice president's address, jobs is the theme of the conference, which kicked off Wednesday.

Cincinnati Urban League CEO Donna Jones Baker welcomed attendees and reminded them that the league skipped Cincinnati 11 years ago.

Back then the city was embroiled in a controversy over police/community relations. Baker said attendees are in a different Cincinnati now.

"To say that we have turned it around is an understatement," Baker said.

Morial said it's not just about jobs, but about good paying jobs that will reverse years of economic decline.

"Jobs rebuild America. Jobs rebuild the nation. That a job is the best anti-poverty program there is," he said.

The group believes the topic is critical because unemployment among African-Americans is double the national average.

And the problem hits close to home.

Morial said, "And here's the truth: Four of the largest metro areas in the nation with black unemployment over 20 percent are right here in Ohio."

But there's room to grow on the economic front, which is why Morial thinks the four-day conference, with its numerous speakers and events, is so important.

Thursday's events also include a panel discussion with mayors from several U.S. cities, plus a career fair. Walmart chief executive officer William S. Simon attended a luncheon with attendees, as well.

The Expo Hall features hundreds of exhibitors, a health zone with free health screenings, in addition to live entertainment and performances. It will also feature a 3-on-3 basketball game with NBA players.

Al Sharpton spoke at 4 p.m. to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act.

Friday will feature a town hall meeting on education that features several speakers including Charles Ogeltree of Harvard University and UNCF CEO Michael Lomax. Sen. Paul is expected to speak on topics such as school choice, as well as criminal justice reform and economic freedom zones.

I'm not so sure there will be resistance

Biden Stresses Jobs, Job Training At National Urban League Conference

[WLWT-TV Cincinnati](#), July 25, 2014

Looking trim and tenacious at 71, Vice President Joe **Biden** tore into the jobs issue Thursday, bounding with optimism about America's positioning for future economic growth.

Biden told the National Urban League about a recent survey of U.S. firms in China.

"Fifty-four percent said they're coming home or considering coming home to America," **Biden** said to applause from the crowd.

He noted the word "insourcing" is starting to be used a lot more than "outsourcing," indicating there is a new era dawning when it comes to job opportunities.

Biden ran down a laundry list of employment opportunities that don't require four-year or graduate degrees.

"These range from welding jobs that pay \$36,000 a year to machinists that pay \$40,000 a year – not requiring a doctorate degree, not even requiring a community college degree," **Biden** said.

The vice president challenged his audience to understand that there are two important steps to take in order to reap the advantage that is before the country.

He said the nation's infrastructure must be modernized and the workforce trained to meet the skills demanded of the 21st century.

The Urban League's CEO, Marc Morial, said career fairs, like the one at the convention, help spike awareness about opportunities. But more needs to be done by Congress.

"The training system in the country has to be radically transformed," Morial said.

"The way in which and the scale in which we train people for the available jobs is not there in the way it ought to be," Morial said.

The passage of the new Workforce Act last week was crucial, Morial said.

But he remarked that President Obama has also challenged individuals to learn about where the real job opportunities are and how to acquire them.

State Representative Alicia Reece was in town for the **Biden** address, noting the vice president talked about the importance of certificate programs.

"I think Cincinnati is on the cutting edge because Cincinnati State is moving towards certificate programs," Reece said.

It resonated with Kenya Leonard, of St. Louis, who thought of people getting certificates or specific training.

"They can take that and get immediately placed into jobs," Leonard said.

Biden said relative to the rest of the world, the U.S. is better positioned to meet the jobs challenge.

"We have the cheapest energy, we have the best court system, we protect intellectual property," **Biden** said.

Community leaders want career fairs, like the one at the convention, to spark a business focus on youth who need jobs, lack training and are missing the guideposts that lead to both.

"There are 100,000 manufacturing jobs right now, at this moment, going unfilled because of the lack of the right skills," **Biden** said as he checked his notes about a recent employment study.

He predicted America will cut its dependence on foreign energy in a few years and that people aren't as divided as our political system is.

"We just have to push our politicians to do better," conference attendee Melanie Campbell said.

Biden Encourages Infrastructure Development At Urban League Conference

[WKSU-FM Kent \(OH\)](#), July 25, 2014

Vice President Joe **Biden** told the National Urban League Conference this morning in Cincinnati that the Obama administration is committed to job training and infrastructure repair.

The vice president said the initiatives are needed to put under-employed urban residents, particularly African-Americans, in better paying jobs.

And **Biden** said the nation needs to invest \$3.6 trillion to infrastructure repair between now and the year 2020.

Joe Biden: Voter ID Laws "An Attempt To Repress Minority Voting"

[CBS News](#), July 25, 2014

Vice President Joe **Biden** urged a gathering of civil rights leaders on Thursday to fight back against Republican-led attempts to restrict voting rights, calling the push for voter identification requirements an "attempt to repress minority voting masquerading as an attempt to end corruption."

For several decades after the civil rights movement of the 1960s, both parties made progress in protecting and strengthening voting rights, **Biden** said during his address before the National Urban League in Cincinnati. "Expanding the protection of the franchise," he explained, "used to be a bipartisan thing."

But more recently, voting rights have come under attack, **Biden** warned, saying there have been 83 attempts this year to curtail voting rights in 29 states across the country.

Those efforts were made "in the name of preventing corruption where no corruption was found," **Biden** said. He noted that courts have found no evidence to substantiate Republican fears of widespread voter fraud and voter impersonation.

In a Wednesday speech before the NAACP in Las Vegas, **Biden** delivered a similar message, slamming the push for voter ID laws as "pure politics." He suggested that President Obama might have lost Florida, instead of narrowly carrying the state, if a voter ID law had been in place during the 2012 election.

Biden also sounded an optimistic note on the economy during both speeches, saying America is better positioned than any other country to prosper in the 21st century. He urged Congress to address the nation's ailing infrastructure and fix its broken immigration system to strengthen the economy further.

Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus also addressed the National Urban League on Thursday, in the latest iteration of his push to bring the GOP message into traditionally Democratic constituencies.

“We want you to know that the Republican Party is listening and fighting for you,” Priebus said in his prepared remarks, ticking through the party’s outreach initiatives in minority communities. “As a party, we believe it’s wrong for anyone to be overlooked or taken for granted in our political process. And that’s what motivates me every day.”

He recalled an RNC luncheon on the anniversary of the March on Washington last year, when he was approached by two people at the event.

“We’re Democrats,” he recalled them saying, “But we’re here because we know if both parties don’t fight like crazy for black voters, the other side takes our votes for granted.”

Priebus did not address the push for voter ID laws by some Republican-controlled state legislatures, but he did hew closely to some Republican themes on education and unemployment that could resonate with black voters.

He pushed for an expansion of charter schools and vouchers to promote “school choice,” saying, “The Republican Party believes that every parent in America should have the power to send their kids to the school of their choice. The other party thinks a ZIP code should make that choice.”

And he called the unemployment rate among black Americans – more than 4 points higher than the national average of 6.1 percent – a “problem we must address,” praising recent congressional action on job training and apprenticeships.

© 2014 CBS Interactive Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Biden: GOP States Waging ‘Assault’ On Voting Rights

[NBC News](#), July 25, 2014

CINCINNATI, OHIO – Vice President Joe **Biden** said Republican-controlled states like Wisconsin were leading an “assault” on voting rights designed to “repress minority voting” through their passage of laws that require people to present a photo ID to vote.

“The fiction of widespread voter fraud continues to persist,” **Biden** told a crowd of several hundred at the annual conference of the National Urban League.

Republicans have defended these laws, arguing that Americans should have to present an ID to vote, just as they do to enter many public buildings or fly on an airline. Democrats say the laws, which have been adopted by 31 states, most of which have Republican governors or legislators, are an attempt to make it harder for liberal-leaning people to vote.

African-Americans disproportionately lack government-issued identification.

The vice president’s remarks continue a tense battle between the two parties on voting provisions, like voter ID but also limits on early voting that many Republican states have adopted.

Biden’s appearance here, and at a conference sponsored by the NAACP earlier this week, comes as Democrats are increasingly focused on making sure blacks turn out to vote this fall in states with close Senate races like Georgia and North Carolina.

Biden: State Ballots Threaten Gains Made

[Toledo \(OH\) Blade](#), July 25, 2014

CINCINNATI — Vice President Joe **Biden** told a conference of the National Urban League on Thursday that gains made since passage of the civil and voting rights acts half a century ago are endangered by what he characterized as threats on the minority vote.

"We see renewed attacks on voting rights across the nation," he said. "This year alone there were 83 initiatives in 29 states to limit access to the ballot box in the name of preventing ... widespread fraud where none was occurring. ...

"But the fiction of widespread voter fraud continues to persist. Where I live, no American worth their salt could ever defend these new laws."

He talked about the backlash against laws passed in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin but did not specifically mention Ohio, where U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder recently said he expects to get involved with a lawsuit filed by the NAACP and League of Women Voters against Republican-passed legislation reducing early and absentee voting opportunities.

On the heels of speaking to the NAACP convention in Las Vegas, the Democratic Vice President made the case in Ohio that at the same time such laws threaten the minority votes, a brightening economic picture offers new job opportunities for the same groups.

"It's not hyperbole," Mr. **Biden** said. "We are now in-sourcing [jobs] because, again, relative to the rest of the world, we're better positioned than any other nation."

But for more Americans to take advantage of those jobs, the United States must invest in work-force training, education, and its infrastructure.

"There are 100,000 manufacturing jobs right now going unfilled because of the lack of the right skills," Mr. **Biden** said. "... These range from welding jobs that pay \$36,000 a year to machinists that pay \$40,000 a year — not requiring a doctorate degree, not even requiring a community college degree.

"In energy, the epicenter of energy in the world ... is North America. It is already here. ... The United States, Canada, and Mexico, not the Arabian Peninsula. ... We'll be energy independent in the next several years, and North America will be in the next few years. There's a boom."

Republican Gov. John Kasich was invited to participate but instead made appearances at the Ohio State Fair and a career college graduation in Columbus. His Democratic opponent, Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald, spoke.

Republicans have been represented, however. Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus spoke on Thursday, and U.S. Sen. Rand Paul (R., Ky.) — a potential 2016 presidential contender — is expected to speak today during the three-day conference.

Mr. Priebus said the GOP is reaching out to minorities, saying some black Democrats believe they have been taken for granted by their party.

"If there's one thing I'm trying to change, it's to make us a national party in every community with full-time, paid, on-the-ground staff making our case," Mr. Priebus said. "... We have to be present year-round. We can't just show up a few months before an election, and we can't just be a U-Haul trailer of cash for our nominee."

He spoke of the party's support for job training, apprenticeships, and school vouchers as a means to allow students to escape struggling public schools. The last issue is particularly popular in the African-American community.

"America's underemployment, especially black America's underemployment, is a crisis," Mr. Priebus said. "But the commentators on TV tell us that the economy's getting better.

"That's because they don't see the whole picture. They don't see the people who are exhausted from looking for jobs that don't exist. They forget that the black unemployment rate isn't that national rate of 6.1 percent. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, it's 10.7 percent, and that's a problem we must address."

Contact Jim Provance at: jprovance@theblade.com or 614-221-0496.

Biden: Blacks Have Not Made Enough Progress

By Dave Boyer

[Washington Times](#), July 25, 2014

In an election-year push to motivate minority voters, Vice President Joseph R. **Biden** told the National Urban League Thursday that the black community “can’t be satisfied with where we are now.”

“On the civil rights front, we see renewed attacks on voting rights across the nation,” Mr. **Biden** said at the group’s annual meeting in Cincinnati. “On the economic front as well, there’s been some tough times.”

He said, “If we’re honest with ourselves, we can’t be satisfied with where we are now, on either civil rights or economic opportunities for African-Americans.”

After recounting gains by blacks in the civil rights era, Mr. **Biden** said, “Something happened on the way to the 2008 election.”

“The franchise is under siege,” he said. “Both civil rights and economic rights, in the aftermath of the great recession that the president and I inherited, has devastated parts of the community.”

Mr. **Biden** didn’t mention that the black unemployment rate of 10.7 percent is more than double the white jobless rate of 5.3 percent. But he said he is “optimistic” that the U.S. economy is positioned to lead the world.

“That’s not because Barack Obama and Joe **Biden** are president and vice president — it’s just the simple reality,” he said.

Republicans countered Thursday that the 5-year-old economic recovery is the weakest in a half-century.

“A record number of people are unemployed or have left the workforce,” said House Speaker John A. Boehner, Ohio Republican. “More have left the workforce than have found new jobs. Incomes for American families have declined under this president, while the cost of everything from gas to groceries has gone up.”

As the vice president did in a speech to an NAACP audience Wednesday, Mr. **Biden** attacked Republicans’ efforts across the country to approve voter ID laws, calling them an attempt to suppress minority voting rights.

“This year alone, there were 83 initiatives in 29 states to limit access to the ballot box in the name of preventing corruption, where no corruption was found; in the name of preventing widespread fraud, where none was occurring,” the vice president said.

He added, “I don’t think we’ve made it clear enough to the American people what these attempts are all about. Name it for what it is — it’s an attempt to repress minority voting, masquerading as an attempt to end corruption.”

Mr. **Biden** said Washington needs to spend more on rebuilding America’s infrastructure and on job-retraining programs to fill what he said are hundreds of thousands of available jobs.

“This is a new era,” he said. “We’re back; we’re coming back.”

Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus assured participants at the conference Thursday that the GOP is making a strong effort to build ties with minority voters. He said Republicans have added staff in various states, including swing-state Ohio, to help reach out to black voters.

“So we want you to know, desperately, that the Republican Party is listening, we want a relationship, we want to fight for everybody in this country,” Mr. Priebus said.

Joe Biden: 'Businesses Are Hiring At Historic Rates'

By Cheryl K. Chumley

[Washington Times](#), July 25, 2014

Vice President Joseph R. **Biden** said in a task force report to President Obama that business growth in the United States has hit "historic rates" and that hiring is reaching new highs.

Specifically, the report said: "Businesses are hiring at historic rates, with 52 consecutive months of net private sector job growth. Manufacturing is back, with 668,000 new jobs in the past 52 months," National Review reported.

And yet, facts show the hiring claims may be a bit short of truth. As the National Review put it: "**Biden** is flat-out wrong."

The media outlet reported that the number of business hires per month as a percentage of the number of employed Americans, as well as the number of gross hires made by businesses on a monthly basis, were much healthier under the previous George W. Bush administration.

"In fact," National Review reported, "most of the Bush years handily outstripped the very best of the Obama years."

Central American Presidents Want More US Investment In Security

By Brian Bennett

[McClatchy](#), July 25, 2014

WASHINGTON — If the U.S. wants to stem the tide of children illegally crossing its Southwest border, it should increase investment in Central America to improve security and dismantle drug cartels, the presidents of Guatemala and Honduras said Thursday.

The two presidents met with lawmakers on Capitol Hill before speaking about the border crisis at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank. They are scheduled to meet with President Barack Obama on Friday.

Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez said he appreciated the attention the crisis has brought to economic conditions in Honduras, where 45 percent of the populace lives on less than \$1 a day.

But the vast majority of children are fleeing violence and crime, he said. U.S. Department of Homeland Security maps he has seen show most Honduran children apprehended in the U.S. came from the 30 most violent cities and towns in Honduras.

"Where the greatest drug violence lies – that is where the most children are departing," he said.

More than 57,000 unaccompanied children have been apprehended after crossing the border since Oct. 1, officials said. The number of children declined during the first two weeks of July as the U.S. launched a public awareness campaign about the dangers of the journey, and as hot summer weather deterred crossings.

Hernandez said he has been working to purge Honduras of corrupt officials and to extradite accused drug lords to the U.S. He recently launched an overhaul of the government's immigration department.

"The old immigration officials were in cahoots with the drug traffickers," he said.

In the past decade, the U.S. has poured billions of dollars into fighting drug cartels in Mexico and Colombia through programs like the Merida Initiative and Plan Colombia. But the money has largely passed over Central America, Hernandez said.

As a result, drug lords "poured into Central America and linked up with gangs in an unholy alliance," Hernandez said.

"We are picking up the pieces because they all came home to roost in Central America, and that is what we are dealing with," he said.

Since 2008, the State Department has spent more than \$642 million through a program called the Central American Regional Security Initiative. The money went to countries including Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

But the program has been too small to be effective, and more money is needed, Hernandez said.

"One dollar of investment in Central America is one dollar invested in U.S. security," Hernandez said.

Congress is unlikely to open the tap for these countries, said Rep. Ted Yoho, R-Fla., who met with ambassadors from Central American countries this week. He said he told them not to expect a flow of money from the U.S.

"I said, 'In case you don't remember, our government shut down last year'" over a budget dispute, he said.

Guatemala President Otto Perez Molina said his country is preparing to receive the children and families who will eventually be deported from the U.S.

But solving the crisis will require more attention and investment from the U.S., he said. Among countries investing in Guatemala, the U.S. ranks seventh, he said – below Canada, Russia and Colombia.

Perez Molina said the violence and crime in Guatemala is a by-product of the Cold War when the U.S. and the Soviet Union were funding opposite sides of civil wars in Central America to gain influence.

Perez Molina was a top intelligence officer in the Guatemalan military in the '80s and '90s.

"We were one of the hot spots in that war," he said. "The cost to Central America has been that we became a transit corridor and warehouse for drugs going to the U.S." In 2013, Guatemalan police seized 50,000 weapons that were traced back to the U.S., Perez Molina said.

Obama and Vice President Joe **Biden** will meet the two presidents, as well as President Salvador Sanchez Ceren of El Salvador, at the White House on Friday.

Biden will host the three leaders for lunch before the meeting. **Biden** met with the presidents of Guatemala and El Salvador in Guatemala City on June 20 to discuss the humanitarian crisis on the U.S. border. The president of Honduras skipped the meeting to watch the Honduran national team play a World Cup match in Brazil.

Central American Leaders Want Washington's Help With Immigration Crisis

By David Nakamura And Ed O'Keefe

[Washington Post](#), July 24, 2014

Leaders of the Central American nations at the other end of the U.S. border crisis came to Washington on Thursday to discuss the response and placed much of the blame on the United States.

"Your country has enormous responsibility for this," Honduras's Juan Orlando Hernández said in an interview with The Washington Post. "The problem of narco-trafficking generates violence, reduces opportunities, generates migration because this [the United States] is where there's the largest consumption of drugs. That's leaving us with such an enormous loss of life."

The criticism set the stage for a meeting Friday at the White House in which President Obama and Vice President **Biden** will host Hernández, Guatemala's Otto Pérez Molina and El Salvador's Salvador Sánchez Cerén for a face-to-face discussion of the crisis at the border. The White House said Obama also telephoned Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto on Thursday to discuss the possibility of "regional programs" that would improve security and the economy in Central America.

