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Subject: Vice Presidential News Clips for Tuesday, July 8, 2014

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TO: THE VICE PRESIDENT AND STAFF

DATE: TUESDAY, JULY 8, 2014 -- 6:15 AM EDT

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- + Haslam To Visit Southeast Tenn. Before NGA Meeting (AP)
- + John Walsh, CNN's New Anti-NRA Advocate (POLITICO)
- + Biden: 'Tea Baggers' Preventing New Gun-Control Laws (NTRVW)
- + Days Before Launching A New Fugitive-seeking Show On CNN, John Walsh Talks Gun Control (NYDN)
- + No One Is Reading 'Hard Choices,' Either. (WP)
- + Dr. Biden Invites You To Follow Her Trip To Africa (MSNBC)
- + Ukrainian Employer Of Joe Biden's Son Hires A D.C. Lobbyist (TIME)

NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS:

- + Can Israeli And Palestinian Leaders End The Revenge Attacks? (NYT)
- + Germany And The Minimum Wage (NYT)
- + The Long Wait To See A Doctor (NYT)
- + New York's Mapmaking Scandal (NYT)
- + The Messy World Of Smart Guns (NYT)
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- + Should Germans Read 'Mein Kampf'? (NYT)
- + The Promise Of Aleppo's Radicals (NYT)
- + Thai Rice And Nigerian Politics (NYT)
- + Taking Sides In Libya (NYT)
- + U.S. Should Aid Those Who Fight Terror, Not Abet Human Rights Abuses (WP)
- + Health-care Sign-up Mistakes Pose A New Challenge For Obamacare, Not A Disaster (WP)
- + Eduard Shevardnadze Helped Change The World (WP)
- + On Wall Street, The Corleone Family Fits Right In (WP)
- + Boehner's Unprincipled Fight With Obama Over Separation Of Powers (WP)
- + Zero-tolerance Policies Are Destroying The Lives Of Black Children (WP)
- + The Divided States Of Obama (WP)
- + NSA's Misguided Snooping On Innocent People (WP)
- + Millennials Get Cut Off At The Polls (WP)
- + Obama's 'imperial Presidency' Doesn't Rule Much Of Anything (WP)

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES:

- + Firefighters, Others Walk Out Of Council Meeting (WILNJ)
- + Christiana Care Marks One Year Of Cord Blood Banking (WILNJ)
- + Wilmington Violence: 'So Many Funerals' (WILNJ)
- + Police Clear Bomb Threat At UD (WILNJ)

- + Kent Sports Complex's Future Unknown (WILNJ)
- + Overcome Addictions With Plenty Of Programs In Delaware (WILNJ)
- + University Of Delaware Tuition, Fees To Increase (WILNJ)

WILMINGTON JOURNAL NEWS EDITORIALS:

- + Rethink City Worker Law In Wilmington (WILNJ)
 - + The Right Way To Help Students With Disabilities (WILNJ)
 - + Time To Separate Health Care Coverage And Work? (WILNJ)
 - + Our Disappearing Role As A Global Leader (WILNJ)
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BIDEN IN THE NEWS:

BIDEN: DON'T FORGET ABOUT ME (WSJ)

Wall Street Journal, July 8, 2014

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

HASLAM TO VISIT SOUTHEAST TENN. BEFORE NGA MEETING (AP)

Associated Press, July 8, 2014

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) - Gov. Bill Haslam will be in southeast Tennessee early in the week then return to Nashville to host the National Governors Association summer meeting July 10-13.

On Tuesday, the Republican governor will visit Pikeville, Dunlap and Monteagle to make agriculture and transportation grant announcements.

He is scheduled to be back in Nashville by Thursday for the beginning of the NGA meeting being held at the Omni Hotel.

Vice President Joe Biden is also scheduled to attend the opening session of the meeting, which concludes on Sunday.

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JOHN WALSH, CNN'S NEW ANTI-NRA ADVOCATE (POLITICO)

Politico, July 8, 2014

John Walsh, the host of CNN's new primetime series "The Hunt," looks set to replace Piers Morgan as the cable network's in-house gun control advocate.

"We have a serious problem with guns in this country, and we refuse to address it," Walsh, the creator and host of "America's Most Wanted," told reporters on Monday. "The NRA solution to arm every grammar school 80-year-old teacher with a gun is absolutely ludicrous."

Walsh also said that Vice President Joe Biden had agreed with his claim that politicians are "scared s--less" of the NRA.

Walsh says he once told Biden, "'90 percent of Americans are for a responsible background check for a gun, and you know what this Congress has done? Not voted on it, not brought it to the floor, not introduced a bill... They're all scared shitless of the NRA, aren't they?'"

"John, every one of them," Biden replied, according to Walsh. "'Because the NRA will run a tea bagger against you. ... They'll put 5 million bucks against you.'"

Morgan, who is no longer with CNN, drew national attention in 2012 and 2013 for taking on the NRA and advocating for enhanced gun control legislation in the wake of the Sandy Hook elementary school shooting. Morgan made the issue a centerpiece of his program and hosted combative interviews with pro-gun advocates. His show was cancelled earlier this year due to low ratings.

In Monday's remarks, Walsh called Morgan "the only journalist who had the balls to tackle the gun problem straight on."

Walsh's "The Hunt," which debuts July 13, is not a political talk show - it focuses on chasing criminals, similar to "America's Most Wanted" - so debates over gun control will not figure prominently in his program. Still, Walsh's association with CNN will likely invite criticism from anti-

gun control conservatives.

Walsh is a gun owner and a hunter. He has been reporting on crime since his six-year-old son was killed by a serial murderer in 1981.

See more of Walsh's remarks on gun control at The Wrap.

BIDEN: 'TEA BAGGERS' PREVENTING NEW GUN-CONTROL LAWS (NTRVW)

National Review, July 8, 2014

Vice president Joe Biden has disparaged gun-rights advocates as "tea baggers," CNN host John Walsh told reporters today.

Walsh, the former host of America's Most Wanted, recounted that he bonded with Biden over the need for more gun control and their distaste for the National Rifle Association.

"I said to Joe Biden, '90 percent of Americans are for a responsible background check for a gun, and you know what this Congress has done? Not voted on it, not brought it to the floor, not introduced a bill,'" he recalled to reporters during an event for his upcoming program, a crime show called The Hunt

. "I said, 'They're all scared shitless of the NRA, aren't they?'"

"John, every one of them," the vice president replied, according to Walsh

. "'Because the NRA will run a tea-bagger against you. . . . They'll put 5 million bucks against you.'"

Walsh made clear that he is a gun owner, but said the United States needs to do more to address gun violence and characterized himself as "the biggest advocate for background checks out of any gun owner in America."

DAYS BEFORE LAUNCHING A NEW FUGITIVE-SEEKING SHOW ON CNN, JOHN WALSH TALKS GUN CONTROL (NYDN)

New York Daily News, July 8, 2014

CNN's newest star has the gun lobby in his sights.

With Piers Morgan out of the picture, former "America's Most Wanted" host John Walsh is seizing the spotlight that's on him as he launches a show on the network, and turning it on the gun lobby Walsh, whose CNN show, "The Hunt," debuts Sunday, said Monday that politicians are "scared s-less" of the NRA.

Walsh, a gun owner who says he loves to hunt, is a longtime advocate of background checks and other measures for gun sales.

He said he has "testified in every state capital multiple times" about guns.

"I've hunted all my life. I hunt quail on my ranch," he said. "And I am the biggest advocate for background checks out of any gun owner in America."

He added, "I am the guy that has seen both sides of the issue."

I've hunted all my life. I hunt quail on my ranch. And I am the biggest advocate for background checks out of any gun owner in America.

"I own guns. I'm the father of a murdered child. I've done nothing but track violence in America since my son was murdered. We have a serious problem with guns in this country. And we refuse to address it. And the NRA solution to arm every grammar-school 80-year-old teacher with a gun is absolutely ludicrous," Walsh said.

"I said to Joe Biden, 'Ninety percent of Americans are for a responsible background check for a gun, and you know what this Congress has done? Not voted on it, not brought it to the floor, not introduced a bill,'" Walsh said. "I said, 'They're all scared s-less of the NRA, aren't they?'"

Walsh said the vice president replied, "John, every one of them. Because the NRA will run a tea-bagger against you. . . . They'll put 5 million bucks against you."

CNN President Jeff Zucker noted that Walsh has spoken in favor of gun-control measures "many, many, many times on CNN."

Like "America's Most Wanted," "The Hunt" aims to help bring fugitives to justice and will have a heavy online component - including a tie-in with Facebook, which will send regional Amber Alerts to users.

NO ONE IS READING 'HARD CHOICES,' EITHER. (WP)

By Philip Bump

Washington Post, July 8, 2014

By now, the poor sales of Hillary Clinton's new book "Hard Choices" are well-documented.

(Relatively poor, we will add, given the complex topography of bookselling.)

But another metric came to our attention this weekend which allows us to loosely evaluate a more interesting bit of data: how much the book is being read.

Jordan Ellenberg, a professor of mathematics at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, outlined what he calls the "Hawking Index" in the Wall Street Journal over the weekend. The index is a way to estimate how far into books people actually get. It's named for Stephen Hawking, author of the dense "A Brief History of Time" which, swear to God, I've actually read. (In part.)

It works like this: Every time people highlight something in a book on their Kindles, Amazon records that data. Ellenberg takes the top five highlights listed at the site for any given book and correlates them to a page number. Comparing the average page number of those five highlights to the length of the book gives you a sense of how many people made it how far in. (He adds:

"Disclaimer: This is not remotely scientific and is for entertainment purposes only!" Which, fine.)

The summer's most-read book? Donna Tartt's "The Goldfinch." Least-read? Thomas Piketty's "Capital in the Twenty-First Century," for which the notations only get about 2.4 percent of the way in.

So, naturally, we decided to apply this methodology to "Hard Choices" and other recent or comparable political books. And we have our own ranking, which we now present in order from estimated-least- to estimated-most-read.

1. "Hard Choices," by Hillary Clinton. Hawking Index: 2.04 percent.

Well, there you have it. The deepest into Hard Choices the popular highlights get is page 33, a quote about smart power. Three of the five most-popular highlights occur within the first 10 pages. We will note the same caveat that Ellenberg applies to Piketty. "Hard Choices" is fairly new, and fairly long. Still, though, one would think more people had made it past page 33.

The most popular quote? "Do all the good you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." Which, like several of the top quotes from the authors listed below, isn't actually a quote from Hillary Clinton. Instead, it's a mantra from her family's Methodist faith.

2. "Promises to Keep," by Joe Biden. Hawking Index: 2.78 percent.

Oh, Joe. Joe, Joe, Joe, Joe. Did you know that Joe Biden has a book? Joe Biden has a book. And people haven't read very far into it.

The most popular snippet is a bit of Bidenesque feel-goodery: "The art of living is simply getting up after you've been knocked down." There you go! But it is hard to find the most popular highlights in the book, because there simply aren't enough to warrant placement on the main Kindle page.

3. "A Fighting Chance," by Elizabeth Warren. Hawking Index: 14.38 percent.

Clinton supporters have compared "Hard Choices" to "A Fighting Chance" in the past, perhaps because they recognize it compares well on sales. And Warren's book is also the third least-deeply read - although readers are still making it a bit further in than either of the two Democrats most likely to run in 2016, apparently. The second-most highlighted quote in Warren's book is the one that goes deepest in, perhaps given the punchiness with which it begins: That the economic crisis "didn't have to happen."

4. "My Life," by Bill Clinton. Hawking Index: 15.28 percent.

The other Clinton's (extremely long) memoir apparently hasn't been read as much on the Kindle, as befits its age. While the most-highlighted passage in "Hard Choices" has been highlighted 223 times (as of writing), the most-highlighted in "My Life" has only been selected 65 times. That passage? "I learned that what seems funny to the strong can be cruel and humiliating to the weak."

(Note: Biden's most highlighted passage has been highlighted nine times.)

5. "Living History," by Hillary Clinton. Hawking Index: 17.88 percent.

Clinton's first autobiography was, by all accounts, more of a crowd-pleaser. Unlike "Hard Choices," it focused broadly on her life and time in the White House. And people appear to have read it more.

As with "Hard Choices," the most popular quote isn't from Clinton. It's from Eleanor Roosevelt. "A woman is like a teabag. You never know how strong she is until she's in hot water." The third-most-popular highlight is a good one, deriving from Clinton's Methodist faith: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."

Sound familiar?

6. "Dreams from My Father," by Barack Obama. Hawking Index: 17.94 percent.

Doing slightly better than his 2008 nemesis, the most-highlighted quotes from Obama's autobiography appear a little deeper into the work, on average. Most of the popular passages deal with race, but the most popular is about life's challenges - something everyone eats up. He refers to a friend from college: "You might be locked into a world not of your own making, her eyes said, but you still have a claim on how it is shaped. You still have responsibilities."

7. "Duty," by Robert Gates. Hawking Index: 24.55 percent.

Shortly after "Hard Choices" was released, Clinton supporters told Politico to compare sales to Gates's and Warren's books. That first one was a mistake. Gates's book has handily outsold "Hard Choices" (so far), and according to this ("not remotely scientific and for entertainment purposes only") metric, is being out-read, too.

On the plus side for Clinton, none of the most-highlighted passages in "Duty" are from his excoriation of Clinton's Iraq vote. But that was on page 376, and most people apparently only got as deep as page 300.

DR. BIDEN INVITES YOU TO FOLLOW HER TRIP TO AFRICA (MSNBC)

MSNBC, July 8, 2014

On Tuesday, Dr. Jill Biden arrived in Africa with plans to take in the sights and discuss female empowerment, education, democracy, and leadership along a three-city tour.

"Dr. Biden's trip to Africa will highlight the importance of girls' education and women's participation in government, the economy, and civil society in accelerating economic development; improving health and educational outcomes; strengthening democratic governance; and fostering peace and security," The White House website wrote.

To help stress the importance of her trip, Dr. Biden used her husband's Vice President Joe Biden's Instagram Account, @VP, as well as her own Twitter account, @DrBiden, to share her travels as she embarked on her summer vacation through Africa.

Hi everybody, it's Jill Biden! I'm traveling across Africa this week to promote women's empowerment. While I'm here, I'm borrowing Joe's Instagram account to share some photos from the road. Stay tuned for more!

Preventing and responding to gender-based violence is a cornerstone of our commitment to advancing gender equality, and earlier today, Dr. Biden visited Panzi Hospital in the Congo to meet with survivors and hear their stories.

UKRAINIAN EMPLOYER OF JOE BIDEN'S SON HIRES A D.C. LOBBYIST (TIME)

TIME, July 8, 2014

When Vice President Joe Biden's son, R. Hunter Biden, joined the board of a private Ukrainian oil and natural gas company this spring, he explained his new job as a legal one, disconnected from any effort to influence the Obama Administration. In a press release, the younger Biden boasted of his abilities on issues like improving corporate transparency.

But the company, Burisma Holdings, did not disclose at the time the scope of their plans for influencing the U.S. government. Recently released documents show that Biden's hiring coincided with the launch of a new effort to lobby members of Congress about the role of the company in Ukraine and the country's quest for energy independence.

David Leiter, a former Senate chief of staff to Secretary of State John Kerry, signed on to work as a lobbyist for Burisma on May 20, 2014, about a week after Biden announced he was joining the company, according to lobbying disclosures filed this month.

Leiter's involvement in the firm rounds out a power-packed team of politically-connected Americans that also includes a second new board member, Devon Archer, a Democratic bundler and former adviser to John Kerry's 2004 presidential campaign. Both Archer and Hunter Biden have worked as business partners with Kerry's son-in-law, Christopher Heinz, the founding partner of Rosemont Capital, a private-equity company.

Biden's office referred questions to a Burisma spokesman, who says Biden has not been involved in contacting members of Congress or the Obama Administration about the company. "His role, like all board members, is to provide strategic guidance to Burisma," said Lawrence Pacheco, who works in Washington D.C. for FTI Consulting, a communications firm that is also employed by

Burisma.

But Burisma is contacting officials in Washington through Leiter's lobbying firm, ML Strategies. "ML Strategies is working with Burisma to educate U.S. officials about the company and its role in creating a stable and secure energy future for Ukraine, not any specific policy or legislation," Pacheco said. "Burisma supports energy independence, economic growth, national sovereignty and regional stability and will engage as needed to encourage efforts to further these goals."

Some Democratic senators, meanwhile, have been working to secure more U.S. funding, either directly or through entities like the Export-Import Bank, to improve Ukraine's domestic energy production potential. On June 27, Sen. Edward Markey of Massachusetts, wrote President Obama a letter with three other Democratic senators calling for increased aid. "We should leverage the full resources and expertise of the U.S. government to assist Ukraine in improving its energy efficiency, increasing its domestic production, and reforming its energy markets," wrote Markey, who has also proposed legislation with about \$40 million in additional aid for Ukrainian energy development.

Markey's letter was trumpeted by Burisma Holdings as a commendable move towards securing the future security of Ukraine. "Burisma Holdings today applauded the range of U.S. legislative support for development of Ukraine's broad and untapped resources and an increase in transparency and good governance," the company said in a statement on the day the letter was released.

An aide in Markey's office told TIME that Leiter, Biden and Archer were not part of discussions that led to the drafting of the letter or the legislation. Staff for the other senators who signed the letter, Ron Wyden of Oregon, Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire and Christopher Murphy of Connecticut, also said they did not have contact with Leiter, who could not be reached for comment.

Burisma Holdings is owned by a Cypriot holding firm, Brociti Investments Limited, which is controlled Nikolai Zlochevskyi, a former Ukrainian government minister, according to Cypriot records. It controls government development licenses in three regions of Ukraine, and sells to industrial customers in the country, according to the company.

By taking a job with Burisma, the younger Biden has put himself in the middle of a struggle between the United States and Russia, which currently provides the bulk of the natural gas supplies to Ukraine. Both the White House and European nations have recently emphasized the strategic interest in making Ukraine less dependent on Russia.

Since Hunter Biden took the new job, his father, Vice President Joe Biden, has continued to serve as the Obama Administration's point person on Ukraine, traveling to the country as recently as June for the inauguration of President Petro Poroshenko and talking to Poroshenko by phone at least five times in the last month.

"I've spent a considerable amount of time in the last two months in Ukraine," the elder Biden said on June 19. "You see what the Russians are doing relative to using gas as a foreign policy tool to try to alter behavior. And so it's - around the world in varying degrees it's of significant consequence in terms of security, both economic and political security of a nation."

There is no legal barrier to prohibit Hunter Biden from working with a company that can be impacted by the policy decisions of his father, and the White House has maintained that the Vice President has not been influenced by his son's employment. "The Vice President does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company," said his spokeswoman Kendra Barkoff.

But Hunter Biden's new job, along with the association with Burisma of other politically-connected businessmen, has raised concerns among some Ukraine watchers. "It's unhelpful when we are trying to get across to the Ukrainians to clean up corruption and special deals for special folks," said Ed Chow, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a U.S. think tank. "It maybe sends the wrong message that Westerners are just hypocritical."

Additional reporting by Alex Rogers and Zeke Miller/Washington

NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS:

CAN ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN LEADERS END THE REVENGE ATTACKS? (NYT)

New York Times, July 8, 2014

In the space of a few weeks, the brutal killings of four teenagers - one Palestinian and three Israelis - have inflamed tensions in Israel and the occupied territories, potentially igniting a conflict that could be even more vicious than the intifadas of 1987 and 2000. It is the responsibility of leaders on both sides to try and calm the volatile emotions that once again threaten both peoples. The hostilities and recriminations began with the kidnapping and murder last month of three Israeli teenagers in the West Bank: Eyal Yifrach, 19; Naftali Fraenkel, 16; and Gilad Shaar, 16. Last week, the body of Muhammad Abu Khdeir, a Palestinian teenager, was found beaten and burned in a Jerusalem forest.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, after days of near silence, condemned that killing and promised that anyone found guilty would "face the full weight of the law." Israeli officials said the murder seemed to be a revenge attack for the killing of the three Israeli teenagers. In the sweep to find those teenagers, six Palestinians were killed in confrontations with Israeli forces and about 400 Palestinians were arrested, many of them affiliated with Hamas, which Israel accused of the murders. The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, also after a delay, denounced the abductions and vowed to help catch the kidnappers. Two suspects said to have ties to Hamas have since been arrested.

After the attack on the Israeli teenagers, some Israelis gave in to their worst prejudices. During funerals for the boys, hundreds of extreme right-wing protesters blocked roads in Jerusalem chanting "Death to Arabs." A Facebook page named "People of Israel Demand Revenge" gathered 35,000 "likes" before being taken down; a blogger gave prominence to a photo, also on Facebook, that featured a sign saying: "Hating Arabs is not racism, it's values." Even Mr. Netanyahu referenced an Israeli poem that reads: "Vengeance for the blood of a small child, Satan has not yet created." Israelis have long had to cope with Hamas's violence, including a recent increase in rocket attacks from Gaza. And Palestinians have been fully guilty of hateful speech against Jews. In an atmosphere in which each side dehumanizes the other, it shouldn't be surprising that some people would act on extremist views. According to news reports, the suspects arrested in Mr. Khdeir's murder may be fans of a soccer club known for its anti-Arab rhetoric. Commentators in the Israeli news media have been frank in analyzing the killings, especially that of Mr. Khdeir, and their effect on society. Self-criticism is a strength of democracies. An editorial in Haaretz, the Israeli newspaper, said prosecuting Mr. Khdeir's murderers is not by itself sufficient. The country's leaders "must begin raising the next generation, at least, on humanist values, and foster a tolerant public discourse."

Despite the pain and anger, there have been gestures of compassion and understanding. Mr. Khdeir's grieving father made an appeal for "both sides to stop the bloodshed." On Sunday, the uncle of Naftali Fraenkel offered his condolences in a phone call with Mr. Khdeir's father. President Shimon Peres and Reuven Rivlin, who is succeeding Mr. Peres later this month, wrote in a joint essay in Yedioth Ahronoth, an Israeli newspaper, that there would be no cover-up in the investigation of Mr. Khdeir's murder and called for an end to incitement on both sides. These deaths should cause the two communities to think again about the need for a permanent peace, but the loss of four young men may not be motivation enough.

GERMANY AND THE MINIMUM WAGE (NYT)

By The Editorial Board

New York Times, July 8, 2014

The federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour is obviously too low. So is the Democrats' proposed increase to \$10.10 an hour by 2016. If the minimum wage had merely kept pace over time with inflation, average wages or productivity growth, it would be between \$11 an hour and \$18 an hour today.

It would also be higher if it kept pace with what other advanced economies are prepared to pay. Last week, the lower house of Parliament in Germany voted to set a nationwide minimum wage of 8.50 euros an hour, about \$11.60, effective in 2015. The upper house is expected to approve the measure this week. With the passage of it, Germany, France, Britain and the Netherlands have or soon will have higher minimum wages than the current and proposed minimums in the United States, and only six countries in the European Union will be without a statutory minimum wage: Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Italy and Sweden.

The expected German minimum is noteworthy not only for its level. For nearly 70 years, most wages in Germany have been set by agreements that are collectively bargained between unions and employers. In recent decades, however, and particularly following reunification with the former East Germany, the share of workers who are effectively covered by union agreements has fallen. By enacting an adequate minimum wage, the German Parliament is responding constructively to that development, because a solid wage floor ensures that economic growth is broadly shared even by those who fall outside the collectively bargained framework.

In a global economy that has long relied on low wages to lift profits, a relatively high minimum wage in Germany would also reflect a growing consensus there that a high-wage, high-productivity economy is, in fact, an advantage in stabilizing the nation economically and socially.

In Germany, as in the United States, business lobbyists and some economists have warned that a robust minimum wage will lead to job losses and higher prices, but that has not been the historical experience. Rather, higher wages for low-wage workers are generally offset by lower labor turnover, while the boost in consumer spending from higher wages is good for the economy. Boosting consumer demand is especially important in Germany, whose economy is overly reliant on exports.

Germany's move offers the United States important lessons, if only lawmakers in Washington would learn.

THE LONG WAIT TO SEE A DOCTOR (NYT)

By The Editorial Board

New York Times, July 8, 2014

Americans are already experiencing long waits to get doctor's appointments, and experts say the delays are bound to get worse when millions of previously uninsured Americans get health coverage under the Affordable Care Act. That is the sobering news from a new survey of wait times conducted by Merritt Hawkins, a physician staffing firm, which polled some 1,400 medical offices in 15 large metropolitan areas across the country.

The survey, conducted over a five-month period last year, assessed how long it would take a new patient to get an appointment for nonemergency care in five different medical specialties: cardiology, dermatology, obstetrics and gynecology, orthopedic surgery and family practice.

Boston had the longest average wait times - 45 days across all specialties, well above the national average of 19 days. The findings in this survey showed little change across all specialties from two previous surveys in 2009 and 2004. Long waits have apparently become the norm in many metropolitan areas.

The findings are consistent with an international survey of 11 industrialized countries last year by the Commonwealth Fund, a foundation that analyzes health care issues. The findings punctured the illusion that our high-priced health care system, relying on private doctors, provides faster service than the national health systems in other advanced countries. When Americans got sick, 26 percent had to wait six days or longer for an appointment, better only than Canada and Norway but much worse than other countries with national health systems like Britain and the Netherlands. Patients in Britain and Switzerland also reported shorter waits to see a specialist than patients in the United States.

Experts suggest several ways to reduce wait times, like increasing primary care doctors, allowing nurses and physicians' assistants to provide more care and opening more primary care clinics.

The critical ingredient is to make reduction of wait times a political issue, as happened in Britain and is now happening in American veterans' hospitals in the wake of a scandal involving falsified records to hide long wait times.

NEW YORK'S MAPMAKING SCANDAL (NYT)

By The Editorial Board

New York Times, July 8, 2014

In his 2010 campaign for governor, Andrew Cuomo promised to end "partisan gerrymandering," in which lawmakers draw their own districts. He failed to do that, and instead, as governor, signed onto a set of legislative maps in 2012 that were carefully designed to keep legislators safely in their jobs.

Then, he and lawmakers came up with a counterfeit reform, a constitutional amendment on

November's ballot that would only make matters worse and make it harder to clean up the whole inbred process for years to come.

The flawed maps created in 2012 will be in use until 2022. The constitutional amendment would put a new, virtually permanent system in place for the next round of mapmaking that starts after the 2020 census. The amendment sets up a bipartisan commission, a majority of whose members are appointed by legislative leaders. The possibilities for partisan gridlock are endless, and it will take another constitutional amendment to make any corrections of what is destined to be a flawed system.

In a recent report, Common Cause/NY, New York Public Interest Research Group and Effective NY warned that the amendment would only make it easier for New York legislators to continue to draw district maps that help no one but the incumbents.

Amendment supporters say the maps would be drawn by a bipartisan, independent commission, with co-executive directors, one Democrat and one Republican. That sounds reasonable, except that it is much the same as the state's Board of Elections, one of the least effective public operations in New York. That board is also bipartisan, which often means stalemate, not compromise.

Under this new system, if the Legislature does not like the commission's maps, they can vote them down and send them back for amendments. If the maps return and the lawmakers still don't approve, they can vote them down and then draw their own, much as they do now. This amendment is not a reform. It is another way to maintain the status quo, and does not deserve voters' support.

THE MESSY WORLD OF SMART GUNS (NYT)

By Joe Nocera

New York Times, July 8, 2014

The Andy Raymond rant is a thing to behold.

Raymond, the co-owner of Engage Armament in Montgomery County, Md., is one of the two gun dealers who, a few months ago, tried to sell the Armatix iP1 - a.k.a., the first commercially available "smart gun" - to his customers. He thought that not only did he have every right to sell a smart gun, but that he was doing the gun world a favor by offering a gun that had the potential to expand the universe of gun owners. Instead, both Engage Armament and Oak Tree, a California-based gun dealer, backed away after receiving a torrent of hate mail and death threats from gun-rights absolutists.

In the rant, which he posted on his Facebook page, Raymond is sitting in front of an array of semiautomatic weapons. He has a bottle of what appears to be whiskey next to him. He acknowledges that he's been drinking. From time to time, he takes a puff on a cigarette. (I don't have a Facebook page, so I relied on excerpts from the rant that were shown on Chris Hayes's MSNBC show, "All In.")