More than 57,000 unaccompanied minors and an additional 55,000 parents with children, most of them from Central America, have been apprehended this year.

The Obama administration acknowledged Thursday that it is weighing a proposal to allow hundreds of Hondurans to enter the United States after applying for refu-gee visas in their home country. A senior White House official emphasized that the proposal is one of many policy options being considered and that no decision has been made on that specific proposal.

The proposal, if ever implemented, would be a relatively modest response given the scale of the problem: The initiative would provide fewer than 2,000 refu-gee visas to young Hondurans in the first year of what officials described as a pilot program. The New York Times first reported on the potential program, saying it could cost \$47 million over two years.

And the proposal would do nothing about the tens of thousands of migrants who have already reached the United States from Central America and have overwhelmed border security operations in recent months. Obama has requested that Congress provide \$3.7 billion in emergency funds to combat the crisis, but Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill have balked at that price tag. Both the Senate and House are preparing separate plans with lower funding levels.

But in an interview with The Post, Molina said that proposals to boost border patrols are shortsighted and do not address the real problem.

"If they want to attack the root of the problem, I think that they need to think about making investments in countries like Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras," he said, adding later: "With just 10 percent of the money that you're investing on the U.S. border, it could be spent at minimum in the three countries and I'm confident that it would be much more profitable than investing it on border security or border control with Mexico."

The Central American leaders met with members of Congress on Thursday to press their case for more economic assistance. Some Republican lawmakers have called for a decrease in aid to the region, along with Mexico, until those governments do more to curb the problem. GOP lawmakers have focused on strengthening enforcement operations at the border, including calling on the administration to send in National Guard troops.

Administration officials announced Thursday the deployment of a team of military and national security analysts to the Texas border to determine whether there is a productive role for the National Guard in response to the crisis. The move came just days after Texas Gov. Rick Perry (R) announced his plan to send 1,000 of his state's guardsmen to the border to assist local law enforcement operations..

Molina and Hernández pledged that they are determined to do their part to help curb the exodus of migrants.

But they also warned that U.S. politicians should not politicize the debate ahead of the midterm elections this fall.

"The United States is in the run-up to an electoral moment," Hernández said. "I would appeal to the leaders and to American people to understand this is a humanitarian crisis. We are neighbors and will remain neighbors, and it's best to be friends with your neighbors."

Hernández said that most of the children coming to the United States from Honduras are fleeing the 30 most violent areas of the country. He said Honduran girls were sexually abused by smugglers, who instructed them to take contraceptives that the smugglers told them were vitamins.

"Please remember we're talking about children," Hernández said. "These are human beings. As minors, they are the most vulnerable, the weakest among us." This should catch the attention and pull at the heart strings of humanity at large."

The White House gathering will mark the first time an American president has hosted a group of Central American leaders in Washington since 1998, when President Bill Clinton welcomed regional leaders after Hurricane Mitch.

Senior administration officials said this week that each government has stepped up the apprehension of human smugglers and launched public campaigns to discourage illegal immigration since **Biden** visited the region last month. In Guatemala, the “Quedate” (or, “Stay”) campaign has been led by the country’s first lady, Rosa Leal de Perez. In the interview, Molina said that he thinks the campaign has contributed to the 50 percent reduction in illegal border crossings in the past two weeks.

Since signing an agreement with Central American countries and the Dominican Republic in 2008, the United States has spent about \$800 million on security and law enforcement assistance in the region, with roughly two-thirds of the money sent to Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.

Lawmakers and regional experts say that any new requests for aid are likely to be greeted with skepticism.

“There’s deep concern about the violence in Central America,” said Eric Olson, director for the Latin American Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center., “But people are asking hard questions about what is our money going to be used for?”

Marlon Correa contributed to this report.

Honduran Children May Be Allowed To Apply For U.S. Admission From Home

By Brian Bennett

[Los Angeles Times](#), July 25, 2014

The White House is considering a proposal that would allow Honduran children to apply for admission to the United States as refugees or on humanitarian grounds while still in their native country.

It is one of several plans under review to deter Central American kids from making the difficult and dangerous journey to the Southwest border, White House officials said Thursday. If successful, the program could be expanded to include other volatile nations, such as Guatemala and El Salvador.

Under the plan, children fleeing dangerous street gangs plaguing cities in Honduras, or other threats, would be interviewed by American immigration officials and temporarily sheltered in Honduras while their cases are considered.

Supporters of the plan said it would help children who are genuinely in danger and reduce the number of minors traveling along smuggling routes through Mexico. Critics said it would only increase the number of refugees and worsen the current backlog of applications from Central America.

The idea is similar to a proposal from Arizona Sens. John McCain and Jeff Flake, both Republicans, to boost the number of visas by 5,000 for young people coming from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

Of the 57,000 unaccompanied minors apprehended at the Southwest border since Oct. 1, more than 45,000 have been from these three countries. Their numbers have overwhelmed social services and created a humanitarian crisis.

The presidents of Guatemala and Honduras, who were in Washington on Thursday, said changing the U.S. immigration system would be helpful, but insufficient. If the U.S. wants to stem the tide of children illegally crossing its Southwest border, it should increase investment in Central America to improve security and dismantle drug cartels, they said.

They met with lawmakers on Capitol Hill before speaking about the border crisis at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank. They are scheduled to meet with President Obama on Friday.

Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez said he appreciated the attention the crisis had brought to economic conditions in Honduras, where 45% of the populace lives on less than \$1 a day.

But the vast majority of children are fleeing violence and crime, he said. "Where the greatest drug violence lies – that is where the most children are departing," he said.

Hernandez said he had been working to purge Honduras of corrupt officials and to extradite accused drug lords to the U.S. He recently launched an overhaul of the government's immigration department.

"The old immigration officials were in cahoots with the drug traffickers," he said.

In the last decade, the U.S. has poured billions of dollars into fighting drug cartels in Mexico and Colombia through programs such as the Merida Initiative and Plan Colombia. But the money has largely passed over Central America, Hernandez said.

As a result, drug lords "poured into Central America and linked up with gangs in an unholy alliance," Hernandez said.

"We are picking up the pieces because they all came home to roost in Central America, and that is what we are dealing with," he said.

Since 2008, the State Department has spent more than \$642 million through a program called the Central American Regional Security Initiative. The money went to countries including Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

But the program has been too small to be effective, and more money is needed, Hernandez said.

"One dollar of investment in Central America is one dollar invested in U.S. security," Hernandez said.

Congress is unlikely to open the tap for these countries, said Rep. Ted Yoho (R-Fla.), who met with ambassadors from Central American countries this week. He said he told them not to expect a flow of money from the U.S.

"I said, 'In case you don't remember, our government shut down last year'" over a budget dispute, he said.

Guatemalan President Otto Perez Molina said his country was preparing to receive the children and families who will eventually be deported from the U.S.

But solving the crisis will require more attention and investment from the U.S., he said. Among countries investing in Guatemala, the U.S. ranks seventh, he said – below Canada, Russia and Colombia.

Perez Molina said the violence and crime in Guatemala is a byproduct of the Cold War, when the U.S. and the Soviet Union were funding opposite sides of civil wars in Central America to gain influence.

Perez Molina was a top intelligence officer in the Guatemalan military in the '80s and '90s.

"We were one of the hot spots in that war," he said. "The cost to Central America has been that we became a transit corridor and warehouse for drugs going to the U.S."

In 2013, Guatemalan police seized 50,000 weapons that were traced back to the U.S., Perez Molina said. Obama and Vice President Joe **Biden** will meet with Hernandez, Perez Molina and Salvadoran President Salvador Sanchez Ceren at the White House on Friday.

Biden will host the three leaders for lunch before the meeting. He met with Perez Molina and Sanchez Ceren in Guatemala City last month to discuss the humanitarian crisis on the U.S. border. Hernandez skipped the meeting to watch the Honduran national soccer team in the World Cup in Brazil.

For more reporting on border security follow me on Twitter @ByBrianBennett.

Biden: Shoulda' Had One Republican Rich Kid

[Bloomberg](#), July 24, 2014

U.S. Vice President Joe **Biden**, center, buys an ice-cream at a shop as he tours a Hutong alley with his granddaughter Finnegan **Biden**, right, and son Hunter **Biden**, left on Dec. 5, 2013 in Beijing. "I should have had one Republican kid who'd grow up to make money," Vice President Joe **Biden** said today, spurred by his audience's laughter to add: "so when they put me in a home, I get a window with a view."

"You know what I mean?"

Biden has one son following in his political footsteps, Beau **Biden**, attorney general of Delaware, and he has a daughter, Ashley, who, as he noted today, is a social worker running a program for children at risk.

He also has one son, Hunter **Biden**, who's a member of Burisma Holdings' board of directors. That is Ukraine's largest private gas producer.

"Burisma's track record of innovation 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 at the company's announcement of him.

The vice president was addressing the Urban League in Cincinnati today at a conference with a theme, "One Nation Underemployed."

Biden, who spent more than three decades in the Senate, has not amassed much personal wealth. At a recent White House summit on Working Families, he said: "Don't hold against me that I don't own — that I don't own a single stock or bond. Don't hold it — I have no savings accounts. But I got a great pension, and I got a good salary."

As we noted in these columns, however

, his official financial disclosure forms say something else about that savings account:

The form the vice president filed in mid-May shows calendar year 2013 holdings ranging from \$1,001 to \$15,000 in a U.S. Senate Federal Credit Union joint savings account, and the same in each of two checking accounts at Suntrust and M&T Bank. It also shows a joint holding of less than \$1,001 in a M&T Bank checking account.

More than "no account."

Not enough for that room with a view, though.

Poll: Clinton Dominates 2016 Field In Florida

By Rebecca Shabad

[The Hill](#), July 24, 2014

Hillary Clinton easily tops the 2016 presidential field in the battleground state of Florida in a new poll, while in-state Sen. Marco Rubio is narrowing the GOP gap, as support wanes for former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush.

Just over two-thirds of Democratic voters in Florida back Clinton, who also beats her possible GOP competitors by margins of 7-21 percentage points, according to a Quinnipiac University survey released Thursday.

None of the possible candidates have announced a decision to run.

Florida voters back Clinton over Bush 49 percent to 42 percent, the poll found. They support Clinton over Rubio 53 percent to 39 percent, over Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) 51 percent to 38 percent, over Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) 53 percent to 37 percent and over Gov. Chris Christie (R-N.J.) 54 percent to 33 percent.

Support for Clinton in Florida has increased by 3 percentage points, since 64 percent said they back her in a May Quinnipiac poll.

The new survey found Vice President **Biden** and Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) trail Clinton distantly in Florida with 8 percent support each.

Bush, meanwhile, tops the potential GOP field with 21 percent. Eighteen percent said they support Rubio; 10 percent back Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas); 8 percent support Paul; 7 percent support former Gov. Mike Huckabee (R-Ark.) and 6 percent back Gov. Chris Christie (R-N.J.). Thirteen percent of Republicans remain undecided.

The survey from May also found Bush led the GOP pack with 27 percent support, but Paul came in second with 14 percent, and Rubio came in third with 11 percent.

Clinton received the highest favorability rating with 58 percent, compared with 48 percent who view Bush favorably, 43 percent who view Rubio favorably, 35 percent who view Christie favorably and 33 percent who view Rubio favorably.

The new poll surveyed 1,251 registered voters from July 17-21 with a 2.8 percentage point margin of error. The poll's survey included 451 Republicans and 457 Democrats with 4.6-point margins of error each.

Poll: Clinton Sweeps GOP In Florida

By Jonathan Topaz

[Politico](#), July 24, 2014

Hillary Clinton is leading all potential Republican 2016 presidential challengers in Florida, a new poll says.

According to a Quinnipiac University poll released Thursday, the former secretary of state holds at least a 7-percentage-point lead in match-ups against potential GOP challengers in the politically crucial Sunshine State.

Two Florida politicians — Sen. Marco Rubio and former Gov. Jeb Bush — were the top two vote-getters in the Republican field, with Bush at 21 percent and Rubio at 18 percent. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas came in third, with 10 percent, while Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky followed with 8 percent, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee received 7 percent and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie 6 percent.

The Democratic contest — as it has in many other statewide and national polls — remains far more clear-cut than the Republican field. Sixty-seven percent of Democratic voters support Clinton, while Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Vice President Joe **Biden** each pulled in only 8 percent.

Bush provides the closest head-to-head match-up with Clinton, with the Democrat leading Bush 49 percent to 42 percent. Clinton holds a wider, 14-point lead over Rubio, a 16-point lead over Paul and a 19-point lead over Christie.

Florida women show strong support for Clinton, giving her a 20-point edge in a potential match-up with Bush.

The survey was conducted July 17-21 among 1,251 registered Florida voters. The margin of error is plus or minus 2.8 percentage points. The primary surveys had 451 Republicans and 457 Democrats; each had a margin of error of plus or minus 4.6 percentage points.

Clinton Polling Well In Key Presidential Battleground

By

[CNN](#), July 24, 2014

(CNN) – Hillary Clinton is the clear 2016 frontrunner in the nation's largest presidential battleground state, according to a new poll.

A Quinnipiac University survey of Florida voters indicates the former secretary of state, who's seriously considering a second bid for the White House, has leads from seven to 21 percentage points over potential GOP presidential candidates in possible 2016 showdowns.

Follow @politicalticker

"Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton may be taking some criticism recently in the news media and among some liberal Democratic precincts, but nothing has changed among average voters in Florida where she remains queen of the political prom," said Peter A. Brown, assistant director of the Quinnipiac University poll.

According to the survey, which was released Thursday morning, Clinton also has an overwhelming lead in the hunt for the Democratic nomination, with former two-term Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and the state's junior U.S. senator, Marco Rubio, leading the pack of potential GOP contenders.

Two-thirds of Sunshine State Democratic primary voters questioned in the survey say they'd back Clinton for their party's nomination, followed by Vice President Joe **Biden** and Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts each at eight percent. **Biden** is mulling another presidential bid while Warren has said numerous times that she's not running in 2016. Other potential candidates registered at one percent or less.

Twenty-one percent of Republicans say they'd back Bush in the primary, followed by Rubio at 18%. Bush was at 27% and Rubio at 11% among Florida Republicans in Quinnipiac's May poll.

Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas is at 10% in the new poll, with Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky standing at 8%, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee – who ran for the 2008 nomination – at 7%, and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie at 6%. None of the other possible contenders top 5%.

In hypothetical 2016 general election matchups, Sunshine State voters back Clinton over Bush 49%-42%. The poll indicates Clinton leads Ryan by 13 points, Rubio by 14 points, Paul by 16 points and Christie by 21 points.

A Quinnipiac poll in Colorado released last week, another swing state, indicated much closer 2016 general election showdowns between Clinton and potential GOP candidates.

As for the current occupant in the White House, the survey indicates President Barack Obama has a 44%-52% approval/disapproval rating among Florida voters, compared to 46%-50% in May.

The Quinnipiac University poll was conducted July 17-21, with 1,251 registered voters in Florida questioned by telephone. The survey's overall sampling error is plus or minus 2.8 percentage points.

CNN Political Editor Paul Steinhauser contributed to this report

Poll Shows Hillary Clinton Still Strong In Florida

By Anthony Man, Sun Sentinel

[Orlando \(FL\) Sentinel](#), July 24, 2014

Her book sales are lousy, she's made a couple of gaffes, and she's taken a battering in recent weeks from Republicans and cable TV pundits, but a poll out Thursday shows Hillary Clinton is still a favorite of Floridians.

The Quinnipiac University poll of Florida voters found Clinton “dominates the 2016 presidential landscape, sweeping the Democratic field and topping former Gov. Jeb Bush and other possible Republican contenders by margins of 7 to 21 percentage points.”

Despite the recent negatives — which included her lament that she and former President Bill Clinton left the White House “dead broke” and “struggled” financially — her favorability rating among Florida voters remains strong.

The new poll has her at 58 percent favorable and 38 percent unfavorable. In May she was 58/37, in June 2013 she was 57/38 and in March 2013 she was 62/33.

Sean Phillippi, a Democratic political consultant, said Clinton’s Florida strength isn’t a surprise.

“She’s always had very, very strong support in Florida, especially in South Florida,” he said. “Her base is strong because she and her family have had roots down here for decades, and I don’t think a few events will supersede a long history of standing for the values that Floridians share.”

U.S. Rep. Ted Deutch, a Democrat whose district includes northwest Broward and southwest Palm Beach counties, said Clinton “remains the gold standard as we look ahead to 2016.”

Deutch acknowledged she’s had a rough patch. “I could point to any number of ostensibly leading Republican presidential candidates who have said and done things that are absolutely ripe for the picking for the political press, but Hillary Clinton is the leading Democrat that people are talking about. Of course they are going over every little thing.”

He said people like her because “she is smart, she is thoughtful, she is strong, and she is committed to strengthening ... America at home and abroad.”

Still, she’s not loved by everyone.

The poll shows she’s viewed favorably by 95 percent of Florida Democrats, 21 percent of Republicans, 57 percent of independents, 49 percent of men and 66 percent of women.

Mona Malbranche, a Democratic committeewoman and board member of the Kings Point Democratic Club, said she understands why women are such strong supporters. “A lot of women are looking at her and thinking: Wow, with all of these guys bashing at you like this and not get upset, there is a sincerity to the answers And to heck with all of you who don’t believe me.”

The youngest voters view her more positively than the oldest voters: 65 percent favorable among 18 to 29 year olds, 62 percent of 30 to 49 year olds, 55 percent of 50 to 64 year olds and 54 percent of people 65 and older.

Quinnipiac surveyed 1,251 registered voters from July 17–21. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

“Nothing has changed among average voters in Florida where she remains queen of the political prom,” Peter A. Brown, assistant director of the Quinnipiac poll said in a statement. In Washington, “they may be talking about Mrs. Clinton’s potential weaknesses should she run in 2016. But at this point in Florida, the nation’s largest presidential swing state, her assets overwhelm any vulnerabilities.”

That’s bound to change, said Tom Truex, chairman of the Broward Republican Party.

He said many people like the Clintons, but she’ll take a dip when Republicans have a candidate. “There are so many facts that when you really get down to analyzing her record and some of the horrendous missteps that she’s had, those are the acts that come out in a contested campaign.”

“Certainly Republicans aren’t going to like her either way,” Truex said. “Even Democrats are going to pause a bit.”

Anita Mitchell, chairwoman of the Palm Beach County Republican Party, also sees Clinton’s advantage as fleeting.

"She's got high visibility. She's got high name recognition. But also the Republicans don't have a presidential candidate picked yet," Mitchell said. "It's so darned early. It doesn't surprise me because she's been out there." Clinton vs. Republicans

If the presidential election were held today, Quinnipiac found Florida voters would award her the state's 29 electoral votes — more than 10 percent of the total needed to win the White House.

She'd best Bush 49 percent to 42 percent and U.S. Sen Marco Rubio 53 percent to 39 percent.

Clinton leads Bush narrowly, 45 percent to 41 percent, among independents. Among women, she leads Bush 56 percent to 36 percent.

Like many political pros, Phillippi cautioned against reading too much into polling that's more than 27 months before the 2016 election.

However, he said, it might be somewhat telling in the Clinton-Bush and Clinton-Rubio matchups because all those candidates are familiar to Florida voters.

Terrie Rizzo, chairwoman of the Palm Beach County Democratic Party, has a more partisan take: "A lot of people believe in Hillary. With the bunch of knuckleheads that the Republicans have ... she stands tall."

Truex said it's far too early to see potential matchups as definitive. Democratic primary

Clinton is the overwhelming favorite among Florida Democrats for the party's 2016 presidential nomination.

She has support of 67 percent of Democrats. "None of the others even makes it into double digits," Brown said.

Vice President Joseph **Biden** and U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts have 8 percent each.

Republican primary

Florida's home state candidates, Bush and Rubio, are at the top of Florida Republicans' lists.

Florida voters give Bush a 58 percent favorable to 37 percent unfavorable rating. Rubio's rating is 43 percent favorable and 35 percent unfavorable.

"My take is they are our favorite sons and they ought to be at the top of the heap," Mitchell said. She said Bush was a "popular governor for a very long time."

Bush gets 21 percent in a Republican presidential primary in Florida, followed by Rubio with 18 percent.

U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas has 10 percent, U.S. Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky 8 percent, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee 7 percent and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie 6 percent. No other candidate tops 5 percent.

The surveys of Democrats only and Republicans only have a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percentage points. Obama

President Barack Obama is underwater with Florida voters, with 44 percent approving of his performance and 52 percent disapproval. That's a slight change dip from May when his approval was 46 percent and disapproval 50 percent.

He's viewed positively by 7 percent of Republicans, 40 percent of independents and 84 percent of Democrats, 48 percent of men and 49 percent of women.

Q Poll: Bush Leads GOP Field In Florida; Hillary Beats Them All

[Tampa Bay \(FL\) Times](#), July 25, 2014

Jeb Bush leads a field of prospective GOP presidential candidates in Florida, topping Sen. Marco Rubio, Sen. Ted Cruz and others. But Hillary Clinton beats them all in head-to-head matchups, according to a poll released Thursday

“Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton may be taking some criticism recently in the news media and among some liberal Democratic precincts, but nothing has changed among average voters in Florida where she remains queen of the political prom,” said Peter A. Brown, assistant director of the Quinnipiac University Poll.

In a 2016 Republican primary — keep in mind none of the candidates have said they are running — Bush gets 21 percent support followed by Rubio with 18 percent, Texas’ Cruz with 10 percent, Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky with 8 percent, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee with 7 percent and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie with 6 percent.

In a May survey, Bush led with 27 percent, followed by Paul with 14 percent and Rubio with 11 percent. Either way, the field remains crowded and unsettled.

The Democratic side is another story with Clinton consistently leading the way over would-be Democratic rivals and beating Republicans.

Except for Bush, whom she leads by 7 points, 49-42, she beats other Republicans by double digits. Her lead over Rubio is 53-39.

Florida voters give President Barack Obama a negative 44 percent job approval rating, compared to a negative 46 percent May 1, the poll shows. Voters approve of the job Rubio is doing by 49 percent and give Democratic U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson a 45 percent approval rating.

The poll was conducted July 17-21 and included 1,251 registered voters with a margin of error of 2.8 percentage points.

Attorney General Biden sues Consumer Advocacy Assistance

By

[Dover \(DE\) Post](#), July 24, 2014

Attorney General Beau **Biden** a filed a lawsuit July 23 against Consumer Advocacy Assistance, a company which allegedly defrauded five Delaware homeowners of more than \$8,000 after claiming to be a mortgage rescue group.

Biden said in a news release that state agencies can offer free assistance to homeowners needing loan modification, and that Delawareans should “never pay a dime” to anyone for these services.

Delaware’s lawsuit seeks restitution for the homeowners, the payment of civil penalties and a court order requiring the company to cease and desist its illegal activities.

For more information, visit attorneygeneral.delaware.gov.

Read more: <http://www.doverpost.com/article/20140724/CCH Content/140729861#ixzz38RuMtmrl>

Del. Child Predator Unit Makes Arrests

[WHYY-FM Philadelphia](#), July 25, 2014

General Beau **Biden** announced that separate undercover online investigations by the Delaware Child Predator Task Force led to their apprehension.

“The Child Predator Task Force is working to weed out the most dangerous predators – those who seek to sexually assault our children,” **Biden** said in a statement Wednesday.

In the first case, Steve Moore responded to the profile of a 13-year-old girl on an online social dating site. The Dagsboro man, however, was communicating with a task force detective posing as the girl. According to Delaware's Dept. of Justice, Moore said "

in explicit terms" that he wanted to meet to have sex with the girl and set up a location, date and time to meet.

The 49-year-old was arrested as soon as he arrived at Tidbury Park on South State Street in Dover, Wednesday. Moore was charged with one count of Sexual Solicitation of a Child Under 18 and four counts of Obscenity.

In the second case, 51 year-old Mark Cavill of Bloomingdale, New Jersey, responded to the profile of a 14 year-old girl on an online social dating site. The DOJ said during several conversations with a task force detective posing as the girl Cavill indicated that he wanted to meet to have sex.

Once the location, date and time were set, Cavill was arrested last Friday when he showed up, as agreed, at a fast food restaurant on the 1700 block of North Dupont Highway in Dover. As a result of the investigation Cavill was charged with one count of Sexual Solicitation of a Child Under 18.

Both men's homes were searched and investigations related to their cases are ongoing.

Stronger penalties

These two arrests are the first made under the strengthened penalties established by House Bill 256 , which was signed into law last month. The legislation makes it a chargeable offense to sexually solicit a child online whether the suspect is soliciting an actual child or an undercover investigator posing as a child. The law also elevates the offense in cases in which the predator actually travels for "the meet."

"Thanks to legislation enacted this year which strengthens penalties against predators who travel to meet their victims we're in an even stronger position to take them off the streets for longer periods of time where they can no longer hurt kids," **Biden** said.

Delaware's Child Predator Task Force was created in 2007. The unit has four undercover investigators and two prosecutors.

NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS

Gaza's Mounting Death Toll

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

These days, even a school — clearly identified as a shelter run by the United Nations — cannot protect Palestinian civilians in Gaza from deadly attacks. Located in the northern Gaza town of Beit Hanoun, it was struck multiple times on Thursday as people who had taken refuge there were gathering in the courtyard and preparing to flee. At least 16 of them were killed, bringing the total death toll in 17 days of war to more than 750, a vast majority being Palestinian civilians.

There are competing charges over who carried out the attack — Israel; Hamas, which controls Gaza; or one of Hamas's allies — and that could take time to sort out. What really matters now is that some way be found to stop this carnage.

The war is terrorizing innocent people on both sides of the border, fomenting more hatred, creating an ever larger appetite for vengeance and ensuring that the cycle of violence will be repeated, if not right away then surely at some point in the future. It is past time for an immediate cease-fire and for a political strategy that offers the hope of a more stable future for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Israeli officials say they have taken pains not to harm civilians. They also say they did not target the Beit Hanoun school, suggesting that Hamas may have struck the facility by mistake. Surely, Israel has

reason to take strong military action against the barrage of rockets on its territory and to destroy Hamas's underground tunnels. Yet no one can be indifferent to the fact that innocents are paying an intolerable cost for being caught in the middle.

It is fair to ask whether Israel is doing enough to prevent that. According to a United Nations official in New York, at least 72 United Nations schools, hospitals and offices have been damaged in the fighting, even though they are clearly marked. At the same time, the United Nations did not enhance its own credibility and influence when its Human Rights Council focused entirely on Israel in a resolution on Wednesday, opening an inquiry into possible Gaza-related human rights violations.

Hamas also deserves scrutiny, as well as the strongest possible condemnation for storing and launching rockets in heavily populated areas, knowing full well they would draw Israeli fire to places where civilians live. Unlike Israel, Hamas has not built bomb shelters where civilians can seek refuge. And even as war rages and his people are exposed, Hamas's political leader, Khaled Meshal, has been safely ensconced at his exile home in Qatar.

Perversely, things seem to be going his way. The Times reported that Hamas, which is committed to Israel's destruction and was in a weakened political position before the war, is now being hailed among Palestinians in the West Bank as a champion. And, the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, a moderate, is being faulted for not achieving a Palestinian state in negotiations with Israel.

Israel's interest would be ill-served if Mr. Abbas ends up being marginalized while the hard-liners are empowered. Any cease-fire should be structured to help strengthen Mr. Abbas's position.

Secretary of State John Kerry has been working feverishly to get a cease-fire, but his mission is hugely complicated. Meanwhile, the killing goes on.

The Phony 'Narrow Network' Scare

By The Editorial Board

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

Republicans contend that the Affordable Care Act is a failure because many of the plans sold on the online health exchanges limit a consumer's choice of doctors and hospitals. Many plans do, indeed, limit choice — deliberately so, to keep premiums down. But a vast majority of consumers can almost always buy a plan with a broad array of doctors, hospitals and other providers if they are willing to pay more for the policies.

The issue is one of priorities: Is it more important to keep premiums low or to have access to a broad array of doctors to choose from? A poll in February showed that many people, especially the previously uninsured, think lower cost is more important.

There is no clear definition of what constitutes a "narrow network," the term used in public and political discourse, but there are protections built into the Affordable Care Act and federal regulations that require all networks to have enough doctors of various types to ensure that services can be provided "without unreasonable delay."

Most plans probably have the experts needed, but there are concerns that in the hectic rollout of the health exchanges the primary emphasis has been put on enrolling people, not on making sure that all networks were adequate.

Any shortcomings that have emerged can be addressed with better public education and regulatory fixes.

Some consumers have been surprised to find that their own doctor may accept the insurance company they are using but not the particular plan they have chosen from that insurer's offerings. Or that

a new doctor they wanted to see, though listed as taking their plan's insurance, was not accepting new patients because the practice was already full.

These problems can be solved by requiring more accurate and up-to-date information about doctors in the plan, preferably posted on the government's website, not just on insurance company websites.

Some consumers may discover after the fact that a doctor who treated them in an emergency — a hospital anesthesiologist, for example — is not covered by their plan. Regulators in other states might well emulate New York's pioneering law requiring that patients be told when an out-of-network doctor will be treating them, and if they are not informed, they would not have to pay more than their usual co-pays. In that case, the insurer and the provider would fight to see who absorbs the cost.

The technique of using limited networks to control costs has been around for years. It became especially useful with the passage of health care reform, which eliminated or made illegal several other cost-control tactics, such as refusing to insure people with pre-existing conditions.

These and other reforms left insurers to compete on the basis of cost and the scope of the networks. To attract cost-conscious consumers, many plans have formed narrow networks of providers who agreed to accept low negotiated prices or who had a track record for delivering care at low cost. But those are hardly the only plans available.

One industry survey found that 90 percent of the individuals using the exchanges had access to a broad network plan, with no difference in quality between the broad and narrow plans. Another industry analysis found that narrow network plans had premiums 5 percent to 20 percent lower than broader plans. State and federal regulators need to monitor how well the plans are performing and if they fail to serve the needs of their customers.

Anything Goes In China's Food System

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

The recent revelations that a Shanghai-based meat supplier to McDonald's, KFC and other chain restaurants used expired chicken and beef in its products serve as a stark reminder that China needs to do a lot more to improve its inadequate food safety system.

After tainted milk killed at least six babies and sickened thousands in 2008, Chinese officials overhauled the country's food safety laws and promised to crack down on negligent companies and corrupt bureaucrats.

The scandals have kept coming. Since April 2013, more than 155 people have died from a strain of avian influenza, a disease linked to poor sanitary conditions in poultry markets. Last year, officials found high levels of cadmium, which has been linked to organ failure and cancer, in rice at markets and restaurants in Guangdong Province. And, earlier this year, Walmart stores in China recalled packages of donkey meat that contained meat from other animals.

While the 2009 food law improved safety regulations — banning the use of unauthorized additives in food, for instance — inadequate enforcement remains a major problem. Many officials responsible for enforcing the law have not been properly trained to do their jobs, says John Yasuda, a fellow at the University of Pennsylvania's Center for the Study of Contemporary China.

The country's water and soil pollution problems have also hurt China's ability to clean up its food system, Yanzhong Huang, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote recently. Even the prime minister of China, Li Keqiang, said last year that the nation's food system has "a great deal of outstanding problems and potential hidden dangers."

Weak and uneven enforcement has encouraged an anything-goes culture among food producers, including at Shanghai Hushi Food, the company accused of putting expired meat into fast-food meals. In a local TV broadcast, a manager at the Shanghai factory told government investigators that it was company policy to use expired meat and that the practice had gone on for years. TV reporters also showed footage of plant workers using chicken meat that was two weeks past its expiration date and beef that was six months past its use-by date. The meat was used to make chicken nuggets, sandwiches and other food. Some of the factory's production was exported to Japan.

Chinese officials recently proposed changes to the 2009 law that would impose tougher civil and criminal penalties on companies and people who violate food safety regulations. These changes will only be effective if they are accompanied by stronger enforcement and a greater effort to deal with environmental degradation.

Don't Teach Math, Coach It

By Jordan Ellenberg

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

MADISON, Wis. — PEOPLE ask me all the time how they can get their kids excited about math. That ought to be a softball for me, because I teach math for a living. I wake up excited about math.

But it's not that simple. With the college students I teach, it's a straightforward transaction. They're paying me to teach them math, and my job is to cajole or incentivize them into doing the work that's necessary to learn the subject, whether they feel like it or not.

It's a different story with your own children. None of us want to be Leo Wiener. Yes, Wiener helped shape his son, Norbert, into a child prodigy who got a Ph.D. at Harvard at 18, and who later became a groundbreaking mathematician. But this was how Norbert recalled the process:

"He would begin the discussion in an easy, conversational tone. This lasted exactly until I made the first mathematical mistake. Then the gentle and loving father was replaced by the avenger of the blood. ... Father was raging, I was weeping, and my mother did her best to defend me, although hers was a losing battle."

No parents want this story told in their child's memoirs. But how can we encourage kids in a difficult task like math without doing so in a way they'll come to resent?

I found an answer in something my 8-year-old son, C. J., likes even better than math: baseball. Let me be clear here. My level of skill at baseball — actually, with every kind of ball — is pretty much the opposite of my mastery of math. I've reached 40 and I still throw in the way that we used to call, before they started showing college softball on TV, "like a girl."

But C. J. is a baseball fanatic. He lives and dies with the Milwaukee Brewers and he's pretty set on being one of them when he grows up. He plays Little League with a fierce concentration I seldom see at home. And I've learned a lot about what kind of math parent I want to be from an unexpected source — his coaches.

Baseball is a game. And math, for kids, is a game, too. Everything for them is a game. That's the great thing about being a kid. In Little League, you play hard and you play to win, but it doesn't actually matter who wins. And good coaches get this. They don't get mad and they don't throw you off the team. They don't tell you that you stink at baseball, even if you do — they tell you what you need to do to get better, which everybody can do.

What does it mean to coach math instead of teaching it? For C. J., it means I give him a “mystery number” to think about before bed. “I’m thinking of a mystery number, and when I multiply it by 2 and add 7, I get 29; what’s the mystery number?” And already you’re doing not just arithmetic but algebra.

For his little sister, who’s 4, that’s too formal. But say we’re at the grocery store and we need four cans of soup and she brings me two, and I say, “so we need three more, right?” and she says “No, Daddy!” That’s really funny when you’re 4. It’s a game, and it’s math.

Lots of games are math. There are the classics you know about: chess, which builds the ability to follow a series of logical steps; Monopoly, which demands basic arithmetic and probabilistic reasoning; and Rubik’s Cube, which is fundamentally an exercise in geometry and group theory.

But there are new classics, too, that weren’t around when you were a kid: Rush Hour, a board game about search algorithms; Set, a study in higher-dimensional geometry in the form of a viciously competitive card game; and DragonBox, an app for phone or tablet that teaches the formalisms of algebra. Every one of these games shows kids mathematical ideas in a spirit of play, which is a big and often hidden part of the true spirit of math.

These games are difficult, but also, for many kids, kind of addictive. Which means they also teach *sitzfleisch*, the ability to focus on a complicated skill for the length of time it takes to master it. Math needs that. (Baseball does, too.) It fits with the research of the psychologist Carol Dweck, which suggests that mentors should emphasize effort over native ability. We can’t really teach kids to do things; we can only teach them to practice things.

There are many things we’d like to coach our kids to do. And we can’t help playing favorites to some extent. I’ll admit, I’d rather C. J. aimed to be a mathematician than a shortstop. I tried to open his eyes to some more realistic careers that could still satisfy his hunger for the major leagues. “You know,” I told him, “you really like math, and all the teams now have people who work for them analyzing the players’ statistics. You’d probably enjoy that!”

At this suggestion he became agreeably eager. “Daddy, that’s a really good idea,” he said. “Because almost all major league players have to retire by the time they’re 40 — so then I could get a job analyzing the statistics!”

Well, I tried.

Jordan Ellenberg, a professor of mathematics at the University of Wisconsin, is the author of “How Not To Be Wrong: The Power of Mathematical Thinking.”

Saving Daughters From Mutilation

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

An international conference focusing on a global scourge — female genital mutilation — made significant progress this week with an announcement from Prime Minister David Cameron of Britain that his government would prosecute parents who submit their daughters to that primitive abuse. The world can only wish for similar enlightenment in the 29 countries in Africa and in parts of Asia and the Middle East where genital mutilation is most common and where more than 130 million girls and women have been scarred for life.

“All girls have the right to live free from violence and coercion,” Mr. Cameron declared, speaking as the co-host of a global Girl Summit in London dedicated to eradicating both female genital mutilation and child marriage within a generation. This is an enormous goal. More than 700 million women alive today worldwide were forced into marriage as children, according to Unicef, the event’s co-sponsor.

Each year an estimated three million girls are at risk of genital mutilation, ranging in age from infancy to 15. The initiative by Mr. Cameron was driven by the growing realization in Britain that an estimated 20,000 girls, though born in the country, were at risk of genital mutilation by their parents, often immigrants fleeing countries in conflict where the practice is common, according to a report by City University London and the human rights group Equality Now. Researchers estimate up to 137,000 women and girls in Britain and Wales are victims of the practice, which was outlawed there in 1985 but is still prevalent in some communities. The stronger measure of prosecuting parents as criminals for cutting their daughters is to be accompanied by an aggressive education campaign by police and health officials.