"How can the N.R.A. want to prohibit a gun when we're supposed to be pro-gun?" he says. "How hypocritical is that?" Then, after an angry, expletive-filled shout-out to those who sent him death threats, he changes direction. He denies ever selling an Armatix pistol. And then he says, "I thought my principles were correct, but maybe I was wrong." And he apologizes. And with one last gulp of whiskey, he is done.

Which is to say, he epitomizes the state of smart guns right now. The whole thing is a bit of a mess.

I last looked into smart gun technology about a year and a half ago, and what I saw then was a lot of ferment - and genuine excitement about the potential of smart-gun technologies. I found people who had been working on smart guns for years, like Don Sebastian of the New Jersey Institute of Technology, and newcomers to the field like Ron Conway, the Silicon Valley investor who was galvanized by the massacre in Newtown, Conn., and began backing a smart-gun effort. It was also the first time I heard about a New Jersey law that said that if smart guns became commercially available anywhere in the country, New Jersey gun dealers would be required, within three years, to sell only guns that had smart-gun technology.

The idea, said Loretta Weinberg, the New Jersey Senate majority leader who sponsored the legislation 12 years ago, was partly to spur gun innovation. Instead, it held back innovation, as traditional gun manufacturers saw no incentive in investing in smart-gun technology. It was also

vehemently opposed by the National Rifle Association, which viewed it, not incorrectly, as a gun control effort. Gun advocates mocked smart-gun technologies, claiming the "bad guys" with normal guns would have the advantage over the "good guys" with smart guns.

The New Jersey law was at the heart of the objections to Oak Tree and Engage Armament selling the Armatix smart gun. The fear of gun advocates is that if someone did start selling a commercialized smart gun, the three-year clock would start ticking in New Jersey.

When I spoke to smart-gun advocates this time around, I found a great deal of mixed emotions about the New Jersey law. Jonathan Mossberg, who runs something called the iGun Technology Corporation - and is an avowed gun advocate - told me that the New Jersey mandate "needs to be repealed."

Stephen Teret, the co-director of the Center for Law and the Public's Health at Johns Hopkins University - and an expert on smart-gun technology - said that he thought the law would soon be irrelevant. "There will be a personalized gun sold very soon," he told me. "It will be the Armatix gun that people are talking about." He wouldn't tell me who the seller would be, however.

Senator Weinberg acknowledged that her bill may have become an impediment rather than a spur to gun safety.

There is still a lot going on in smart-gun technology. Sebastian continues to plug away at a technology that would recognize an owner's grip, and only allow that person to use the gun. Ron Conway's group, the Smart Tech Foundation, just awarded a total of \$1 million to 15 grantees that are working on promising smart-gun technologies.

As for Weinberg, she told me that she had approached the N.R.A. as recently as two weeks ago and said she would try to get her law repealed if the N.R.A. would promise not to block smart-gun technology from reaching the marketplace. "I said we might have some common ground here."

The N.R.A. did not reply.

What a surprise.

Frank Bruni is off today.

THE CREATIVE CLIMATE (NYT)

By David Brooks

New York Times, July 8, 2014

In the current issue of *The Atlantic*, Joshua Wolf Shenk has a fascinating description of how Paul McCartney and John Lennon created music together. McCartney was meticulous while Lennon was chaotic. McCartney emerged out of a sunny pop tradition. Lennon emerged out of an angst-ridden rebel tradition.

Lennon wrote the song "Help" while in the throes of depression. The song originally had a slow, moaning sound. McCartney suggested a lighthearted counter melody that, as Shenk writes, fundamentally changed and improved the nature of the piece.

Lennon and McCartney came from different traditions, but they had similar tastes. They brought different tendencies to the creative process but usually agreed when the mixture was right. This created the special tension in their relationship. They had a tendency to rip at each other, but each knew ultimately that he needed the other. Even just before his death, Lennon was apparently thinking of teaming up with McCartney once again.

Shenk uses the story to illustrate the myth of the lone genius, to show that many acts of genius are the products of teams or pairs, engaged in collaboration and "co-opetition." And we have all known fertile opposites who completed each other - when they weren't trying to destroy each other.

But the Lennon-McCartney story also illustrates the key feature of creativity; it is the joining of the unlike to create harmony. Creativity rarely flows out of an act of complete originality. It is rarely a virgin birth. It is usually the clash of two value systems or traditions, which, in collision, create a transcendent third thing.

Shakespeare combined the Greek honor code (thou shalt avenge the murder of thy father) with the Christian mercy code (thou shalt not kill) to create the torn figure of Hamlet. Picasso combined the traditions of European art with the traditions of African masks. Saul Bellow combined the strictness of the Jewish conscience with the free-floating go-getter-ness of the American drive for success.

Sometimes creativity happens in pairs, duos like Lennon and McCartney who bring clashing worldviews but similar tastes. But sometimes it happens in one person, in someone who contains

contradictions and who works furiously to resolve the tensions within.

When you see creative people like that, you see that they don't flee from the contradictions; they embrace dialectics and dualism. They cultivate what Roger Martin called the opposable mind - the ability to hold two opposing ideas at the same time.

If they are religious, they seek to live among the secular. If they are intellectual, they go off into the hurly-burly of business and politics. Creative people often want to be strangers in a strange land. They want to live in dissimilar environments to maximize the creative tensions between different parts of themselves.

Today we live in a distinct sort of creative environment. People don't so much live in the contradiction between competing worldviews. We live in a period of disillusion and distrust of institutions.

This has created two reactions. Some monads withdraw back into the purity of their own subcultures. But others push themselves into the rotting institutions they want to reinvent. If you are looking for people who are going to be creative in the current climate, I'd look for people who are disillusioned with politics even as they go into it; who are disenchanted with contemporary worship, even as they join the church; who are disgusted by finance even as they work in finance. These people believe in the goals of their systems but detest how they function. They contain the anxious contradictions between disillusionment and hope.

This creative process is furthest along, I'd say, in the world of B corporations. There are many people today who are disillusioned both with the world of traditional charity and traditional capitalism. Many charities have been warmheartedly but wastefully throwing money at problems, without good management or market discipline. Capitalists have been obsessed with the short-term maximization of shareholder return without much concern for long-term prosperity or other stakeholders.

B corporations are a way to transcend the contradictions between the ineffective parts of the social sector and myopic capitalism. Kyle Westaway, a lawyer in this field and the author of the forthcoming "Profit & Purpose," notes that benefit corporation legal structures have been established in 22 states over the last four years. The 300 or so companies that have registered in this way, like Patagonia or Method, can't be sued if they fail to maximize profits in order to focus on other concerns. They are seeking to reinvent both capitalism and do-gooder-ism, and living in the contradiction between these traditions.

This suggests a final truth about creativity: that, in every dialectic, there is a search for creative synthesis. Or, as Albert Einstein put it, "You can never solve a problem on the level on which it was created."

SHOULD GERMANS READ 'MEIN KAMPF'? (NYT)

By Peter Ross Range

New York Times, July 8, 2014

WASHINGTON - GERMANY is once again passing through the wringer of its past. At issue this time are not the deeds but the words of Adolf Hitler and the planned republication of his infamous manifesto-as-autobiography, "Mein Kampf," a book that has been officially suppressed in the country since the end of World War II.

But while the prospect of the Führer's words circulating freely on the German market may shock some, it shouldn't. The inoculation of a younger generation against the Nazi bacillus is better served by open confrontation with Hitler's words than by keeping his reviled tract in the shadows of illegality.

Hitler wrote the first draft of his deeply anti-Semitic, race-based ideological screed in 1924, while in prison for leading a failed coup; by the time of his death 21 years later, it had sold 10 million copies.

Since then, although "Mein Kampf" has maintained a shadow presence - on the back shelves of used bookstores and libraries and, more recently, online - its copyright holder, the state of Bavaria, has refused to allow its republication, creating an aura of taboo around the book.

All that is about to change. Bavaria's copyright expires at the end of 2015; after that, anyone can publish the book: a quality publisher, a mass-market pulp house, even a neo-Nazi group.

The release of "Mein Kampf" into Germany's cultural bloodstream is sure to be a sensational moment. In a nation that still avidly buys books - and loves to argue in public - the book will again

ignite painful intergenerational debates on talk shows and in opinion pages about how parents and grandparents let themselves be so blindly misled.

Like the 1996 uproar caused by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's controversial book "Hitler's Willing Executioners," which accused ordinary Germans of being capable of mass-murdering Jews, this publishing event will shape contemporary politics and feed Germany's deep-rooted postwar pacifism. Germany's involvement - or noninvolvement - in international crises like Kosovo, Afghanistan, Libya and, most recently, Mali is profoundly influenced by such impassioned debates. "Germany is a haunted land, still living in Hitler's shadow," the German Jewish writer Henryk M. Broder told me recently.

Racing to be first to publish the book is the Institute for Contemporary History, a noted center in Munich for the study of Nazism, which has a five-scholar team at work on an annotated "critical edition" of Hitler's 700-page ramble.

The institute's version will double the size of the book and create an academic baseline for all future study of the ur-text of Hitlerism, said the team's leader, Christian Hartmann. The book's extensive notations, he added, will "encircle" Hitler's story line with a "collage" of commentary to demystify and decode it, an alternative subtext and historical context that will strip it of its allegedly hypnotizing power.

Unsurprisingly, the "Mein Kampf" project has stirred uproar in some Jewish circles. Charlotte Knobloch, president of the Israelite Cultural Community of Munich and Upper Bavaria, said "there is still a danger" of catalyzing far-right sentiments. Uri Chanoch, an 86-year-old Israeli Holocaust survivor, added that Germans "somewhere in their hearts still have a hatred for us" and has campaigned aggressively against the book's republication, calling for international pressure on Bavaria to block it.

After such sentiments were expressed to Bavaria's premier, Horst Seehofer, during a trip to Israel, he decided to halt his state's planned participation in the "Mein Kampf" project and cancel the \$684,000 it had given in research funding.

That decision, in turn, triggered an outcry among academics and in the Bavarian Legislature, which had earlier approved the book. Even some Jewish leaders were taken aback. "I was astonished by this decision," said Salomon Korn, the leader of Frankfurt's 7,000-strong Jewish community. "We should have already had a critical edition of 'Mein Kampf.'"

In an awkward dance, Mr. Seehofer's government was forced to reconsider its reconsideration. It agreed to leave the money in place while withholding its governmental seal of approval. This reverse fig leaf may or may not mollify opponents, especially in Israel, who thought they had stopped the book.

But with the funding in hand, the institute is proceeding. Its edition will serve a political purpose, countering the negative impact on Germany's image and political culture of raw reprints of the book that might flood the market. Whether it impedes such publications or not, the academic edition can always be held up as authoritative, especially in schools and universities. This is a good thing. Sixty-nine years after World War II, it no longer makes sense for Germans not to have unfettered access to the same book that can be easily bought in other countries. Keeping Hitler's dreary and often incomprehensible diatribe under wraps, out of misplaced fear of a Nazi revival, is a vast overreaction: Germany's only pseudo-Nazi party received 1 percent in the recent European Parliament vote; in France, the far right received nearly 25 percent.

In 1959, West Germany's first postwar president, Theodor Heuss, recommended republishing "Mein Kampf" as a cautionary document for the German people. Not yet ready for such a confrontation, the political establishment ignored him. Today, 55 years and 10 presidents later, Heuss's good idea is finally coming to fruition.

Peter Ross Range is a journalist who writes frequently on Germany.

THE PROMISE OF ALEPPO'S RADICALS (NYT)

By Matthieu Aikins

New York Times, July 8, 2014

ALEPPO, Syria - As a rebel fighter shined his flashlight onto a clump of blankets and clothes scattered around the concrete basement floor, I wondered if this was where my friend Sultan had spent the last moments of his life. A goofy, gap-toothed 22-year-old who worked for a local fixer, he was part of a group of Syrian activists, journalists and rebel fighters who had been arrested by

the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria and taken to this makeshift prison in the basement of a former hospital.

The building had served as the Sunni extremist group's headquarters in Aleppo, Syria's largest city, but now the pitch-dark corridors were deserted. By the stairs, we found a long cable of copper wires taped together. One of the rebels picked it up and mimicked a whipping gesture - former prisoners who were held here reported being tortured. Farther down was a room that served as a cafeteria, with signs in English attesting to the presence of foreign jihadists among ISIS's ranks. "Fear Allah! Remember that he is watching you so please do not waste food and clean up after you have eaten," read one. Another advised "brothers who want to receive their families from outside Syria" to coordinate with the "Mujahideen Services Office."

ISIS began as the Iraqi affiliate of Al Qaeda but split off at the beginning of this year over its ambitions to expand into Syria and establish itself as a new caliphate. After its stunning takeover of much of western Iraq last month, it now calls itself simply the Islamic State.

But ISIS is gone from Aleppo, having been forced out by local Syrian rebels in January. This military reversal, one of the group's few, highlights the dilemma facing the West: Its best potential allies against ISIS are other Sunni Islamists.

The fighters who accompanied me during a weeklong visit to Aleppo in mid-June were members of the Islamic Front, a rebel coalition dominant in the city and much of northern Syria. The Islamic Front is a fierce and effective opponent of ISIS but also, in its Islamist platform and indirect connections with Al Qaeda, a far cry from the "appropriately vetted elements of the moderate Syrian armed opposition" for whom the Obama administration recently requested \$500 million in military training and funding.

ISIS's abandoned headquarters in Aleppo are just across from another large building that serves as the base for Tawhid Brigade, one of the largest of the seven rebel groups that joined together in November to form the Islamic Front. ISIS had been present in opposition-held Aleppo since the beginning of 2013, but by the end of the year tensions with rebel groups had reached a crisis. Considering itself a sovereign state, ISIS was refusing to accept mediation for any dispute, and it had taken to kidnapping those it considered to be critics or enemies, including people who worked with foreign journalists, like Sultan.

On Jan. 7, ISIS carried out a surprise attack on Tawhid Brigade's headquarters. It was held off. The next day, Tawhid Brigade forces from around the city counterattacked and surrounded the hospital. "We cut them off and prevented them from bringing any support," said the commander who led the offensive and who goes by the nom de guerre of Abu Assad.

Around 3 a.m., the ISIS fighters trapped inside the hospital asked to be allowed to leave the city, and Abu Assad, not wanting further bloodshed, agreed. When he and his men searched the hospital at first light, they discovered that ISIS had massacred its captives. "We found a group of bodies every ten meters," said Abu Assad. Most of them had been shot in the head while bound. "They were real revolutionaries, journalists, doctors. If we had known what ISIS had done, we wouldn't have let them escape alive."

Not long after the battle, half a globe away, I watched footage of its aftermath that rebels had recorded and uploaded to YouTube, and recognized Sultan among the corpses.

The battle against ISIS in Aleppo is part of a larger conflict that started at the beginning of this year, as rebel groups across the northern provinces of Idlib and Aleppo - including the powerful Syrian Al Qaeda affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra - fought a pitched battle to expel ISIS. The face-off left the Islamic Front pre-eminent. It controls the key border crossing with Turkey at Azaz and, with its estimated 50,000 to 60,000 fighters, is thought to be the largest and most militarily potent rebel alliance in Syria.

The Islamic Front is entirely Syrian in leadership, and its central goal is overthrowing President Bashar al-Assad - good credentials in the eyes of Western governments hoping to roll back ISIS without strengthening the Syrian regime. Many of the group's most powerful members - including Tawhid Brigade and one of the largest factions fighting in the Damascus suburbs, Jaish al-Islam - are not particularly ideological, and were once allied with the Western-backed Free Syrian Army. But they are far from secular. The Islamic Front draws on support from pre-war Islamist resistance networks, including wealthy, religious donors across the Muslim world and the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, an exiled Islamist group. More problematic from a Western perspective, one of the coalition's key members, Ahrar al-Sham, has links to Al Qaeda's core leadership, and the Islamic

Front as a whole closely coordinates operations with Jabhat al-Nusra.

The commanders I spoke to in Aleppo said the Islamic Front has not, as a result, directly received any military aid from Washington or other Western governments. But can the West meaningfully influence the military situation in Syria while continuing to eschew Islamist groups, now that they are dominant among the rebels? "The Free Syrian Army has been weak and divided," said Richard Barrett, a former British intelligence official. "And so the Islamic Front is really the only game in town if you want to attack ISIS in Syria."

Rebel commanders in Aleppo were dismissive of the supposedly "secular" Free Syrian Army groups linked to the government in exile, which the West has been backing. "They're like NGOs. They know how to say what the donor wants to hear," said Abu Bilal, Tawhid Brigade's chief of operations. "In reality, they're diesel smugglers who control a little of the border. They don't do any serious fighting."

If Washington and its partners want to push back against both Assad and ISIS at once, they will have to be less squeamish about picking allies in Syria. Otherwise, they may not find any left at all. Matthieu Aikins is a magazine writer living in Kabul.

THAI RICE AND NIGERIAN POLITICS (NYT)

By Adewale Maja-Pearce

New York Times, July 8, 2014

LAGOS, Nigeria - In Nigeria, as elsewhere, the will of the people is fickle. The recent gubernatorial race in Ekiti State is a case in point.

On one side was the incumbent, Kayode Fayemi, who was seeking a second, four-year term. Even the opposition agreed that he was a fine gentleman, an intellectual with a doctorate in social science from King's College London, and solid credentials as a pro-democracy activist during the dark years of military rule. Moreover, he had already proved to be an able, conscientious administrator. He built roads, saw that pensioners received their due, and had begun cleaning up corruption and incompetence in the public school system.

His rival was Ayo Fayose, a former governor suspected by human rights advocates of having political opponents killed, who is facing court hearings this month on corruption charges stemming from his first term, which ended abruptly a year early in 2006 when he was impeached and forced to flee the country. Although Mr. Fayose had fallen from favor with the leaders of his People's Democratic Party, including President Olusegun Obasanjo, he was able to return to the fold in 2007 after Mr. Obasanjo left office.

Mr. Fayose is a proven vote-getter, so it was no surprise that the People's Democratic Party chose him to challenge Mr. Fayemi in the election on June 21. After all, the old party bosses - known as "godfathers" in Nigeria - are willing to embrace certain political truths many of us are loath to acknowledge. Responsible leadership is all very well, but it doesn't always win out over those who know how to play the politics of hunger, especially in a poor place like Ekiti. Thus, the godfathers were willing to bet that their sometime fugitive would beat the squeaky-clean Ph.D. hands down. Still, they were taking no chances, for they had been burned before in Ekiti State. After Mr. Fayose's 2006 impeachment, the P.D.P. had pulled out all the stops to ensure that its candidate, Segun Oni, would defeat the newcomer, Mr. Fayemi, in the 2007 election. So they sent in senators and other party heavyweights - including the usual thugs paid to terrorize voters - and Mr. Oni won. But Mr. Fayemi challenged the validity of the election in the courts, won a three-year legal battle, and finally took up residence in the governor's house in 2010.

With national elections approaching in 2015, several opposition parties have allied to form the All Progressives Congress in the hope of defeating President Goodluck Jonathan and the governing People's Democratic Party next February. The election in Ekiti on June 21 was to be the first test of its popularity in a state it already controlled.

Once again, the P.D.P. left nothing to chance. Both the national ministers of defense and police affairs flooded the state with truckloads of soldiers and national police who came to "aid" local security forces. Many people testified to witnessing outright harassment and intimidation of Mr. Fayemi's supporters.

Nevertheless, election observers - including representatives from the United States and the European Union - declared that the voting had been reasonably free and fair. Mr. Fayose won by a wide margin - 200,000 votes to Mr. Fayemi's 120,000 - in a high turnout of eligible voters. When

the results were announced, many observers in Ado-Ekiti, the state capital, noted the jubilation in the streets. Even Mr. Fayemi, in keeping with his graceful disposition, was quick to congratulate his "brother," who is set to take his place on Oct. 15.

So where, exactly, did Kayode Fayemi go wrong?

The first problem was Mr. Fayemi himself. He may be an exemplary governor, but he is no man of the people. Like most states in Nigeria, Ekiti is predominantly rural, populated by farmers far removed from Government House discussions about the importance of education, infrastructure and economic development in the age of globalization. As governor, Mr. Fayemi never hesitated to grant newspaper interviews, had a massive following on Twitter and was widely liked on Facebook. But, in the words of Jibrin Ibrahim of the Center for Democracy and Development, "most of the farmers and teachers in Ekiti State are not on Twitter or Facebook and do not read newspapers."

Mr. Fayose, by contrast, has the common touch. He knows how to milk media coverage, whether it be by escorting elderly people to the bank to open an account, or by stopping his convoy at a roadside bar to buy drinks all around. "We love his simplicity, we love his style," one constituent wrote in *The Nigerian Tribune*. "He dined with us, we saw him on our streets in his shirts and shorts and could ask him for a handshake which he gladly obliged."

It is difficult to convince uneducated, undernourished farmers that big projects like constructing roads will benefit them in the long term by making it easier to get their produce to the market. While Mr. Fayemi tried to do so, Mr. Fayose hit the campaign trail armed with huge quantities of Thai rice (several years past the recommended consumption date, according to news reports), handing bags out to hungry voters.

The tactic, hugely successful, points to the challenge that faces all "developing" countries: how to negotiate a compromise between the immediate demands of an impoverished, mostly illiterate populace, and the urgent need for capital projects that will lift them out of poverty. Hungry people will always be susceptible to immediate inducements of the kind offered by politicians like Mr. Fayose.

This after all is politics, and the first duty of a politician is to win. If the able Mr. Fayemi had had the common sense to make a show of channeling more state resources to the local level, he would not have enabled the triumph of a so-called friend of the people, who will continue to pursue his own interests. Sadly, Ekiti State is now destined for another four years of underdevelopment under the guidance of the people's choice.

Adewale Maja-Pearce is a writer and critic, and the author of "Remembering Ken Saro-Wiwa, and Other Essays."

TAKING SIDES IN LIBYA (NYT)

By Frederic Wehrey

New York Times, July 8, 2014

MARJ, Libya - Two days before she was murdered in Benghazi on June 25, the Libyan human rights activist Salwa Bugaighis walked into a Tripoli hotel guarded by Islamist militias wearing three-inch heels and no veil.

She had little patience for such gunmen and their political backers, whom she accused of terrorizing Libya and derailing the country's struggling democracy: "We have five courthouses in Benghazi and they are all shut down," she told me. "If these Islamists say they are committed to defending the state, they should defend the state's institutions."

Ms. Bugaighis was at the vanguard of the 2011 revolution and had recently been appointed the deputy head of a national dialogue commission. She had criticized the United States for inflating the stature of Islamist figures like the ex-jihadist Abdelhakim Belhaj and the grand mufti, whose religious edicts had stymied her fight for women's rights.

Her murder shocked a country facing two divergent paths toward security: repression or reconciliation.

When she was killed, I was in eastern Libya meeting with Gen. Khalifa Hifter, who, for the past month, has been leading a military campaign against Islamist militias in Benghazi and other eastern cities.

General Hifter, a septuagenarian mustachioed man in a crisply starched uniform with golden epaulets, could not be a stronger counterpoint to Ms. Bugaighis.

He received me at a sprawling military base littered with rusting T-72 tanks, after I was ushered through an extraordinary security gauntlet that involved an invasive pat-down by men with assault rifles. I was not allowed to take my own pen and paper into the meeting.

The general's military campaign is called "Operation Dignity" and his self-styled "Libyan National Army" taps support from tribes, civil society, defected army units and militias to the west of Tripoli, who were fed up with the spate of daily assassinations in Benghazi and other eastern cities. It burst onto the scene with relentless artillery strikes and aerial bombardment of Islamist militia bases in and around Benghazi and other cities; the Islamists have responded with rocket attacks of their own.

General Hifter is unsanctioned by the Libyan government and his Libyan National Army is, quite frankly, just another militia outside the official military chain of command. Most alarmingly, his operation was aimed at the country's elected legislature, whose Islamist members he accuses of backing the militias and blocking the rebuilding of the country's army and police.

All of this has left Libya deeply divided. For some - as for millions of Egyptians who opened their arms to a familiar form of autocracy - General Hifter is a savior delivering long-sought stability. Others recoil at the shades of Muammar el-Qaddafi, seeing a strongman subverting democracy in the name of fighting a loosely defined threat of "terrorism."

In person, and like Egypt's new president, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, General Hifter is utterly convinced of his popular mandate. His language is grandiose and messianic. "Libya will be the graveyard of global terrorism," he told me. He dismissed recent mediation efforts in Benghazi by tribal elders as producing nothing but "emotional language." There could be no negotiations, he insisted, citing an ambush of his forces and the killing of Ms. Bugaighis; his foes could only expect one of three outcomes: prison, death or expulsion from the country.

He was frustrated that Libya's allies, including America, had not given him more support in the form of drones and Apache helicopters. "We are fighting the world's enemies," he declared, "and the world should help us."

Amid Libya's worsening violence and polarization, room for dialogue and consensus is shrinking. Bridge builders like Ms. Bugaighis have been forced to take sides. In our last conversation before her death, she seemed to have chosen among evils: She maintained that, despite his faults, General Hifter had broken the taboo of calling out extremists and had taken action. She argued that since he couldn't be stopped, the Libyan government should bring him into the fold and legitimate him, in the hopes of somehow limiting and controlling him.

But there is a stark danger - for Libyans and their friends abroad - in backing a military strongman whose vague definition of terrorism includes nonviolent Islamist political groups like the Muslim Brotherhood. General Hifter denies the right of peaceful Islamist groups to shape the future of the post-Qaddafi state, even though they fought in the revolution, too, and played a greater role than he did. Many Libyans draw a distinction between these groups and Ansar al-Sharia. The danger is that by lumping them all in the same basket the general will radicalize the moderates.

Even more worrisome for Libya is the general's claim that he is defending democracy while threatening the country's main elected body with military force. Whether he can be tamed by being "brought into the fold" seems unlikely: History is littered with examples of such appeasement of strongmen gone horribly awry.

Supporting General Hifter would be a Faustian bargain with far-reaching negative consequences for Libya's future. To avoid throwing the country into further chaos or sending it down an authoritarian path, Libyans must focus on forging a consensus government that addresses grievances in the east. It must build security institutions overseen by elected authorities. And it should recommit itself to a broad-based national reconciliation and the drafting of an equitable constitution.

For their part, outside powers like the United States should make clear that they will not tolerate upending the rule of law in the interest of fighting General Hifter's ill-defined "terrorist" threat that includes political opponents.

Ms. Bugaighis paid the ultimate price in her quest for dignity, but General Hifter may be extracting an even higher one from Libya's future.

Frederic Wehrey, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, served as a United States military attaché in Libya before the 2011 revolution.

U.S. SHOULD AID THOSE WHO FIGHT TERROR, NOT ABET HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES (WP) Washington Post, July 8, 2014

IN HIS recent address at West Point, President Obama doubled down on his administration's strategy of combating terrorism and other security threats through "partnerships" with other armies. Describing the strategy as an alternative to "invading every country that harbors terrorist networks," the president said he would ask Congress to appropriate \$5 billion for a Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund to "train, build capacity and facilitate partner countries on the front lines."

There's nothing particularly new about Mr. Obama's initiative: 158 countries were already recipients of U.S. military training in 2012, and about \$15 billion has been spent annually in recent years on security assistance through the State and Defense departments. Nor is the strategy much in question; stronger local forces are essential to countering the proliferating affiliates of al-Qaeda. But the president's request, which was sent to Congress at the end of last month, nevertheless raises some disturbing questions.

One is what to do when local armies are not up to the task of defeating al-Qaeda, even with U.S. training and help. That was the case in Mali, where a U.S.-trained officer led a coup against a democratic government and U.S.-supplied and -drilled army units crumbled in the face of an offensive by ethnic and Islamist insurgents. Now Iraq's U.S.-trained forces have allowed much of the country to be overrun by al-Qaeda and Sunni tribal fighters and appear to lack the firepower to prevent the consolidation of a terrorist-ruled state.

The capture of Mali's capital by al-Qaeda was averted only by a quick deployment of French troops in early 2013. Mr. Obama's strategy doesn't make clear how similar threats can be managed. If the new al-Qaeda state in Iraq and Syria cannot be defeated by local forces, will the United States allow it to remain?

A related problem concerns the behavior of foreign units that receive U.S. training and funding. If U.S.-backed forces commit human rights abuses, the damage is twofold: The fight against insurgents is compromised, and so is support for alliance with the United States.