The Girl Summit drew 500 government officials and mutilation victims and academics from around the world. The agenda included creating an “international charter” to enlist support from nations where abuses of young girls are most severe — a task more necessary than ever.

The Shared Destiny Of Israel And Gaza

By Roger Cohen

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

LONDON — Freight cars full of bodies shot out of the sky make their way across Europe. After more than two weeks of fighting in Gaza, at least 150 Palestinian children are dead, according to the United Nations. Thousands of Hamas rockets have hit Israel, and 32 young Israeli soldiers have been killed fighting to end this terror. As the poet Seamus Heaney observed, “It is difficult at times to repress the thought that history is about as instructive as an abattoir.”

When children die in these numbers, when the legitimate claim of the Jewish people to a sliver of earth is again contested, when the shrieking cacophony of each side declaiming its “truths” overwhelms, human progress seems a fickle fantasy. Truth, even before social media, was always the first victim of war.

Yet, against all evidence, people hope. They seek justice. It is in their nature.

Hamas establishes a stranglehold over 1.8 million Palestinians squeezed into what David Cameron, the British prime minister, once called the “open-air prison” of Gaza. It is a Jew-hating organization. It is ready, when need be, to use the lives of its own people as pawns. It pours concrete into a maze of tunnels rather than schools. Isolated before the latest violence, it revives by demonstrating a measure of military command and control, by hurting Israel, by appearing resolute as Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, wavers.

The demands of this reconstituted Hamas become the demands of the Palestinian people. Abbas is marginalized. This is not a strategic victory for Israel.

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, pursues a status-quo strategy that keeps Palestinians divided and Israel dominant. The price of the strategy is periodic violence. This is the third Gaza mini-war in six years. An oppressed people will rise up. That is in the nature of things.

Some decades ago, Netanyahu denounced the efforts of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to reach peace with the Palestinians through the Oslo Accords. Rabin, who had once vowed to “break the bones” of Palestinians, sought peace not because he had changed his view of the enemy but because he saw no alternative. Like the men responsible for Israel’s security interviewed in the movie “The Gatekeepers,” he had concluded that endless dominion over another people was unsustainable and incompatible with the preservation of a Jewish and democratic state. Netanyahu compared Rabin to Neville Chamberlain. Rabin’s widow never forgave him.

This month, Netanyahu said that rockets from Gaza demonstrated how critical it was that “we don’t get another Gaza in Judea and Samaria” — the West Bank. He declared: “I think the Israeli people understand now what I always say: that there cannot be a situation, under any agreement, in which we relinquish security control of the territory west of the river Jordan.”

As David Horowitz observed in The Times of Israel, “That sentence, quite simply, spells the end to the notion of Netanyahu consenting to the establishment of a Palestinian state.”

After the suspension of some flights into Tel Aviv’s Ben Gurion airport due to Hamas rockets, Netanyahu’s stance is immeasurably reinforced.

Inherent in Israeli policy are the eruptions of violence that in turn justify the policy that in turn spurs further violence. Vile Hamas revives itself. Palestinian statehood recedes.

Yet, people, in their majority, hope.

Netanyahu wants a majority Jewish state in the Holy Land. Abbas wants an end to the occupation, freedom and statehood for the Palestinians. Those two objectives are not mutually exclusive. In significant ways they are complementary. But they involve sacrifice of cherished national ambitions.

Two impossible things happened in my lifetime. My parents’ South Africa ended apartheid without the bloodbath I’d heard was coming throughout my youth. Europe’s division at the Berlin Wall dissolved, allowing freedom to spread eastward (if not quite far enough yet to spare those corpses in freight cars).

Sydney Kentridge, a classmate of my father’s in Johannesburg and a lawyer for Nelson Mandela, once told me that he concluded at the 1956 treason trial that one day “both sides would realize that neither could win.”

He was right. Hope is not always irrational.

On a recent visit to Israel, I passed through the Damascus Gate into Jerusalem’s Old City. Palestinians emerging from Al Aqsa Mosque moved toward me in a vast throng. They ran straight into a group of ultra-Orthodox Jews headed toward the Western Wall, and at that moment, out of the Via Dolorosa, a crowd of Philippine Christians emerged, carrying a heavy wooden crucifix. It was an impossible scene, funny even: the three great monotheistic religions jostling in the alley, no way around each other.

Nobody is going away. The peoples of the Holy Land are condemned to each other. Without that realization, any truce, even any demilitarization of Gaza, will only be a way station to the next round of slaughter.

That’s the likely but not inevitable scenario. Impossible things do happen.

Left Coast Rising

By Paul Krugman

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

The states, Justice Brandeis famously pointed out, are the laboratories of democracy. And it’s still true. For example, one reason we knew or should have known that Obamacare was workable was the post-2006 success of Romneycare in Massachusetts. More recently, Kansas went all-in on supply-side economics, slashing taxes on the affluent in the belief that this would spark a huge boom; the boom didn’t happen, but the budget deficit exploded, offering an object lesson to those willing to learn from experience.

And there’s an even bigger if less drastic experiment under way in the opposite direction. California has long suffered from political paralysis, with budget rules that allowed an increasingly extreme Republican minority to hamstring a Democratic majority; when the state’s housing bubble burst, it

plunged into fiscal crisis. In 2012, however, Democratic dominance finally became strong enough to overcome the paralysis, and Gov. Jerry Brown was able to push through a modestly liberal agenda of higher taxes, spending increases and a rise in the minimum wage. California also moved enthusiastically to implement Obamacare.

I guess we're not in Kansas anymore. (Sorry, I couldn't help myself.)

Needless to say, conservatives predicted doom. A representative reaction: Daniel J. Mitchell of the Cato Institute declared that by voting for Proposition 30, which authorized those tax increases, "the looters and moochers of the Golden State" (yes, they really do think they're living in an Ayn Rand novel) were committing "economic suicide." Meanwhile, Avik Roy of the Manhattan Institute and Forbes claimed that California residents were about to face a "rate shock" that would more than double health insurance premiums.

What has actually happened? There is, I'm sorry to say, no sign of the promised catastrophe.

If tax increases are causing a major flight of jobs from California, you can't see it in the job numbers. Employment is up 3.6 percent in the past 18 months, compared with a national average of 2.8 percent; at this point, California's share of national employment, which was hit hard by the bursting of the state's enormous housing bubble, is back to pre-recession levels.

On health care, some people — basically healthy young men who were getting inexpensive insurance on the individual market and were too affluent to receive subsidies — did face premium increases, which we always knew would happen. Over all, however, the costs of health reform came in below expectations, while enrollment came in well above — more than triple initial predictions in the San Francisco area. A recent survey by the Commonwealth Fund suggests that California has already cut the percentage of its residents without health insurance in half. What's more, all indications are that further progress is in the pipeline, with more insurance companies entering the marketplace for next year.

And, yes, the budget is back in surplus.

Has there been any soul-searching among the prophets of California doom, asking why they were so wrong? Not that I'm aware of. Instead, I've been seeing many attempts to devalue the good news from California by pointing out that the state's job growth still lags that of Texas, which is true, and claiming that this difference is driven by differential tax rates, which isn't.

For the big difference between the two states, aside from the size of the oil and gas sector, isn't tax rates. it's housing prices. Despite the bursting of the bubble, home values in California are still double the national average, while in Texas they're 30 percent below that average. So a lot more people are moving to Texas even though wages and productivity are lower than they are in California.

And while some of this difference in housing prices reflects geography and population density — Houston is still spreading out, while Los Angeles, hemmed in by mountains, has reached its natural limits — it also reflects California's highly restrictive land-use policies, mostly imposed by local governments rather than the state. As Harvard's Edward Glaeser has pointed out, there is some truth to the claim that states like Texas are growing fast thanks to their anti-regulation attitude, "but the usual argument focuses on the wrong regulations." And taxes aren't important at all.

So what do we learn from the California comeback? Mainly, that you should take anti-government propaganda with large helpings of salt. Tax increases aren't economic suicide; sometimes they're a useful way to pay for things we need. Government programs, like Obamacare, can work if the people running them want them to work, and if they aren't sabotaged from the right. In other words, California's success is a demonstration that the extremist ideology still dominating much of American politics is nonsense.

A Chinese Gold Standard?

By Kwasi Kwarteng

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

LONDON — While the 70th anniversary of D-Day last month received a lot of attention, another event, in July 1944 — the Bretton Woods conference, named for the mountain resort in New Hampshire where it was held — was perhaps even more significant in shaping the modern world. It not only led to the creation of what are now the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, but it also confirmed the central position of the United States dollar in the international monetary system.

Why does this matter for us now? Just as America displaced Britain as the world's pre-eminent economic power in the interwar period, so, too, the large debts and fiscal pressures confronting the West, and the rise of China and other economic powers, challenge us to think about the future of finance.

For most of the 19th century the British pound had been the world's "reserve currency," the currency in which trade and finance were denominated. "As sound as a pound" became a widely used expression. The pound was pegged to gold at a fixed rate of just under £4 per ounce.

At the outbreak of World War I, Britain abandoned the gold standard. You could no longer exchange pounds for gold. The gold standard was reintroduced in 1925, but this, as John Maynard Keynes observed, proved to be an economic mistake.

British prices and, more crucially, wages, would have to be forced down by 10 percent to maintain the competitiveness of British exports. As American agricultural and industrial exports soared in the 1920s and 1930s, the dollar effectively replaced the pound. It was American bankers who helped out the financially strapped Weimar Republic in the 1920s. The British, as exporters of capital, were a diminished force.

By the time of Bretton Woods, the United States held roughly 60 percent of the world's gold supply. "Think of the gold in Fort Knox," America's chief negotiator at Bretton Woods, Harry Dexter White, said. "That is why we are in a powerful position." He added, "We have the wherewithal to buy any currency we want."

Bretton Woods fixed the dollar price of gold at \$35 per ounce, and all the other major currencies — the pound, the franc, the mark, the yen — were subsequently pegged to the dollar, even though they could not be exchanged directly for gold. This system lasted until 1971. By then, America was under the financial strain of the Vietnam War and Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society. With mounting deficits and an adverse balance of trade, America struggled to maintain gold convertibility at the old rate of \$35 an ounce. So President Richard M. Nixon abandoned the fixed dollar price of gold established at Bretton Woods (over the objections of the Federal Reserve chairman, Arthur F. Burns).

International critics said that the United States, by ending the dollar link to gold, was turning its back on its responsibilities as the guarantor of the international monetary system. Over the decades, the situation has gotten worse. The United States is \$17.6 trillion in debt owed to the public, and large trade deficits are the norm. Yet there is no scope for revisiting the international monetary system, despite great dissatisfaction by countries like China and the Persian Gulf states, which hold large foreign currency reserves. Americans themselves question the security of the dollar when their country faces such large trade and budget deficits.

China's nearly \$4 trillion in reserves — accumulated through its mercantilist trade policies — give it plenty of ammunition to claim leadership in the creation of a new monetary order. The Chinese, however, are most unlikely to bid for monetary hegemony in the near future. For the past 25 years they have pursued a policy of aggressive export growth to drive their economy. China successively devalued its

currency, from 1.50 renminbi to the dollar in 1980, to 8.72 in 1994. (Today the renminbi trades at 6.20 to the dollar, which the United States still considers artificially low.)

Could China someday peg its currency to gold, as Britain did in 1821? China has the reserves to do this, and it could have the political will, if the dollar proved to be unreliable as a store of value in the future.

Of course, Britain's earlier adoption of the gold standard, in 1821, worsened a sharp deflationary period, during which, according to one calculation, consumer prices fell nearly 50 percent, between 1818 and 1822.

Nevertheless, to its supporters the gold standard ensured British fiscal and monetary dominance during the rest of the 19th century. As the British historian A.J.P. Taylor observed, 19th-century Britons believed that "a country could not flourish without a balanced budget and a gold currency." Since Keynes, the West has tried to deny this proposition, with our reliance on deficit spending and "fiat" money, backed mainly by the expectation that a government will not default on its debts.

China is not as indebted as the West, but it is looking to "rebalance" its economy by raising demand by consumers, who want to enjoy the standard of living enjoyed across the Western world. Since 2010, the renminbi has appreciated 14 percent without drastically hurting Chinese exports.

Having expanded its manufacturing base and captured international markets, China may well find a world hooked on its products. It could eventually — in, say, 20 years — peg the renminbi to gold, considering it preferable to the dollar as a store of value, because of its permanence and longevity. With a balanced budget and a gold-backed currency, China's economy could be even more formidable than it is today. Such a move would truly mark its return as the "Middle Kingdom." Hard as it may be to contemplate today, this scenario would, in many ways, be a more secure basis for an international monetary regime system than the system of floating exchange rates that Nixon inadvertently created in 1971, one that forever overturned the Bretton Woods order.

Kwasi Kwarteng, a Conservative member of Parliament, is the author of "War and Gold: A Five-Hundred-Year History of Empires, Adventures and Debt."

Why Tony Abbott Axed Australia's Carbon Tax

By Julia Baird

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

SYDNEY, Australia — It will be remembered as one of the most ignoble moments in our history: On July 17, Australia became the first country to repeal a carbon tax.

The deputy leader of the Greens Party, Adam Bandt, said it was "the Australian Parliament's asbestos moment, our tobacco moment — when we knew what we were doing was harmful, but went ahead and did it anyway."

The tax, or carbon-pricing mechanism, had defined three elections, destabilized three prime ministers and dominated public debate in this country for eight toxic years. Finally, the leader of the center-right Liberal Party, Tony Abbott, won the last election in part by promising to "ax the tax."

Mr. Abbott is famous for his fitness and muscular approach. As a student at Oxford, he won a "blue" at boxing for the university and was known for his all-out, flailing attacks. When the carbon-pricing scheme became law in 2011, he vowed to lead a "people's revolt" and "fight this tax every second of every minute of every day."

His political success was not, in fact, a result of the failure of the policy. The scheme was, in at least the most important sense, working, since emissions were declining. The initial public opposition was

fading, but the Labor government that introduced the policy failed to sell it. Critics portrayed it as a burden that would hurt businesses and cost households, instead of one that would cut pollution and ensure a more secure future for our children.

It was the misleading old cliché — the economy versus the environment — but politicians staked their careers on it, and won.

In 2010, the Labor prime minister, Julia Gillard, said she would look at carbon-pricing proposals, but also promised, “There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead.” Then, under pressure to form a minority government, she made a deal with the Greens and agreed to legislate a carbon price: a tax by any other name.

The heat, anger and vitriol directed at her as a leader — and as Australia’s first woman to be prime minister — coalesced around the promise and the tax. It grew strangely nasty: She was branded by a right-wing shockjock as “Ju-Liar,” a moniker she struggled to shake. The political cynicism surrounding the carbon tax certainly reduced Ms. Gillard’s political capital, but it was a perceived lack of conviction in the policy itself that damaged the pricing scheme’s credibility.

Business leaders opposed what Mr. Abbott called a “useless, destructive tax,” even though just 0.02 percent of Australia’s three million businesses were affected (the top 500 polluters). But Australia is one of the world’s biggest producers of coal, and the industry is worth about \$60 billion and supports an estimated 200,000 jobs.

A powerful triumvirate campaigned against the law: mining companies, the conservative coalition parties and Rupert Murdoch’s newspapers. A study found that 82 percent of articles on the carbon tax in News Corporation’s Australian papers were negative.

Ms. Gillard now believes she made a crucial error in framing. After losing office in June 2013, she wrote: “I erred by not contesting the label ‘tax’ for the fixed price period of the emissions trading scheme I introduced. I feared the media would end up playing constant silly word games with me, trying to get me to say the word ‘tax.’”

George Lakoff, a professor of linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley, agreed that “was a disaster.” It wasn’t just the T-word; even the term “carbon price” was a problem, too abstract and technical: “It does not evoke in the minds of the public the real human horrors and economic costs of climate disasters.”

“I made the wrong choice,” Ms. Gillard conceded, “and, politically, it hurt me terribly.” With Labor plummeting in the polls, her leadership was challenged and she lost the vote to the party’s previous leader, Kevin Rudd. (Mr. Rudd’s victory was shortlived; less than three months later, he was defeated general election by Mr. Abbott.)

Opposition to the carbon tax trailed away after Ms. Gillard’s ouster, and public concern about climate change has only grown. A recent poll found that almost two-thirds of Australians believe there should be carbon pricing for major emitters, but 42 percent agreed with the repeal of the tax (against 36 percent who did not). We did, after all, elect a government that promised to ax it. So we’re a hot mess of contradictions.

Mr. Abbott’s claim that households will be better off by 550 Australian dollars, or \$520, a year following the repeal has been greeted with skepticism. Electricity prices did go up after carbon pricing came in, but this was mostly because of investment in infrastructure. Consumers are likely to see no effect now — unless they’re paying less simply by using less electricity. An Australian National University study reported that carbon emissions from the power generation sector had been cut by 1 to 2 percent as a result of the tax.

If carbon pricing was working, you might well ask why the law was repealed. The result is that Australia has no clear climate policy, though Mr. Abbott says he now believes climate change is occurring and he takes it “very seriously.”

The prime minister’s paramount concern, though, is still that taxing emissions should not “clobber the economy.” His government has proposed an alternative to the carbon tax, the Direct Action Scheme, that would provide incentives for businesses to cut emissions. But it faces fierce criticism — even from within Mr. Abbott’s own administration — because of loopholes, a lack of consequences for nonparticipants and its unfunded targets.

What’s clear is that Australia has proved again that politicians rarely choose to take the lead on tackling climate change. When the public is conflicted, our leaders too often whip up fear, and reason and evidence go out the window. The shame is that when the tax was axed, so were the facts.

Julia Baird is a journalist and a television presenter with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and an author who is working on a biography of Queen Victoria.

How I Passed The English Cricket Test

By Kenan Malik

[New York Times](#), July 25, 2014

LONDON — How times change. Last week, I was at Lord’s Cricket Ground in London — the “home of cricket,” as England’s cricket officials like to boast — to see England play India. I was born in India, yet I was cheering England.

Thirty years ago, I certainly would not have been. I can remember the Indian cricket team touring England in 1986. India won that three-match series 2-0 (with one draw). I was ecstatic.

Why the change in attitude? Answering that question will, of course, reveal much about myself. It will reveal much about Britain. Perhaps most of all, it will reveal much about the nature of identity.

We live in an age of constant soul-searching about the meaning of national identity. Public debates about what it is to be “English” or “British” have become a ritual almost as familiar as an England soccer team being humiliated at a World Cup. But these debates rarely grasp the realities of the ways in which people experience their identities.

In 2007, the last Labour government produced a green paper titled “The Governance of Britain,” which bemoaned the fact that, compared with French or American citizens, Britons had a “less clear sense” of the “values that bind” the British people. It proposed “a British statement of values that will set out the ideals and principles that bind us together as a nation.” Earlier this year, when an attempt to introduce an Islamist agenda into certain state schools in Birmingham was exposed, the coalition government’s response was to insist that “Britishness” had to become part of the educational curriculum.