Congress sought to deal with this problem in 1997 by passing the Leahy amendment, a provision named after Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) that prohibits aid to units and individuals thought to be involved in gross human rights violations. The legislation has had a far-reaching effect: In 2011, aid was withheld from 1,766 individuals or units in 46 countries, and State Department staff vetted some 200,000 individuals and units, according to the New York Times. Senior U.S. military officials have told Congress that the restrictions helped improve major U.S. aid programs in Colombia and Afghanistan. Some countries, such as Bangladesh, have taken steps to punish offenders in order to win a restoration of aid.

Such vetting ought to be built into the new partnership program. But the administration is seeking to neuter the Leahy amendment by giving the defense secretary the authority to disregard it by asserting that "it is in the national security interest to do so." In fact, allowing aid to flow to foreign military units that commit major human rights crimes cannot be in the U.S. interest in any circumstances. Congress should reject the exemption.

HEALTH-CARE SIGN-UP MISTAKES POSE A NEW CHALLENGE FOR OBAMACARE, NOT A DISASTER (WP)

By Editorial Board

Washington Post, July 8, 2014

ARE HUNDREDS of thousands of Americans getting government money they aren't entitled to because of Obamacare? Illegal immigrants, too? Is it all further evidence that the Obama administration is incompetent and the system unworkable?

For critics of health-care reform, these are tempting conclusions to draw from reports that the Obama administration found nearly 3 million discrepancies between what enrollees reported when they signed up for Affordable Care Act insurance and what federal records show about them. Tempting but overblown. There's more reason for encouragement from recent news about the act than there is to decry its problems.

Defying pessimistic predictions, more than half of those who signed up in the exchanges were previously uninsured, according to a June Kaiser Family Foundation survey. The law, then, has not served merely as a vehicle to move insured people from one plan to another. It is enrolling

uninsured people, its main purpose. Among those who had insurance before, more reported lower bills under Obamacare than higher, and many in both groups no doubt have better coverage. Part of the reason is the financial help the government is providing. Some 87 percent of people enrolled in the exchange that the federal government runs for much of the country are taking government subsidies, and the average post-subsidy cost is a mere \$82 a month.

But are those figures fraught with error or fraud? The Department of Health and Human Services' inspector general revealed last week that there were 2.9 million inconsistencies between the information insurance applicants submitted to the federal exchange and data about them in government records. Most discrepancies had to do with citizenship status or income, both of which determine people's eligibility for subsidies. The administration's flawed technical systems were unable to resolve the inconsistencies quickly, so they piled up, and officials are still working through them.

Many of these discrepancies are likely to be small - incorrect documentation, misspellings or a simple absence of available records for the government to consult. Another source of error is that the government is checking applications against old tax and pay records, but applicants reported current incomes. Many ostensible errors probably did not lead to improper payments.

Problems of this sort are inherent in creating a system to distribute any means-tested benefit to millions of people, in this case a benefit that seems to be doing a lot of good. The right response is to get better at catching and resolving errors faster, not to condemn the system.

People who are getting more than they're entitled to will be on the hook to pay some back next tax season, so the government must fix major discrepancies soon. It must also be ready for the next enrollment round. People will learn their 2015 premiums this fall. It will be as important as ever to have a functioning system in place to calculate their subsidies properly - and to serve the millions more expected to sign up next year.

The Obama administration, in other words, faces another Affordable Care Act management challenge, not a policy disaster.

EDUARD SHEVARNADZE HELPED CHANGE THE WORLD (WP)

Washington Post, July 8, 2014

EDUARD SHEVARNADZE had been foreign minister of the Soviet Union for less than a year when the Chernobyl nuclear power plant exploded in April 1986, sending radioactive contamination into the atmosphere. Winds carried radioactive materials over Sweden and stoked international fears. At first, the new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, was silent, and Soviet authorities covered up the scope of the disaster. But later Mr. Gorbachev admitted what happened, and the experience gave rise to his policy of glasnost, or openness. The Chernobyl experience was also searing for Mr. Shevardnadze, who wrote in his memoirs that it "tore the blindfold from our eyes and persuaded us that politics and morals could not diverge." To the extent that it guided Mr. Shevardnadze and Mr. Gorbachev in their "new thinking" about the world, this approach changed the course of history. Together, they abandoned the view of inexorable confrontation between two blocs and, despite fierce internal opposition, began to work with the West toward common goals. They agreed that the Soviet Union could no longer rule by threat of force and that they must find a way to ease the burden of the nuclear arms race, dramatically reversing decades of Cold War thinking.

Mr. Shevardnadze, who died Monday at age 86, was a Soviet man. He had been a Communist Party leader in Georgia, south of Stavropol, the region where Mr. Gorbachev rose to power. In a fateful conversation in 1984, during a long walk at Pitsunda on the Black Sea, they held nothing back about their troubled country. "Everything's rotten," Mr. Shevardnadze said. "It has to be changed." In 1985, Mr. Gorbachev shocked the world by naming Mr. Shevardnadze his foreign minister to replace the obdurate Andrei Gromyko.

Mr. Shevardnadze and Mr. Gorbachev told leaders in Eastern Europe that Moscow would no longer dictate to them, ultimately contributing to the fall of the Berlin Wall and unification of Germany within the North Atlantic alliance. Mr. Shevardnadze helped forge the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces agreement with President Ronald Reagan, the first treaty to eliminate an entire class of nuclear weapons. Even small and now-forgotten concessions were telling: Mr.

Shevardnadze assented to the principle of on-site inspections in arms control that Moscow's secrecy-shrouded military-industrial complex had long resisted. He was Mr. Gorbachev's partner in

a radical upending of the old order. His 1990 resignation, warning Mr. Gorbachev that "dictatorship is coming," was another mark of conscience.

How sad it was that Mr. Shevardnadze later ignored or forgot the lessons of his own time in Moscow. His misrule as president of independent Georgia was lamentable, a time of rampant corruption and authoritarianism. But he must be remembered, first and foremost, for those fleeting but inspiring years of glasnost and new thinking at the side of Mr. Gorbachev. The two of them were improbable revolutionaries, but what they did changed everything - and millions of people are better off for it today.

ON WALL STREET, THE CORLEONE FAMILY FITS RIGHT IN (WP)

By Richard Cohen

Washington Post, July 7, 2014

FADE IN: Michael Corleone's den.

He is at his desk. Facing him are members of his organization. Michael rises and dims the lights. He starts a PowerPoint display showing the various Mafia families. The chieftains and button men are puzzled but they say nothing. Michael turns the lights back on. It is clear he is about to say something important.

Michael: "We're gonna incorporate."

The capos are shocked. They all start talking at once. "Michael, Michael, what would your old man say?"

Michael: "The Godfather is dead. So is his way of doing business. Hyman Roth showed me what we should do. We turn the Corleone family into Corleone Enterprises Ltd. We list it on the stock exchange along with the other criminals. We do what we have always done, but if we get caught, nobody goes to jail. We pay a fine and say we're sorry."

"Michael, Michael," Luca Brasi says. "It is not possible. You do the crime, you do the time."

Michael is patient. "The French bank BNP Paribas admitted it broke the law. It copped a plea. It said it helped Iran avoid sanctions. Iran is our mortal enemy and a country the Corleone family has no sympathy for. The bank helped our enemy and he who helps our enemy is also our enemy. So what happened? Tell 'em, Hyman."

Hyman says, "They paid a fine, nearly \$9 billion. A piffle for them. But it was treated like the corporation acted on its own. Nobody was in charge. Nobody benefited. A corporation is the perfect crime family."

Michael says, "Tell 'em about Credit Suisse."

"It pleaded guilty to tax evasion," Hyman says. "Tax evasion! But no one went to jail. It paid Uncle Sam almost \$2.6 billion and went on its way. Al Capone of blessed memory got 11 years for tax evasion. Why? Because even though he controlled all the rackets in Chicago and had politicians and judges in his pocket, he was not incorporated."

Michael says, "Corporations don't go to jail. And neither do the people who run the corporations. Banks have paid a fortune in penalties for cheating and lying and selling junk and ruining people's lives, and nobody goes to jail."

Fredo says, "Being a corporation is never having to say you're sorry."

Michael looks disgusted: "Fredo, you're in the wrong movie."

Luca Brasi says, "I don't know, Michael. It don't seem right. I don't know about these things. You need someone whacked, I do it. Garroted, that's me. Shot, again that's me. But this, I don't understand. It just don't seem right."

Michael ignores him. "Hyman, tell 'em the rest."

"We're going to buy a business in Switzerland. When we have control of it, we become a Swiss corporation and pay taxes there, where they are lower. This is called an inversion and is something Walgreens says it is now considering. It got tax breaks in Illinois and tax credits and training money, and it don't matter. It still might go to Switzerland, where the weather, if you ask me, is lousy."

Fredo interjects. "But we're an Italian family."

Luca Brasi: "Sicilian!"

Michael signals for quiet. "Globalization means you don't belong to any country. You have allegiances to no one except your own family or, as it happens, the corporation. Pfizer tried to buy AstraZeneca so it could move to England. But they stupidly made an offer that AstraZeneca could

refuse - and it did.

"Many companies are doing this and no one says nothing about loyalty to the country or anything like that. Corporations can do anything they want. We will do the same. We will move where the taxes are lowest, and we will never speak of this matter outside of the company. We will use our people in the media who are on our payroll to say that we are studying many options to maximize stockholder value. You, Fredo, will go on CNBC and not wear a tie so you look cool. All of you, remember that phrase and use it often: Maximize stockholder value."

"Michael, Michael," Luca Brasi says. "What does it mean?"

"Nothing, everything, anything you want," Michael says. He pauses. "I am no longer Capo di tutti capi. I am the CEO. Tom Hagen is no longer consigliere. He's the general counsel. All we do is change the titles but not who we are. We're still criminals."

"Like others on Wall Street, this is the business we've chosen," Hyman Roth says.

Read more from Richard Cohen's archive.

BOEHNER'S UNPRINCIPLED FIGHT WITH OBAMA OVER SEPARATION OF POWERS (WP)

By Jonathan Capehart

Washington Post, July 8, 2014

House Speaker John Boehner took to CNN.com yesterday to continue to tout his intention to sue President Obama for "[circumventing] the American people and their elected representatives through executive action, changing and creating his own laws, and excusing himself from enforcing statutes he is sworn to uphold." This notion that Obama is willfully lawless and exercising powers above and beyond the Constitution has me side-eyeing so hard right now.

Last month, I dealt with the president's increasing reliance on executive orders to get around a recalcitrant Republican majority in the House and minority in the Senate to get anything done. Despite the hysteria from the right, Obama has issued fewer of them than any of his predecessors since Grover Cleveland in the late 1800s, according to a study by John Hudak at Brookings. Now, it's time to deal with signing statements, which is a legal way for the president to reinterpret or ignore the law he is signing if it conflicts with his view of executive authority. As you know, I'm not a fan of them. But they are hardly unconstitutional and Obama hasn't abused their use in number. Kevin Evans of Florida International University told The Post's Karen DeYoung last month that President George W. Bush "used signing statements to challenge about 1,200 provisions of 172 laws he signed - twice as many as all his predecessors combined." Meanwhile, Obama "has issued close to 30 signing statements; in the 2013 Defense Authorization Act alone, he challenged more than 20 sections of the law," DeYoung reports. "Among the challenges have been assertions of his power to close Guantanamo Bay, for instance, and to disregard whistleblower protections." The DeYoung article points out that use of signing statements were "relatively rare until Ronald Reagan began using [them] as a means of asserting the power of the executive against the legislative branch." Thanks to Tobias Gibson, a political science professor at Westminster College in Missouri writing at Monkey Cage, we know Samuel Alito is the reason.

Before Bush nominated Alito to the Supreme Court in 2005, he had been a Reagan-appointed deputy assistant attorney general in the Office of Legal Counsel. In 1986, Alito penned a six-page memo that provides the legal underpinnings for expanded use of signing statements by the president. The subject of the opinion says it all: "Using Presidential Signing Statement to Make Fuller Use of the President's Constitutionally Assigned Role in the Process of Enacting Law." Our primary objective is to ensure that Presidential signing statements assume their rightful place in the interpretation of legislation.....

The novelty of the proposal previously discussed by this Group is the suggestion that Presidential signing statements be used to address questions of interpretation. Under the Constitution, a bill becomes law only when passed by both houses of Congress and signed by the President (or enacted over his veto). Since the President's approval is just as important as that of the House or Senate, it seems to follow that the President's understanding of the bill should be just as important as that of Congress....

From the perspective of the Executive Branch, the issuance of interpretive signing statements would have two chief advantages. First, it would increase the power of the Executive to shape the law. Second, by forcing some rethinking by courts, scholars, and litigants, it may help to curb some of the prevalent abuses of legislative history.

This view of presidential power is accepted on the right and the left. Laurence Tribe, the renowned Harvard constitutional law professor who taught Obama and went on to advise him during his first campaign, is among them. "The objection to signing statements is completely misplaced," he told me yesterday via e-mail. "There is nothing at all wrong with a president signing a bill and simultaneously giving everyone, including the executive officials who answer to him, notice of how he intends to interpret and apply the bill he has signed, as well as notice of any provision that he regards as constitutionally void even though it has not yet been struck down by the Supreme Court."

Tribe, co-author of "Uncertain Justice: The Roberts Court and the Constitution" with Joshua Matz, went on to say, "The proper objection is not to the fact that a signing statement has been issued, but to the substance of a particular statement. For example, if a signing statement reflects an essentially unlimited view of presidential power and rests on the premise that Congress has no authority to regulate the exercise of that power, then we are all better off knowing in advance that that is the president's position - a position that is, in my view, indefensible. But it is not the fact of a signing statement having been issued that is indefensible; it is what particular signing statements SAY in a particular case that may reflect an exaggerated view of presidential authority."

So, there is nothing extraordinary about Obama's use of executive orders or signing statements. But Boehner makes strong allegations against Obama without articulating specific violations of the separation of powers. That's not to say there aren't areas of concern. When I asked Tribe last month about whether Boehner would have standing to bring what I called a frivolous lawsuit, he was not as skeptical as I thought he would be.

The House as an institution may well have standing to challenge at least some of the President's unilateral suspensions and revisions of statutory deadlines and specific mandates in the Affordable Care Act and other congressional legislation, including legislation governing deportations. It's not an open-and-shut case, but the House would have at least a plausible basis for claiming standing. On the merits, at least some of the actions the House might challenge are probably consistent with the separation of powers, but others arguably are not.

This makes sense. I totally get it. We should at least judge Boehner's lawsuit on the merits. But what is so dispiriting is that the motivation behind the litigation strikes me as less about having a principled fight over the separation of powers and more about doing serious harm to this president and his ability to get anything done. That's why I'm convinced that Boehner's sideshow of a lawsuit is really a dress rehearsal for impeachment.

Once Boehner's raucous caucus and their constituents realize that such litigation probably would not be resolved until long after Obama left the White House, I have no doubt they will insist he be punished while in office. If the GOP succeeds in taking the Senate in the November midterms, then impeachment becomes a scarily viable option.

Follow Jonathan on Twitter: @Capehartj

ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICIES ARE DESTROYING THE LIVES OF BLACK CHILDREN (WP)

By Andre M. Perry

Washington Post, July 8, 2014

President Obama wants to limit the number of students expelled every year from high schools. He believes the rates of suspensions and expulsions are racially biased, arbitrary and ineffective.

"Although African-American students represent 15 percent of students in the CRDC, they make up 35 percent of students suspended once, 44 percent of those suspended more than once, and 36 percent of students expelled," writes the Education Department. "Further, over 50 percent of students who were involved in school-related arrests or referred to law enforcement are Hispanic or African-American." So the administration sent to educational leaders a Dear Colleague guidance letter on civil rights and discipline. To close the racial gap, he said, go easy with the zero-tolerance policies. Predictably, the ed-reform types, rending their garments and gnashing their teeth, see this as a disastrous stripping of school autonomy.

The guidance "would certainly compromise the operation of schools," according to Richard Epstein, professor of law at New York University. Some critics argue that schools need to sweat the small things - uniform violations, smoking, tardiness and singing - if they want to create a positive school culture in which students and teachers are focused on learning. For the sake of those who are focused on learning, those who aren't ready must be forced to leave. Epstein adds

that schools with zero-tolerance policies offer "no taint of any purported civil-rights violation." And he's right when he says, "Disproportionate rates should not be regarded as unjustified merely because they reflect higher rates of improper behavior by minority students than by white students." Expulsions are easily justified and aren't inherently racist. More importantly, they can be a very effective way to increase learning outcomes.

In fact, the complainers are right: Obama's plan has a major flaw. But curbing the option to expel students is not it. The trouble is his rationale. The real reason to stop expulsions is that, in the noble cause of closing the black-white achievement gap, schools are insidiously giving up on black children by expelling those who are considered not ready to learn. While zero-tolerance expulsions myopically help the school and the majority of students in it, they destroy the student - and, ultimately, the community, too.

Zero-tolerance policies have many allies. Parents are often the most ardent supporters. (If a kid injured your son or daughter, you'd want expulsion, too.) Moreover, teachers and principals will tell you that ridding the school of disruptive behaviors accelerates achievement for the overwhelming majority of its students. Educational leaders embrace no-tolerance policies on the ground that they provide the greatest good for the greatest number.

The trouble is that when students are out of school, they're still learning - just not the things society wants them to. Many districts don't require that suspended and expelled students receive homework support or tutoring, so they fall further behind their peers. In addition, expelled students abandon activities that lead to college and take up activities that lead to prison. Expulsion also correlates with court involvement. (A modest proposal: Whenever a young person sees a judge, he or she should be accompanied by the principal of the last school attended.) This is why a suspension for infractions such as chewing gum, not wearing a uniform correctly or even fighting hurts the larger goal of meeting the child's needs.

And what happens to expelled children can have large consequences on the entire community. Schools are contributing to the explosion of young adults who are not working or in school in major cities. New Orleans, where I worked, provides an example of a city already in a bad way. According to "Building an Inclusive, High-Skill Workforce for New Orleans' Next Economy," a report from the Greater New Orleans Data Center, 14,000 youths ages 16 to 24 in the New Orleans metro are neither enrolled in school nor employed. This is a terrible enough social trend that we should fight in every way we can to reverse, rather than letting schools exacerbate it. Here's some perspective for that number: 14,000 exceeds the number of registered students at Tulane or the University of New Orleans. It's a greater number than the combined enrollments of Loyola, Dillard and Xavier universities. Fourteen thousand youths is about one-third the number of students who attend public schools in Orleans Parish. The number is about 4,000 seats shy of a full house at a Pelicans game. If a company hired 14,000 youths, it would be the largest employer in the city. Although expulsion isn't the only cause of these numbers, it certainly doesn't help. At some point, institutions must do the very hard work of educating children with extraordinary challenges.

The goal has to be to keep children in school. Kudos to the Recovery School District of New Orleans for being proactive in creating a uniform expulsion policy that is in line with Obama's goal but for also recognizing the community need for curbing expulsions.

That doesn't mean Obama's conceit is flawless. It is important for schools to be able to credibly threaten reprisals for the malcontents. Some behaviors do warrant out-of-school time: Weapons and schools don't mix. Fighting may require separating a child from the school to assess and calm a situation.

But schools are great places to instill character, critical thinking and ethical decision-making. They may be the best places to safely resolve conflicts. Obama is right to want to keep kids in school. The policy addresses a significant systemic problem - the fact that schools abdicate the responsibility to educate the most challenging students, handing that power instead to the streets, the criminal justice system or parents who we should assume are not good educators or disciplinarians. The problem with the guidance is that the data the administration puts forth about discrimination and disparate impact neither support the charge nor address the deeper issues head on. Then again, neither do Obama's critics.

The achievement gap for black children is not a sufficient reason to push underperformers out. (It's no better, and no less preposterous, than another path to close the gap: stop educating white

people.) If schools don't have everything they need to instill positive behaviors in their toughest kids, then let's find the resources and staff for them to do it. Instead of lobbying for more disciplinary autonomy for schools, let's petition for wrap-around services, restructured in-school suspensions, conflict mediation, restorative justice programs, parenting courses, out-of school behavioral services or a host of other interventions that address the problem. Just as long as we keep the kids in school.

THE DIVIDED STATES OF OBAMA (WP)

By Michael Gerson

Washington Post, July 8, 2014

The headline - "Poll: Obama worst president since World War II" - was both provocative and misleading. The Quinnipiac University survey did, indeed, place President Obama at the top of the worst since FDR. But this was largely a measure of partisan concentration. Republicans were united in their unfavorable historical judgment of Obama. Democrats divided their votes (and would insist, I'd imagine, that they have more options to choose from).

We already know that Obama is a highly polarizing figure. But beneath the headline, the poll identified serious problems for the president. Fifty-four percent of respondents said the Obama administration is "not competent running the government." (Shout-out to HealthCare.gov.) A majority believes the president does not have "strong leadership qualities." Obama is solidifying a perception that he is out of his depth. Once made, such an impression is difficult to unmake. And the failings of the Obama era are contributing to a deeper crisis for liberalism. Public confidence that government generally does the right thing is near an all-time low. In a recent Gallup poll, 79 percent of Americans agreed that corruption is "widespread throughout the government" - up from 59 percent in 2006. During a presidency that placed considerable trust in government, public trust in government has been badly shaken.

Obama is left with a job approval rating - in the low to mid-40s - that is about the same as when his party lost 63 House seats during the 2010 midterm elections. On the stump, his strategy is a ferocious peevishness. Republicans "don't do anything except block me and call me names" - an accusation in the best rhetorical tradition of school yards everywhere. His promised use of executive power seems more like a confession of powerlessness in the normal political realms of persuasion and legislation.

On his executive orders, Obama challenges the House speaker: "So sue me." As a former speechwriter, I'd advise greater care in the choice of catchphrases. When Ronald Reagan goaded Congress on tax increases with "Go ahead, make my day," he was channeling Clint Eastwood. "So sue me" sounds like the guy who steals your parking space and taunts you afterward. Petulance does not signal strength.

On policy issues, Obama has few places to turn. Public impressions of the economy seem set. Obamacare is enduringly controversial. The IRS and Veterans Affairs scandals continue to unfold. Foreign policy hardly offers a refuge - as years of disengagement in the Middle East now require engagement on dramatically less favorable terms.

Obama therefore turns to the two issues that Democrats keep in their back pocket, confident that broad social currents are running in their favor: immigration and contraception. (I suppose many Americans, not just Democrats, keep contraception in their back pocket.) In the long run, the political analysis that informs this strategy is correct. The U.S. electorate is becoming more demographically diverse and more culturally liberal on some issues. When it comes to Hispanic voters, younger voters and single voters, Republicans can seem out of touch (because they mostly are).

So the midterm contest sets up: "Out of his depth" vs. "Out of touch."

But both of Obama's surefire issues offer complications. The appearance of chaos at the border - fueled, in part, by rumors of an immigration free pass - may lead the Obama administration to seek procedural reforms that expedite the deportation of children. The only successful immigration legislation this session may be a border-control measure - signed by a president whose administration has already deported more than 2 million immigrants.

And the "war on women" conducted by the Supreme Court turns out to be a narrow exception to a 2011 Health and Human Services regulation - an exception allowing a family-owned company to provide 16 types of contraception to its employees instead of 20. The court ordered the Obama

administration, when it substantially burdens a religious belief, to pursue the "least restrictive means" of achieving its goal - which has been the law since Bill Clinton signed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in 1993.

It is hard to imagine that the president's use of cultural wedge issues will have much effect in battleground Senate races, conducted (this time around) mainly in red states. But even if it does - even if a deep blue appeal moves voters substantially - a historical reputation will be set.

"I don't want to pit red America against blue America," Obama once said. Now he organizes the sorting of America between red and blue. Best president or worst, he has left a nation more divided.

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

NSA'S MISGUIDED SNOOPING ON INNOCENT PEOPLE (WP)

By Eugene Robinson

Washington Post, July 8, 2014

Even those who believe the National Security Agency's vacuum-cleaner surveillance of electronic communications does not trample privacy rights should be troubled by this practical implication: If you try to know everything, you end up knowing nothing.

An investigation by The Post, which examined a cache of intelligence reports provided by fugitive NSA contractor Edward Snowden, illustrates my point. The agency is gathering and warehousing enormous amounts of private information, most of it irrelevant because it concerns innocent individuals - mostly foreigners but some U.S. citizens as well.

By "innocent," I mean the NSA is convinced these people have no involvement with any activity that poses a threat. But the agency keeps their information anyway.

Reporter Barton Gellman, researcher Julie Tate and security consultant Ashkan Soltani spent four months analyzing more than 160,000 instant-messaging conversations, e-mails, social network exchanges and other communications sucked in by the NSA's surveillance programs. The material Snowden provided was associated with roughly 11,400 individuals, perhaps half of them Americans.

Of those whose lives were rummaged through, only 11 percent are identified by the NSA as legitimate targets who warrant surveillance. This means that about nine out of 10 just happened to be snagged in the NSA's net.

It is important to clarify that I'm not talking about content-free metadata, such as the NSA's controversial log of domestic phone calls. These are actual e-mails, instant-messaging exchanges and social media posts that the NSA gathered under surveillance programs known as PRISM and Upstream. The Post reported that the content includes "stories of love and heartbreak, illicit sexual liaisons, mental-health crises, political and religious conversions, financial anxieties and disappointed hopes."

It's also important to note that the 11 percent deemed legitimate targets included some people I definitely want our spies to be watching. The Post said the surveillance records it examined included information that led to the captures of a Pakistan-based terrorist bomb-maker and a suspect in an Indonesian bomb attack. Other successes were withheld by government officials' request. Perhaps these cases could have been cracked by means other than mass surveillance. Perhaps not.

My point is not that this surveillance is incapable of helping authorities find and apprehend genuine terrorists. I just believe the snooping should be more targeted - and clearly irrelevant information about innocent people should be quickly erased.

The NSA seeks something like omniscience regarding electronic communications. But it is not enough to have a crucial tidbit of information stored on a server somewhere. For that information to be useful, it has to be identifiable and accessible. The more indiscriminately you amass data, the harder it is to find the relevant bits.

The NSA's position is essentially that the bigger the haystack it can gather, the more needles it can find. But given the ever-increasing volume of electronic communications around the world, what sense does it make for the NSA to clutter its data banks with information about people - foreign and domestic - who pose no threat? Retaining this material, apparently for up to five years, is not just an invasion of the targets' privacy but also a waste of the NSA's capacity for storage and

analysis.

If NSA officials are so confident they can manage the unimaginably vast quantities of data the agency is assembling, then why have they repeatedly given public assurances that Snowden - whom they frequently describe as a lowly analyst - had no access to the kind of sensitive data he gave to The Post? Does the agency really have any idea of what is already in its databases? Does the NSA know who might be sifting through this material? And for what purposes?

These NSA programs are designed to snoop on foreigners. Snowden has expressed the view that citizens of other countries have privacy rights, too. You don't have to agree with him to wonder why the personal e-mails of, say, a college professor in Germany or an insurance salesman in Brazil should not be purged once the material is determined irrelevant to any investigation.

Snowden also believes there are legitimate threats and targets. He gave the information to The Post with the understanding that nothing would be published that could harm U.S. national security or endanger lives. Indeed, the newspaper said it withheld details about "a secret overseas nuclear project, double-dealing by an ostensible ally, a military calamity that befell an unfriendly power, and the identities of aggressive intruders into U.S. computer networks."

Investigate that stuff, NSA. Stop wasting time and effort on people who mean us no harm.

MILLENNIALS GET CUT OFF AT THE POLLS (WP)

By Catherine Rampell

Washington Post, July 8, 2014

First they came for blacks, and we said nothing. Then they came for Latinos, poor people and married women, and we again ignored the warning signs.

Now, after our years of apathy, they're coming for us: the nation's millennials.

Across the country, Republican state policymakers have hoisted barriers to voting by passing voter-ID laws and curtailing electoral accommodations such as same-day registration and early voting. These policy changes are allegedly intended to eradicate the imagined scourge of voter fraud, but the real point seems to be voter suppression.

For a time, the targeted populations were primarily racial, ethnic and income groups that traditionally vote Democratic. Now they happen to include Gen-Y'ers, more specifically my college-age brethren. We millennials may be fickle in our loyalties, generally distrustful of government institutions and unaligned with any political party, but our generation's motley, liberal-to-libertarian-leaning ideological preferences still threaten red-state leadership.

In response, Republicans have set out to erect creative, if potentially unconstitutional, Tough-Mudder-style obstacle courses along our path to the polls.

Last year in Ohio, for example, Republican legislators proposed a measure that would effectively strip hundreds of millions of dollars from state schools if they continued to provide students paying out-of-state tuition with the paperwork necessary to register to vote in the state (as courts have said college students are legally allowed to do). In Maine, the secretary of state investigated 200 university students for voter fraud; he found no evidence of wrongdoing but then sent a threatening letter telling them that they must either obtain a Maine driver's license and register their vehicles or cancel their state voter registrations. In Texas, photo identification is required to vote and, while concealed handgun licenses count, state-school-issued student IDs don't.

North Carolina's efforts have been particularly aggressive, perhaps because young people represent an especially threatening voting bloc to the Republicans in control there. Without the strong turnout of young voters in 2008, after all, Barack Obama would not have become the first Democratic presidential candidate in more than two decades to carry the Tar Heel state.

Like other states, North Carolina has eliminated many accommodations disproportionately used by young people and other first-time voters, such as same-day registration, and instituted voter-ID requirements that don't recognize student IDs. But it has also stopped allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to fill out voter-registration forms early so that they can be automatically registered upon reaching majority age. Another state Senate bill last year would have effectively raised taxes on parents of students who registered to vote where they attend college.

Perhaps it is unsurprising, then, that the state faces a lawsuit filed by college students, aided by several voter registration advocacy groups, as the New York Times reported Sunday. The suit essentially claims that the state is engaging in age discrimination. Age discrimination accusations may be off-limits to young people in employment settings - federal law doesn't protect workers

under age 40 - but when it comes to elections, the plaintiffs have a shot. The 26th Amendment, which lowered the federal voting age to 18 in 1971, guarantees that the right to vote "shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age."

Republican lawmakers may feel threatened by the political proclivities of millennials, but the truth is, aside from 2008, young people are not usually much of a concern to either party because our turnout rates are so poor. Of all age groups, Americans 18 to 29 consistently have the lowest participation rates - even in the 2008 election, when our generation was galvanized around an unusually inspiring presidential candidate promising hope and change. That year, just 51 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds cast ballots. Sadly, it was the first time since 1972 that a majority of young people voted.

For years, get-out-the-vote groups such as Rock the Vote and Citizen Change have tried to market voting as rebellious and enviably adult (including by enlisting celebrity spokespeople who were unregistered themselves, and at least one who was possibly barred from voting due to felony records). If Paris Hilton, 50 Cent and Madonna can't convince young people to vote, maybe a bunch of old white men trying to bar their path will do the job.

OBAMA'S 'IMPERIAL PRESIDENCY' DOESN'T RULE MUCH OF ANYTHING (WP)

By Dana Milbank

Washington Post, July 8, 2014

On either end of Lafayette Square on Monday, you could observe the receding power of the Obama presidency.

On the north side, across from the White House, stands St. John's Episcopal Church, "the Church of the Presidents," where every president since James Madison has worshiped. But there was no sanctuary for Obama at St. John's on Monday; it was hosting a protest against him.

More than 100 Latinos - a constituency that has been a reliable part of Obama's political base - stood on the church steps as speakers denounced Obama's pledge to hasten deportations of children illegally crossing the southern border. Addressing the participants, many of whom held signs saying "President Obama: STOP!!," immigration advocate Gustavo Torres charged that "the president has failed to act with the urgency and competence that is required."

At that very moment on the other side of the square, the White House was acting with urgency on Obama's latest executive action, the "Excellent Educators for All" initiative. Eight hundred feet from the church protest, Education Secretary Arne Duncan was in the White House briefing room, talking about "differential compensation," "systemic inequities" and the administration's plans to spend \$4.2 million on a new "educator equity support network."

Duncan said the administration would prefer to act with Congress rather than use executive authority, "but we just can't continue to wait."

Certainly, the matter of teacher quality for poor kids is important, but Duncan and his administration colleagues are in for a semester at the school of hard knocks if they think a \$4.2 million initiative (that's about 0.0001 percent of the federal budget) will get attention when there's a crisis on the border, a crisis in Iraq and Syria, and other fires to be extinguished at home and abroad.

Indeed, the first question for Duncan on Monday wasn't about his new initiative but about the National Education Association's call over the weekend for Duncan's resignation after several policy disagreements. Duncan said he doesn't get involved in "local union politics."

Local? The NEA is the nation's largest teachers union and a key component of Obama's political base - just like the Latino activists protesting across the square.

This is why the oft-leveled accusation that Barack Obama is running an "imperial presidency" is a bit silly. As imperial rulers go, this president has about as much oppressive might and raw dictatorial clout as Prince Hans-Adam II of Liechtenstein. Republicans have never respected Obama's authority. And now, as his popularity slips, he seems to be losing his ability to influence foreign allies, congressional Democrats and some of his previously loyal supporters.

Both the puny executive action and the criticism from erstwhile allies on Monday showed why the Obama presidency these days is falling a good bit short of imperial on the Alexander the Great scale. Education was the White House's message du jour - lunch with teachers on the South Lawn was the only item on Obama's publicly released schedule other than his intelligence briefing - but it didn't have a chance of wresting the national narrative away from less pleasant affairs.

On Tuesday, Obama plans to ask Congress for additional funds to process child immigrants. But then he's going on a fundraising trip to Colorado and Texas that, his spokesman confirmed Monday, doesn't include a stop at the border. This could put Obama further on the defensive by inviting the sort of criticism that followed George W. Bush's Hurricane Katrina flyover. In recent days, Obama has spoken in scattershot fashion about education, jobs, the Highway Trust Fund, immigration legislation and Republicans' threat to sue him for his supposedly monarchical behavior. But his success in shaping the agenda has been negligible. He has been at the mercy of events, reacting to matters not of his choosing and taking executive actions that, for all the criticism, don't have the permanence or reach of legislation. Following Duncan's visit to the briefing room, new White House press secretary Josh Earnest had the unpleasant task of responding to all the other problems generated by supposed friends. Ed Henry of Fox News inquired about Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-Tex.), who on Sunday called the administration "one step behind" on the border crisis. The Associated Press's Julie Pace asked about Germany's complaint that one of its intelligence operatives was allegedly a U.S. double agent. And Mark Landler of the New York Times asked why Iraqi leaders seem to be "brushing aside" the administration's pleas to form a new government. To that last question, Earnest said he had "been pretty candid, I think, over the last couple of weeks, in articulating our disappointment." Articulating disappointment! Does the arrogance of this imperial presidency know no bounds?

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES:

FIREFIGHTERS, OTHERS WALK OUT OF COUNCIL MEETING (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 7, 2014

WILMINGTON - Dozens of firefighters, police and administration members stormed out of a city council committee meeting Monday night after a call to vote on controversial proposals was made without the committee allowing the fire chief to address the panel.

Public Safety Committee Chairman Mike Brown, said he was planning to let Fire Chief Anthony Goode speak after the committee voted to move the items to the full council for consideration.

"We wanted to hear from council members and others. The fire chief was going to have an opportunity to give his remarks," Brown said after the meeting. "I don't let people tell me what to do. I run this meeting. Every council chairperson has a way of running their meetings."

Chief of Staff Cleon Cauley notified council members he was leaving as Brown attempted to call for a vote without allowing Goode to comment on the proposals.

Firefighters and police applauded Cauley's move and followed him out of the door.

One firefighter compared Brown's handling of the meeting to a dictatorship. Others shouted "you're a disgrace" and "good thing you're not running again." to Brown.

Goode called Brown's behavior inappropriate and said he felt disrespected.

"Tonight's meeting was something unique," Goode said following the meeting.

"I've never been to a public safety meeting where the chief was not even allowed to sit down. Then they offer public comment before they had me address any of the concerns," he said.

Goode acknowledged he and Brown had personal issues in the past, but he didn't elaborate.

Monday's meeting considered proposals that would, among other things, eliminate seven vacant firefighter positions and require the police and fire chiefs to go before council before starting academy classes for new recruits. Currently, each department can start academies when their uniformed strength falls below 95 percent of staffing guidelines.

Goode has said the fire department meets conditions to start an academy.

Before leaving, Cauley called the academy proposal a burden. "I question whether it's a step into the executive branch of government," he said.

Council President Theo Gregory, said the legislation wouldn't change the agencies' ability to address shortages.

"We want to make sure at a certain threshold that a class is started," Gregory responded. "So it's just a matter of accountability."

"We ... have to ensure and always ask, 'Why hasn't a class started yet? It may be a good reason or there may not be a good reason. And that's where the dialogue starts.'"

But Cauley challenged the need for a formal process.

"You want to have a review or conversation, my door's always open," Cauley said. "Come ask the question, and you'll have answers. I don't think we can legislate conversations. We just need to talk. Just come across the hall, and we'll let you know."

The proposal to cut seven vacant firefighter positions would help the city save \$447,000. The legislation is a direct suggestion from the Berkshire report, a 2012 study on the fire department. Council members said they're looking at the fire department because of concerns from the public that city spending has not been checked.

But council members also said they're looking at other departments for cost-savings, as well. Councilman Robert Williams, a former city police officer, said the city could be taking a big public safety risk by killing positions, even if no one is occupying them.

"[The study] was put together as a proposal on how to go about saving money," he said. "From the onset, it wasn't looking for better of the city of Wilmington. It was looking for a way to save money." Goode and other fire leaders said eliminating the vacancies would significantly speed up the rate at which the department hands out overtime. When the department hands out overtime to more than three firefighters, it has to shut a fire engine down, thereby creating a coverage gap and increasing response times, Goode said.

The vacant positions and academy proposals were each sent to full council on 3-1 votes. The items will be considered at a future council session. The council meets again on Thursday.

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CHRISTIANA CARE MARKS ONE YEAR OF CORD BLOOD BANKING (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 7, 2014

More than 1,000 mothers who delivered babies in Delaware in the past year made use of a free option to donate their umbilical cord blood for research purposes or life-saving transfusions, officials at Christiana Care Health System said.

"It's just a great gift to society and to the child," Kim Petrella, a labor and delivery nurse at Christiana Care, said of cord blood banking. "This is something we used to throw away, and now we're realizing it could be the holy grail."

Christiana Care notched its 1,036th donation in July since an arrangement with a public cord blood bank, CORD:USE, took effect in July 2013, hospital officials said. The hospital handles about 6,500 deliveries a year, meaning about 16 percent of expecting mothers took the option, which adds no cost to a patient's bill after giving birth.

Blood retrieved from a woman's umbilical cord, minutes after she gives birth, is sought-after in modern medicine because it contains a rich supply of stem cells - young cells that can serve as a kind of template for making blood cells.

Such cells are increasingly used to treat people with diseases like leukemia and lymphoma that cause their own bodies' blood-forming cells to become diseased, according to the federal Health Resources and Services Administration, which promotes cord blood donation. They're not the same thing as embryonic stem cells, either, so they carry none of the bioethical baggage attached to those kinds of stem cells.

When Congress passed the Stem Cell Act of 2005, it gave the federal government authority to work with cord blood banks to develop an inventory of 150,000 units of transplantable cord blood. By May 2011, there had been 41,000 units of blood banked with the federally developed National Cord Blood Inventory and 94,000 units of cord blood in other U.S. registries, according to the Government Accountability Office.

Since cord blood therapies have become more widespread, expectant parents have been offered the chance to bank their infants' cord blood for their own family's use alone. This private cord blood banking can cost between \$900 and \$2,500 at first, with yearly storage fees that follow. Christiana Care has for years offered its patients an option to donate cord blood instead, which builds up supplies of publicly available cord blood, much like donating blood to the Red Cross. The hospital worked with a New Jersey blood bank, Community Blood Services, until 2012, and started its partnership with CORD:USE, a Florida company affiliated with researchers at Duke University, in July 2013.

Blood donated by mothers giving birth can be used for transplants when the recipient's blood type is a match. It can also be used for research purposes by scientists trying to extend the usefulness of cord blood in treatments.

If cord blood isn't saved for public use or privately banked, it's just discarded as medical waste, never extracted from the umbilical cord and placenta.

Dr. Richard J. Derman, who chairs Christiana Care's obstetrics and gynecology department, called the past year's surpassed goal of getting to 1,000 cord blood donations "a rather dramatic step forward."

"We're dealing with cells that are much more undeveloped than bone marrow," Derman said.

"They have much more capacity for adapting." The process of getting the blood out of the umbilical cord and placenta immediately after birth, Derman said, is quick and usually unnoticed by the mother, since it's done when she is first holding the baby.

"It does not affect the birth of the baby. There's no danger to mom," Petrella said. "That's usually the part where the parents are counting the fingers and the toes. We've had people ask, did you do it already?"

Christiana Care is the only Delaware hospital that facilitates free public cord blood donations, according to the Parent's Guide to Cord Blood Foundation.

Petrella said more people who donate cord blood choose to make a public donation than opt to privately bank it and pay for its storage themselves.

Some researchers in Christiana Care's own cancer center have even made use of the hospital's donated blood for their work, she said, which means "the newborns that are born at Christiana are going to be helping the sickest of the sick in our own state."

For Jessica Papp McNemar of Wilmington, who gave birth to her daughter Moxie at Christiana Care in February, donating her cord blood was a no-brainer. "I'm sort of a helping person by nature. I know there's so much research and so much that can be done with cord blood,"

McNemar said. She considered private banking, she said, but thought it didn't seem "urgent" to set aside the blood only for her family to use.

Getting the task of donating done only required filling out some paperwork in advance, McNemar said, and right after delivery, she never noticed the quick extra procedure.

"I didn't even know they were doing it," she said. "I was looking at the baby the whole time."

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Resources

- The Parent's Guide to Cord Blood Foundation provides a wealth of information about donating, privacy protections for donors and what treatments can be carried out with donated cord blood: parentsguidecordblood.org.

- The company Christiana Care partners with to process cord blood donations, CORD:USE, has information on its public bank and retrieval process at corduse.com.

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WILMINGTON VIOLENCE: 'SO MANY FUNERALS' (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 7, 2014

WILMINGTON - Crystal Brown and her cousins stopped at Adams Market to grab some food Sunday night.

A few moments later, the 43-year-old woman left the store, walking right into a crossfire of bullets outside the corner store located at Adams and Seventh streets. A stray bullet struck her in the chest, fatally wounding her in front of relatives, some of whom were preteens, her brother Harry Brown said Monday.

"That's the other unfortunate thing," said Brown, who along with about 30 people gathered outside his aunt's house Monday for a vigil held for his baby sister. "They saw that and now we have to deal with that on top of everything else."

The shooter remained at large Monday.

Her killing puts Wilmington on pace to surpass the number of people killed in the city in the last three years. There have been 13 homicides so far this year - that's one more than in 2011 and 2012 and five more than last year.

Her homicide came in the midst of a 41-hour period of violence in the city that included a noontime

shooting Monday in which suspects shot at police officers. No injuries were reported in that incident, but an undercover police vehicle was struck by gunfire while following a vehicle believed to have been involved in a previous shooting.

The ongoing gun violence in the city of about 71,000 residents had Mayor Dennis P. Williams on Monday promising police saturation in some of the more crime-ridden areas, including Pine Street where two men were killed last month during two separate shootings.

"This is our community, these are our folks killing each other and it anguishes me every day," Williams said at a Central Baptist Church gathering.

"I truly apologize for the violence in your community. I accept responsibility and truly apologize," said Williams. The plan is expected to begin in mid-July and would include going after slumlords. City police will not put up with "people who are running around here being Al Capone, shooting up the place," he added. "We are going to clean up Pine Street, but it's not going to be a piece of cake."

About three dozen residents heard Williams speak at the neighborhood meeting called by City Councilwoman Hanifa Shabazz.

"We are sounding the alarm," she said. "We're no longer living in this condition. ... We want our neighborhoods back."

Like Williams and Wilmington Police Chief Bobby Cummings, Shabazz called on residents to work with police to end the violence that is destroying families and neighborhoods.

Jack McDonough, from the state Department of Justice, urged residents to report houses of known drug activity or storage as nuisance properties - especially in the focus area of Sixth to 10th and Lombard to Spruce streets - and report probationers loitering on blocks where they have no connections, so they can be restricted from doing so.

Williams said everyone can do something to help, from mentoring to picking up trash. But he also told residents if they see crime and don't report it, "you're part of the problem."

Williams, who talked of people helping him avoid a negative life on the streets, also promised continuing emphasis on activities for youth, job development and massive increase in police presence. But he also warned residents that he didn't want people complaining when it happens.

"We're getting ready to get tough," he said.

After the meeting, Shabazz gathered many of the residents for a neighborhood walk, handing out papers with phone numbers for services and to report crime.

About a mile west of the meeting, friends and family of Brown gathered in the 1000 block of Seventh St. to hold a vigil for her. A photo of Brown was taped to her aunt's front porch, which was surrounded by stuffed animals. Candles were lit in her honor. A set of small white candles shaped her initials, with a set of red candles making the shape of a heart.

Her mother was surrounded by many who came to pay their respects. She said she was not ready to be interviewed.

Harry Brown, who said his mother was holding him up, said his sister visited him over the weekend in Magnolia, where he has his home. He fought back his emotions when remembering he had not told her he loved her when she left his home Sunday afternoon.

"I'm realizing that I need to seize every opportunity I have to tell the people that I love that I love them," he said. "Yesterday I didn't do that. But I think she knew that I loved her."

Others described Brown, who recently started working as a collections agent in Dover, as a person who would give the shirt off her back for anyone.

"She was like everybody's best friend," said 32-year-old Shavon Richardson, one Brown's close friends. "She was everybody's protector. If you needed advice, she was always there for you. She was just a great friend and she will be missed."

Tiffany Smith, another of Brown's close friends, said this senseless act adds to the list of people she knows who have been killed.

"I live in Wilmington - born and raised," she said. "Every other day, I'm hearing about a childhood friend, someone I went to school with, someone I grew up with, someone who I used to play with is dying."

"I have gone to so many funerals, I cannot count. I have so many obituaries, I cannot count. I just want it to stop."

Smith said the city needed to do more in order to keep people occupied and away from violence.

"Put the guns down," she said. "You are killing people left and right, innocent people. It's a shame

that now we have to bury my sister, my best friend, who was so sweet and so innocent. She was such a lovable, caring person."

The vigil started about 6:30 p.m., almost a block and a half from where Brown was shot.

"They're just pulling out guns"

About 6 hours earlier on Monday, an undercover officer in an unmarked vehicle saw a silver Buick speeding in the area of West 35th and North Market streets, said Cpl. Mark Ivey, a Wilmington police spokesman.

As the officer followed the vehicle, an occupant fired at the officer's vehicle multiple times, and gunfire hit the passenger's side window.

The Buick crashed into a parked car in the 2800 block of N. West St. about 12:45 p.m., and three people fled from the vehicle, Ivey said. Two were taken into custody after a brief foot chase; the third remained at large Monday, he said.

A multitude of Wilmington police officers, some with assault rifles, fanned out in the area as residents, including children, walked about.

A young boy was standing near the police crime tape at North West and West 29th streets when Wanda Lee came up and recognized him. She sternly told him to go home, then told him "I love you."

"The young children, they're being exposed to too much and they have no regard for life whatsoever. None whatsoever," she said.

"It's sad. People are losing their loved ones just for something so mediocre. They're not discussing what's going on. They're just pulling out guns."

Lee said with Sunday night's homicide and the shootings previous to that, the city feels like it's lost its way.

"This is just too much. Too much," she said. "We need to take control of the city."

Wilmington police also were called out to other shooting incidents during the 41-hour period that started on Saturday, including the arrest of 23-year-old Shavar Watson after he drew a gun in front of patrolling officers.

Wilmington Officers Danielle Watson and Jose Vasquez were on patrol about 8:25 p.m. Saturday when they heard several gunshots near the 200 block of N. Van Buren Street. The officers then saw Watson standing and pointing a handgun north on that block.

The officers chased Watson, who discarded a 9mm handgun as he fled. When he was captured, Ivey said, Watson was in possession of 54 bags of heroin. Watson was taken to Wilmington Hospital for treatment for a small puncture to his foot.

He's charged with with weapon offenses, and possession with intent to deliver heroin and resisting arrest.

About 7 hours later, a 26-year-old city man was shot in the abdomen.

The preliminary investigation suggests the man was standing in the area of West Fifth and North Madison streets when he heard gunfire and was shot shortly after 2:30 a.m. Sunday. The man, who was driven by private vehicle to Wilmington Hospital, was uncooperative with investigators, Ivey said.

He was listed stable condition Monday.

Lamotte X, the head of the Wilmington Peacekeepers, an anti-violence group, said it can get discouraging, but the community must come together if they want to reduce the violence.

"It's not going to be the Peacekeepers one day hitting the nail on the head and everybody is going to say 'Hurray. Everything stopped,' " he said. "We can't put it on the police officers, we can't put it on the mayor. It's going to take the community."

The group was in the 800 block of Pine Street over the weekend trying to bring awareness to the June 21 killing of Jason Turner, 32, and the June 30 homicide of Brian Rivers, 35. He said young children passing by inspired him and others in the group to continue fighting against the violence. The two were killed on or near the 800 block of Pine Street.

"When you see the little children, that is encouraging," he said. "Because we get a chance to talk to them and then maybe they'll come up and live a different way."

The group plans to march in the 600 block of Adams Street this Thursday to bring awareness to Brown's killing.

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POLICE CLEAR BOMB THREAT AT UD (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 7, 2014

A bomb scare Monday night caused the evacuation of a dorm complex at the University of Delaware.

The University of Delaware sent out an alert Monday night to the campus community after receiving a bomb threat shortly before 8 p.m.

"Report of suspicious activity at Dickinson Complex; Police are on scene; please avoid the area until an all clear alert is received," read an alert to the university community following a threat called in to university police shortly before 8 p.m.

As of 11:34 p.m., K-9 units from the University of Delaware, Delaware State and New Castle County police departments completed their search and found no explosives, said Andrea Boyle, a university spokeswoman.

The university evacuated three students from the complex, located off Hillside Road in Newark, she said. The low number was because of the summer break, she said.

For hours, officers blocked traffic at Hillside and Apple roads and also prevented pedestrians from entering the area off Elkton Road.

Customers and employees at the nearby Buffalo Wild Wings Grill & Bar on South Main Street said they were not aware of the situation.

Customer Douglas Foust said he was surprised to learn of the bomb threat, which was the first he ever heard of on campus.

UD students Neha Luthra and Rashmi Gupta said they were concerned when they got the alert about police activity that didn't say what was happening.

The women, who live in the apartments above Buffalo Wild Wings, said they didn't know anyone who was evacuated.

Avoiding the complex was no problem, since they had no plans to go there Monday night, they said.

Still, the UD alert left them curious.

"There have been a lot of armed robberies, so I just figured that was what it was," said Gupta, a junior from Cumberland, Rhode Island.

"I think it would have freaked me out more to know it was a bomb threat," said sophomore Luthra. She said her father called her to check in after he got the alert.

Luthra and Gupta said they were relieved to learn that only a few people were in the building when UD police received the call.

They said they had no idea why anyone would make such a threat involving college dorms.

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KENT SPORTS COMPLEX'S FUTURE UNKNOWN (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 7, 2014

Cars speed north along Del. 1, passing 85 acres of farmland. The only thing to see is a sign planted nearby that's been there for almost two years, advertising the future home of the Kent County Regional Sports Complex.

The proposed \$24 million, 15-field sports venue for tournaments is shovel-ready since last year, but has recently faced major setbacks that have supporters concerned that the plan will get lost in the shuffle or its backers could walk away. A proposed \$25 million interchange supporters say is vital to the complex's success was delayed and \$3.2 million earmarked for the project was diverted by lawmakers to bail out the state's three ailing casinos.

Frederica residents and Kent County officials say now matters have fallen into their own hands and they need to make enough noise to remind people that this project, with a potential multi-million dollar economic impact, is vital to Delaware. A community meeting about the project is scheduled at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Frederica Volunteer Fire Hall.

"It's such a potential home run. It would change the landscape of not just Kent County, but the

state," said Kent County Levy Court Commissioner Eric Buckson.

"People need to understand that while the wind might have been temporarily taken out of the sails, the boat is still moving," said Bob Murphy, a local resident who organized the meeting.

"Sometimes things get worse before they get better."

Residents plan to organize a citizens group, the Friends of the Kent County Regional Sports Complex, to remind state lawmakers and officials about the importance of this project, he said.

"We have elections coming up and one thing legislators do pay attention to are voters," he said.

The public's involvement comes at a time when the project's stakeholders are conducting "a deliberate review" of their potential options, which include moving the plans to another location in Kent County or walking away entirely, said Bill Strickland, past president of the nonprofit Greater Kent Committee, which is partnering with the county on the project.

The groups already have identified two other potential sites, including one along Del. 1, Strickland said.

But he said he is optimistic the project would get done in its proposed location. A decision on the project's future should come by summer's end, he said.

Should it not work out, it would not be because of the casino money. Supporters say they understand why it was diverted and trust it will be returned next year, as promised and written in legislation passed last week.

Instead, the property would remain vacant because of a stalemate between the project's stakeholders and DelDOT over the proposed south Frederica overpass project, Strickland said.

Officials this year delayed the \$25 million interchange project until fiscal year 2017.

The project will only get funding from the banks if the overpass is built, Strickland said.

The interchange, proposed in the 1990s, was high on DelDOT's priority list at one point, but not after DelDOT began using a data-driven decision-making and prioritizing process.

The complex project, supported by the interchange, would create 300 jobs and have an estimated economic impact of \$10 million to \$18 million. Murphy said he's not sure how that's not a driving priority.

"The governor spent \$13 million on bicycle paths, and while I have nothing against people who ride bicycle paths, it neither created revenue or jobs as far as I know," Murphy said.

The overpass isn't needed purely to ensure the safety of people using the facilities, said DelDOT secretary Shailen Bhatt. There are also concerns about spending \$25 million in public funds for a project that's seen its financing plan change multiple times, Bhatt said.

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OVERCOME ADDICTIONS WITH PLENTY OF PROGRAMS IN DELAWARE (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 7, 2014

Addiction to drugs and alcohol touches everyone, devastating individuals and families.

It impacts people who are rich and poor, old and young, from the hardened addict who steals to support his habit to the teenager who slips pills from her parents' medicine cabinet.

Addiction also has a serious impact on an individual's health.

People with substance abuse issues are at increased risk for illnesses and injuries. Drinking too much alcohol makes it more likely someone will fall or be hurt in an accident. Overindulging in alcohol also contributes to heart and liver disease, and increases the risk of some cancers, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention attributes 88,000 deaths a year to excessive drinking.

Drug abuse puts users at risk for HIV, hepatitis, heart problems, kidney disease and other illnesses, says the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Additionally, more people are dying from overdoses, according to the CDC, which reported 38,329 fatal overdoses in 2010, more than twice the 16,849 deaths reported in 1999.

There also has been an alarming spike in heroin use throughout the United States. A 2012 survey by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration revealed about 669,000 people older than 12 used heroin that year. In contrast, fewer than 400,000 people used heroin in 2007, the agency said. Heroin overdose deaths increased 45 percent between 2006 and 2010. In Delaware this year, there are 12 to 15 drug deaths from heroin each month.

Addiction is a complex illness that causes changes in the brain. That is why it is difficult for addicts

to control their behavior and make good decisions - or to understand and accept they have a problem.

Addictions to drugs and alcohol start for a variety of reasons, related to a combination of genetic, environmental, social, cultural and behavioral factors. It's important, however, to recognize that once folks are addicted, they have a disease that needs treatment.

People become "hooked" on drugs due to their potential for overstimulation of the brain's pleasure centers. Drugs of addiction cause a flood of dopamine, a brain hormone (neurotransmitter), which create a pleasure sensation that may be as much as 10 times greater than everyday pleasures. While addiction is a difficult problem to treat, many people are able to reclaim their lives with help from medical professionals and treatment programs.

Unfortunately, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, relapse rates after treatment can be as high as 60 percent. Getting those who have "slipped" back to treatment, with understanding and support, is important to do, as repeat treatments can be successful.

Under the Affordable Care Act, treatment for drug and alcohol addiction is listed among the 10 essential benefits that must be included in health plans. Coverage is included in the plans offered by the insurance exchanges, as well as Medicaid, the government health plan for people who are poor or have a disability.