Craft a statement. Teach a lesson. Politicians may be the only people in the world who imagine that the creation of identities, or the forging of a sense of belonging, can be reduced to such simple formulas.

What most public debates ignore is the complexity, elasticity and sheer contrariness of identity. Whether personal or national, identities can never be singular or fixed because they are rooted largely in people’s relationships with one another — not merely personal but social relationships, too — and such connections are always mutating.

Thirty years ago, Britain was a different place. And I was a different person. I grew up in a Britain where racism was woven into the fabric of society in a way that would be difficult to imagine today. Racism was vicious, visceral and sometimes fatal. Assaults and stabbings were common; firebombings of Asian houses were almost weekly events.

My parents were of a generation that accepted racism as part of life. I was of a generation that challenged it, politically and physically. We confronted far-right thugs, organized street patrols to protect black and Asian families, and stood up to police harassment. And this inevitably shaped our sense of who we were.

My generation did not think of itself as “Muslim” or “Hindu” or “Sikh.” We wanted to be seen as British. When Britain told us, “You don’t belong,” we responded both by insisting on our Britishness and by identifying with those who challenged British identity. Such is the contradictory character of belonging.

So I refused to support any British team, still less an English one. (The relationship between Englishness and Britishness can seem as unfathomable as the rules of cricket; it is an issue to which I will return another time.) Whether in cricket, soccer, rugby or tiddlywinks, for me it was a case of “anyone but England.”

Today, things are different. Neither racism nor racial violence has disappeared, and hostility to immigration has become a defining feature of British politics. Yet the savage, in-your-face racism that marked Britain a generation ago is, thankfully, relatively rare. The nature of Britishness has changed, too. No longer rooted in ideas of race and empire, it is defined as much by diversity as by jingoism. National identity is being recast in a host of new debates, from the fractious question of Scottish independence to the fraught relationship with the European Union.

Blacks and Asians have long since become an accepted part of Britain’s identity, as well as its sporting tapestry. And I have dropped my “anyone but England” attitude. I, too, now feel the pain of penalty shootout defeats and the rare joy of cricket match victories. Yet, if I am now willing to wave the flag at a cricket field or in a soccer stadium, I will not necessarily do so in all contexts. I may be tribal about sports, but I am not patriotic about Britain.

Unthinking, irrational support for one team over another is an essential part of the experience of sports. Patriots wish us to be equally unthinking in our attachment to the nation in every arena, from culture to war. The myth of nationalism is that “Britishness,” just like “Frenchness” or “Americanness,” comes as a single package. But identity does not work like that.

There are many aspects of British life that I admire, and many that I despise. I only have to visit a London street market to be reminded how open Britain is to foods and goods and influences from all over the world; I only have to stand in line in passport control at Heathrow Airport to remember how deep the suspicion of foreigners runs. Many British traditions resonate with me; many I find abhorrent. This is the nation that produced the Levellers and the Suffragettes, radical movements that helped shape the world; it is also a nation that still clings to a monarchy and the unelected, feudal House of Lords.

Many non-British traditions, too, have helped shape my views, values and ideals. To erase this complexity with the myths of patriotism is to diminish the very meaning of belonging.

As for the cricket match, England was humiliated by India at Lord’s. Some things, it seems, never change.

Kenan Malik, a writer, lecturer and broadcaster, is the author, most recently, of “The Quest for a Moral Compass: A Global History of Ethics.”

Sen. John Walsh Should Stop Making Excuses For His Actions

By Editorial Board

[Washington Post](#), July 25, 2014

SEN. JOHN Walsh, a place-holding Democrat from Montana, already was deemed unlikely to win a full term in this year’s election. With revelations in the New York Times that he extensively plagiarized an

academic paper, his prospects are even cloudier. But Mr. Walsh still has a chance at public service: He could apologize for his intellectual theft, acknowledge the seriousness of the offense and use the difficult episode as a learning opportunity for the young people of Montana.

Thus far, Mr. Walsh has taken a different route. When first asked Tuesday outside his office whether he plagiarized his 2007 paper for his U.S. Army War College master's degree, he answered, "I don't believe I did, no." The next day, that denial turned into an admission of a "mistake," with a campaign spokeswoman asking that the "incorrect citations" be viewed in light of Mr. Walsh's "experience of post-deployment." The senator later revealed that he had been seeing two doctors to treat his post-traumatic stress disorder at the time. His campaign on Thursday released a statement highlighting his military accomplishments and insisted that any impropriety was "unintentional."

Unintentional? More than half of the 14-page paper, "The Case for Democracy as a Long Term National Strategy," was directly lifted from papers by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace experts and a Harvard scholar, or improperly attributed to other authors, the Times showed.

For example, Mr. Walsh inserted almost verbatim these sentences from a Harvard paper by Sean M. Lynn-Jones, with original footnotes also included: "Many studies have found that there are virtually no historical cases of democracies going to war with one another. In an important two-part article published in 1983, Michael Doyle compares all international wars between 1816 and 1980 and a list of liberal states." The copying continues for more than a page.

The Army War College has rightly launched an investigation and pledged to hand down any appropriate punishments. Mr. Walsh should be subject to all the usual protocols that the college uses for plagiarism cases. He should also apologize to all scholars he copied from. Tom Carothers, a foreign policy expert whose work was plagiarized, told us he had not yet received a phone call from Mr. Walsh.

Mr. Walsh's plagiarism does not diminish his accomplishments in Iraq or the National Guard. By the same token, Mr. Walsh should not use his service to deflect criticism for his academic misdeeds. More than a third of undergraduates and a fourth of graduate students admit to plagiarizing in school. College plagiarism rates have risen, facilitated by widespread Internet access. There is widespread confusion about the line between plagiarism and paraphrasing.

Rather than playing to that confusion, Mr. Walsh should forthrightly explain why claiming someone else's work as one's own is wrong. He can't erase his record, but he could seize this opportunity to discourage Montana students from following in his footsteps.

Paul Ryan's Anti-poverty Plan Has Some Good Ideas That All Sides Can Support

By Editorial Board

[Washington Post](#), July 25, 2014

HOUSE BUDGET Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) has produced his latest take on conservative anti-poverty policy. As is often the case with Mr. Ryan's proposals, this one, launched under the heading "Expanding Opportunity in America," is ambitious, thoughtful and not entirely persuasive.

Mr. Ryan's best idea is a substantial expansion of the earned-income tax credit, a wage supplement for low-income workers administered through the tax code. Currently the third-largest federal poverty-fighting program at \$59 billion per year, the EITC has a proven track record of lifting families out of poverty and stimulating work effort. But it offers only skimpy assistance to childless adult workers, which Mr. Ryan would remedy by doubling the maximum annual credit for such workers to \$1,005 and lowering the eligibility age from 25 to 21. It's nearly identical to a proposal in President Obama's 2015 budget that would have cost roughly \$60 billion over 10 years.

The other pillar of Mr. Ryan's plan is less satisfactory. He would not reduce the money Washington currently spends on some 11 anti-poverty programs — the largest of which include food stamps, public housing and cash welfare, known as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) — but would fold them into a single block grant, available to states that wish to operate their own consolidated aid programs for the poor. States that took the option would have to meet federal conditions, including a work requirement for recipients, in return for far greater flexibility in how their agencies, public and private, meet the needs of individual clients for housing, drug treatment, training and the like. Mr. Ryan's model is the series of state-level pilot projects that preceded 1996 welfare reform, which ultimately trimmed caseloads nationwide.

No doubt this could reduce the bureaucracy and complexity associated with administering the government's myriad aid programs. Whether that necessarily translates into better outcomes for the disadvantaged is a different question. Mr. Ryan argues that the poor do better when grass-roots agencies, public and private, are in charge. Yet rolling food stamps into a single funding stream would seem to forfeit that program's usefully counter-cyclical feature (that is, it spends more when the economy turns down and less when it recovers). Mr. Ryan has only tentative proposals to address that. Even thornier, though, is the work requirement, which can't succeed unless jobs are plentiful. It's one thing to link a single source of aid — TANF — to work, as the welfare reform law did. It's quite another to make everything depend on it, including food.

The thing to do, therefore, is focus on the most promising, most bipartisan part of Mr. Ryan's plan — the EITC increase. With support not only from Mr. Ryan and Mr. Obama but also, in different iterations, leading members on both sides of the aisle in the Senate, there should be no problem getting this passed. Heretofore the sticking point had been that the two parties could not agree on how to pay for the measure's relatively modest cost. Mr. Ryan says to cut corporate welfare — including the Democrats' pet green-energy grants. The Democrats say to close tax breaks for the rich such as the carried-interest deduction. We say both have a point. So do some of both and get on with it.

If The West Doesn't Do More For Ukraine Now, It Might Soon Be Too Late

[Washington Post](#), July 25, 2014

VLADIMIR PUTIN has responded to the international outrage over the destruction of a Malaysian airliner by his proxies in eastern Ukraine by escalating his aggression. According to U.S. officials, tanks, artillery and other heavy weapons have continued to cross from Russia to Ukraine after the passenger jet was shot down. On Wednesday, two more Ukrainian military jets were hit by anti-aircraft missiles, which Ukrainian officials said had been fired from Russia. The State Department also said Thursday that Russian artillery was firing at Ukrainian positions from across the border.

The Russian president is clearly not impressed by Western responses to the killing of 298 innocent people and the subsequent attempt by his government and its proxies to deny and cover up the crime. And why should he be? After making a statement Monday that contained no tangible response and only a vague threat that "the costs for Russia's behavior" will increase, President Obama departed for three days of fundraising on the West Coast. The message to Mr. Putin — not to mention Israelis, Palestinians and Iraqis fighting their own wars — was that the president was not engaged enough by the crises to set aside the purely political activity of collecting checks from donors.

In Brussels, European Union officials met Thursday to discuss potential sanctions against Russia, including new measures against the banking, energy and arms industries. But no decisions will be made before next week, and even then Moscow will likely be given a new deadline for meeting a demand that it

stop supplying the Ukrainian rebels. Previous deadlines to cease weapons deliveries have passed with no significant action.

While the West temporizes, a de facto Russian army is rapidly assembling in occupied portions of eastern Ukraine. A report in the Financial Times, sourced to U.S. intelligence officials, says it includes dozens of T-64 battle tanks, Grad rocket launchers, self-propelled guns, infantry combat vehicles with automatic cannons and armored personnel carriers, in addition to anti-aircraft systems like that which shot down the Malaysian plane. This force is commanded by Russian citizens who infiltrated Ukraine from Moscow, including a Russian secret police colonel, and manned in large part by fighters from Russia.

Incredibly, the European Union's position — tacitly supported by Mr. Obama — is that the Ukrainian government should stop attempting to expel the invaders from its territory and instead negotiate with them about the political future of Ukraine. Fortunately, newly elected President Petro Poroshenko has not capitulated to this appeasement strategy. However, his appeals for military aid from the United States and NATO, or at least more substantial sanctions, have so far been turned aside by Mr. Obama and the Europeans.

Frustration with Mr. Obama's weakness now extends to the top ranks of the Democratic Party. A letter released Tuesday by three Senate committee chairs — Dianne Feinstein (Calif.), Carl Levin (Mich.) and Robert Menendez (N.J.) — called on Mr. Obama to "impose immediate broad sanctions" against Russia's defense sector, as well as broader measures against energy and financial industries, and to explore designating the rebels' political structure as a foreign terrorist organization. While cooperation with Europe is desirable, the senators said, "the United States must not limit its own national security strategy when swift action will help fulfill our strategic objectives."

Mr. Obama has already missed the opportunity for swift action to stop Mr. Putin's escalation. If he does not act soon, it may be too late to save Ukraine.

Corporations Are People. So What If People Were Corporations?

By Catherine Rampell

[Washington Post](#), July 24, 2014

"Checked the tax code," wrote a friend who's engaged to a woman from a low-tax country. "Unfortunately, marrying [my fiancée] does not entitle me to a tax inversion like the big US companies are getting. Thanks for nothing IRS."

That got me thinking. Maybe we've been looking at this whole corporations-are-people-too foofaraw the wrong way. Critics complained when the Supreme Court granted companies rights to freedom of speech and religion under the legal fiction that corporations are people. But perhaps this precedent is good news for flesh-and-blood people like you and me (a.k.a. People Classic™).

If companies are claiming the rights and privileges of people, maybe people should start claiming the rights and privileges of corporations. Rights harmonization, in other words, should flow in both directions, since we're now all indistinguishable, equally protected "persons" — in the court's eyes, anyway.

I spoke with a few legal and tax experts about what we humans stand to gain from my cutting-edge constitutional insight. Turns out corporations enjoy tons of rights and privileges that biological beings should be salivating over.

The most obvious place to start is taxes. Companies save billions from loopholes that don't apply to individuals — yet.

People, for example, pay taxes on their worldwide incomes. Corporations do not, as long as they don't bring the foreign profits back into the United States. And tax attorneys have come up with clever ways of booking an unexpectedly high share of corporate income abroad.

Businesses, for example, can transfer their "intangible" property — things like patents or trademarks — to holding companies in tax havens. That means a company such as Apple could assign ownership of its patents to a subsidiary in Bermuda, and any profits resulting from those patents would get taxed in Bermuda only. Unless and until those profits were repatriated to the States, Uncle Sam wouldn't get a cut.

If you think about it, humans have valuable intangible assets, too. Take, for instance, a college degree.

According to Martin Sullivan, the chief economist at Tax Analysts, if individuals were treated like corporations, I could set up an affiliate called "Catherine Rampell Bermuda," have it pay my college tuition and then declare that the affiliate owns the resulting degree. I could then tell the IRS that everything I earn above the average high school grad's wage should be recorded as income in Bermuda, since it's all derived from a Bermuda-based asset. Until I decide to repatriate those diploma-derived earnings, I've built myself a tax-free IRA.

Other goodies abound. On federal tax returns, individuals can deduct either the sales taxes they paid or their state income taxes, not both; for companies, these deductions are all-you-can-eat. If people were treated like companies, we could also start deducting the first dollar we spend on health care, rather than just the medical spending that exceeds 10 percent of our adjusted gross incomes.

Home-buying would also become more attractive. Right now there are limits to how much mortgage interest humans can deduct. But if you analogize your primary residence to a "corporate headquarters" and your vacation homes to "branch offices," you can deduct the full interest on every McMansion you ever buy.

The tax code isn't the only place where we might enjoy gaining our corporate brethren's rights.

If people were treated like corporations, perhaps we'd be able to "merge" with whomever we want without worrying about restrictive marriage laws, noted Adam Winkler, a UCLA law professor. We could also choose to abide by the family law in whichever state we like best, regardless of where we live. Companies, after all, can incorporate in the jurisdiction with the most favorable corporate governance laws, regardless of where they operate, explained Kent Greenfield, a law professor at Boston College. That's one reason Delaware is home to more businesses than people.

But the best perk of being treated like an incorporeal corporation?

Even if you killed someone, stole a house, funded a genocidal regime or terrorize the global economy, you wouldn't go to jail. At worst, you'd pay a fine. Sure, you could be executed for your crimes — sort of — by having your charter revoked or by being driven to bankruptcy by onerous penalties, but you could always return from the dead with a different name but much of the same DNA. To err is human; to err and bounce back unscathed, you really need to be a company.

Israel Must Be Permitted To Crush Hamas

By Michael Oren

[Washington Post](#), July 25, 2014

U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary of State John Kerry and the foreign ministers of Great Britain and France all are rushing to achieve a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas. Their motive — to end civilian suffering and restore stability to the area — is noble. The images of the wounded and

dead resulting from the conflict are indeed agonizing. However, these senior statesmen can be most helpful now by doing nothing. To preserve the values they cherish and to send an unequivocal message to terrorist organizations and their state sponsors everywhere, Israel must be permitted to crush Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

This is the lesson of previous rounds of fighting between the Israeli Defense Forces and terrorist strongholds. In Lebanon in 2006 and in Gaza in 2008 and again in 2012, Israel responded to rocket attacks on its cities with fierce counteroffensives. Fighting against a deeply dug-in enemy that both blended in with the local population and used it as a shield, Israel's best efforts to avoid civilian casualties invariably proved limited. Incensed world opinion generated immense pressure on governments to convene the U.N. Security Council and empower human rights organizations to censure Israel and stop the carnage. These measures succeeded where the terrorists' rockets failed. Israel was compelled to back down.

And the terrorists, though badly mauled, won. Admittedly, their bar for claiming victory was exceptionally low. While Israel must achieve a clear battlefield success to win, the terrorists merely had to survive. But they did more than survive. Under the protection of cease-fires and, in some cases, international peacekeepers, they vastly expanded their arsenals to include more lethal and longer-range missiles. While reestablishing their rule in the streets, they burrowed beneath them to create a warren of bombproof bunkers and assault tunnels. Such measures enabled Hamas, as well as Hezbollah, to mount devastating attacks at the time of their choosing, confident that the international community would once again prevent Israel from exacting too heavy a price.

So the cycle continued. Allowed to fight for several weeks, at most, Israel was eventually condemned and hamstrung by cease-fires. The terrorists, by contrast, could emerge from their hideouts and begin to replenish and enhance their stockpiles. That is precisely the pattern established in the second Lebanon War and repeated in Operations Cast Lead and Pillar of Defense in Gaza. Hezbollah and Hamas sustained losses but, rescued and immunized by international diplomacy, they remained in power and became more powerful still. Israel, on the other hand, was forced to defend its right to defend itself. Jihadist organizations no different from the Islamic State and al-Qaeda gained regional legitimacy, while Israel lost it in the world.

The cycle can end, now and decisively. As Operation Protective Edge enters its third week, responsible world leaders can give Israel the time and the leverage it needs to alter Hamas's calculus. They can let the Israeli army ferret Hamas out of its holes and make it pay a prohibitive cost for its attacks. They can create an outcome in which the organization, even if it remains in Gaza, is defanged and deprived of its heavy arms. Of course, Hamas will resist demilitarization, and more civilians will suffer, but by ending the cycle once and for all thousands of innocent lives will be saved.

Life in Gaza is miserable now, but if Israel is permitted to prevail, circumstances can improve markedly. U.S.- and Canadian-trained security forces of the Palestinian Authority can take over key crossings and patrol Gaza's porous border with Egypt. Rather than be funneled into Hamas's war chest, international aid can be transferred directly to the civilian population to repair war damage and stimulate economic growth. Terrorist groups and their state patrons can be put on notice: The game has changed unalterably.