There is tremendous value in rehabilitation and other treatments for addiction. Various estimates conclude that every dollar invested in treatment programs saves up to \$12 in health care costs and costs related to crime. Recovery also leads to more productive and fulfilling lives.

In Delaware, there are many resources to help people fight drug and alcohol addiction. If you or someone you love needs help with addiction, seek treatment. A good place to start is by checking out resources throughout the state through the Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health. To learn more, go to <http://dhss.delaware.gov/dsamh> and click on "substance abuse."

Innovative approaches to treatment are also developing. One example, "Project Engage," is a partnership between Christiana Care Health System and Brandywine Counseling & Community Services. It pairs patients with addictions with counselors who are themselves in recovery.

The counselors engage the patients at an important time - while they are still in the hospital - and refer them directly to treatment and other resources to help them continue their recovery when they return to the community.

Results from this program, which provides crucial connection and support outside the hospital, indicate that fewer patients return to the hospital or the emergency department.

This type of program helps us envision ways in which we can integrate medical care with community programs for those in need.

Dr. Michael Rosenthal is chair of the Department of Family & Community Medicine at Christiana Care Health System.

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UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE TUITION, FEES TO INCREASE (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 7, 2014

Students at the University of Delaware will have a heftier bill in the upcoming academic year.

In-state students at UD will pay \$12,342 in tuition and fees for the 2014-15 school year, an increase of \$230, officials announced Monday.

The 1.9 percent growth is the smallest percentage increase in more than 30 years.

For out-of-state students, tuition and fees will grow by \$760 to \$30,692, an increase of 2.54 percent. Mandatory fees include the Student Health Service Fee, Student Center Fee and Student Comprehensive Fee.

Including room and board, the total cost of attending UD will be \$23,900 for in-state students and \$42,250 for out-of-state students.

For graduate students, tuition will be \$1,625 per credit hour, an increase of 3 percent or \$47 a credit hour. Full-time graduate students will, however, see a 7 percent reduction in their mandatory fees.

Sustaining fees, which grad students pay while they are working on dissertations but not taking credit hours, will remain at \$621 for master's students and \$938 for doctoral students.

Tuition at UD, like at most colleges across the country, has steadily climbed over the past few years.

In the 2004 school year, undergraduate tuition and fees for in-state students were \$6,954; in 2014, they will be \$12,342. That's an increase of more than 75 percent.

UD is not alone in seeing such increases - nationwide, the average cost of a four-year public university, including tuition, fees, room and board soared from \$9,196 in 2001 to \$16,789 in 2011, according to the latest figures available from the National Center for Education Statistics. That's a growth of 82 percent.

The state's other publicly funded university did not raise tuition and fees for the second year in a row. Delaware State University students will pay \$7,336 for in-state tuition and \$15,962 for those outside Delaware.

Still, a 1.9 percent increase is easily the smallest percentage increase in the past decade at UD, where students were sometimes hit with hikes of as much as 9.7 percent. The average increase over the last 10 years was 6.6 percent.

UD Provost Domenico Grasso said the most recent increase is necessary to cover growing costs of things like energy, salary increases and growth in health benefits. He said university officials are concerned about the cost of attending school, and have made affordability a key plank of their recently-launched strategic planning process.

"This is very high on our priority list. It is something we are certainly concerned about," he said.

"But, at the same time, President Harker and the faculty and staff of this university have been committed to Delawareans, and I think people know this institution is a tremendous value."

Grasso said UD has pointed to the Commitment to Delawareans, UD's program aimed at in-state families that meets a student's full demonstrated financial need and caps student loans at 25 percent of the cost of a four-year-degree.

All told, UD students received more than \$74 million in scholarships and grants, more than double the amount five years ago, the university said.

School officials also pointed to reports from the Princeton Review and Kiplinger's Personal Finance that each named UD a "best value" institution based on its academics and cost.

"This is a top-ranked research university of the first caliber," Grasso said. "If you look at the net cost of the University of Delaware, we're competitive with the best."

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WILMINGTON JOURNAL NEWS EDITORIALS:

RETHINK CITY WORKER LAW IN WILMINGTON (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 7, 2014

Revisiting the city of Wilmington's mandatory residency requirement for its workers was bound to keep cropping up since the mandatory employment rule took effect two decades ago.

It's no secret that it has left plenty of potential good hires grumbling over the years. Until the late 1990s, anyone hired by the city had to live in Wilmington. The law was later changed. New hires now must live in the city for five years.

And courts have backed this idea for decades now, judging them "not irrational." According to a Fraternal Order of Police case in Iowa, the benefits outweighed the criticism - "such things as having employees available for emergency calls, employees having a stake in the community, enhancing the tax base, improving community attitudes and cooperation, increasing loyalty to the community, and reducing absenteeism."

Mayor Dennis Williams essentially outlined the same benefits a few months ago to The News Journal Editorial Board. He cited city workers' loyalty to their hometown and commitment to the state's largest municipal government even during such tough economic times. He judged these employees more valuable than contracting their jobs to outside vendors, despite the purported cost savings. And he made a point that often the costs savings to such outside vendors don't stay stagnant.

So shouldn't such loyalty on the mayor's part to these employees be reciprocated with all workers' compliance to the residency requirement? However, not all city workers are held to such a requirement. There are several special cases, mostly in management, where workers have

knowingly skirted the intent of the law. Some rent apartments or stay with relatives during the weekdays, while visiting and maintaining their primary residence outside the city. Rather than revisiting the lack of compliance to the existence requirement, it's clear that living in the city is a hurdle for workers who might be good at what they do, but just don't want to follow the residency rule beyond the spirit of the law. They should not be subjected to public shame, though. City Councilman Michael Brown wants to "review the residencies of certain employees by calling them in for a hearing." That's a wasteful side show in the making, one that will only scare off potential good candidates for city jobs, who do meet the requirements.

To be fair to all workers - regardless of their position or address - the city has two choices. Drop the residency requirement entirely, which would draw a wider pool of potential hires. Former Mayor James Baker urges as much, because he found it interfered with his administration getting the best talent.

Or the city could do what the law originally intended - only hire workers who are committed to the city and who demonstrate it by complying with the residency rule of living within city limits for the five-year requirement.

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1IOQJ5r>

THE RIGHT WAY TO HELP STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 7, 2014

Over the last several days, The News Journal has focused on the issue of standardized testing in Delaware public schools for students who have disabilities. This provides a useful opportunity to talk more broadly about how Delaware can better help its students with disabilities fulfill their potential.

Much of our time in public office has been dedicated to advocating for children with disabilities. We believe strongly that there is much more the state and its schools should do to help students with disabilities fulfill their potential.

We believe just as strongly, though, that it is not all about standardized tests. Tracking how our students are progressing is important, and the state must be diligent and disciplined about doing so. But, if the state does not provide a sufficient number of teachers and specialists to work with children with special needs, and if the state does not provide those professionals with the time and training to hone their skills, then standardized tests will do our students no good. Simply saying that we should have high expectations for our students - then giving them tests - will not help them achieve.

The reality is that educating students with disabilities is often more expensive than educating students who are lucky enough not to have those extra hurdles. Advocates for children with disabilities have had to be vigilant over the past several years as policymakers at state and local levels have sought to divert funds that should be spent educating students with special needs into other funding streams. If the state is serious about helping students with disabilities improve academically, it should make a concerted effort to ensure that resources are available to teachers and schools to provide the individualized, skilled attention that those students require.

When it comes to truly assessing students, Delaware is as rigorous as almost any state in the country. Eighty-eight percent of students with disabilities in Delaware take the DCAS - the same standard assessment that all students take.

By national standards, that is a very high percentage. The federal Department of Education criticized Delaware for having a low participation rate among students with disabilities on a separate assessment that the federal government conducts, the results of which are never revealed to Delaware teachers and are never used to help any individual student or evaluate any individual teacher or school. We are more concerned with student participation on assessments that actually measure how individual students are doing.

The remaining students with disabilities take an alternate test called the DCAS Alternate. For some students with disabilities, the DCAS Alternate is a good assessment that accurately charts their progress. But for some of our students with very significant cognitive disabilities, the DCAS Alternate tells us little or nothing about their progress.

Many of these students have very limited ability to communicate.

They take the test year after year, they are relentlessly prepared for the test by school personnel trying to follow the rules, and year after year, they are unable to produce any usable results on the

test. Parents object to their children being tested, but still, they are tested. Legislation that we authored with State Rep. Longhurst this year was designed to deal with that small subgroup of students.

The bill that we authored was supported by 60 of the 62 members of the General Assembly. Senate Bill 229 simply says that for students with very severe cognitive disabilities, whose parents and schools don't believe a standardized test like the DCAS Alternate is appropriate, the state must provide a different assessment that is based on a portfolio of the student's work. It doesn't say that those students won't be assessed; it just says that they will be assessed in a way that provides some meaningful results. And it will only apply to students who qualify medically and whose parents and schools think it is the right thing to do.

This is not a novel idea. Massachusetts, which was rated by the federal government as having a good record of educating children with disabilities, uses a portfolio assessment for all of its students with disabilities who do not take the standard assessment.

People who try to simplify the issue of educating students with disabilities by saying it is just about expectations and assessments do those students no good. High expectations are important, and assessments are necessary.

But, providing adequate staffing in our schools, ensuring a high level of professional development for those who work with our kids, and exercising some common sense and discretion when it comes to assessments are even more important.

We believe that students with disabilities can excel - and, more than that - we believe that it is our moral obligation to help them do so. But doing so will require a real investment by the state, not just a test.

Matt Denn is Delaware's lieutenant governor. State Sen. Nicole Poore represents the 12th District. Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1IOz5Pb>

TIME TO SEPARATE HEALTH CARE COVERAGE AND WORK? (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 7, 2014

I was thrilled to work for the federal government for six years. I believe passionately in the importance of public service, and I had both job security in a field I care deeply about and amazing co-workers. It never occurred to me that my employment placed me at any disadvantage - until I came face to face with special laws that restricted my reproductive choices. I suppose I shouldn't have been surprised, given increasing attempts across the United States to limit women's access to reproductive health care, in some cases with the backing of the Supreme Court.

I've been on the pill for most of my adult life, and I've always had irregular menstruation, routinely going three or four months without a period. That's why I didn't worry when I missed a period last fall. It wasn't until I began to suffer extreme nausea and fatigue that I began to think something was wrong. A home pregnancy test on a Thursday night led to phone calls Friday morning and then a quickly scheduled doctor's appointment for Monday.

Already struggling with the idea of a very unplanned and unwanted pregnancy, I was beyond shocked when my doctor informed me I was already eight weeks and three days pregnant.

Abortion wasn't an automatic choice for me, but it was one I was strongly considering, and the method I preferred - drug-induced abortion - can't be performed after nine weeks. I had only days to consider my choices.

My doctor and nurse were supportive and informative, and I felt relieved to be in their care. But after leaving to do some of the required paperwork, the nurse quickly returned and sat down with me, holding my hand as she told me that, as a federal employee enrolled in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, my health-care coverage is barred by Congress from paying for abortion services except in cases of rape or incest or when the life of the woman is in danger. If I wanted to terminate my pregnancy, I was on my own.

So I ran out of my doctor's office to call Planned Parenthood before its appointment line shut down for the day, despite not yet knowing whether I was going to choose an abortion. My ability to make my own decision was rapidly diminishing. I wanted to preserve all my options.

By the time of my appointment, two days later, I knew what I wanted to do. After a long morning of exams and conversations, I had an abortion.

The procedure cost around \$480, due immediately. I am fortunate: I was able to pay for the abortion without affecting my ability to honor other financial commitments. But not that long ago, I

couldn't have managed that, and I fear for the women who can neither afford the procedure nor wait for their next payday to take action. The clinic I went to was only minutes from both my house and my workplace, so I didn't have to find a way to pay for last-minute travel expenses.

I'm not ashamed that, as a 29-year-old woman, I'm sexually active and I have a healthy, functioning reproductive system. In fact, I'm quite happy to be able to state this. I was also fortunate to have an accommodating workplace, supportive family and friends and the financial resources to handle unexpected expenses.

Abortion opponents often argue that impediments such as the ones I faced lead women to consider more carefully the decisions they are making. But I am fully capable of making appropriate decisions, in consultation with my doctor, about my health, my body and my life. In the end, I would have gotten an abortion with or without the restrictions placed upon me as a federal employee. It was the right decision for me. Restricting my access to health coverage didn't prevent my pregnancy, and it certainly didn't influence my choice. All it did was punish me, financially and otherwise, for making a responsible, physician-approved health-care decision. I've now left federal government to pursue a master's degree, and I am proud of the years I spent working with the federal government to keep the American public safe and secure. However, the mission of preserving my health and well-being rests solely with me and my doctors, and it requires no interference from my government or its politicians.

Loren Clark-Moe is a former Department of Homeland Security analyst.

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OUR DISAPPEARING ROLE AS A GLOBAL LEADER (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, July 7, 2014

Coaches know that there is nothing more dangerous for a sports team than retreating into passivity out of fear of making a mistake. Whether it is because of a desire to sit on a lead or because of nerves following a setback, failing to advance aggressively is almost always a strategic error.

What is true in athletic competition is all too true in the life of nations. While imprudence is never good, excessive caution in the name of prudence or expediency can have grave consequences. A nation will never have more power or influence than it has ambition to shape the global system. A sense of fatalism can become a self-fulfilling prophecy as adversaries are emboldened and allies move either to appease rivals or to provide for their own security.

At a time of high tension in Europe, with Russian adventurism in Ukraine, pervasive conflict and instability in the Middle East and rising tensions within Asia as China makes its presence ever more strongly felt, the choices the United States makes will have far-reaching consequences. It is no exaggeration to say that there is more doubt about our willingness to stand behind our allies, resist aggression and support a stable global system than at any time in decades.

Effective engagement at flash points is essential, but crisis response is never as good as crisis prevention. Somewhat lost as the world focuses on global hot spots is the danger that the United States will abdicate the responsibility it has taken for 70 years - since World War II - for supporting a more integrated, increasingly rule-based and faster-growing global economy. It is the success of this project that explains why history played out so differently after the Second World War than after the first, and it is this project that won the Cold War by demonstrating that capitalism, rather than communism, was the best way forward for the world's people.

At a time when authoritarian mercantilism has emerged as the principal alternative to democratic capitalism, Congress is flirting with eliminating the Export-Import Bank, which at no cost to the government enables U.S. exporters to compete on a more level playing field with those of competitor nations, all of whom have similar vehicles. Only by maintaining a capacity to counter foreign subsidies can we hope to maintain a level global trading system and to avoid ceding ground to mercantilists. Eliminating the Export-Import Bank without extracting concessions from foreign governments would be the economic equivalent of unilateral disarmament.

No one with any sophistication supposes that the world has seen the last major financial crisis or that we can prosper in a world in crisis. Yet the United States, having pushed successfully for major increases in International Monetary Fund resources and for important reforms in its governance, now is the lone nation blocking these measures from going into effect as Congress is unwilling to pass the relevant authorizing legislation. The IMF enables us to do in the economic

area what we are unable to do in the security area: place most of the burden for supporting a functioning global system on all global stakeholders.

The key strategic thrust proclaimed in U.S. foreign policy over the past five years has been the pivot, or rebalance, toward Asia. This is entirely appropriate given the shift in the global economic center of gravity. The reality, though, is that little has changed. The most important potential positive change in the next several years would be the achievement of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Yet the combined likelihood that a deal will be negotiated and that it will receive congressional approval seems much too low for comfort, and there is little evidence that the issue commands urgency beyond the relatively narrow international trade community. The prospects for a trade agreement with Europe seem even more remote.

Then there is the economic assistance dimension. When Latin America faced a profound debt crisis in the 1980s, when the Berlin Wall fell and the nations of central Europe and the former Soviet Union needed to transform their economies, when financial crisis struck Asia in 1997, when debt burdens stunted Africa's growth around the turn of the century, the United States, working with its allies and the international financial institutions, crafted strong if imperfect responses to restore growth and hope. No comparably large and generous effort is visible today with respect to the Middle East or Ukraine, even as China is emerging as a greater presence in much of Africa and Latin America than the United States.

A failure to engage effectively with global economic issues is a failure to mount a strong forward defense of U.S. interests. That we cannot do everything must not become a reason not to do anything. While elections may turn on domestic preoccupations, history's judgment will turn on what the United States does internationally. Passivity's moment has passed.

Lawrence Summers is a professor at and past president of Harvard University. He was treasury secretary from 1999 to 2001 and economic adviser to President Obama from 2009 through 2010. Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1ma3AUo>

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VICE PRESIDENTIAL *NEWS CLIPS*

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BIDEN IN THE NEWS

Biden: Don't Forget About Me

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 8, 2014

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

Haslam To Visit Southeast Tenn. Before NGA Meeting

[Associated Press](#), July 8, 2014

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Gov. Bill Haslam will be in southeast Tennessee early in the week then return to Nashville to host the National Governors Association summer meeting July 10-13.

On Tuesday, the Republican governor will visit Pikeville, Dunlap and Monteagle to make agriculture and transportation grant announcements.

He is scheduled to be back in Nashville by Thursday for the beginning of the NGA meeting being held at the Omni Hotel.

Vice President Joe **Biden** is also scheduled to attend the opening session of the meeting, which concludes on Sunday.

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John Walsh, CNN's New Anti-NRA Advocate

[Politico](#), July 8, 2014

John Walsh, the host of CNN's new primetime series "The Hunt," looks set to replace Piers Morgan as the cable network's in-house gun control advocate.

"We have a serious problem with guns in this country, and we refuse to address it," Walsh, the creator and host of "America's Most Wanted," told reporters on Monday. "The NRA solution to arm every grammar school 80-year-old teacher with a gun is absolutely ludicrous."

Walsh also said that Vice President Joe **Biden** had agreed with his claim that politicians are "scared s--less" of the NRA.

Walsh says he once told **Biden**, "'90 percent of Americans are for a responsible background check for a gun, and you know what this Congress has done? Not voted on it, not brought it to the floor, not introduced a bill... They're all scared shitless of the NRA, aren't they?'"

"John, every one of them," **Biden** replied, according to Walsh. "'Because the NRA will run a tea bagger against you. ... They'll put 5 million bucks against you.'"

Morgan, who is no longer with CNN, drew national attention in 2012 and 2013 for taking on the NRA and advocating for enhanced gun control legislation in the wake of the Sandy Hook elementary school shooting. Morgan made the issue a centerpiece of his program and hosted combative interviews with pro-gun advocates. His show was cancelled earlier this year due to low ratings.

In Monday's remarks, Walsh called Morgan "the only journalist who had the balls to tackle the gun problem straight on."

Walsh's "The Hunt," which debuts July 13, is not a political talk show – it focuses on chasing criminals, similar to "America's Most Wanted" – so debates over gun control will not figure prominently in his program. Still, Walsh's association with CNN will likely invite criticism from anti-gun control conservatives.

Walsh is a gun owner and a hunter. He has been reporting on crime since his six-year-old son was killed by a serial murderer in 1981.

See more of Walsh's remarks on gun control at The Wrap.

Biden: 'Tea Baggers' Preventing New Gun-Control Laws

[National Review](#), July 8, 2014

Vice president Joe **Biden** has disparaged gun-rights advocates as "tea baggers," CNN host John Walsh told reporters today.

Walsh, the former host of America's Most Wanted, recounted that he bonded with **Biden** over the need for more gun control and their distaste for the National Rifle Association..

"I said to Joe **Biden**, '90 percent of Americans are for a responsible background check for a gun, and you know what this Congress has done? Not voted on it, not brought it to the floor, not introduced a bill,'" he recalled to reporters during an event for his upcoming program, a crime show called The Hunt

. "I said, 'They're all scared shitless of the NRA, aren't they?'"

"John, every one of them," the vice president replied, according to Walsh

. "Because the NRA will run a tea-bagger against you. . . . They'll put 5 million bucks against you."

Walsh made clear that he is a gun owner, but said the United States needs to do more to address gun violence and characterized himself as "the biggest advocate for background checks out of any gun owner in America."

Days Before Launching A New Fugitive-seeking Show On CNN, John Walsh Talks Gun Control

[New York Daily News](#), July 8, 2014

CNN's newest star has the gun lobby in his sights.

With Piers Morgan out of the picture, former "America's Most Wanted" host John Walsh is seizing the spotlight that's on him as he launches a show on the network, and turning it on the gun lobby

Walsh, whose CNN show, "The Hunt," debuts Sunday, said Monday that politicians are "scared s—less" of the NRA.

Walsh, a gun owner who says he loves to hunt, is a longtime advocate of background checks and other measures for gun sales.

He said he has "testified in every state capital multiple times" about guns.

"I've hunted all my life. I hunt quail on my ranch," he said. "And I am the biggest advocate for background checks out of any gun owner in America."

He added, "I am the guy that has seen both sides of the issue."

I've hunted all my life. I hunt quail on my ranch. And I am the biggest advocate for background checks out of any gun owner in America.

"I own guns. I'm the father of a murdered child. I've done nothing but track violence in America since my son was murdered. We have a serious problem with guns in this country. And we refuse to address it. And the NRA solution to arm every grammar-school 80-year-old teacher with a gun is absolutely ludicrous," Walsh said.

"I said to Joe **Biden**, 'Ninety percent of Americans are for a responsible background check for a gun, and you know what this Congress has done? Not voted on it, not brought it to the floor, not introduced a bill,' " Walsh said. "I said, 'They're all scared s—less of the NRA, aren't they?' "

Walsh said the vice president replied, "John, every one of them. Because the NRA will run a tea-bagger against you. ... They'll put 5 million bucks against you."

CNN President Jeff Zucker noted that Walsh has spoken in favor of gun-control measures "many, many, many times on CNN."

Like "America's Most Wanted," "The Hunt" aims to help bring fugitives to justice and will have a heavy online component — including a tie-in with Facebook, which will send regional Amber Alerts to users.

No One Is Reading 'Hard Choices,' Either.

By Philip Bump

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

By now, the poor sales of Hillary Clinton's new book "Hard Choices" are well-documented. (Relatively poor, we will add, given the complex topography of bookselling.)

But another metric came to our attention this weekend which allows us to loosely evaluate a more interesting bit of data: how much the book is being read.

Jordan Ellenberg, a professor of mathematics at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, outlined what he calls the "Hawking Index" in the Wall Street Journal over the weekend. The index is a way to estimate how far into books people actually get. It's named for Stephen Hawking, author of the dense "A Brief History of Time" which, swear to God, I've actually read. (In part.)

It works like this: Every time people highlight something in a book on their Kindles, Amazon records that data. Ellenberg takes the top five highlights listed at the site for any given book and correlates them to a page number. Comparing the average page number of those five highlights to the length of the book gives you a sense of how many people made it how far in. (He adds: "Disclaimer: This is not remotely scientific and is for entertainment purposes only!" Which, fine.) The summer's most-read book? Donna Tartt's "The Goldfinch." Least-read? Thomas Piketty's "Capital in the Twenty-First Century," for which the notations only get about 2.4 percent of the way in.

So, naturally, we decided to apply this methodology to "Hard Choices" and other recent or comparable political books. And we have our own ranking, which we now present in order from estimated-least- to estimated-most-read.

1. "Hard Choices," by Hillary Clinton. Hawking Index: 2.04 percent.

Well, there you have it. The deepest into Hard Choices the popular highlights get is page 33, a quote about smart power. Three of the five most-popular highlights occur within the first 10 pages. We will note the same caveat that Ellenberg applies to Piketty. "Hard Choices" is fairly new, and fairly long. Still, though, one would think more people had made it past page 33.

The most popular quote? "Do all the good you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." Which, like several of the top quotes from the authors listed below, isn't actually a quote from Hillary Clinton. Instead, it's a mantra from her family's Methodist faith.

2. "Promises to Keep," by Joe **Biden**. Hawking Index: 2.78 percent.

Oh, Joe. Joe, Joe, Joe, Joe. Did you know that Joe **Biden** has a book? Joe **Biden** has a book. And people haven't read very far into it.

The most popular snippet is a bit of Bidenesque feel-goodery: "The art of living is simply getting up after you've been knocked down." There you go! But it is hard to find the most popular highlights in the book, because there simply aren't enough to warrant placement on the main Kindle page.

3. "A Fighting Chance," by Elizabeth Warren. Hawking Index: 14.38 percent.

Clinton supporters have compared "Hard Choices" to "A Fighting Chance" in the past, perhaps because they recognize it compares well on sales. And Warren's book is also the third least-deeply read – although readers are still making it a bit further in than either of the two Democrats most likely to run in 2016, apparently. The second-most highlighted quote in Warren's book is the one that goes deepest in, perhaps given the punchiness with which it begins: That the economic crisis "didn't have to happen."

4. "My Life," by Bill Clinton. Hawking Index: 15.28 percent.

The other Clinton's (extremely long) memoir apparently hasn't been read as much on the Kindle, as befits its age. While the most-highlighted passage in "Hard Choices" has been highlighted 223 times (as

of writing), the most-highlighted in “My Life” has only been selected 65 times. That passage? “I learned that what seems funny to the strong can be cruel and humiliating to the weak.”

(Note: **Biden**’s most highlighted passage has been highlighted nine times.)

5. “Living History,” by Hillary Clinton. Hawking Index: 17.88 percent.

Clinton’s first autobiography was, by all accounts, more of a crowd-pleaser. Unlike “Hard Choices,” it focused broadly on her life and time in the White House. And people appear to have read it more.

As with “Hard Choices,” the most popular quote isn’t from Clinton. It’s from Eleanor Roosevelt. “A woman is like a teabag. You never know how strong she is until she’s in hot water.” The third-most-popular highlight is a good one, deriving from Clinton’s Methodist faith: “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.”

Sound familiar?

6. “Dreams from My Father,” by Barack Obama. Hawking Index: 17.94 percent.

Doing slightly better than his 2008 nemesis, the most-highlighted quotes from Obama’s autobiography appear a little deeper into the work, on average. Most of the popular passages deal with race, but the most popular is about life’s challenges – something everyone eats up. He refers to a friend from college: “You might be locked into a world not of your own making, her eyes said, but you still have a claim on how it is shaped. You still have responsibilities.”

7. “Duty,” by Robert Gates. Hawking Index: 24.55 percent.

Shortly after “Hard Choices” was released, Clinton supporters told Politico to compare sales to Gates’s and Warren’s books. That first one was a mistake. Gates’s book has handily outsold “Hard Choices” (so far), and according to this (“not remotely scientific and for entertainment purposes only”) metric, is being out-read, too.

On the plus side for Clinton, none of the most-highlighted passages in “Duty” are from his excoriation of Clinton’s Iraq vote. But that was on page 376, and most people apparently only got as deep as page 300.

Dr. Biden Invites You To Follow Her Trip To Africa

[MSNBC](#), July 8, 2014

On Tuesday, Dr. Jill **Biden** arrived in Africa with plans to take in the sights and discuss female empowerment, education, democracy, and leadership along a three-city tour.

“Dr. **Biden**’s trip to Africa will highlight the importance of girls’ education and women’s participation in government, the economy, and civil society in accelerating economic development; improving health and educational outcomes; strengthening democratic governance; and fostering peace and security,” The White House website wrote.

To help stress the importance of her trip, Dr. **Biden** used her husband’s Vice President Joe **Biden**’s Instagram Account, @VP, as well as her own Twitter account, @DrBiden, to share her travels as she embarked on her summer vacation through Africa.

Hi everybody, it’s Jill **Biden**! I’m traveling across Africa this week to promote women’s empowerment. While I’m here, I’m borrowing Joe’s Instagram account to share some photos from the road. Stay tuned for more!

Preventing and responding to gender-based violence is a cornerstone of our commitment to advancing gender equality, and earlier today, Dr. **Biden** visited Panzi Hospital in the Congo to meet with survivors and hear their stories.

Ukrainian Employer Of Joe Biden's Son Hires A D.C. Lobbyist

[TIME](#), July 8, 2014

When Vice President Joe **Biden's** son, R. Hunter **Biden**, joined the board of a private Ukrainian oil and natural gas company this spring, he explained his new job as a legal one, disconnected from any effort to influence the Obama Administration. In a press release, the younger **Biden** boasted of his abilities on issues like improving corporate transparency.

But the company, Burisma Holdings, did not disclose at the time the scope of their plans for influencing the U.S. government. Recently released documents show that **Biden's** hiring coincided with the launch of a new effort to lobby members of Congress about the role of the company in Ukraine and the country's quest for energy independence.