And by letting Israel regain its security with regard to Gaza — with all the pain it entails — the United States and its allies will be safeguarding their own. Though bitter, the fighting between Israel and Hamas raging in Gaza's alleyways is merely part of the far vaster struggle between rational nations and the al-Qaeda and Islamic State-like forces seeking their destruction. Relative to that global conflict, Operation

Protective Edge may seem small, but it is nevertheless pivotal. To ensure that it concludes with a categorical Israeli win is in the world's fundamental interest. To guarantee peace, this war must be given a chance.

My Son Has Been Suspended Five Times. He's 3.

By Tunette Powell

[Washington Post](#), July 24, 2014

I received a call from my sons' school in March telling me that my oldest needed to be picked up early. He had been given a one-day suspension because he had thrown a chair. He did not hit anyone, but he could have, the school officials told me.

JJ was 4 at the time.

I agreed his behavior was inappropriate, but I was shocked that it resulted in a suspension.

For weeks, it seemed as if JJ was on the chopping block. He was suspended two more times, once for throwing another chair and then for spitting on a student who was bothering him at breakfast. Again, these are behaviors I found inappropriate, but I did not agree with suspension.

Still, I kept quiet. I knew my history. I was the bad preschooler.

I was expelled from preschool and went on to serve more suspensions than I can remember. But I do remember my teachers' disparaging words. I remember being told I was bad and believing it. I remember just how long it took me to believe anything else about myself.

And even still, when my children were born, I promised myself that I would not let my negative school experiences affect them. I believed my experience was isolated. I searched for excuses. Maybe I was just a bad kid. Maybe it had something to do with my father's incarceration, which forced my mother to raise me and my brothers alone.

So I punished JJ at home and ignored my concerns. Then, two months later, I was called to pick up my 3-year-old son, Joah. Joah had hit a staff member on the arm. After that incident, they deemed him a "danger to the staff." Joah was suspended a total of five times. In 2014, my children have received eight suspensions.

Just like before, I tried to find excuses. I looked at myself. What was I doing wrong? My children are living a comfortable life. My husband is an amazing father to JJ and Joah. At home, they have given us very few problems; the same goes for time with babysitters.

I blamed myself, my past. And I would have continued to blame myself had I not taken the boys to a birthday party for one of JJ's classmates. At the party, the mothers congregated to talk about everyday parenting things, including preschool. As we talked, I admitted that JJ had been suspended three times. All of the mothers were shocked at the news.

"JJ?" one mother asked.

"My son threw something at a kid on purpose and the kid had to be rushed to the hospital," another parent said. "All I got was a phone call."

One after another, white mothers confessed the trouble their children had gotten into. Some of the behavior was similar to JJ's; some was much worse.

Most startling: None of their children had been suspended.

After that party, I read a study reflecting everything I was living.

Black children represent 18 percent of preschool enrollment but make up 48 percent of preschool children receiving more than one out-of-school suspension, according to the study released by the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights in March.

I immediately thought back to my own childhood. I thought back to the humiliating labels that greeted me before I could read. I thought back to the number of black friends and family members who also were suspended and expelled. I thought about my family and friends who had not overcome the detrimental effects of being suspended in preschool. I did not want that for JJ and Joah. I did not want it for any child.

But the next step was the hardest. At news of all of this, friends and relatives suggested that I pull my children out of the preschool program and move them into another. At first, I considered that. That move may have changed my kids' circumstances, but it would not have solved the problem. All across this country, black children are being suspended in preschool.

We can no longer put a Band-Aid on our nation's preschool-to-prison pipeline, which pushes children out of the education system and criminalizes relatively minor offenses. Moving my boys to another school would have provided a stopgap solution. It may have solved my problem, but it would not have solved the problem.

The problem is not that we have a bunch of racist teachers and administrators. I believe most educators want to help all children. But many aren't aware of the biases and prejudices that they, like all of us, harbor, and our current system offers very little diversity training to preschool staff.

A recent study published by the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology found that the subjects — mostly white, female undergraduates — viewed black boys as older and less innocent than their white peers. When photos of children were paired with descriptions of crimes, the subjects judged the black children to be more culpable for their actions than their white or Latino counterparts and estimated that they were an average of 4.5 years older than they actually were.

Authority figures strip black boys of their innocence at younger ages than white children. Diversity training for teachers and administrators would raise their awareness of how subconscious prejudices can drive racial discrepancies in disciplinary action.

I know that I am only one person and that it will be difficult for me to change the system. But I will do my part at my kids' preschool. I joined the parent advisory board and intend to work with it until I see change. I encourage other parents to join parent boards and attend school meetings that are open to parents. This is not the time to be silent. We must speak out. I cannot go back and undo what was done to me, but I refuse to let it be done to my children.

More from PostEverything:

Zero-tolerance policies are destroying the lives of black children

The education-reform movement is too white to do any good

This is what happened when I drove my Mercedes to pick up food stamps

Supreme Court May Not Protect Obamacare This Time

By Ruth Marcus

[Washington Post](#), July 25, 2014

Don't be so sure that the Supreme Court is going to save Obamacare. Again.

The question is enormously important: Are health-care consumers entitled to subsidies if they buy coverage on insurance exchanges established by the federal government, as they are with insurance from state exchanges?

Two federal appeals courts have reached contradictory conclusions, at least so far. (The Obama administration plans to ask the full federal appeals court in Washington to review the three-judge panel ruling against the subsidies, and that court is newly stocked with liberals.) Cases are headed to two other appeals courts.

Which adds up to: coming eventually to a Supreme Court near you. The justices, particularly Chief Justice John Roberts, might prefer to duck the case — who needs the court embroiled in another Obamacare dispute? — but that might not be a realistic option.

The dispute involves perhaps the most consequential case of sloppy drafting in congressional history. The section of the law outlining how subsidies are calculated refers specifically to an exchange “established by the state.” It doesn’t mention subsidies for the federal exchanges set up in those states (now 36) that chose not to establish their own.

Preventing federal exchanges from offering subsidies would cripple the law, driving up premiums as healthy enrollees drop coverage and sicker ones remain. It is implausible to think that the Congress that created federal exchanges as a backup alternative to state marketplaces also intended them to fail. Yet the legislative language, taken alone, implies that outcome.

As the Richmond-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit conceded even as it upheld the subsidies, “If Congress did in fact intend to make the tax credits available to consumers on both state and federal exchanges, it would have been easy to write in broader language, as it did in other places in the statute.”

Nonetheless, the stronger legal argument is with the government. In context — and even Justice Antonin Scalia, the ultimate textualist, believes in looking at laws this way — it’s clear that Congress could not have meant the provision to be so narrowly construed.

As you may have noticed, the stronger legal argument doesn’t always win at this Supreme Court. The four liberal justices are reliable votes in the government’s favor. Where is the fifth? Justice Anthony Kennedy believes the Affordable Care Act is unconstitutional, but he might be moved by the plight of millions of people suddenly without affordable insurance.

A more likely candidate is Roberts, who has already rewritten the statute once to save it, in the 2012 ruling upholding the constitutionality of the individual mandate because it was a tax, not a penalty. Would he ride again to Obamacare’s rescue — not because he cares a whit about the law but to protect the court’s reputation?

Some smart people think so. “A major lesson to be learned from the Court’s previous decision . . . is that a majority of the justices do not want to determine the fate of a hugely important social issue,” Supreme Court super-litigator Tom Goldstein wrote for *ScotusBlog*.

Ezra Klein of *Vox* agreed: “The Supreme Court simply isn’t going to rip insurance from tens of millions of people in order to teach Congress a lesson about grammar.”

Let’s hope they’re right, but I have my doubts. Certainly, Roberts zealously guards the court’s institutional standing against accusations of overreaching. But only to a point. The Voting Rights Act offers an example. In 2009, Roberts, as with the Affordable Care Act, demonstrated his willingness to stretch the language of the statute to save it — temporarily. Four years later, he wrote the majority ruling striking down the law’s key provision.

Importantly, Roberts’s initial restraint in that case, as in his ruling upholding the Affordable Care Act, was based on constitutional considerations: the long-standing principle that the court, if possible, should avoid overturning the work of a co-equal branch of government.

In the looming case about federal subsidies, which involves statutory interpretation (actually, whether the court should accept a federal agency’s interpretation of a statute), Roberts may be inclined to a less deferential stance.

Indeed, the two D.C. Circuit judges who invalidated the subsidies — Thomas Griffith and Raymond Randolph — cast their decision in terms of the “legislative supremacy” of Congress and the need for judges to respect statutory language, not to substitute their own surmise about what Congress intended.

Last time around, Roberts was protecting the court from appearing to overstep its constitutional muscle. This case is different, and so, I fear, could be the outcome.

Read more from Ruth Marcus’s archive, follow her on Twitter or subscribe to her updates on Facebook.

Israel Is Acting As If It Is Free Of Moral Responsibilities.

By Eugene Robinson

[Washington Post](#), July 24, 2014

The civilian death toll in Gaza from Israel’s latest incursion is appalling. The right to self-defense is inalienable, but it is not free from moral constraints.

As of this writing, nearly 750 Palestinians, including dozens of children, have been killed since the Israeli assault began. On Thursday, a compound housing a United Nations school — crowded with Gaza residents who had fled their homes to seek shelter — was shelled in an incident still under investigation by the Israeli Defense Forces. Palestinian officials said 15 people were killed and scores injured.

I support Israel. I abhor Hamas. But unleashing such devastating firepower on a tiny, densely crowded enclave in which civilians are trapped — and thus destined to become casualties — is wrong by any reasonable moral standard.

The Israeli government’s motivations in Gaza deserve to be taken seriously. But they do not justify the onslaught that is now in its third week. For Israeli military action to be justifiable, it must be proportionate. What we’re witnessing is not.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday that Hamas is “targeting civilians and hiding behind civilians,” which he called a “double war crime.” He was referring to the fact that Hamas targets Israeli civilians with its rocket attacks and positions its military installations in residential neighborhoods or near schools and hospitals.

Netanyahu is right that these practices are reprehensible and that Israel has every right to respond. But none of this absolves Israel from its own moral responsibility. A civilized nation does not repay every heinous act in kind.

Israel says it is taking great pains to avoid civilian deaths. Indeed, Israel has been warning people to leave — with leaflets, text messages and nonlethal “roof-knocking” bombs — before smashing into residential neighborhoods. It is also true that in many instances Hamas, even knowing that an attack was coming, has instructed Gazans to stay put.

I have seen no confirmed reports, however, of Hamas using force to keep people in targeted areas so they can serve as human shields — and perhaps sway world opinion by boosting the body count. When people decide they must leave their homes, they can do so. But where are these evacuees supposed to go? To the nearest school or hospital? Not if these, too, are considered legitimate targets by the Israeli Defense Forces.

Gazans cannot flee across the closed border with Egypt. They obviously do not have the option of escaping into Israel or sailing away across the Mediterranean Sea. Gaza’s 1.8 million people are packed into an enclave measuring 139 square miles — an area and population roughly the size of Philadelphia.

Israeli officials say they would never consider attacking such targets as a school, a hospital or an apartment building unless Hamas were using these places — which should be off-limits in war — as

military command posts, launch sites for rocket attacks and entry points for tunnels through which assassins and suicide bombers could enter Israel.

Again, however, there is the issue of proportionality. The military and political leadership of Hamas has much better intelligence about what the Israeli armed forces are doing and more options for refuge and shelter than the average Gazan. Indeed, we have not heard of any major Hamas figure being killed. So if you're an Israeli commander and you know that there's a Hamas military facility next to a medical clinic, but you're not completely sure the militants are still there, while the clinic is likely packed with injured civilians, do you still pull the trigger?

Hamas's rockets are much less of a threat than in the past because of Israel's Iron Dome missile-defense system, which has an impressive record. The tunnels are more worrisome because of their potential for use in future terrorism. Assume for the sake of argument that Israel had no choice but to act. What, then, would be a morally acceptable number of Palestinian civilian casualties?

Let me frame the question in practical terms: How many civilian casualties are needed to guarantee another generation of hatred and war?

The scale of death and destruction appears to be aimed not just at lessening the actual threat from Hamas but also at punishing Gazans for elevating Hamas to power in the first place. Netanyahu seems determined to teach them a lesson.

From all reports, however, the people of Gaza were already weary of Hamas. Netanyahu could have offered them an alternative future of free movement, economic development and peace. Instead, he gives them no choice.

Read more from Eugene Robinson's archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook. You can also join him Tuesdays at 1 p.m. for a live Q&A.

The E.U. Is The World's Great No-show

By Fareed Zakaria

[Washington Post](#), July 25, 2014

The Ukraine crisis has shone a spotlight on one of the glaring gaps in the world: the lack of a strategic and purposeful Europe. The United States can and should lead on the response to this conflict, but nothing can really happen without Europe. The European Union is by far Russia's largest trading partner — it buys much of Russia's energy, is the major investor in Russian companies and is the largest destination for Russian capital. Some of President Obama's critics want him to scold Vladimir Putin. But ultimately, it is European actions that the Russian president will worry about.

Consider how Europe has dealt with Ukraine. For years, it could not really decide whether it wanted to encourage Ukrainian membership in the union, so it sent mixed signals to Kiev, which had the initial effect of disappointing pro-European Ukrainians, angering Russians and confusing everyone else.

In 2008, after Moscow sent troops into Georgia, Europe promised an "Eastern partnership" to the countries along Europe's eastern fringe. But, as Neil MacFarlane and Anand Menon point out in the current issue of the journal *Survival*, "The Eastern partnership was a classic example of the EU's proclivity for responding to events by adding long-term and rhetorically impressive, but resource-poor, bolt-ons to existing policy."

European leaders were beginning to woo Ukraine without recognizing how this would be perceived in Russia. Moscow had its own plans for a customs union, to be followed by a Eurasian Union, which was meant to be a counter to the European Union. Ukraine was vital to Russia's plans and was dependent on

Russia for cheap natural gas. Plus, of course, Ukrainians were divided over whether to move west or east.

Negotiations between the European Union and Ukraine for an association agreement meandered along, with the lawyers and translators taking a year to work out the text. In describing this tardiness as a mistake, Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said, “The same thing applies to the [European] Union as to the Vatican. God’s mills grind slowly but surely.” The deal that was offered to Ukraine was full of demands for reform and restructuring of its corrupt economy, but it had little in the way of aid to soften the blows and sweeten the pot. When then-President Viktor Yanukovich rejected Europe’s offer and sided with Moscow, he set in motion a high-speed, high-stakes game that Europe was utterly unprepared for and could not respond to.

If Europe was trying to move Ukraine into its camp, it should have been more generous to Kiev and negotiated seriously with Moscow to assuage its concerns. Instead, Europe seemed to act almost unaware of the strategic consequences of its actions. Then when Russia began a campaign to destabilize Ukraine — which persists to this day — Europe remained a step behind, internally conflicted and unwilling to assert itself clearly and quickly. Those same qualities have been on display following the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17.

The European Union still has a chance to send a much clearer signal to Ukraine, Russia and the world. It could demand that Russia pressure the separatists to cooperate fully with the investigation of Flight 17 and allow the Ukrainian government — which Moscow recognizes — to take control of its own territory in eastern Ukraine. It could put forward a list of specific sanctions that would be implemented were those conditions not met within, say, two weeks.

In addition, Europe should announce longer-term plans on two fronts, first to gain greater energy independence from Russian oil and gas. European nations must also reverse a two-decade downward spiral in defense spending that has made the E.U. a paper tiger in geopolitical terms. Germany, for example, spends about 1.5 percent of its gross domestic product on defense, among the lowest rates in Europe and well below the 2 percent that is the target for all NATO members. It’s hard for a country’s voice to be heard and feared when it speaks softly and carries a twig.

The problem is now being described as European cowardice and appeasement. It is better explained by an absence of coherence among the European Union’s 28 very different countries, a lack of strategic direction and a parochial inward orientation that looks for the world’s problems to go away. The result is a great global vacuum, with terrible consequences.

If we look back years from now and wonder why the liberal, open, rule-based international order weakened and eroded, we might well note that the world’s most powerful political and economic unit, the European Union, with a population and economy larger than America’s, was the great no-show on the international stage.

Read more from Fareed Zakaria’s archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook.

The Vacant Presidency

By Charles Krauthammer

[Washington Post](#), July 24, 2014

The president’s demeanor is worrying a lot of people. From the immigration crisis on the Mexican border to the Islamic State rising in Mesopotamia, Barack Obama seems totally detached from the

world's convulsions. When he does interrupt his endless rounds of golf, fundraising and photo ops, it's for some affectless, mechanical, almost forced public statement.

Regarding Ukraine, his detachment — the rote, impassive voice — borders on dissociation. His U.N. ambassador, Samantha Power, delivers an impassioned denunciation of Russia. Obama cautions that we not “get out ahead of the facts,” as if the facts of this case — Vladimir Putin's proxies shooting down a civilian airliner — are in doubt.

The preferred explanation for the president's detachment is psychological. He's checked out. Given up. Let down and disappointed by the world, he is in withdrawal.

Perhaps.

But I'd propose an alternate theory, less psychological than intellectual, that gives him more credit: Obama's passivity stems from an idea. When Obama says Putin has placed himself on the wrong side of history in Ukraine, he actually believes it. He disdains *realpolitik* because he believes that, in the end, such primitive 19th-century notions as conquest are self-defeating. History sees to their defeat.

“The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice,” said Obama in June 2009 (and many times since) regarding the Green Revolution in Iran.

Ultimately, injustice and aggression don't pay. The Soviets saw their 20th-century empire dissolve. More proximally, U.S. gains in Iraq and Afghanistan were, in time, liquidated. Ozymandias lies forever buried and forgotten in desert sands.

Remember when, at the beginning of the Ukraine crisis, Obama tried to construct for Putin “an offramp” from Crimea? Absurd as this idea was, I think Obama was sincere. He actually imagined that he'd be saving Putin from himself, that Crimea could only rebound against Russia in the long run.

If you really believe this, then there is no need for forceful, potentially risky U.S. counteractions. Which explains everything since: Obama's pinprick sanctions; his failure to rally a craven Europe; his refusal to supply Ukraine with the weapons it has been begging for.

The shooting down of a civilian airliner seemed to validate Obama's passivity. “Violence and conflict inevitably lead to unforeseen consequences,” explained Obama. See. You play with fire, it will blow up in your face. Just as I warned. Now world opinion will turn against Putin.

To which I say: So what? World opinion, by itself, is useless: malleable, ephemeral and, unless mobilized by leadership, powerless. History doesn't act autonomously. It needs agency.

Germany's Angela Merkel still doesn't want to jeopardize trade with Russia. France's François Hollande will proceed with delivery of a Mistral-class attack-helicopter carrier to Russia. And Obama speaks of future “costs” if Russia persists — a broken record since Crimea, carrying zero credibility.

Or did Obama think Putin — a KGB thug who rose to power by turning Chechnya to rubble — would be shamed into regret and restraint by the blood of 298 innocents? On the contrary. Putin's response has been brazen defiance: denying everything and unleashing a massive campaign of lies, fabrications and conspiracy theories blaming it all on Ukraine and the United States.

Putin doesn't give a damn about world opinion. He cares about domestic opinion, which has soared to more than 80 percent approval since Crimea. If anything, he's been emboldened. On Wednesday, his proxies shot down two more jets — a finger to the world and a declaration that his campaign continues.

A real U.S. president would give Kiev the weapons it needs, impose devastating sectoral sanctions on Moscow, reinstate our Central European missile-

defense system and make a Reaganesque speech explaining why.

Obama has done none of these things. Why should he? He's on the right side of history.

Of course, in the long run nothing lasts. But history is lived in the here and now. The Soviets had only 70 years, Hitler a mere 12. Yet it was enough to murder millions and rain ruin on entire continents. Bashar al-Assad, too, will one day go. But not before having killed at least 100,000 people.

All domination must end. But after how much devastation? And if you leave it to the forces of history to repel aggression and redeem injustice, what's the point of politics, of leadership, in the first place?

The world is aflame and our leader is on the 14th green. The arc of history may indeed bend toward justice, Mr. President. But, as you say, the arc is long. The job of a leader is to shorten it, to intervene on behalf of "the fierce urgency of now." Otherwise, why do we need a president? And why did you seek to become ours?

Read more from Charles Krauthammer's archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook.

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES

117 Immigrant Children Placed With Delaware Families

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

The federal government has placed 117 children who illegally immigrated alone into the U.S. with families in Delaware, Gov. Jack Markell told lawmakers in a letter on Thursday.

Markell, who previously said that Delaware had no facilities that could accommodate children illegally migrating alone to the U.S., also urged lawmakers to "remain mindful that we are called upon to provide for the least of our brothers and sisters."

He called the U.S. a "nation of immigrants," saying "the humanitarian crisis of unaccompanied minors fleeing dangerous situations at home does not just affect our border states; it impacts all of us as Americans. Whatever one's politics, we are a nation of immigrants."

In his letter, Markell said that his administration was prepared to work with nonprofits to ensure that child migrants who need services have their basic needs met, saying the presence of child migrants in Delaware may come at a cost for state taxpayers.

He said the children may enroll in Delaware schools while awaiting immigration processing, "as immigrant children ordinarily do." Markell said the Obama administration does not pay for food, clothing or the education of minors placed with families.

"I believe that the federal government should ensure that the children being placed with Delaware families are placed into safe environments and are receiving the services they need, including medical care," Markell wrote. "The education and other services come at a cost for the state, school districts and non-profit providers and I am asking federal officials to work with states to cover those costs and ensure that these children receive appropriate care."

Markell said the number of children currently housed in Delaware was provided by the Obama administration, and were accurate as of Tuesday. He did not specify in the letter whether the minors, who came across the southern border of the U.S. unaccompanied by their parents, were placed with members of their own family.

The letter noted generally that many unaccompanied minors "are placed with families they know in our country – preferably with close relatives." The federal government does not disclose the identity or location of families housing child migrants to protect their privacy of the families and the children, Markell said in his letter.

Markell said he wrote the letter to lawmakers after his office fielded “numerous requests” for information about the immigration crisis from members of the General Assembly. It was addressed to members of the leadership of both parties in the Legislature.

Senate Minority Whip Greg Lavelle, R-Sharples, who had questioned Markell about whether child migrants would be housed in Delaware, read the letter late Thursday and could not comment on the details.

“I’m glad he’s informing Delaware,” said Lavelle, who had publicly expressed concern about the cost to provide services to child migrants housed here. “I think there are still unanswered questions. I think it would be nice to hear from our federal delegation.”

House Speaker Pete Schwartzkopf, a Rehoboth Democrat, said he received Markell’s letter but hadn’t read it.

More than 57,000 children have entered the U.S. illegally since Oct. 1, mostly from three Central American countries: Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, Markell said in his letter. Twenty percent of the child migrants are 12 years old or younger.

“Unfortunately, the debate around immigration has been marked too often by scare-mongering and xenophobia,” Markell wrote. “I know you share my view that, in Delaware, that is not how we approach problems. If we can provide help, shelter and respite to these unaccompanied children, we will do so and remain mindful that we are called upon to provide for the least of our brothers and sisters.”

Read: Markell’s letter to lawmakers about the children

Markell said in his letter that the Obama administration has taken steps to address the flow of immigrants crossing the southern border.

The average time to deport unaccompanied adults illegally crossing the border has been reduced from 33 days to 4 days, and 3,500 immigrants are being returned to Central America weekly, Markell wrote.

Markell was first emailed on July 2 by an official in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services requesting help in housing child migrants crossing into the U.S. alone.

Markell said in Thursday’s letter that the Obama administration reached out to many states seeking assistance. The Health department required, however, that shelter be provided by an entity licensed to provide residential services to kids with an array of services.

Markell said his administration is “not aware of licensed residential facilities in Delaware prepared to provide the required shelter and wrap-around services to a significant number of minors.”

That’s partly, Markell said, because Delaware relies on foster care to meet the needs of the majority of children in state custody, as opposed to group residential settings.

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

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1mL142M>

Delaware Views Mirror Gaza Division

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

The deadly conflict in Gaza piquing concern among global leaders also echoes in Delaware, where back-to-back rallies have drawn hundreds, spotlighting the dichotomy of opinion on the subject.

The situation escalated Thursday in the Mideast with deaths and injuries from Israeli shelling of a hospital in Gaza and a United Nations shelter for Palestinian refugees, amid ongoing negotiation attempts by the U.S. secretary of state and UN officials. Others are pressing Hamas leaders to accept an Egyptian-led cease fire.

As is the case around the world, emotion-charged opinions in Delaware are entrenched because each side holds the other responsible for continuing violence – especially killings of children and other non-military citizens. Both sides feel misunderstood as well as victimized by the other, said professor Stuart Kaufman, a University of Delaware political science and international relations expert.

Even suggesting to someone on one side that the other side may have valid reasons for its position may fall on unhearing ears, he said.

“Both sides are so sensitive, because they feel like victims, that it’s hard to get them to be flexible,” he said. “The hardest part is that they can’t see things from the other side’s point of view.”

On Thursday, more than 100 people turned out for a demonstration in Wilmington planned by University of Delaware students.

Their lunchtime protest – outside the Market Street office of U.S. Sen. Chris Coons – came as part of a “National Day of Action for Gaza,” by a group called the “U.S. Campaign to End the Occupation.”

Organizers said their goal was to send a message: “Stop the unjust violence in Gaza & end all military aid to Israel.” They also called on Israel to end what they called its “shocking violence and human rights abuses.”

Madinah Wilson, president of the student group, said she hoped passersby would listen to demonstrators to shape informed opinions. “If you are not educated, you are complacent,” Wilson said.

But Coons did not see the protest because he was in Washington, D.C. The night before, however, he joined more than 250 at the Siegel Jewish Community Center in Talleyville for a solidarity rally, “Together We Stand With Israel.”

With Coons among its speakers, the event was held by the Jewish Federation of Delaware, the community center and Delaware Rabbinical and Cantors Association.

Rabbi Yair D. Robinson of Congregation Beth Emeth in Wilmington, who leads the Delaware Rabbis and Cantors Association, told The News Journal on Thursday night he is “pro-Palestinian.”

Robinson said he wants Palestinians to have a good life, but says Hamas – not Palestine, Palestinians or Israel – has made that impossible.

The Palestinian people are held hostage by Hamas, which destroyed the extensive and functioning infrastructure Israel left in Gaza, he said. Hamas diverted resources that could have helped ensure a better life in Palestine toward its mission of killing Jews, he said.

Hundreds of millions of dollars and 700,000 tons of concrete were used not for roads, factories, hospitals and schools but for tunnels into Israel solely for the purpose of murderous attacks on Israeli citizens, said Robinson, who also spoke at Wednesday’s solidarity rally.

The mouths of those tunnels intentionally are placed in homes and other non-military settings to use “civilians as human shields,” he said.

But those outside the senator’s office Thursday afternoon voiced a different view.

Omar Abuashi, 21, wore a T-shirt emblazoned with the slogan “Free Palestine,” and his brother Mahmoud, 19, led the flag-waving crowd in chants of “Free, free Palestine,” and “Not another nickel, not another dime, no more money for Israel’s crime.”

The brothers, both of Newark, hold Israel responsible for deaths of innocent children and families on the streets of their homeland.

“Kids are not terrorists,” Omar said. “They kidnapped a 16-year-old boy, forced him to drink gasoline and set him on fire, and people are just watching. They were not doing anything. They are killing everybody in Gaza and the West Bank.”

Peace activists Joan French and Phillip Bannowsky, who are married, said Thursday they were there for humanitarian reasons to protest the Israeli government's "rampant policy" of ethnic cleansing.

Organizers of the community center rally said the event was an opportunity to educate the community, show solidarity and emphasize that Israel's ongoing conflict is not with Palestine, but with the Hamas terrorist group, said Andrea M. Bock of the Jewish Federation of Delaware.

But labeling Hamas solely as terrorists, Kaufman said, is a tactic that negates the other side. Hamas does engage in terrorism, he said, but also is an unrecognized government that provides hospitals and many services.

While each side may be willing to "give an inch" in negotiations, Kaufman said, "there always comes a point beyond which the sides aren't willing to go.

"Then, when that happens, that's when the totalizing language comes out: 'You guys are evil, you just want to destroy us.' There are so many emotional issues, that negotiation is like going into a mine field," he said.

Under Israeli sanctions, he said, Palestinian life "is absolutely horrible.... They have no options. They have no chance for life, liberty or the pursuit of happiness."

Hamas – which denies Jewish suffering in the Holocaust to irritate its enemies – resorted to violence after getting no benefit from being moderate, Kaufman said. "Their calculation becomes 'if we can't actually improve the lives of our people, our fallback plan is to score political points by killing Israelis,' because at least it's an ideological win even if it accomplishes nothing," he said.

A similar staunchness is reflected by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Kaufman said: "The Israeli position on Hamas is they're terrorists and 'We don't talk to terrorists,' end of story."

And neither side wants to share Jerusalem, Kaufman said.

Because the U.S. is a longtime ally and supporter of Israel, opinion tends to favor Israel, he said, adding, "Palestinians aren't very popular in America." But, "if we side with the Israelis, we are siding with the Israelis not giving the Palestinians a decent life. If we side with the Palestinians, we are letting them get away with terrorism. What Americans need to do is think, which of those things is worse?"

Kaufman, who is Jewish, said he has come to believe that denying Palestinians "any possibility of having a decent life is morally worse than what the Palestinians are doing."

Israel – still the one solid U.S. ally in the region – remains the only democracy in the Middle East and, under attack by terrorists, is doing what it must to protect its own people and Palestinians as well, Robinson said.

While some extremists support the idea of Israel retaking Gaza, Robinson said he supports a plan proposed by a former Israeli defense minister to raise \$50 billion to rebuild Palestine after the conflict ends.

"I was happy that Israel pulled out of Gaza in 2005," he said. "It was the right thing to do."

But eying the current conflict, he said, "It plagues my heart ... that a generation of Gazans are being wiped out – if not physically, literally, then psychologically. Gaza is a place of despair and it doesn't have to be."

Staff reporter Terri Sanginiti contributed to this article.

Contact robin brown at (302) 324-2856 or rbrown@delawareonline.com. Find her on Facebook and follow her on Twitter @rbrowndelaware.

Latest casualties in Gaza

A U.N. school in Gaza crowded with hundreds of Palestinians seeking refuge from fierce fighting came under fire Thursday, killing at least 15 civilians and leaving a sad tableau of blood-spattered pillows, blankets and children's clothing scattered in the courtyard.

More than 250 people gathered Wednesday night at the Siegel Jewish Community Center in Talleyville for a solidarity rally called "Together We Stand With Israel." 7/24/14

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1rEFPHz>

Rep. Potter Speaks Out On Haynes Park Charity Event Where Shots Fired

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

A state representative whose wife was fired as a top aide to Wilmington's mayor is questioning how electric power was provided to an unsanctioned charity event in a city park where a number of shots were fired Sunday.

"It is my understanding that the electricity was turned on in Haynes Park on Sunday, which, if true, would indicate that personnel in the Department of Parks and Recreation turned the electricity on, since that access is not available to the general public," state Rep. Charles Potter Jr. said in a letter to Mayor Dennis P. Williams. "It is also my understanding that city personnel were in attendance in the park that day."

A walk through the park Thursday found four active sockets in an electric box near the center of the park.

Potter, who was reached Thursday afternoon, said he was more concerned about residents.

"What I want to tell you is that there was an incident at the park and I want to ensure the safety of my people," he said. "That's it. Nothing more."

Potter's letter, which was obtained by The News Journal, also questions why the special event permit process was not enforced.

City spokeswoman Alexandra Coppadge said the administration is looking into Potter's allegations, but had no comment at this time.

The News Journal obtained a second letter Potter sent to state police Col. Nathaniel McQueen Jr. asking "for an increase in patrols" from his agency. The letter also said he contacted New Castle County police.

State police Sgt. Paul Shavack and county police Sgt. Jacob Andrews confirmed that Potter requested an increase in police patrols. A portion of Potter's district is covered by state and county police. Both agencies said they will review crime data to determine if a change in deployment is warranted.

"Haynes Park is in the Wilmington Police Department jurisdiction and any requests for increased patrols or presence by state police would be accomplished at the request of the Wilmington Police Department," Shavack added.

The News Journal is asking Williams' administration to explain who gave permission to turn park power on at the charity event organized to help Francine Wallace, who was seriously injured in a June 16 fire at her Bird Street home.

The event Sunday came to an end when a group of young men started shooting guns when the basketball courts were full and children were playing on nearby jungle gyms, police and witnesses said.

When asked if his letters had anything to do with his wife, Velda Jones-Potter, being fired by Williams's chief strategist, Potter insisted he was looking out for his constituents' safety.

She was let go for representing her son's business, Foxtail Fest, in meetings with other city leaders. This occurred despite Wilmington's policy prohibiting city employees from representing or assisting "any private enterprise with respect to any matter before the city."

Wilmington billed Foxtail Fest organizers \$7,000 for public resources devoted to the for-profit event.

Organizers of the Sept. 14 music festival filed a lawsuit in April arguing they are not responsible for those costs, adding there was no contract between the host company, What Scene? LLC, and the city for the event.

What Scene? owner Brandon Potter is son of state Rep. Charles Potter, who is the mayor's cousin.

The suit was dismissed by Chancery Court on May 9 for lack of jurisdiction. A new case was then filed in Superior Court.

The charity event in Haynes Park did not have a permit to operate, city officials have said. The permit allows the city to put resources in place based on an event's size, type, time of day, location and other circumstances.

The permit application also outlines costs that may be required. Sunday's event would have cost organizers \$1,425, the city estimated earlier this week.

"As elected officials, it is our responsibility to ensure that our constituents are safe and protected, and that safeguards are in place to prevent violence like this from occurring," Potter ended his letter. "I have several ideas which I think may help, and I will share them at a later date."

Reporter Sean O'Sullivan contributed to this story.

Contact Esteban Parra at (302) 324-2299, eparra@delawareonline.com or Twitter @eparra3.

Shots interrupted a charity basketball tournament Sunday evening at Haynes Park, according to police. It appears no one was wounded in the chaotic situation. 7/21/14

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1mICkld>

Del. Official's Wife Hurt In Va. Tornado Where 2 Died, 36 Injured

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

Two people were killed and at least 36 injured – including the wife of a New Castle County official – when a tornado swept through the Cherrystone Campground in Cheriton on Virginia's Eastern Shore on Thursday morning, officials said.

A tree fell on a tent at the campground, killing a couple from Jersey City, New Jersey — Lord Balatbat and Lolabeth Ortega, both 38, Virginia State Police said. Their 13-year-old son, who was in another tent nearby also hit by a tree, is in a hospital with life-threatening injuries.

Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital in Nassawadox, Virginia, treated 15 adults and 11 children after the tornado, according to spokesman Peter Glagola. Of that number, one adult was undergoing surgery; one was transferred to Medical College of Virginia in Richmond; and 13 adults were treated and released.

Dave Carpenter Jr., New Castle County's coordinator of emergency management, was vacationing with his wife Shelly and their son and daughter at the campground when the storm struck about 9 a.m. Thursday.

"We can confirm that Dave Carpenter, his wife, and their children were in Cherrystone Campground in Cheriton, Va., when a tornado reportedly hit this morning," said Antonio M. Prado, director of communications for the county.

"Carpenter contacted Director of Public Safety Joe Bryant to brief him of his situation. Unfortunately, his wife suffered a dislocated hip and a fractured hipbone after their trailer was flipped over," Prado said.

"She was transported to the hospital, with the expectation she would be transferred soon to an orthopedic hospital. Their children were unharmed, thankfully."

"As for Dave, he said his back was sore after the incident but that seemed to be the extent of things for him. We were sorry to hear of his wife's injury but glad to hear that his family was alright," Prado said in an email. "This was a serious storm, and our hearts go out to the victims who perished as a result of it."

Virginia State Police spokesperson Corrine Geller said the EF-1 tornado came off the bay from the southwest corner of the campground and cut a "V-pattern" through the facility where more than 1,300 people were staying. Geller said "deputies and troopers went to every tent and camper to make sure everyone was accounted for."

Two of the injured children were transferred from Shore Memorial to Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters in Norfolk; one child was admitted; and eight children were treated and released.

Most of those being treated at Nassawadox suffered broken bones, cuts or lacerations, while the more seriously injured suffered head injuries or internal injuries, Glagola said.

Eastville volunteer firefighter Brittney Eder told The Associated Press, "It came in real quick. The sky turned jet black."

Eder said she left the campground before the full force of the storm hit.

Eder's father, Fire Chief David Eder, told her from the scene that the storm felled trees and flipped at least two campers.

Jordan Bertok tweeted two photos of damage at the campground, saying, "Just lived through a tornado."

The area was under a tornado warning from the National Weather Service until 9 a.m. after radar indicated a waterspout over the Chesapeake Bay.

U.S. 13 was littered with debris and hail that ranged from the size of a quarter to a golf ball, witnesses said.

In Cheriton, a tractor-trailer overturned on U.S. 13, with the driver trapped.

Those injured have all been transported to nearby hospitals. At least one person was critically injured.

The Coast Guard and Virginia Marine Police received a report of two vessels overturned in Oyster Bay, on the seaside of Northampton County, after a severe storm struck the area Thursday morning.

The boaters were rescued by Good Samaritans before the Coast Guard arrived on the scene, according to Fifth Coast Guard District spokesman Petty Officer David Weydert.

There were no injuries and information on the condition and types of their vessels was not immediately available.