David Leiter, a former Senate chief of staff to Secretary of State John Kerry, signed on to work as a lobbyist for Burisma on May 20, 2014, about a week after **Biden** announced he was joining the company, according to lobbying disclosures filed this month.

Leiter's involvement in the firm rounds out a power-packed team of politically-connected Americans that also includes a second new board member, Devon Archer, a Democratic bundler and former adviser to John Kerry's 2004 presidential campaign. Both Archer and Hunter **Biden** have worked as business partners with Kerry's son-in-law, Christopher Heinz, the founding partner of Rosemont Capital, a private-equity company.

Biden's office referred questions to a Burisma spokesman, who says **Biden** has not been involved in contacting members of Congress or the Obama Administration about the company. "His role, like all board members, is to provide strategic guidance to Burisma," said Lawrence Pacheco, who works in Washington D.C. for FTI Consulting, a communications firm that is also employed by Burisma.

But Burisma is contacting officials in Washington through Leiter's lobbying firm, ML Strategies. "ML Strategies is working with Burisma to educate U.S. officials about the company and its role in creating a stable and secure energy future for Ukraine, not any specific policy or legislation," Pacheco said. "Burisma supports energy independence, economic growth, national sovereignty and regional stability and will engage as needed to encourage efforts to further these goals."

Some Democratic senators, meanwhile, have been working to secure more U.S. funding, either directly or through entities like the Export-Import Bank, to improve Ukraine's domestic energy production potential. On June 27, Sen. Edward Markey of Massachusetts, wrote President Obama a letter with three other Democratic senators calling for increased aid. "We should leverage the full resources and expertise of the U.S. government to assist Ukraine in improving its energy efficiency, increasing its domestic production, and reforming its energy markets," wrote Markey, who has also proposed legislation with about \$40 million in additional aide for Ukrainian energy development.

Markey's letter was trumpeted by Burisma Holdings as a commendable move towards securing the future security of Ukraine. "Burisma Holdings today applauded the range of U.S. legislative support for development of Ukraine's broad and untapped resources and an increase in transparency and good governance," the company said in a statement on the day the letter was released.

An aide in Markey's office told [TIME](#) that Leiter, **Biden** and Archer were not part of discussions that led to the drafting of the letter or the legislation. Staff for the other senators who signed the letter, Ron Wyden of Oregon, Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire and Christopher Murphy of Connecticut, also said they did not have contact with Leiter, who could not be reached for comment.

Burisma Holdings is owned by a Cypriot holding firm, Brociti Investments Limited, which is controlled Nikolai Zlochevskyi, a former Ukrainian government minister, according to Cypriot records. It controls

government development licenses in three regions of Ukraine, and sells to industrial customers in the country, according to the company.

By taking a job with Burisma, the younger **Biden** has put himself in the middle of a struggle between the United States and Russia, which currently provides the bulk of the natural gas supplies to Ukraine. Both the White House and European nations have recently emphasized the strategic interest in making Ukraine less dependent on Russia.

Since Hunter **Biden** took the new job, his father, Vice President Joe **Biden**, has continued to serve as the Obama Administration's point person on Ukraine, traveling to the country as recently as June for the inauguration of President Petro Poroshenko and talking to Poroshenko by phone at least five times in the last month.

"I've spent a considerable amount of time in the last two months in Ukraine," the elder **Biden** said on June 19. "You see what the Russians are doing relative to using gas as a foreign policy tool to try to alter behavior. And so it's — around the world in varying degrees it's of significant consequence in terms of security, both economic and political security of a nation."

There is no legal barrier to prohibit Hunter **Biden** from working with a company that can be impacted by the policy decisions of his father, and the White House has maintained that the Vice President has not been influenced by his son's employment. "The Vice President does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company," said his spokeswoman Kendra Barkoff.

But Hunter **Biden**'s new job, along with the association with Burisma of other politically-connected businessmen, has raised concerns among some Ukraine watchers. "It's unhelpful when we are trying to get across to the Ukrainians to clean up corruption and special deals for special folks," said Ed Chow, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a U.S. think tank. "It maybe sends the wrong message that Westerners are just hypocritical."

Additional reporting by Alex Rogers and Zeke Miller/Washington

NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS

Can Israeli And Palestinian Leaders End The Revenge Attacks?

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

In the space of a few weeks, the brutal killings of four teenagers — one Palestinian and three Israelis — have inflamed tensions in Israel and the occupied territories, potentially igniting a conflict that could be even more vicious than the intifadas of 1987 and 2000. It is the responsibility of leaders on both sides to try and calm the volatile emotions that once again threaten both peoples.

The hostilities and recriminations began with the kidnapping and murder last month of three Israeli teenagers in the West Bank: Eyal Yifrach, 19; Naftali Fraenkel, 16; and Gilad Shaar, 16. Last week, the body of Muhammad Abu Khdeir, a Palestinian teenager, was found beaten and burned in a Jerusalem forest.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, after days of near silence, condemned that killing and promised that anyone found guilty would "face the full weight of the law." Israeli officials said the murder seemed to be a revenge attack for the killing of the three Israeli teenagers. In the sweep to find those teenagers, six Palestinians were killed in confrontations with Israeli forces and about 400 Palestinians were arrested, many of them affiliated with Hamas, which Israel accused of the murders. The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, also after a delay, denounced the abductions and vowed to help catch the kidnappers. Two suspects said to have ties to Hamas have since been arrested.

After the attack on the Israeli teenagers, some Israelis gave in to their worst prejudices. During funerals for the boys, hundreds of extreme right-wing protesters blocked roads in Jerusalem chanting "Death to Arabs." A Facebook page named "People of Israel Demand Revenge" gathered 35,000 "likes" before being taken down; a blogger gave prominence to a photo, also on Facebook, that featured a sign saying: "Hating Arabs is not racism, it's values." Even Mr. Netanyahu referenced an Israeli poem that reads: "Vengeance for the blood of a small child, Satan has not yet created." Israelis have long had to cope with Hamas's violence, including a recent increase in rocket attacks from Gaza. And Palestinians have been fully guilty of hateful speech against Jews.

In an atmosphere in which each side dehumanizes the other, it shouldn't be surprising that some people would act on extremist views. According to news reports, the suspects arrested in Mr. Khdeir's murder may be fans of a soccer club known for its anti-Arab rhetoric. Commentators in the Israeli news media have been frank in analyzing the killings, especially that of Mr. Khdeir, and their effect on society. Self-criticism is a strength of democracies. An editorial in Haaretz, the Israeli newspaper, said prosecuting Mr. Khdeir's murderers is not by itself sufficient. The country's leaders "must begin raising the next generation, at least, on humanist values, and foster a tolerant public discourse."

Despite the pain and anger, there have been gestures of compassion and understanding. Mr. Khdeir's grieving father made an appeal for "both sides to stop the bloodshed." On Sunday, the uncle of Naftali Fraenkel offered his condolences in a phone call with Mr. Khdeir's father. President Shimon Peres and Reuven Rivlin, who is succeeding Mr. Peres later this month, wrote in a joint essay in Yedioth Ahronoth, an Israeli newspaper, that there would be no cover-up in the investigation of Mr. Khdeir's murder and called for an end to incitement on both sides.

These deaths should cause the two communities to think again about the need for a permanent peace, but the loss of four young men may not be motivation enough.

Germany And The Minimum Wage

By The Editorial Board

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

The federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour is obviously too low. So is the Democrats' proposed increase to \$10.10 an hour by 2016. If the minimum wage had merely kept pace over time with inflation, average wages or productivity growth, it would be between \$11 an hour and \$18 an hour today.

It would also be higher if it kept pace with what other advanced economies are prepared to pay.

Last week, the lower house of Parliament in Germany voted to set a nationwide minimum wage of 8.50 euros an hour, about \$11.60, effective in 2015. The upper house is expected to approve the measure this week. With the passage of it, Germany, France, Britain and the Netherlands have or soon will have higher minimum wages than the current and proposed minimums in the United States, and only six countries in the European Union will be without a statutory minimum wage: Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Italy and Sweden.

The expected German minimum is noteworthy not only for its level. For nearly 70 years, most wages in Germany have been set by agreements that are collectively bargained between unions and employers. In recent decades, however, and particularly following reunification with the former East Germany, the share of workers who are effectively covered by union agreements has fallen. By enacting an adequate minimum wage, the German Parliament is responding constructively to that development, because a solid wage floor ensures that economic growth is broadly shared even by those who fall outside the collectively bargained framework.

In a global economy that has long relied on low wages to lift profits, a relatively high minimum wage in Germany would also reflect a growing consensus there that a high-wage, high-productivity economy is, in fact, an advantage in stabilizing the nation economically and socially.

In Germany, as in the United States, business lobbyists and some economists have warned that a robust minimum wage will lead to job losses and higher prices, but that has not been the historical experience. Rather, higher wages for low-wage workers are generally offset by lower labor turnover, while the boost in consumer spending from higher wages is good for the economy. Boosting consumer demand is especially important in Germany, whose economy is overly reliant on exports.

Germany's move offers the United States important lessons, if only lawmakers in Washington would learn.

The Long Wait To See A Doctor

By The Editorial Board

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

Americans are already experiencing long waits to get doctor's appointments, and experts say the delays are bound to get worse when millions of previously uninsured Americans get health coverage under the Affordable Care Act. That is the sobering news from a new survey of wait times conducted by Merritt Hawkins, a physician staffing firm, which polled some 1,400 medical offices in 15 large metropolitan areas across the country.

The survey, conducted over a five-month period last year, assessed how long it would take a new patient to get an appointment for nonemergency care in five different medical specialties: cardiology, dermatology, obstetrics and gynecology, orthopedic surgery and family practice. Boston had the longest average wait times — 45 days across all specialties, well above the national average of 19 days. The findings in this survey showed little change across all specialties from two previous surveys in 2009 and 2004. Long waits have apparently become the norm in many metropolitan areas.

The findings are consistent with an international survey of 11 industrialized countries last year by the Commonwealth Fund, a foundation that analyzes health care issues. The findings punctured the illusion that our high-priced health care system, relying on private doctors, provides faster service than the national health systems in other advanced countries. When Americans got sick, 26 percent had to wait six days or longer for an appointment, better only than Canada and Norway but much worse than other countries with national health systems like Britain and the Netherlands. Patients in Britain and Switzerland also reported shorter waits to see a specialist than patients in the United States.

Experts suggest several ways to reduce wait times, like increasing primary care doctors, allowing nurses and physicians' assistants to provide more care and opening more primary care clinics. The critical ingredient is to make reduction of wait times a political issue, as happened in Britain and is now happening in American veterans' hospitals in the wake of a scandal involving falsified records to hide long wait times.

New York's Mapmaking Scandal

By The Editorial Board

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

In his 2010 campaign for governor, Andrew Cuomo promised to end "partisan gerrymandering," in which lawmakers draw their own districts. He failed to do that, and instead, as governor, signed onto a set of legislative maps in 2012 that were carefully designed to keep legislators safely in their jobs.

Then, he and lawmakers came up with a counterfeit reform, a constitutional amendment on November's ballot that would only make matters worse and make it harder to clean up the whole inbred process for years to come.

The flawed maps created in 2012 will be in use until 2022. The constitutional amendment would put a new, virtually permanent system in place for the next round of mapmaking that starts after the 2020 census. The amendment sets up a bipartisan commission, a majority of whose members are appointed by legislative leaders. The possibilities for partisan gridlock are endless, and it will take another constitutional amendment to make any corrections of what is destined to be a flawed system.

In a recent report, Common Cause/NY, New York Public Interest Research Group and Effective NY warned that the amendment would only make it easier for New York legislators to continue to draw district maps that help no one but the incumbents.

Amendment supporters say the maps would be drawn by a bipartisan, independent commission, with co-executive directors, one Democrat and one Republican. That sounds reasonable, except that it is much the same as the state's Board of Elections, one of the least effective public operations in New York. That board is also bipartisan, which often means stalemate, not compromise.

Under this new system, if the Legislature does not like the commission's maps, they can vote them down and send them back for amendments. If the maps return and the lawmakers still don't approve, they can vote them down and then draw their own, much as they do now. This amendment is not a reform. It is another way to maintain the status quo, and does not deserve voters' support.

The Messy World Of Smart Guns

By Joe Nocera

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

The Andy Raymond rant is a thing to behold.

Raymond, the co-owner of Engage Armament in Montgomery County, Md., is one of the two gun dealers who, a few months ago, tried to sell the Armatix iP1 — a.k.a., the first commercially available “smart gun” — to his customers. He thought that not only did he have every right to sell a smart gun, but that he was doing the gun world a favor by offering a gun that had the potential to expand the universe of gun owners. Instead, both Engage Armament and Oak Tree, a California-based gun dealer, backed away after receiving a torrent of hate mail and death threats from gun-rights absolutists.

In the rant, which he posted on his Facebook page, Raymond is sitting in front of an array of semiautomatic weapons. He has a bottle of what appears to be whiskey next to him. He acknowledges that he's been drinking. From time to time, he takes a puff on a cigarette. (I don't have a Facebook page, so I relied on excerpts from the rant that were shown on Chris Hayes's MSNBC show, “All In.”)

“How can the N.R.A. want to prohibit a gun when we're supposed to be pro-gun?” he says. “How hypocritical is that?” Then, after an angry, expletive-filled shout-out to those who sent him death threats, he changes direction. He denies ever selling an Armatix pistol. And then he says, “I thought my principles were correct, but maybe I was wrong.” And he apologizes. And with one last gulp of whiskey, he is done.

Which is to say, he epitomizes the state of smart guns right now. The whole thing is a bit of a mess.

I last looked into smart gun technology about a year and a half ago, and what I saw then was a lot of ferment — and genuine excitement about the potential of smart-gun technologies. I found people who had been working on smart guns for years, like Don Sebastian of the New Jersey Institute of Technology, and newcomers to the field like Ron Conway, the Silicon Valley investor who was galvanized by the massacre in Newtown, Conn., and began backing a smart-gun effort. It was also the first time I heard

about a New Jersey law that said that if smart guns became commercially available anywhere in the country, New Jersey gun dealers would be required, within three years, to sell only guns that had smart-gun technology.

The idea, said Loretta Weinberg, the New Jersey Senate majority leader who sponsored the legislation 12 years ago, was partly to spur gun innovation. Instead, it held back innovation, as traditional gun manufacturers saw no incentive in investing in smart-gun technology. It was also vehemently opposed by the National Rifle Association, which viewed it, not incorrectly, as a gun control effort. Gun advocates mocked smart-gun technologies, claiming the “bad guys” with normal guns would have the advantage over the “good guys” with smart guns.

The New Jersey law was at the heart of the objections to Oak Tree and Engage Armament selling the Armatix smart gun. The fear of gun advocates is that if someone did start selling a commercialized smart gun, the three-year clock would start ticking in New Jersey.

When I spoke to smart-gun advocates this time around, I found a great deal of mixed emotions about the New Jersey law. Jonathan Mossberg, who runs something called the iGun Technology Corporation — and is an avowed gun advocate — told me that the New Jersey mandate “needs to be repealed.”

Stephen Teret, the co-director of the Center for Law and the Public’s Health at Johns Hopkins University — and an expert on smart-gun technology — said that he thought the law would soon be irrelevant. “There will be a personalized gun sold very soon,” he told me. “It will be the Armatix gun that people are talking about.” He wouldn’t tell me who the seller would be, however.

Senator Weinberg acknowledged that her bill may have become an impediment rather than a spur to gun safety.

There is still a lot going on in smart-gun technology. Sebastian continues to plug away at a technology that would recognize an owner’s grip, and only allow that person to use the gun. Ron Conway’s group, the Smart Tech Foundation, just awarded a total of \$1 million to 15 grantees that are working on promising smart-gun technologies.

As for Weinberg, she told me that she had approached the N.R.A. as recently as two weeks ago and said she would try to get her law repealed if the N.R.A. would promise not to block smart-gun technology from reaching the marketplace. “I said we might have some common ground here.” The N.R.A. did not reply.

What a surprise.

Frank Bruni is off today.

The Creative Climate

By David Brooks

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

In the current issue of *The Atlantic*, Joshua Wolf Shenk has a fascinating description of how Paul McCartney and John Lennon created music together. McCartney was meticulous while Lennon was chaotic. McCartney emerged out of a sunny pop tradition. Lennon emerged out of an angst-ridden rebel tradition.

Lennon wrote the song “Help” while in the throes of depression. The song originally had a slow, moaning sound. McCartney suggested a lighthearted counter melody that, as Shenk writes, fundamentally changed and improved the nature of the piece.

Lennon and McCartney came from different traditions, but they had similar tastes. They brought different tendencies to the creative process but usually agreed when the mixture was right. This created the special tension in their relationship. They had a tendency to rip at each other, but each knew ultimately that he needed the other. Even just before his death, Lennon was apparently thinking of teaming up with McCartney once again.

Shenk uses the story to illustrate the myth of the lone genius, to show that many acts of genius are the products of teams or pairs, engaged in collaboration and “co-opetition.” And we have all known fertile opposites who completed each other — when they weren’t trying to destroy each other.

But the Lennon-McCartney story also illustrates the key feature of creativity; it is the joining of the unlike to create harmony. Creativity rarely flows out of an act of complete originality. It is rarely a virgin birth. It is usually the clash of two value systems or traditions, which, in collision, create a transcendent third thing.

Shakespeare combined the Greek honor code (thou shalt avenge the murder of thy father) with the Christian mercy code (thou shalt not kill) to create the torn figure of Hamlet. Picasso combined the traditions of European art with the traditions of African masks. Saul Bellow combined the strictness of the Jewish conscience with the free-floating go-getter-ness of the American drive for success.

Sometimes creativity happens in pairs, duos like Lennon and McCartney who bring clashing worldviews but similar tastes. But sometimes it happens in one person, in someone who contains contradictions and who works furiously to resolve the tensions within.

When you see creative people like that, you see that they don’t flee from the contradictions; they embrace dialectics and dualism. They cultivate what Roger Martin called the *opposable mind* — the ability to hold two opposing ideas at the same time.

If they are religious, they seek to live among the secular. If they are intellectual, they go off into the hurly-burly of business and politics. Creative people often want to be strangers in a strange land. They want to live in dissimilar environments to maximize the creative tensions between different parts of themselves.

Today we live in a distinct sort of creative environment. People don’t so much live in the contradiction between competing worldviews. We live in a period of disillusion and distrust of institutions.

This has created two reactions. Some monads withdraw back into the purity of their own subcultures. But others push themselves into the rotting institutions they want to reinvent. If you are looking for people who are going to be creative in the current climate, I’d look for people who are disillusioned with politics even as they go into it; who are disenchanted with contemporary worship, even as they join the church; who are disgusted by finance even as they work in finance. These people believe in the goals of their systems but detest how they function. They contain the anxious contradictions between disillusionment and hope.

This creative process is furthest along, I’d say, in the world of B corporations. There are many people today who are disillusioned both with the world of traditional charity and traditional capitalism. Many charities have been warmheartedly but wastefully throwing money at problems, without good management or market discipline. Capitalists have been obsessed with the short-term maximization of shareholder return without much concern for long-term prosperity or other stakeholders.

B corporations are a way to transcend the contradictions between the ineffective parts of the social sector and myopic capitalism. Kyle Westaway, a lawyer in this field and the author of the forthcoming “Profit & Purpose,” notes that benefit corporation legal structures have been established in 22 states over the last four years. The 300 or so companies that have registered in this way, like Patagonia or Method,

can't be sued if they fail to maximize profits in order to focus on other concerns. They are seeking to reinvent both capitalism and do-gooder-ism, and living in the contradiction between these traditions.

This suggests a final truth about creativity: that, in every dialectic, there is a search for creative synthesis. Or, as Albert Einstein put it, "You can never solve a problem on the level on which it was created."

Should Germans Read 'Mein Kampf'?

By Peter Ross Range

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

WASHINGTON — GERMANY is once again passing through the wringer of its past. At issue this time are not the deeds but the words of Adolf Hitler and the planned republication of his infamous manifesto-as-autobiography, "Mein Kampf," a book that has been officially suppressed in the country since the end of World War II.

But while the prospect of the Führer's words circulating freely on the German market may shock some, it shouldn't. The inoculation of a younger generation against the Nazi bacillus is better served by open confrontation with Hitler's words than by keeping his reviled tract in the shadows of illegality.

Hitler wrote the first draft of his deeply anti-Semitic, race-based ideological screed in 1924, while in prison for leading a failed coup; by the time of his death 21 years later, it had sold 10 million copies.

Since then, although "Mein Kampf" has maintained a shadow presence — on the back shelves of used bookstores and libraries and, more recently, online — its copyright holder, the state of Bavaria, has refused to allow its republication, creating an aura of taboo around the book.

All that is about to change. Bavaria's copyright expires at the end of 2015; after that, anyone can publish the book: a quality publisher, a mass-market pulp house, even a neo-Nazi group.

The release of "Mein Kampf" into Germany's cultural bloodstream is sure to be a sensational moment. In a nation that still avidly buys books — and loves to argue in public — the book will again ignite painful intergenerational debates on talk shows and in opinion pages about how parents and grandparents let themselves be so blindly misled.

Like the 1996 uproar caused by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's controversial book "Hitler's Willing Executioners," which accused ordinary Germans of being capable of mass-murdering Jews, this publishing event will shape contemporary politics and feed Germany's deep-rooted postwar pacifism. Germany's involvement — or noninvolvement — in international crises like Kosovo, Afghanistan, Libya and, most recently, Mali is profoundly influenced by such impassioned debates. "Germany is a haunted land, still living in Hitler's shadow," the German Jewish writer Henry M. Broder told me recently.

Racing to be first to publish the book is the Institute for Contemporary History, a noted center in Munich for the study of Nazism, which has a five-scholar team at work on an annotated "critical edition" of Hitler's 700-page ramble.

The institute's version will double the size of the book and create an academic baseline for all future study of the ur-text of Hitlerism, said the team's leader, Christian Hartmann. The book's extensive notations, he added, will "encircle" Hitler's story line with a "collage" of commentary to demystify and decode it, an alternative subtext and historical context that will strip it of its allegedly hypnotizing power.

Unsurprisingly, the "Mein Kampf" project has stirred uproar in some Jewish circles. Charlotte Knobloch, president of the Israelite Cultural Community of Munich and Upper Bavaria, said "there is still a danger" of catalyzing far-right sentiments. Uri Chanoch, an 86-year-old Israeli Holocaust survivor, added that Germans "somewhere in their hearts still have a hatred for us" and has campaigned aggressively against the book's republication, calling for international pressure on Bavaria to block it.

After such sentiments were expressed to Bavaria's premier, Horst Seehofer, during a trip to Israel, he decided to halt his state's planned participation in the "Mein Kampf" project and cancel the \$684,000 it had given in research funding.

That decision, in turn, triggered an outcry among academics and in the Bavarian Legislature, which had earlier approved the book. Even some Jewish leaders were taken aback. "I was astonished by this decision," said Salomon Korn, the leader of Frankfurt's 7,000-strong Jewish community. "We should have already had a critical edition of 'Mein Kampf.' "

In an awkward dance, Mr. Seehofer's government was forced to reconsider its reconsideration. It agreed to leave the money in place while withholding its governmental seal of approval. This reverse fig leaf may or may not mollify opponents, especially in Israel, who thought they had stopped the book.

But with the funding in hand, the institute is proceeding. Its edition will serve a political purpose, countering the negative impact on Germany's image and political culture of raw reprints of the book that might flood the market. Whether it impedes such publications or not, the academic edition can always be held up as authoritative, especially in schools and universities. This is a good thing. Sixty-nine years after World War II, it no longer makes sense for Germans not to have unfettered access to the same book that can be easily bought in other countries. Keeping Hitler's dreary and often incomprehensible diatribe under wraps, out of misplaced fear of a Nazi revival, is a vast overreaction: Germany's only pseudo-Nazi party received 1 percent in the recent European Parliament vote; in France, the far right received nearly 25 percent.

In 1959, West Germany's first postwar president, Theodor Heuss, recommended republishing "Mein Kampf" as a cautionary document for the German people. Not yet ready for such a confrontation, the political establishment ignored him. Today, 55 years and 10 presidents later, Heuss's good idea is finally coming to fruition.

Peter Ross Range is a journalist who writes frequently on Germany.

The Promise Of Aleppo's Radicals

By Matthieu Aikins

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

ALEPPO, Syria — As a rebel fighter shined his flashlight onto a clump of blankets and clothes scattered around the concrete basement floor, I wondered if this was where my friend Sultan had spent the last moments of his life. A goofy, gap-toothed 22-year-old who worked for a local fixer, he was part of a group of Syrian activists, journalists and rebel fighters who had been arrested by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria and taken to this makeshift prison in the basement of a former hospital.

The building had served as the Sunni extremist group's headquarters in Aleppo, Syria's largest city, but now the pitch-dark corridors were deserted. By the stairs, we found a long cable of copper wires taped together. One of the rebels picked it up and mimicked a whipping gesture — former prisoners who were held here reported being tortured. Farther down was a room that served as a cafeteria, with signs in English attesting to the presence of foreign jihadists among ISIS's ranks. "Fear Allah! Remember that he is watching you so please do not waste food and clean up after you have eaten," read one. Another advised "brothers who want to receive their families from outside Syria" to coordinate with the "Mujahedeen Services Office."

ISIS began as the Iraqi affiliate of Al Qaeda but split off at the beginning of this year over its ambitions to expand into Syria and establish itself as a new caliphate. After its stunning takeover of much of western Iraq last month, it now calls itself simply the Islamic State.

But ISIS is gone from Aleppo, having been forced out by local Syrian rebels in January. This military reversal, one of the group's few, highlights the dilemma facing the West: Its best potential allies against ISIS are other Sunni Islamists.

The fighters who accompanied me during a weeklong visit to Aleppo in mid-June were members of the Islamic Front, a rebel coalition dominant in the city and much of northern Syria. The Islamic Front is a fierce and effective opponent of ISIS but also, in its Islamist platform and indirect connections with Al Qaeda, a far cry from the "appropriately vetted elements of the moderate Syrian armed opposition" for whom the Obama administration recently requested \$500 million in military training and funding.

ISIS's abandoned headquarters in Aleppo are just across from another large building that serves as the base for Tawhid Brigade, one of the largest of the seven rebel groups that joined together in November to form the Islamic Front. ISIS had been present in opposition-held Aleppo since the beginning of 2013, but by the end of the year tensions with rebel groups had reached a crisis. Considering itself a sovereign state, ISIS was refusing to accept mediation for any dispute, and it had taken to kidnapping those it considered to be critics or enemies, including people who worked with foreign journalists, like Sultan.

On Jan. 7, ISIS carried out a surprise attack on Tawhid Brigade's headquarters. It was held off. The next day, Tawhid Brigade forces from around the city counterattacked and surrounded the hospital. "We cut them off and prevented them from bringing any support," said the commander who led the offensive and who goes by the nom de guerre of Abu Assad.

Around 3 a.m., the ISIS fighters trapped inside the hospital asked to be allowed to leave the city, and Abu Assad, not wanting further bloodshed, agreed. When he and his men searched the hospital at first light, they discovered that ISIS had massacred its captives. "We found a group of bodies every ten meters," said Abu Assad. Most of them had been shot in the head while bound. "They were real revolutionaries, journalists, doctors. If we had known what ISIS had done, we wouldn't have let them escape alive."

Not long after the battle, half a globe away, I watched footage of its aftermath that rebels had recorded and uploaded to YouTube, and recognized Sultan among the corpses.

The battle against ISIS in Aleppo is part of a larger conflict that started at the beginning of this year, as rebel groups across the northern provinces of Idlib and Aleppo — including the powerful Syrian Al Qaeda affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra — fought a pitched battle to expel ISIS. The face-off left the Islamic Front pre-eminent. It controls the key border crossing with Turkey at Azaz and, with its estimated 50,000 to 60,000 fighters, is thought to be the largest and most militarily potent rebel alliance in Syria.

The Islamic Front is entirely Syrian in leadership, and its central goal is overthrowing President Bashar al-Assad — good credentials in the eyes of Western governments hoping to roll back ISIS without strengthening the Syrian regime. Many of the group's most powerful members — including Tawhid Brigade and one of the largest factions fighting in the Damascus suburbs, Jaish al-Islam — are not particularly ideological, and were once allied with the Western-backed Free Syrian Army.

But they are far from secular. The Islamic Front draws on support from pre-war Islamist resistance networks, including wealthy, religious donors across the Muslim world and the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, an exiled Islamist group. More problematic from a Western perspective, one of the coalition's key members, Ahrar al-Sham, has links to Al Qaeda's core leadership, and the Islamic Front as a whole closely coordinates operations with Jabhat al-Nusra.

The commanders I spoke to in Aleppo said the Islamic Front has not, as a result, directly received any military aid from Washington or other Western governments. But can the West meaningfully

influence the military situation in Syria while continuing to eschew Islamist groups, now that they are dominant among the rebels? “The Free Syrian Army has been weak and divided,” said Richard Barrett, a former British intelligence official. “And so the Islamic Front is really the only game in town if you want to attack ISIS in Syria.”

Rebel commanders in Aleppo were dismissive of the supposedly “secular” Free Syrian Army groups linked to the government in exile, which the West has been backing. “They’re like NGOs. They know how to say what the donor wants to hear,” said Abu Bilal, Tawhid Brigade’s chief of operations. “In reality, they’re diesel smugglers who control a little of the border. They don’t do any serious fighting.”

If Washington and its partners want to push back against both Assad and ISIS at once, they will have to be less squeamish about picking allies in Syria. Otherwise, they may not find any left at all.

Matthieu Aikins is a magazine writer living in Kabul.

Thai Rice And Nigerian Politics

By Adewale Maja-Pearce

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

LAGOS, Nigeria — In Nigeria, as elsewhere, the will of the people is fickle. The recent gubernatorial race in Ekiti State is a case in point.

On one side was the incumbent, Kayode Fayemi, who was seeking a second, four-year term. Even the opposition agreed that he was a fine gentleman, an intellectual with a doctorate in social science from King’s College London, and solid credentials as a pro-democracy activist during the dark years of military rule. Moreover, he had already proved to be an able, conscientious administrator. He built roads, saw that pensioners received their due, and had begun cleaning up corruption and incompetence in the public school system.

His rival was Ayo Fayose, a former governor suspected by human rights advocates of having political opponents killed, who is facing court hearings this month on corruption charges stemming from his first term, which ended abruptly a year early in 2006 when he was impeached and forced to flee the country. Although Mr. Fayose had fallen from favor with the leaders of his People’s Democratic Party, including President Olusegun Obasanjo, he was able to return to the fold in 2007 after Mr. Obasanjo left office.

Mr. Fayose is a proven vote-getter, so it was no surprise that the People’s Democratic Party chose him to challenge Mr. Fayemi in the election on June 21. After all, the old party bosses — known as “godfathers” in Nigeria — are willing to embrace certain political truths many of us are loath to acknowledge. Responsible leadership is all very well, but it doesn’t always win out over those who know how to play the politics of hunger, especially in a poor place like Ekiti. Thus, the godfathers were willing to bet that their sometime fugitive would beat the squeaky-clean Ph.D. hands down.

Still, they were taking no chances, for they had been burned before in Ekiti State. After Mr. Fayose’s 2006 impeachment, the P.D.P. had pulled out all the stops to ensure that its candidate, Segun Oni, would defeat the newcomer, Mr. Fayemi, in the 2007 election. So they sent in senators and other party heavyweights — including the usual thugs paid to terrorize voters — and Mr. Oni won. But Mr. Fayemi challenged the validity of the election in the courts, won a three-year legal battle, and finally took up residence in the governor’s house in 2010.

With national elections approaching in 2015, several opposition parties have allied to form the All Progressives Congress in the hope of defeating President Goodluck Jonathan and the governing People’s Democratic Party next February. The election in Ekiti on June 21 was to be the first test of its popularity in a state it already controlled.

Once again, the P.D.P. left nothing to chance. Both the national ministers of defense and police affairs flooded the state with truckloads of soldiers and national police who came to “aid” local security forces. Many people testified to witnessing outright harassment and intimidation of Mr. Fayemi’s supporters.

Nevertheless, election observers — including representatives from the United States and the European Union — declared that the voting had been reasonably free and fair. Mr. Fayose won by a wide margin — 200,000 votes to Mr. Fayemi’s 120,000 — in a high turnout of eligible voters. When the results were announced, many observers in Ado-Ekiti, the state capital, noted the jubilation in the streets. Even Mr. Fayemi, in keeping with his graceful disposition, was quick to congratulate his “brother,” who is set to take his place on Oct. 15.

So where, exactly, did Kayode Fayemi go wrong?

The first problem was Mr. Fayemi himself. He may be an exemplary governor, but he is no man of the people. Like most states in Nigeria, Ekiti is predominantly rural, populated by farmers far removed from Government House discussions about the importance of education, infrastructure and economic development in the age of globalization. As governor, Mr. Fayemi never hesitated to grant newspaper interviews, had a massive following on Twitter and was widely liked on Facebook. But, in the words of Jibrin Ibrahim of the Center for Democracy and Development, “most of the farmers and teachers in Ekiti State are not on Twitter or Facebook and do not read newspapers.”

Mr. Fayose, by contrast, has the common touch. He knows how to milk media coverage, whether it be by escorting elderly people to the bank to open an account, or by stopping his convoy at a roadside bar to buy drinks all around. “We love his simplicity, we love his style,” one constituent wrote in *The Nigerian Tribune*. “He dined with us, we saw him on our streets in his shirts and shorts and could ask him for a handshake which he gladly obliged.”

It is difficult to convince uneducated, undernourished farmers that big projects like constructing roads will benefit them in the long term by making it easier to get their produce to the market. While Mr. Fayemi tried to do so, Mr. Fayose hit the campaign trail armed with huge quantities of Thai rice (several years past the recommended consumption date, according to news reports), handing bags out to hungry voters.

The tactic, hugely successful, points to the challenge that faces all “developing” countries: how to negotiate a compromise between the immediate demands of an impoverished, mostly illiterate populace, and the urgent need for capital projects that will lift them out of poverty. Hungry people will always be susceptible to immediate inducements of the kind offered by politicians like Mr. Fayose.

This after all is politics, and the first duty of a politician is to win. If the able Mr. Fayemi had had the common sense to make a show of channeling more state resources to the local level, he would not have enabled the triumph of a so-called friend of the people, who will continue to pursue his own interests. Sadly, Ekiti State is now destined for another four years of underdevelopment under the guidance of the people’s choice.

Adewale Maja-Pearce is a writer and critic, and the author of “Remembering Ken Saro-Wiwa, and Other Essays.”

Taking Sides In Libya

By Frederic Wehrey

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

MARJ, Libya — Two days before she was murdered in Benghazi on June 25, the Libyan human rights activist Salwa Bugaighis walked into a Tripoli hotel guarded by Islamist militias wearing three-inch heels and no veil.

She had little patience for such gunmen and their political backers, whom she accused of terrorizing Libya and derailing the country's struggling democracy: "We have five courthouses in Benghazi and they are all shut down," she told me. "If these Islamists say they are committed to defending the state, they should defend the state's institutions."

Ms. Bugaighis was at the vanguard of the 2011 revolution and had recently been appointed the deputy head of a national dialogue commission. She had criticized the United States for inflating the stature of Islamist figures like the ex-jihadist Abdelhakim Belhaj and the grand mufti, whose religious edicts had stymied her fight for women's rights.

Her murder shocked a country facing two divergent paths toward security: repression or reconciliation.

When she was killed, I was in eastern Libya meeting with Gen. Khalifa Hifter, who, for the past month, has been leading a military campaign against Islamist militias in Benghazi and other eastern cities.

General Hifter, a septuagenarian mustachioed man in a crisply starched uniform with golden epaulets, could not be a stronger counterpoint to Ms. Bugaighis.

He received me at a sprawling military base littered with rusting T-72 tanks, after I was ushered through an extraordinary security gauntlet that involved an invasive pat-down by men with assault rifles. I was not allowed to take my own pen and paper into the meeting.

The general's military campaign is called "Operation Dignity" and his self-styled "Libyan National Army" taps support from tribes, civil society, defected army units and militias to the west of Tripoli, who were fed up with the spate of daily assassinations in Benghazi and other eastern cities. It burst onto the scene with relentless artillery strikes and aerial bombardment of Islamist militia bases in and around Benghazi and other cities; the Islamists have responded with rocket attacks of their own.

General Hifter is unsanctioned by the Libyan government and his Libyan National Army is, quite frankly, just another militia outside the official military chain of command. Most alarmingly, his operation was aimed at the country's elected legislature, whose Islamist members he accuses of backing the militias and blocking the rebuilding of the country's army and police.

All of this has left Libya deeply divided. For some — as for millions of Egyptians who opened their arms to a familiar form of autocracy — General Hifter is a savior delivering long-sought stability. Others recoil at the shades of Muammar el-Qaddafi, seeing a strongman subverting democracy in the name of fighting a loosely defined threat of "terrorism."

In person, and like Egypt's new president, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, General Hifter is utterly convinced of his popular mandate. His language is grandiose and messianic. "Libya will be the graveyard of global terrorism," he told me. He dismissed recent mediation efforts in Benghazi by tribal elders as producing nothing but "emotional language." There could be no negotiations, he insisted, citing an ambush of his forces and the killing of Ms. Bugaighis; his foes could only expect one of three outcomes: prison, death or expulsion from the country.

He was frustrated that Libya's allies, including America, had not given him more support in the form of drones and Apache helicopters. "We are fighting the world's enemies," he declared, "and the world should help us."

Amid Libya's worsening violence and polarization, room for dialogue and consensus is shrinking. Bridge builders like Ms. Bugaighis have been forced to take sides. In our last conversation before her death, she seemed to have chosen among evils: She maintained that, despite his faults, General Hifter had broken the taboo of calling out extremists and had taken action. She argued that since he couldn't be stopped, the Libyan government should bring him into the fold and legitimate him, in the hopes of somehow limiting and controlling him.

But there is a stark danger — for Libyans and their friends abroad — in backing a military strongman whose vague definition of terrorism includes nonviolent Islamist political groups like the Muslim Brotherhood. General Hifter denies the right of peaceful Islamist groups to shape the future of the post-Qaddafi state, even though they fought in the revolution, too, and played a greater role than he did. Many Libyans draw a distinction between these groups and Ansar al-Sharia. The danger is that by lumping them all in the same basket the general will radicalize the moderates.

Even more worrisome for Libya is the general's claim that he is defending democracy while threatening the country's main elected body with military force. Whether he can be tamed by being "brought into the fold" seems unlikely: History is littered with examples of such appeasement of strongmen gone horribly awry.

Supporting General Hifter would be a Faustian bargain with far-reaching negative consequences for Libya's future. To avoid throwing the country into further chaos or sending it down an authoritarian path, Libyans must focus on forging a consensus government that addresses grievances in the east. It must build security institutions overseen by elected authorities. And it should recommit itself to a broad-based national reconciliation and the drafting of an equitable constitution.

For their part, outside powers like the United States should make clear that they will not tolerate upending the rule of law in the interest of fighting General Hifter's ill-defined "terrorist" threat that includes political opponents.

Ms. Bugaighis paid the ultimate price in her quest for dignity, but General Hifter may be extracting an even higher one from Libya's future.

Frederic Wehrey, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, served as a United States military attaché in Libya before the 2011 revolution.

U.S. Should Aid Those Who Fight Terror, Not Abet Human Rights Abuses

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

IN HIS recent address at West Point, President Obama doubled down on his administration's strategy of combating terrorism and other security threats through "partnerships" with other armies. Describing the strategy as an alternative to "invading every country that harbors terrorist networks," the president said he would ask Congress to appropriate \$5 billion for a Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund to "train, build capacity and facilitate partner countries on the front lines."

There's nothing particularly new about Mr. Obama's initiative: 158 countries were already recipients of U.S. military training in 2012, and about \$15 billion has been spent annually in recent years on security assistance through the State and Defense departments. Nor is the strategy much in question; stronger local forces are essential to countering the proliferating affiliates of al-Qaeda. But the president's request, which was sent to Congress at the end of last month, nevertheless raises some disturbing questions.

One is what to do when local armies are not up to the task of defeating al-Qaeda, even with U.S. training and help. That was the case in Mali, where a U.S.-trained officer led a coup against a democratic government and U.S.-supplied and -drilled army units crumbled in the face of an offensive by ethnic and

Islamist insurgents. Now Iraq's U.S.-trained forces have allowed much of the country to be overrun by al-Qaeda and Sunni tribal fighters and appear to lack the firepower to prevent the consolidation of a terrorist-ruled state.

The capture of Mali's capital by al-Qaeda was averted only by a quick deployment of French troops in early 2013. Mr. Obama's strategy doesn't make clear how similar threats can be managed. If the new al-Qaeda state in Iraq and Syria cannot be defeated by local forces, will the United States allow it to remain?

A related problem concerns the behavior of foreign units that receive U.S. training and funding. If U.S.-backed forces commit human rights abuses, the damage is twofold: The fight against insurgents is compromised, and so is support for alliance with the United States.

Congress sought to deal with this problem in 1997 by passing the Leahy amendment, a provision named after Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) that prohibits aid to units and individuals thought to be involved in gross human rights violations. The legislation has had a far-reaching effect: In 2011, aid was withheld from 1,766 individuals or units in 46 countries, and State Department staff vetted some 200,000 individuals and units, according to the New York Times. Senior U.S. military officials have told Congress that the restrictions helped improve major U.S. aid programs in Colombia and Afghanistan. Some countries, such as Bangladesh, have taken steps to punish offenders in order to win a restoration of aid.

Such vetting ought to be built into the new partnership program. But the administration is seeking to neuter the Leahy amendment by giving the defense secretary the authority to disregard it by asserting that "it is in the national security interest to do so." In fact, allowing aid to flow to foreign military units that commit major human rights crimes cannot be in the U.S. interest in any circumstances. Congress should reject the -exemption.

Health-care Sign-up Mistakes Pose A New Challenge For Obamacare, Not A Disaster

By Editorial Board

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

ARE HUNDREDS of thousands of Americans getting government money they aren't entitled to because of Obamacare? Illegal immigrants, too? Is it all further evidence that the Obama administration is incompetent and the system unworkable?

For critics of health-care reform, these are tempting conclusions to draw from reports that the Obama administration found nearly 3 million discrepancies between what enrollees reported when they signed up for Affordable Care Act insurance and what federal records show about them.

Tempting but overblown. There's more reason for encouragement from recent news about the act than there is to decry its problems.

Defying pessimistic predictions, more than half of those who signed up in the exchanges were previously uninsured, according to a June Kaiser Family Foundation survey. The law, then, has not served merely as a vehicle to move insured people from one plan to another. It is enrolling uninsured people, its main purpose. Among those who had insurance before, more reported lower bills under Obamacare than higher, and many in both groups no doubt have better coverage. Part of the reason is the financial help the government is providing. Some 87 percent of people enrolled in the exchange that the federal government runs for much of the country are taking government subsidies, and the average post-subsidy cost is a mere \$82 a month.

But are those figures fraught with error or fraud? The Department of Health and Human Services' inspector general revealed last week that there were 2.9 million inconsistencies between the information

insurance applicants submitted to the federal exchange and data about them in government records. Most discrepancies had to do with citizenship status or income, both of which determine people's eligibility for subsidies. The administration's flawed technical systems were unable to resolve the inconsistencies quickly, so they piled up, and officials are still working through them.

Many of these discrepancies are likely to be small — incorrect documentation, misspellings or a simple absence of available records for the government to consult. Another source of error is that the government is checking applications against old tax and pay records, but applicants reported current incomes. Many ostensible errors probably did not lead to improper payments.

Problems of this sort are inherent in creating a system to distribute any means-tested benefit to millions of people, in this case a benefit that seems to be doing a lot of good. The right response is to get better at catching and resolving errors faster, not to condemn the system.

People who are getting more than they're entitled to will be on the hook to pay some back next tax season, so the government must fix major discrepancies soon. It must also be ready for the next enrollment round. People will learn their 2015 premiums this fall. It will be as important as ever to have a functioning system in place to calculate their subsidies properly — and to serve the millions more expected to sign up next year.

The Obama administration, in other words, faces another Affordable Care Act management challenge, not a policy disaster.

Eduard Shevardnadze Helped Change The World

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE had been foreign minister of the Soviet Union for less than a year when the Chernobyl nuclear power plant exploded in April 1986, sending radioactive contamination into the atmosphere. Winds carried radioactive materials over Sweden and stoked international fears. At first, the new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, was silent, and Soviet authorities covered up the scope of the disaster. But later Mr. Gorbachev admitted what happened, and the experience gave rise to his policy of glasnost, or openness. The Chernobyl experience was also searing for Mr. Shevardnadze, who wrote in his memoirs that it “tore the blindfold from our eyes and persuaded us that politics and morals could not diverge.”

To the extent that it guided Mr. Shevardnadze and Mr. Gorbachev in their “new thinking” about the world, this approach changed the course of history. Together, they abandoned the view of inexorable confrontation between two blocs and, despite fierce internal opposition, began to work with the West toward common goals. They agreed that the Soviet Union could no longer rule by threat of force and that they must find a way to ease the burden of the nuclear arms race, dramatically reversing decades of Cold War thinking.

Mr. Shevardnadze, who died Monday at age 86, was a Soviet man. He had been a Communist Party leader in Georgia, south of Stavropol, the region where Mr. Gorbachev rose to power. In a fateful conversation in 1984, during a long walk at Pitsunda on the Black Sea, they held nothing back about their troubled country. “Everything’s rotten,” Mr. Shevardnadze said. “It has to be changed.” In 1985, Mr. Gorbachev shocked the world by naming Mr. Shevardnadze his foreign minister to replace the obdurate Andrei Gromyko.

Mr. Shevardnadze and Mr. Gorbachev told leaders in Eastern Europe that Moscow would no longer dictate to them, ultimately contributing to the fall of the Berlin Wall and unification of Germany within the North Atlantic alliance. Mr. Shevardnadze helped forge the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces

agreement with President Ronald Reagan, the first treaty to eliminate an entire class of nuclear weapons. Even small and now-forgotten concessions were telling: Mr. Shevardnadze assented to the principle of on-site inspections in arms control that Moscow's secrecy-shrouded military-industrial complex had long resisted. He was Mr. Gorbachev's partner in a radical upending of the old order. His 1990 resignation, warning Mr. Gorbachev that "dictatorship is coming," was another mark of conscience.

How sad it was that Mr. Shevardnadze later ignored or forgot the lessons of his own time in Moscow. His misrule as president of independent Georgia was lamentable, a time of rampant corruption and authoritarianism. But he must be remembered, first and foremost, for those fleeting but inspiring years of glasnost and new thinking at the side of Mr. Gorbachev. The two of them were improbable revolutionaries, but what they did changed everything — and millions of people are better off for it today.

On Wall Street, The Corleone Family Fits Right In

By Richard Cohen

[Washington Post](#), July 7, 2014

FADE IN: Michael Corleone's den.

He is at his desk. Facing him are members of his organization. Michael rises and dims the lights. He starts a PowerPoint display showing the various Mafia families. The chieftains and button men are puzzled but they say nothing. Michael turns the lights back on. It is clear he is about to say something important.

Michael: "We're gonna incorporate."

The capos are shocked. They all start talking at once. "Michael, Michael, what would your old man say?"

Michael: "The Godfather is dead. So is his way of doing business. Hyman Roth showed me what we should do. We turn the Corleone family into Corleone Enterprises Ltd. We list it on the stock exchange along with the other criminals. We do what we have always done, but if we get caught, nobody goes to jail. We pay a fine and say we're sorry."

"Michael, Michael," Luca Brasi says. "It is not possible. You do the crime, you do the time."

Michael is patient. "The French bank BNP Paribas admitted it broke the law. It copped a plea. It said it helped Iran avoid sanctions. Iran is our mortal enemy and a country the Corleone family has no sympathy for. The bank helped our enemy and he who helps our enemy is also our enemy. So what happened? Tell 'em, Hyman."

Hyman says, "They paid a fine, nearly \$9 billion. A piffle for them. But it was treated like the corporation acted on its own. Nobody was in charge. Nobody benefited. A corporation is the perfect crime family."

Michael says, "Tell 'em about Credit Suisse."

"It pleaded guilty to tax evasion," Hyman says. "Tax evasion! But no one went to jail. It paid Uncle Sam almost \$2.6 billion and went on its way. Al Capone of blessed memory got 11 years for tax evasion. Why? Because even though he controlled all the rackets in Chicago and had politicians and judges in his pocket, he was not incorporated."

Michael says, "Corporations don't go to jail. And neither do the people who run the corporations. Banks have paid a fortune in penalties for cheating and lying and selling junk and ruining people's lives, and nobody goes to jail."

Fredo says, "Being a corporation is never having to say you're sorry."

Michael looks disgusted: "Fredo, you're in the wrong movie."

Luca Brasi says, "I don't know, Michael. It don't seem right. I don't know about these things. You need someone whacked, I do it. Garroted, that's me. Shot, again that's me. But this, I don't understand. It just don't seem right."

Michael ignores him. "Hyman, tell 'em the rest."

"We're going to buy a business in Switzerland. When we have control of it, we become a Swiss corporation and pay taxes there, where they are lower. This is called an inversion and is something Walgreens says it is now considering. It got tax breaks in Illinois and tax credits and training money, and it don't matter. It still might go to Switzerland, where the weather, if you ask me, is lousy."

Fredo interjects. "But we're an Italian family."

Luca Brasi: "Sicilian!"

Michael signals for quiet. "Globalization means you don't belong to any country. You have allegiances to no one except your own family or, as it happens, the corporation. Pfizer tried to buy AstraZeneca so it could move to England. But they stupidly made an offer that AstraZeneca could refuse — and it did.

"Many companies are doing this and no one says nothing about loyalty to the country or anything like that. Corporations can do anything they want. We will do the same. We will move where the taxes are lowest, and we will never speak of this matter outside of the company. We will use our people in the media who are on our payroll to say that we are studying many options to maximize stockholder value. You, Fredo, will go on CNBC and not wear a tie so you look cool. All of you, remember that phrase and use it often: Maximize stockholder value."

"Michael, Michael," Luca Brasi says. "What does it mean?"

"Nothing, everything, anything you want," Michael says. He pauses. "I am no longer Capo di tutti capi. I am the CEO. Tom Hagen is no longer consigliere. He's the general counsel. All we do is change the titles but not who we are. We're still criminals."

"Like others on Wall Street, this is the business we've chosen," Hyman Roth says.

Read more from Richard Cohen's archive.

Boehner's Unprincipled Fight With Obama Over Separation Of Powers

By Jonathan Capehart

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

House Speaker John Boehner took to CNN.com yesterday to continue to tout his intention to sue President Obama for "[circumventing] the American people and their elected representatives through executive action, changing and creating his own laws, and excusing himself from enforcing statutes he is sworn to uphold." This notion that Obama is willfully lawless and exercising powers above and beyond the Constitution has me side-eyeing so hard right now.

Last month, I dealt with the president's increasing reliance on executive orders to get around a recalcitrant Republican majority in the House and minority in the Senate to get anything done. Despite the hysteria from the right, Obama has issued fewer of them than any of his predecessors since Grover Cleveland in the late 1800s, according to a study by John Hudak at Brookings. Now, it's time to deal with signing statements, which is a legal way for the president to reinterpret or ignore the law he is signing if it conflicts with his view of executive authority. As you know, I'm not a fan of them. But they are hardly unconstitutional and Obama hasn't abused their use in number.

Kevin Evans of Florida International University told The Post's Karen DeYoung last month that President George W. Bush "used signing statements to challenge about 1,200 provisions of 172 laws he

signed — twice as many as all his predecessors combined.” Meanwhile, Obama “has issued close to 30 signing statements; in the 2013 Defense Authorization Act alone, he challenged more than 20 sections of the law,” DeYoung reports. “Among the challenges have been assertions of his power to close Guantanamo Bay, for instance, and to disregard whistleblower protections.”

The DeYoung article points out that use of signing statements were “relatively rare until Ronald Reagan began using [them] as a means of asserting the power of the executive against the legislative branch.” Thanks to Tobias Gibson, a political science professor at Westminster College in Missouri writing at Monkey Cage, we know Samuel Alito is the reason.

Before Bush nominated Alito to the Supreme Court in 2005, he had been a Reagan-appointed deputy assistant attorney general in the Office of Legal Counsel. In 1986, Alito penned a six-page memo that provides the legal underpinnings for expanded use of signing statements by the president. The subject of the opinion says it all: “Using Presidential Signing Statement to Make Fuller Use of the President’s Constitutionally Assigned Role in the Process of Enacting Law.”

Our primary objective is to ensure that Presidential signing statements assume their rightful place in the interpretation of legislation.....

The novelty of the proposal previously discussed by this Group is the suggestion that Presidential signing statements be used to address questions of interpretation. Under the Constitution, a bill becomes law only when passed by both houses of Congress and signed by the President (or enacted over his veto). Since the President’s approval is just as important as that of the House or Senate, it seems to follow that the President’s understanding of the bill should be just as important as that of Congress....

From the perspective of the Executive Branch, the issuance of interpretive signing statements would have two chief advantages. First, it would increase the power of the Executive to shape the law. Second, by forcing some rethinking by courts, scholars, and litigants, it may help to curb some of the prevalent abuses of legislative history.

This view of presidential power is accepted on the right and the left. Laurence Tribe, the renowned Harvard constitutional law professor who taught Obama and went on to advise him during his first campaign, is among them. “The objection to signing statements is completely misplaced,” he told me yesterday via e-mail. “There is nothing at all wrong with a president signing a bill and simultaneously giving everyone, including the executive officials who answer to him, notice of how he intends to interpret and apply the bill he has signed, as well as notice of any provision that he regards as constitutionally void even though it has not yet been struck down by the Supreme Court.”

Tribe, co-author of “Uncertain Justice: The Roberts Court and the Constitution” with Joshua Matz, went on to say, “The proper objection is not to the fact that a signing statement has been issued, but to the substance of a particular statement. For example, if a signing statement reflects an essentially unlimited view of presidential power and rests on the premise that Congress has no authority to regulate the exercise of that power, then we are all better off knowing in advance that that is the president’s position — a position that is, in my view, indefensible. But it is not the fact of a signing statement having been issued that is indefensible; it is what particular signing statements SAY in a particular case that may reflect an exaggerated view of presidential authority.”

So, there is nothing extraordinary about Obama’s use of executive orders or signing statements. But Boehner makes strong allegations against Obama without articulating specific violations of the separation of powers. That’s not to say there aren’t areas of concern. When I asked Tribe last month about whether Boehner would have standing to bring what I called a frivolous lawsuit, he was not as skeptical as I thought he would be.

The House as an institution may well have standing to challenge at least some of the President's unilateral suspensions and revisions of statutory deadlines and specific mandates in the Affordable Care Act and other congressional legislation, including legislation governing deportations. It's not an open-and-shut case, but the House would have at least a plausible basis for claiming standing.

On the merits, at least some of the actions the House might challenge are probably consistent with the separation of powers, but others arguably are not.

This makes sense. I totally get it. We should at least judge Boehner's lawsuit on the merits. But what is so dispiriting is that the motivation behind the litigation strikes me as less about having a principled fight over the separation of powers and more about doing serious harm to this president and his ability to get anything done. That's why I'm convinced that Boehner's sideshow of a lawsuit is really a dress rehearsal for impeachment.

Once Boehner's raucous caucus and their constituents realize that such litigation probably would not be resolved until long after Obama left the White House, I have no doubt they will insist he be punished while in office. If the GOP succeeds in taking the Senate in the November midterms, then impeachment becomes a scarily viable option.

Follow Jonathan on Twitter: @Capehartj

Zero-tolerance Policies Are Destroying The Lives Of Black Children

By Andre M. Perry

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

President Obama wants to limit the number of students expelled every year from high schools. He believes the rates of suspensions and expulsions are racially biased, arbitrary and ineffective. "Although African-American students represent 15 percent of students in the CRDC, they make up 35 percent of students suspended once, 44 percent of those suspended more than once, and 36 percent of students expelled," writes the Education Department. "Further, over 50 percent of students who were involved in school-related arrests or referred to law enforcement are Hispanic or African-American." So the administration sent to educational leaders a Dear Colleague guidance letter on civil rights and discipline. To close the racial gap, he said, go easy with the zero-tolerance policies. Predictably, the ed-reform types, rending their garments and gnashing their teeth, see this as a disastrous stripping of school autonomy.