Emergency personnel from Accomack and Northampton counties responded to multiple traumatic injuries at the campground, police said. An ambulance was also called to a Cheriton home.

Rescue squads from Virginia Beach were also meeting Eastern Shore ambulances at the visitor's center plaza at the northern end of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel to transport some of the injured.

Around 10 a.m., units were still finding injuries, officials at the scene said. Injuries reported so far include a priority one head injury. An injured child was transported to a Hampton Roads hospital.

Just before 9 a.m., there was a report seeking help at Cherrystone Campground, where there reports of overturned campers and a fallen tree on a tent.

Cherrystone Campground, founded in 1964, has 725 sites, including cabins, cottages and deluxe campers.

The campground earlier this month was named as one of three top family RV parks for 2014 by the Good Sam RV Travel Guide.

Early reports

The site commander on the scene at Cherrystone Campground said at least 20 people are in a triage area there “and still finding more.”

Joe Burbee with Bay Creek Golf Club in Cape Charles says there was lots of rain and lightning this morning.

“We got it pretty hard here for 15-20 minutes and it’s gotten better,” he said.

The golf course is about a mile from the campground.

Storm overturns truck on Route 13 on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

A tornado touched down on a campground in Northampton County in Virginia, killing two and injuring at least 20, according to police. Workers from the campground say panic and chaos quickly overtook the site early Thursday morning.

13News Now viewer Linda Weners Zaremski emailed a photo of large pieces of hail that fell at Marina Villages in Cape Charles.

“Debris was flying down the street – our chairs, beach balls. We lost power,” she said.

The Northampton County Sheriff’s Office told 13News Now that there was heavy rain falling.

Virginia State Police were called at 8:48 a.m. to an accident involving an overturned tractor-trailer on U.S. 13 near Cheriton. The driver was transported to a local hospital with minor injuries, according to police spokeswoman Corrine Geller.

Tornado coverage of Cherrystone Campground from WVEC

“We do have some campers overturned” at Cherrystone campground, Geller said.

A campground official denied access to reporters Thursday, saying, “Too much going on down there.”

A traumatic injury call was also placed there where a male patient was cut by a window.

Marva Stratton of Cheriton wasn’t hurt when a tree limb fell on her home.

Severe storm brought hail, caused numerous injuries at nearby campground.

A likely tornado tears through an eastern Virginia campground, killing three and injuring at least 20. Linda So reports.

Gannett-owned WVEC-13 contributed to this report.

Contact News Delivery Editor Jon P. Zaines at (302) 324-2813 or jzaines@delawareonline.com.

Cheriton storm brings hail, numerous injuries.

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1mJ51ov>

Cape’s Board Abolishes Entire Reading List

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

The Cape Henlopen School District’s summer reading list for incoming high school freshmen will not include the controversial book, “The Miseducation of Cameron Post,” – or any other book.

The district school board voted 6-1 on Thursday night to return to the district’s previous summer reading requirements, which demand college preparatory students read one book for the summer and honors students read two books.

Only board member Noble Prettyman voted against the motion on Thursday. Freshman board member Alison Meyer had earlier expressed support to restore the original list but voted for the final motion.

"This was the only way we could make each side somewhat happy," she said.

The board removed the book, which features foul language and a main character who is gay, from the list in June. Six board members cited the book's foul language, not sexual orientation, as the reason behind their vote.

Earlier story: Cape Henlopen to discuss book pulled from list

The board's decision may also avoid action from the American Civil Liberties Union of Delaware, which urged the board to overturn the June decision.

The ACLU argued the board had not properly notified the public before it voted to remove the book and could be violating both Delaware sunshine laws and the district's own policy.

While it's easy for the board to delete items from its agenda during a meeting, it is limited in its ability to add them, said Dave Williams, the district's legal counsel,

"You can take items off but you're so limited in adding items," he said. "It really doesn't work on the other side of the coin."

Thursday's meeting stirred up the board and brought ire from the public.

Board member Sandi Minard took offense at accusations that her decision in June was based on the book's content, rather than its language.

At one point, she began reading excerpts of the book featuring explicit language.

"This board's character has been judged, its integrity has been judged," she said. "It's up to the board to select material that is age appropriate. We're responsible for setting boundaries."

Members of the public were split on the board's final decision.

Rob Spicer, whose son, Matt, graduated from Cape Henlopen High School in 2013 and identifies as a gay alumnus, called the decision "a copout."

"The administrators did their job and provided a diverse list," he said. "The school board abdicated their responsibility, because the heat in the kitchen was too hot for them."

While Matt Spicer compared "Cameron Post" to "To Kill a Mockingbird," which also deals with rape, other members of the public argued the book's scenes were too graphic for 14-year-old readers.

Celeste Metcalfe, who wrote the original letter to the board concerning the summer reading list, applauded the board's decision on Thursday.

Cape parent Celeste Metcalfe supported the board's decision to remove the reading list. Metcalfe agreed with board member Andy Lewis, who suggested a policy for reviewing books.

"We have PG-13 movies and we need to have PG-13 books," she said.

Contact Leigh Giangreco at lgiangrec@dmg.gannett.com or on Twitter @LeighGiangreco

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1mLhBnn>

Sallie Mae Profits Drop In 2nd Quarter

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

The profits at Sallie Mae decreased in the second quarter, the company reported in the first financial results report since it spun off its student loan servicing into a separate entity.

Sallie Mae, which maintains offices in Delaware, reported net income of \$44 million, compared to \$76 million in the second quarter last year.

The diluted earnings per share in the second quarter of 2014 were 9 cents per share, compared to 17 cents last year at this time.

The firm's 2013 earnings reflect the sale to an affiliate of \$71 million in loans. Comparing this year's results to 2013 earnings without the special loan-sale circumstances, Sallie Mae's earnings from continuing operations rose 38 percent from \$32 million to \$44 million.

Loan originations at Sallie Mae were up 3 percent compared to a year ago at the second quarter. Deposits at Sallie Mae Bank increased due to growth in money market accounts, the company reported, and there were total deposits of \$9.5 billion.

The operating expenses at Sallie Mae were up considerably in the second quarter, at \$75 million compared to \$67 million in last year's second quarter. The company reported that \$14 million of the current quarter operating expenses were attributed to the costs associated with spinning off part of the business to create a new, publicly traded company called Navient.

On April 30 Sallie Mae created the new company, which trades as NAVI, by breaking out the student loan servicing segment of the company.

In the second-quarter earnings statement released Thursday, the company noted that it would hang on to past-due loans longer under this arrangement. Prior to the spin-off the company would sell loans after they were at least 90 days behind on payments. The company will now wait 120 days before selling these delinquent loans, the company said.

Sallie Mae reported a 35 percent increase in interest income, and it noted that the private student loans it held in the second quarter was \$7.4 billion, up 40 percent from a year prior.

Contact Nichole Dobo at 324-2281 or ndobo@delawareonline.com. On Twitter @NicholeDobo.

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1rDFvZu>

WSFS Earnings Up In Second Quarter

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

The second-quarter earnings for WSFS Financial Corporation, the parent company of the state's largest independent community bank, show a 20 percent increase from the second quarter of 2013.

In earnings released Thursday, the bank reported net income of \$12.7 million in the second quarter of 2013, up from \$10.3 million at this time a year earlier. The diluted earnings per share were \$1.39 in this year's second quarter, up from \$1.16 per share in the second quarter a year earlier.

This continued a trend of strong financial performance by the bank, something that has not been universal in the nation's financial sector. The top-line growth posted by WSFS was attributed to quality of credit and an increase in fee income from services such as wealth management, originating mortgages and its ATM business.

"We are working hard to maintain the momentum," Stephen A. Fowle, executive vice president and CFO of the bank said Thursday in an interview with The News Journal.

This is the first earnings report since the bank announced a significant milestone was achieved in a deal to increase its market share in Delaware.

In mid-June, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency approved the application by WSFS to acquire First National Bank of Wyoming. This was the last regulatory approval needed to complete the deal.

"Strength in mortgage banking revenue reflects the addition of Array Financial, which joined with us nearly a year ago, and we look forward to our upcoming partnership with First National Bank of Wyoming," Mark A. Turner, president and CEO, said in a statement.

The deal is expected to be complete by Sept. 5. The conversion of FNB Wyoming locations to WSFS is planned to take place by Sept. 8.

Gov. Markell Enjoys A Day At The Fair

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

Gov. Jack Markell took a break on Thursday. He put on a pair of sneakers and climbed on big farm equipment. He took on young farmers in a watermelon eating contest and tossed an egg with Miss Delaware.

So goes Governor's Day at the Delaware State Fair, an annual must-attend event for the state's chief executive — regardless of whether they're trolling for votes.

"I love doing this stuff," said Markell, a second-term Democrat who is prohibited by Delaware's Constitution from seeking another term in the governor's office.

"The fair is a joyful place," he said. "It's nice to be in a joyful place."

Well before the masses arrived to consume fried Oreos, play carnival games and ride the Ferris wheel, Markell's Day at the fair began at 9 a.m., with the dedication of a poultry barn on site.

STORY: 117 immigrant children put with families in Delaware

He moved quickly to tour demonstrations prepared by Future Farmers of America participants at local schools, and on to the egg toss and watermelon eating contest with his partner, Miss Delaware, Brittany Lewis.

"This is what it's all about," Lewis said later about meeting Delawareans and touring the fairgrounds with Markell. "It's one of the most exciting parts about being Miss Delaware. It's definitely a break from the Miss America prep."

Lewis let the egg slip on the governor's fourth toss and the pair fell to Aubrie Jones, 15, and Devan Just, 16, of Delmar High School. "I didn't even know it was the governor," Just said when asked about toppling her more famous opponent.

In the nearby Dover Building on the fairgrounds, Ruth Potter, 80, of Magnolia, spoke to the governor about her prize-winning quilt. Potter, who learned to quilt with friends in a group they affectionately named "stitch and bitch," said the governor was impressed with her work on the queen-sized quilt, which took her "a few years" to complete.

"He congratulated me and said it was pretty amazing," Potter said.

Markell didn't skip all business while at the fair. He signed into law a measure that clarifies how many game birds Delaware hunters may legally possess and "removes archaic and irrelevant language relative to rabbit and muskrat possession."

The governor also joined Perdue chief executive Jim Perdue, and representatives from the DuPont Co.'s Pioneer seed unit, to announce that Perdue AgriBusiness would contract with Delaware farmers to produce 40,000 acres of soybeans that DuPont will use to produce its trans-fat free soybean oil.

That's up from 6,000 acres contracted to produce beans for DuPont's Plenish brand oil today.

"This state understands the importance of an agriculture economy," Perdue said during the announcement.

In his remarks, Markell praised Perdue, which has processing plants in Georgetown and Milford, where it produces organic chicken.

"Some people might think their headquarters is in Salisbury," Markell said. "But (Perdue) is a Delaware company. Perdue has more employees here than they do in that neighboring state."

Markell said Delawareans he met at the fair, like those he meets in his grocery store, were willing to walk up and express their thoughts about the job he's doing.

"This is the ultimate of sort of retail ... I wouldn't even call it politics," Markell said, noting he is not up for re-election. "People are just really straightforward about what's going well, what's not. It's great."

The governor was commended by at least two fair-goers for being willing to engage and listen.

Nick LaRussa and Roxanne Dvorak, who moved to Newark a few years back from Texas, met Markell on Thursday and said they were impressed that he was so accessible. "I love to meet politicians. And everybody here in Delaware is very approachable," Dvorak said.

Added LaRussa, "In Texas, they're in the car and gone. They really don't want to interact with the people."

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

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1rEosqk>

Wilmington Firefighters Light Flames Of Hope

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

Some things just have a way of making you feel good.

The smell of your favorite meal – lasagna or spicy chili for me – coming from the kitchen.

The sound of Jackson Browne's "Running on Empty" coming out of the speakers just as you hit an open country road with rolling hills.

The sight of a puppy licking a smiling, giggling kid's face.

Another thing that's always made me feel good is getting a new coat for the winter. I remember one year in my younger punk days, I got a pea coat and engineer boots. I felt like I ruled the world.

A self-absorbed teen, it didn't cross my mind at the time that there were thousands of less fortunate people, many of them children, who had never experienced that feeling. They had never put on a new winter coat that was all their own, zipped it up and admired themselves in the mirror.

But thanks to an effort by the Wilmington Fire Department, Firefighters Local 1590 and monetary donations from you, dozens of needy children in the city were able to experience that feeling last year and will hopefully again this year.

The firefighters have partnered with Operation Warm and will be holding a fundraiser Sunday at the Blue Rocks game at Frawley Stadium as part of Firefighter Appreciation Day. Firefighters and a firetruck will be out front, and information will be available about this year's fundraising efforts.

The firefighters provided 100 new coats to children last year and hope to double that this year. To do it, they need help from us. The coats, which are all made in America and help support American jobs, cost about \$32 each to make and ship. But any donation helps, according to Lt. Joe Leonetti Jr. of the Wilmington Fire Department and Local 1590.

You don't have to go to the game to donate. You can make your donation online or learn more about the effort at www.operationwarm.org/Wilmington.

A new coat provides more than warmth, according to Leonetti, who added, "a new coat is dignity and pride, core values we respect in the fire service and hope to promote to these children who too often develop low self-esteem."

An effort to be #delaproud of – and one you can join by donating.

Share in the Only in Delaware conversation 24/7 on [delawareonline](http://delawareonline.com). Contact Jeffrey Gentry at jgentry@delawareonline.com. Follow him on Twitter: @jeffreygentry

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1mJLogc>

WILMINGTON JOURNAL NEWS EDITORIALS

Asking Tough Questions Of Wilmington

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

Wilmington, like every other city in America, faces tough challenges in this post-industrial age. Jobs are hard to come by for many. The city struggles to find revenue to provide services. Crime scares off would-be residents and businesses. And the middle class battles to maintain a lifestyle conducive to raising children.

No city is without these challenges. And no city has solved all of its problems. The key is facing up to that fact and honestly assessing the city's pluses and minuses.

The good news is that Wilmington is beginning to do that. This week, the city revealed the first part of an assessment by an outside consultant. It promises to take a deeper look at Wilmington's strengths and weaknesses. Mayor Dennis Williams deserves credit for laying out the facts.

A public discussion this week focused on several of the negatives: crime, education and city government's often slow-moving services. Examining those problems does not take away from the city's positives: its location, its corporate structure and, of course, its people.

The preliminary report and subsequent discussions on its meaning give Wilmington residents and all Delaware residents something to ponder. The point here is that it pays to be honest. For example, business owners have complained for years about the city's slow permitting process. That the city government has a reputation for that slowness should catch no one by surprise, except, perhaps, for city officials.

That sort of problem can be solved. The process can be analyzed and fixed. Will it turn Wilmington's fortunes around overnight? Of course not. However, it will improve the business climate. More important, it will give businesses one less reason to avoid setting up shop in the city.

Crime presents a different sort of problem. The downtown business district sees very little of the crime that is hitting some neighborhoods. Violence, however, affects all of us. That is why making neighborhoods safer, cutting down on the drug trafficking and, most of all, bringing economic development to these neighborhoods is a crucial challenge to the Williams administration, New Castle County, the state government, and the entire population of Wilmington.

This week's offering was only the first look at what the mayor is saying will be a comprehensive economic development plan for the city. This is a positive development. It is imperative that the city have a vision of growth.

We do not expect this plan to be perfect. No plan ever is. Of course, the crucial test will be action.

No matter how good an idea is, if it is not put into effect, it will remain merely a fragment of what might have been. The global economy has changed. Wilmington and Delaware are competing with not just nearby states, but with the world. Things can be made cheaper and, often, better elsewhere. Today's competitors must know their weaknesses and fix them.

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1mKBcUI>

Let's Bring The Imagination Library Program To Delaware

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 24, 2014

Dolly Parton, the wonderful singer, songwriter, actress and owner of Dollywood Entertainment Park in the East Tennessee mountains, started this valuable program in 1995. Her Dollywood Foundation gave a free, age-appropriate children's picture or storybook each month to every child born in her native Sevier

County. Each child and her/his family received a free book a month for his first four years of age or until his fifth year and kindergarten age.

This program was so successful, it was expanded. In 2014, it is now in 46 of our 50 states and in Canada, England, Australia and Ireland. Since the Imagination Library program started, over 50 million books have been sent to these preschool children and their families. Delaware is 1 of 4 states not participating in this program. I am serving as a facilitator to form a supportive Delaware Imagination Library Coalition to bring it to our preschool children.

The strategy for bringing this program to our state is first to inform individual and organization leaders about the program and then have them endorse it and join the supportive coalition. There is no financial obligation for joining this coalition.

After forming the coalition, a coalition committee will be formed to contact organizations in our state and ask them to be sponsors and help fund the program. The Dollywood Foundation has sent me a package of information explaining how the program works in other states.

The foundation selects and mails the books. The cost of the books is \$30 per year for 12 books per child or \$120 for 48 books per child for the four-year period. This includes the cost of administering the program. I will keep individuals and organizations who join our coalition updated about this movement.

The Dollywood Foundation sent me a list of organizations in other states that have helped fund this program. It includes the following organizations: The United Way; local businesses; civic groups; local governments; private citizens; foundations; friends of the library; chambers of commerce and school systems.

A Delaware plan could start the program in each county by private funding sources establishing three county-administering offices in nonprofit organizations. My recommendation is to have these staff administering this program in Delaware to work in a public library in each of our counties.

First, cover all preschool children in lower socioeconomic areas. Then, get state government to include grant funds from the approximately \$50 million given each year in grants to nonprofit community organizations. The total cost each year for this valuable statewide program will be about \$1.35 million.

This approach will ensure every one of our approximately 45,000 Delaware preschool children each year from infancy through age 4 will receive an age-appropriate book.

The Dollywood Foundation has many research studies, which reveal preschoolers in this program are much more successful in academic achievement after entering formal academic schooling.

This program makes a very important contribution to the development of human potential for children fortunate to benefit from this Imagination Library resource. Let's provide it for all of our future Delaware preschool children.

One of our nation's greatest intellects, the late Dr. Albert Einstein, wisely informed us, "Imagination is more important than intelligence."

This valuable research-proven program and cost-effective Imagination Library program will help improve both important abilities in our state's preschool children by increasing their reading confidence, competency along with developing a lifelong love of reading.

The Dollywood Foundation has sent me brochures that further explain this program. Upon request, I will mail a brochure to each person or organization interested in learning about joining our supportive Delaware Imagination Library Coalition.

I consider this to be one of our more important civic responsibility opportunities.

I ask everyone reading this information to bring this to the attention of all Delaware organizations in which you are a member and ask all to understand and join our Delaware Imagination Library Coalition. Again, joining our coalition does not mean any financial obligation.

Charles S. McDowell can be reached at cmcdowell@potteranderson.com.

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1rEko9A>