The guidance "would certainly compromise the operation of schools," according to Richard Epstein, professor of law at New York University. Some critics argue that schools need to sweat the small things — uniform violations, smoking, tardiness and singing — if they want to create a positive school culture in which students and teachers are focused on learning. For the sake of those who are focused on learning, those who aren't ready must be forced to leave. Epstein adds that schools with zero-tolerance policies offer "no taint of any purported civil-rights violation." And he's right when he says, "Disproportionate rates should not be regarded as unjustified merely because they reflect higher rates of improper behavior by minority students than by white students." Expulsions are easily justified and aren't inherently racist. More importantly, they can be a very effective way to increase learning outcomes.

In fact, the complainers are right: Obama's plan has a major flaw. But curbing the option to expel students is not it. The trouble is his rationale. The real reason to stop expulsions is that, in the noble cause of closing the black-white achievement gap, schools are insidiously giving up on black children by expelling those who are considered not ready to learn. While zero-tolerance expulsions myopically help the school and the majority of students in it, they destroy the student — and, ultimately, the community, too.

Zero-tolerance policies have many allies. Parents are often the most ardent supporters. (If a kid injured your son or daughter, you'd want expulsion, too.) Moreover, teachers and principals will tell you that ridding the school of disruptive behaviors accelerates achievement for the overwhelming majority of its students. Educational leaders embrace no-tolerance policies on the ground that they provide the greatest good for the greatest number.

The trouble is that when students are out of school, they're still learning — just not the things society wants them to. Many districts don't require that suspended and expelled students receive homework support or tutoring, so they fall further behind their peers. In addition, expelled students abandon activities that lead to college and take up activities that lead to prison. Expulsion also correlates with court involvement. (A modest proposal: Whenever a young person sees a judge, he or she should be accompanied by the principal of the last school attended.) This is why a suspension for infractions such as chewing gum, not wearing a uniform correctly or even fighting hurts the larger goal of meeting the child's needs.

And what happens to expelled children can have large consequences on the entire community. Schools are contributing to the explosion of young adults who are not working or in school in major cities. New Orleans, where I worked, provides an example of a city already in a bad way. According to "Building an Inclusive, High-Skill Workforce for New Orleans' Next Economy," a report from the Greater New Orleans Data Center, 14,000 youths ages 16 to 24 in the New Orleans metro are neither enrolled in school nor employed. This is a terrible enough social trend that we should fight in every way we can to reverse, rather than letting schools exacerbate it.

Here's some perspective for that number: 14,000 exceeds the number of registered students at Tulane or the University of New Orleans. It's a greater number than the combined enrollments of Loyola, Dillard and Xavier universities. Fourteen thousand youths is about one-third the number of students who attend public schools in Orleans Parish. The number is about 4,000 seats shy of a full house at a Pelicans game. If a company hired 14,000 youths, it would be the largest employer in the city. Although expulsion isn't the only cause of these numbers, it certainly doesn't help. At some point, institutions must do the very hard work of educating children with extraordinary challenges.

The goal has to be to keep children in school. Kudos to the Recovery School District of New Orleans for being proactive in creating a uniform expulsion policy that is in line with Obama's goal but for also recognizing the community need for curbing expulsions.

That doesn't mean Obama's conceit is flawless. It is important for schools to be able to credibly threaten reprisals for the malcontents. Some behaviors do warrant out-of-school time: Weapons and schools don't mix. Fighting may require separating a child from the school to assess and calm a situation.

But schools are great places to instill character, critical thinking and ethical decision-making. They may be the best places to safely resolve conflicts. Obama is right to want to keep kids in school. The policy addresses a significant systemic problem — the fact that schools abdicate the responsibility to educate the most challenging students, handing that power instead to the streets, the criminal justice system or parents who we should assume are not good educators or disciplinarians. The problem with the guidance is that the data the administration puts forth about discrimination and disparate impact neither support the charge nor address the deeper issues head on. Then again, neither do Obama's critics.

The achievement gap for black children is not a sufficient reason to push underperformers out. (It's no better, and no less preposterous, than another path to close the gap: stop educating white people.) If schools don't have everything they need to instill positive behaviors in their toughest kids, then let's find

the resources and staff for them to do it. Instead of lobbying for more disciplinary autonomy for schools, let's petition for wrap-around services, restructured in-school suspensions, conflict mediation, restorative justice programs, parenting courses, out-of school behavioral services or a host of other interventions that address the problem. Just as long as we keep the kids in school.

The Divided States Of Obama

By Michael Gerson

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

The headline — “Poll: Obama worst president since World War II” — was both provocative and misleading. The Quinnipiac University survey did, indeed, place President Obama at the top of the worst since FDR. But this was largely a measure of partisan concentration. Republicans were united in their unfavorable historical judgment of Obama. Democrats divided their votes (and would insist, I'd imagine, that they have more options to choose from).

We already know that Obama is a highly polarizing figure. But beneath the headline, the poll identified serious problems for the president. Fifty-four percent of respondents said the Obama administration is “not competent running the government.” (Shout-out to HealthCare.gov.) A majority believes the president does not have “strong leadership qualities.” Obama is solidifying a perception that he is out of his depth. Once made, such an impression is difficult to unmake.

And the failings of the Obama era are contributing to a deeper crisis for liberalism. Public confidence that government generally does the right thing is near an all-time low. In a recent Gallup poll, 79 percent of Americans agreed that corruption is “widespread throughout the government” — up from 59 percent in 2006. During a presidency that placed considerable trust in government, public trust in government has been badly shaken.

Obama is left with a job approval rating — in the low to mid-40s — that is about the same as when his party lost 63 House seats during the 2010 midterm elections. On the stump, his strategy is a ferocious peevishness. Republicans “don't do anything except block me and call me names” — an accusation in the best rhetorical tradition of school yards everywhere. His promised use of executive power seems more like a confession of powerlessness in the normal political realms of persuasion and legislation.

On his executive orders, Obama challenges the House speaker: “So sue me.” As a former speechwriter, I'd advise greater care in the choice of catchphrases. When Ronald Reagan goaded Congress on tax increases with “Go ahead, make my day,” he was channeling Clint Eastwood. “So sue me” sounds like the guy who steals your parking space and taunts you afterward. Petulance does not signal strength.

On policy issues, Obama has few places to turn. Public impressions of the economy seem set. Obamacare is enduringly controversial. The IRS and Veterans Affairs scandals continue to unfold. Foreign policy hardly offers a refuge — as years of disengagement in the Middle East now require engagement on dramatically less favorable terms.

Obama therefore turns to the two issues that Democrats keep in their back pocket, confident that broad social currents are running in their favor: immigration and contraception. (I suppose many Americans, not just Democrats, keep contraception in their back pocket.) In the long run, the political analysis that informs this strategy is correct. The U.S. electorate is becoming more demographically diverse and more culturally liberal on some issues. When it comes to Hispanic voters, younger voters and single voters, Republicans can seem out of touch (because they mostly are).

So the midterm contest sets up: “Out of his depth” vs. “Out of touch.”

But both of Obama's surefire issues offer complications. The appearance of chaos at the border — fueled, in part, by rumors of an immigration free pass — may lead the Obama administration to seek procedural reforms that expedite the deportation of children. The only successful immigration legislation this session may be a border-control measure — signed by a president whose administration has already deported more than 2 million immigrants.

And the “war on women” conducted by the Supreme Court turns out to be a narrow exception to a 2011 Health and Human Services regulation — an exception allowing a family-owned company to provide 16 types of contraception to its employees instead of 20. The court ordered the Obama administration, when it substantially burdens a religious belief, to pursue the “least restrictive means” of achieving its goal — which has been the law since Bill Clinton signed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in 1993.

It is hard to imagine that the president's use of cultural wedge issues will have much effect in battleground Senate races, conducted (this time around) mainly in red states. But even if it does — even if a deep blue appeal moves voters substantially — a historical reputation will be set.

“I don't want to pit red America against blue America,” Obama once said. Now he organizes the sorting of America between red and blue. Best president or worst, he has left a nation more divided.

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

NSA's Misguided Snooping On Innocent People

By Eugene Robinson

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

Even those who believe the National Security Agency's vacuum-cleaner surveillance of electronic communications does not trample privacy rights should be troubled by this practical implication: If you try to know everything, you end up knowing nothing.

An investigation by The Post, which examined a cache of intelligence reports provided by fugitive NSA contractor Edward Snowden, illustrates my point. The agency is gathering and warehousing enormous amounts of private information, most of it irrelevant because it concerns innocent individuals — mostly foreigners but some U.S. citizens as well.

By “innocent,” I mean the NSA is convinced these people have no involvement with any activity that poses a threat. But the agency keeps their information anyway.

Reporter Barton Gellman, researcher Julie Tate and security consultant Ashkan Soltani spent four months analyzing more than 160,000 instant-messaging conversations, e-mails, social network exchanges and other communications sucked in by the NSA's surveillance programs. The material Snowden provided was associated with roughly 11,400 individuals, perhaps half of them Americans.

Of those whose lives were rummaged through, only 11 percent are identified by the NSA as legitimate targets who warrant surveillance. This means that about nine out of 10 just happened to be snagged in the NSA's net.

It is important to clarify that I'm not talking about content-free metadata, such as the NSA's controversial log of domestic phone calls. These are actual e-mails, instant-messaging exchanges and social media posts that the NSA gathered under surveillance programs known as PRISM and Upstream. The Post reported that the content includes “stories of love and heartbreak, illicit sexual liaisons, mental-health crises, political and religious conversions, financial anxieties and disappointed hopes.”

It's also important to note that the 11 percent deemed legitimate targets included some people I definitely want our spies to be watching. The Post said the surveillance records it examined included information that led to the captures of a Pakistan-based terrorist bomb-maker and a suspect in an Indonesian bomb attack. Other successes were withheld by government officials' request. Perhaps these cases could have been cracked by means other than mass surveillance. Perhaps not.

My point is not that this surveillance is incapable of helping authorities find and apprehend genuine terrorists. I just believe the snooping should be more targeted — and clearly irrelevant information about innocent people should be quickly erased.

The NSA seeks something like omniscience regarding electronic communications. But it is not enough to have a crucial tidbit of information stored on a server somewhere. For that information to be useful, it has to be identifiable and accessible. The more indiscriminately you amass data, the harder it is to find the relevant bits.

The NSA's position is essentially that the bigger the haystack it can gather, the more needles it can find. But given the ever-increasing volume of electronic communications around the world, what sense does it make for the NSA to clutter its data banks with information about people — foreign and domestic — who pose no threat? Retaining this material, apparently for up to five years, is not just an invasion of the targets' privacy but also a waste of the NSA's capacity for storage and analysis.

If NSA officials are so confident they can manage the unimaginably vast quantities of data the agency is assembling, then why have they repeatedly given public assurances that Snowden — whom they frequently describe as a lowly analyst — had no access to the kind of sensitive data he gave to The Post? Does the agency really have any idea of what is already in its databases? Does the NSA know who might be sifting through this material? And for what purposes?

These NSA programs are designed to snoop on foreigners. Snowden has expressed the view that citizens of other countries have privacy rights, too. You don't have to agree with him to wonder why the personal e-mails of, say, a college professor in Germany or an insurance salesman in Brazil should not be purged once the material is determined irrelevant to any investigation.

Snowden also believes there are legitimate threats and targets. He gave the information to The Post with the understanding that nothing would be published that could harm U.S. national security or endanger lives. Indeed, the newspaper said it withheld details about "a secret overseas nuclear project, double-dealing by an ostensible ally, a military calamity that befell an unfriendly power, and the identities of aggressive intruders into U.S. computer networks."

Investigate that stuff, NSA. Stop wasting time and effort on people who mean us no harm.

Millennials Get Cut Off At The Polls

By Catherine Rampell

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

First they came for blacks, and we said nothing. Then they came for Latinos, poor people and married women, and we again ignored the warning signs.

Now, after our years of apathy, they're coming for us: the nation's millennials.

Across the country, Republican state policymakers have hoisted barriers to voting by passing voter-ID laws and curtailing electoral accommodations such as same-day registration and early voting. These policy changes are allegedly intended to eradicate the imagined scourge of voter fraud, but the real point seems to be voter suppression.

For a time, the targeted populations were primarily racial, ethnic and income groups that traditionally vote Democratic. Now they happen to include Gen-Y'ers, more specifically my college-age brethren. We millennials may be fickle in our loyalties, generally distrustful of government institutions and unaligned with any political party, but our generation's motley, liberal-to-libertarian-leaning ideological preferences still threaten red-state leadership.

In response, Republicans have set out to erect creative, if potentially unconstitutional, Tough-Mudder-style obstacle courses along our path to the polls.

Last year in Ohio, for example, Republican legislators proposed a measure that would effectively strip hundreds of millions of dollars from state schools if they continued to provide students paying out-of-state tuition with the paperwork necessary to register to vote in the state (as courts have said college students are legally allowed to do). In Maine, the secretary of state investigated 200 university students for voter fraud; he found no evidence of wrongdoing but then sent a threatening letter telling them that they must either obtain a Maine driver's license and register their vehicles or cancel their state voter registrations. In Texas, photo identification is required to vote and, while concealed handgun licenses count, state-school-issued student IDs don't.

North Carolina's efforts have been particularly aggressive, perhaps because young people represent an especially threatening voting bloc to the Republicans in control there. Without the strong turnout of young voters in 2008, after all, Barack Obama would not have become the first Democratic presidential candidate in more than two decades to carry the Tar Heel state.

Like other states, North Carolina has eliminated many accommodations disproportionately used by young people and other first-time voters, such as same-day registration, and instituted voter-ID requirements that don't recognize student IDs. But it has also stopped allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to fill out voter-registration forms early so that they can be automatically registered upon reaching majority age. Another state Senate bill last year would have effectively raised taxes on parents of students who registered to vote where they attend college.

Perhaps it is unsurprising, then, that the state faces a lawsuit filed by college students, aided by several voter registration advocacy groups, as the New York Times reported Sunday. The suit essentially claims that the state is engaging in age discrimination. Age discrimination accusations may be off-limits to young people in employment settings — federal law doesn't protect workers under age 40 — but when it comes to elections, the plaintiffs have a shot. The 26th Amendment, which lowered the federal voting age to 18 in 1971, guarantees that the right to vote "shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age."

Republican lawmakers may feel threatened by the political proclivities of millennials, but the truth is, aside from 2008, young people are not usually much of a concern to either party because our turnout rates are so poor. Of all age groups, Americans 18 to 29 consistently have the lowest participation rates — even in the 2008 election, when our generation was galvanized around an unusually inspiring presidential candidate promising hope and change. That year, just 51 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds cast ballots. Sadly, it was the first time since 1972 that a majority of young people voted.

For years, get-out-the-vote groups such as Rock the Vote and Citizen Change have tried to market voting as rebellious and enviably adult (including by enlisting celebrity spokespeople who were unregistered themselves, and at least one who was possibly barred from voting due to felony records). If Paris Hilton, 50 Cent and Madonna can't convince young people to vote, maybe a bunch of old white men trying to bar their path will do the job.

Obama's 'imperial Presidency' Doesn't Rule Much Of Anything

By Dana Milbank

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

On either end of Lafayette Square on Monday, you could observe the receding power of the Obama presidency.

On the north side, across from the White House, stands St. John's Episcopal Church, "the Church of the Presidents," where every president since James Madison has worshiped. But there was no sanctuary for Obama at St. John's on Monday; it was hosting a protest against him.

More than 100 Latinos — a constituency that has been a reliable part of Obama's political base — stood on the church steps as speakers denounced Obama's pledge to hasten deportations of children illegally crossing the southern border. Addressing the participants, many of whom held signs saying "President Obama: STOP!!," immigration advocate Gustavo Torres charged that "the president has failed to act with the urgency and competence that is required."

At that very moment on the other side of the square, the White House was acting with urgency on Obama's latest executive action, the "Excellent Educators for All" initiative. Eight hundred feet from the church protest, Education Secretary Arne Duncan was in the White House briefing room, talking about "differential compensation," "systemic inequities" and the administration's plans to spend \$4.2 million on a new "educator equity support network."

Duncan said the administration would prefer to act with Congress rather than use executive authority, "but we just can't continue to wait."

Certainly, the matter of teacher quality for poor kids is important, but Duncan and his administration colleagues are in for a semester at the school of hard knocks if they think a \$4.2 million initiative (that's about 0.0001 percent of the federal budget) will get attention when there's a crisis on the border, a crisis in Iraq and Syria, and other fires to be extinguished at home and abroad.

Indeed, the first question for Duncan on Monday wasn't about his new initiative but about the National Education Association's call over the weekend for Duncan's resignation after several policy disagreements. Duncan said he doesn't get involved in "local union politics."

Local? The NEA is the nation's largest teachers union and a key component of Obama's political base — just like the Latino activists protesting across the square.

This is why the oft-leveled accusation that Barack Obama is running an "imperial presidency" is a bit silly. As imperial rulers go, this president has about as much oppressive might and raw dictatorial clout as Prince Hans-Adam II of Liechtenstein. Republicans have never respected Obama's authority. And now, as his popularity slips, he seems to be losing his ability to influence foreign allies, congressional Democrats and some of his previously loyal supporters.

Both the puny executive action and the criticism from erstwhile allies on Monday showed why the Obama presidency these days is falling a good bit short of imperial on the Alexander the Great scale. Education was the White House's message du jour — lunch with teachers on the South Lawn was the only item on Obama's publicly released schedule other than his intelligence briefing — but it didn't have a chance of wresting the national narrative away from less pleasant affairs.

On Tuesday, Obama plans to ask Congress for additional funds to process child immigrants. But then he's going on a fundraising trip to Colorado and Texas that, his spokesman confirmed Monday, doesn't include a stop at the border. This could put Obama further on the defensive by inviting the sort of criticism that followed George W. Bush's Hurricane Katrina flyover.

In recent days , Obama has spoken in scattershot fashion about education, jobs, the Highway Trust Fund, immigration legislation and Republicans' threat to sue him for his supposedly monarchical behavior. But his success in shaping the agenda has been negligible. He has been at the mercy of events, reacting to matters not of his choosing and taking executive actions that, for all the criticism, don't have the permanence or reach of legislation.

Following Duncan's visit to the briefing room, new White House press secretary Josh Earnest had the unpleasant task of responding to all the other problems generated by supposed friends.

Ed Henry of Fox News inquired about Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-Tex.), who on Sunday called the administration "one step behind" on the border crisis. The Associated Press's Julie Pace asked about Germany's complaint that one of its intelligence operatives was allegedly a U.S. double agent. And Mark Landler of the New York Times asked why Iraqi leaders seem to be "brushing aside" the administration's pleas to form a new government.

To that last question, Earnest said he had "been pretty candid, I think, over the last couple of weeks, in articulating our disappointment."

Articulating disappointment! Does the arrogance of this imperial presidency know no bounds?

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES

Firefighters, Others Walk Out Of Council Meeting

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

WILMINGTON – Dozens of firefighters, police and administration members stormed out of a city council committee meeting Monday night after a call to vote on controversial proposals was made without the committee allowing the fire chief to address the panel.

Public Safety Committee Chairman Mike Brown, said he was planning to let Fire Chief Anthony Goode speak after the committee voted to move the items to the full council for consideration.

"We wanted to hear from council members and others. The fire chief was going to to have an opportunity to give his remarks," Brown said after the meeting. "I don't let people tell me what to do. I run this meeting. Every council chairperson has a way of running their meetings."

Chief of Staff Cleon Cauley notified council members he was leaving as Brown attempted to call for a vote without allowing Goode to comment on the proposals.

Firefighters and police applauded Cauley's move and followed him out of the door.

One firefighter compared Brown's handling of the meeting to a dictatorship. Others shouted "you're a disgrace" and "good thing you're not running again." to Brown.

Goode called Brown's behavior inappropriate and said he felt disrespected.

"Tonight's meeting was something unique," Goode said following the meeting.

"I've never been to a public safety meeting where the chief was not even allowed to sit down. Then they offered public comment before they had me address any of the concerns," he said.

Goode acknowledged he and Brown had personal issues in the past, but he didn't elaborate.

Monday's meeting considered proposals that would, among other things, eliminate seven vacant firefighter positions and require the police and fire chiefs to go before council before starting academy classes for new recruits. Currently, each department can start academies when their uniformed strength falls below 95 percent of staffing guidelines.

Goode has said the fire department meets conditions to start an academy.

Before leaving, Cauley called the academy proposal a burden. "I question whether it's a step into the executive branch of government," he said.

Council President Theo Gregory, said the legislation wouldn't change the agencies' ability to address shortages.

"We want to make sure at a certain threshold that a class is started," Gregory responded. "So it's just a matter of accountability.

"We ... have to ensure and always ask, 'Why hasn't a class started yet? It may be a good reason or there may not be a good reason. And that's where the dialogue starts."

But Cauley challenged the need for a formal process.

"You want to have a review or conversation, my door's always open," Cauley said. "Come ask the question, and you'll have answers. I don't think we can legislate conversations. We just need to talk. Just come across the hall, and we'll let you know."

The proposal to cut seven vacant firefighter positions would help the city save \$447,000. The legislation is a direct suggestion from the Berkshire report, a 2012 study on the fire department. Council members said they're looking at the fire department because of concerns from the public that city spending has not been checked.

But council members also said they're looking at other departments for cost-savings, as well.

Councilman Robert Williams, a former city police officer, said the city could be taking a big public safety risk by killing positions, even if no one is occupying them.

"[The study] was put together as a proposal on how to go about saving money," he said. "From the onset, it wasn't looking for better of the city of Wilmington. It was looking for a way to save money."

Goode and other fire leaders said eliminating the vacancies would significantly speed up the rate at which the department hands out overtime. When the department hands out overtime to more than three firefighters, it has to shut a fire engine down, thereby creating a coverage gap and increasing response times, Goode said.

The vacant positions and academy proposals were each sent to full council on 3-1 votes. The items will be considered at a future council session. The council meets again on Thursday.

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Christiana Care Marks One Year Of Cord Blood Banking

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

More than 1,000 mothers who delivered babies in Delaware in the past year made use of a free option to donate their umbilical cord blood for research purposes or life-saving transfusions, officials at Christiana Care Health System said.

"It's just a great gift to society and to the child," Kim Petrella, a labor and delivery nurse at Christiana Care, said of cord blood banking. "This is something we used to throw away, and now we're realizing it could be the holy grail."

Christiana Care notched its 1,036th donation in July since an arrangement with a public cord blood bank, CORD:USE, took effect in July 2013, hospital officials said. The hospital handles about 6,500 deliveries a year, meaning about 16 percent of expecting mothers took the option, which adds no cost to a patient's bill after giving birth.

Blood retrieved from a woman's umbilical cord, minutes after she gives birth, is sought-after in modern medicine because it contains a rich supply of stem cells – young cells than can serve as a kind of template for making blood cells.

Such cells are increasingly used to treat people with diseases like leukemia and lymphoma that cause their own bodies' blood-forming cells to become diseased, according to the federal Health Resources and Services Administration, which promotes cord blood donation. They're not the same thing as embryonic stem cells, either, so they carry none of the bioethical baggage attached to those kinds of stem cells.

When Congress passed the Stem Cell Act of 2005, it gave the federal government authority to work with cord blood banks to develop an inventory of 150,000 units of transplantable cord blood. By May 2011, there had been 41,000 units of blood banked with the federally developed National Cord Blood Inventory and 94,000 units of cord blood in other U.S. registries, according to the Government Accountability Office.

Since cord blood therapies have become more widespread, expectant parents have been offered the chance to bank their infants' cord blood for their own family's use alone. This private cord blood banking can cost between \$900 and \$2,500 at first, with yearly storage fees that follow.

Christiana Care has for years offered its patients an option to donate cord blood instead, which builds up supplies of publicly available cord blood, much like donating blood to the Red Cross. The hospital worked with a New Jersey blood bank, Community Blood Services, until 2012, and started its partnership with CORD:USE, a Florida company affiliated with researchers at Duke University, in July 2013.

Blood donated by mothers giving birth can be used for transplants when the recipient's blood type is a match. It can also be used for research purposes by scientists trying to extend the usefulness of cord blood in treatments.

If cord blood isn't saved for public use or privately banked, it's just discarded as medical waste, never extracted from the umbilical cord and placenta.

Dr. Richard J. Derman, who chairs Christiana Care's obstetrics and gynecology department, called the past year's surpassed goal of getting to 1,000 cord blood donations "a rather dramatic step forward."

"We're dealing with cells that are much more undeveloped than bone marrow," Derman said. "They have much more capacity for adapting." The process of getting the blood out of the umbilical cord and placenta immediately after birth, Derman said, is quick and usually unnoticed by the mother, since it's done when she is first holding the baby.

"It does not affect the birth of the baby. There's no danger to mom," Petrella said. "That's usually the part where the parents are counting the fingers and the toes. We've had people ask, did you do it already?"

Christiana Care is the only Delaware hospital that facilitates free public cord blood donations, according to the Parent's Guide to Cord Blood Foundation.

Petrella said more people who donate cord blood choose to make a public donation than opt to privately bank it and pay for its storage themselves.

Some researchers in Christiana Care's own cancer center have even made use of the hospital's donated blood for their work, she said, which means "the newborns that are born at Christiana are going to be helping the sickest of the sick in our own state."

For Jessica Papp McNemar of Wilmington, who gave birth to her daughter Moxie at Christiana Care in February, donating her cord blood was a no-brainer. "I'm sort of a helping person by nature. I know there's so much research and so much that can be done with cord blood," McNemar said. She considered private banking, she said, but thought it didn't seem "urgent" to set aside the blood only for her family to use.

Getting the task of donating done only required filling out some paperwork in advance, McNemar said, and right after delivery, she never noticed the quick extra procedure.

"I didn't even know they were doing it," she said. "I was looking at the baby the whole time."

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Resources

- The Parent's Guide to Cord Blood Foundation provides a wealth of information about donating, privacy protections for donors and what treatments can be carried out with donated cord blood: parentsguidecordblood.org.

- The company Christiana Care partners with to process cord blood donations, CORD:USE, has information on its public bank and retrieval process at corduse.com.

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Wilmington Violence: 'So Many Funerals'

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

WILMINGTON – Crystal Brown and her cousins stopped at Adams Market to grab some food Sunday night.

A few moments later, the 43-year-old woman left the store, walking right into a crossfire of bullets outside the corner store located at Adams and Seventh streets. A stray bullet struck her in the chest, fatally wounding her in front of relatives, some of whom were preteens, her brother Harry Brown said Monday.

"That's the other unfortunate thing," said Brown, who along with about 30 people gathered outside his aunt's house Monday for a vigil held for his baby sister. "They saw that and now we have to deal with that on top of everything else."

The shooter remained at large Monday.

Her killing puts Wilmington on pace to surpass the number of people killed in the city in the last three years. There have been 13 homicides so far this year – that's one more than in 2011 and 2012 and five more than last year.

Her homicide came in the midst of a 41-hour period of violence in the city that included a noontime shooting Monday in which suspects shot at police officers. No injuries were reported in that incident, but an undercover police vehicle was struck by gunfire while following a vehicle believed to have been involved in a previous shooting.

The ongoing gun violence in the city of about 71,000 residents had Mayor Dennis P. Williams on Monday promising police saturation in some of the more crime-ridden areas, including Pine Street where two men were killed last month during two separate shootings.

"This is our community, these are our folks killing each other and it anguishes me every day," Williams said at a Central Baptist Church gathering.

"I truly apologize for the violence in your community. I accept responsibility and truly apologize," said Williams. The plan is expected to begin in mid-July and would include going after slumlords.

City police will not put up with "people who are running around here being Al Capone, shooting up the place," he added. "We are going to clean up Pine Street, but it's not going to be a piece of cake."

About three dozen residents heard Williams speak at the neighborhood meeting called by City Councilwoman Hanifa Shabazz.

"We are sounding the alarm," she said. "We're no longer living in this condition. ... We want our neighborhoods back."

Like Williams and Wilmington Police Chief Bobby Cummings, Shabazz called on residents to work with police to end the violence that is destroying families and neighborhoods.

Jack McDonough, from the state Department of Justice, urged residents to report houses of known drug activity or storage as nuisance properties – especially in the focus area of Sixth to 10th and Lombard to Spruce streets – and report probationers loitering on blocks where they have no connections, so they can be restricted from doing so.

Williams said everyone can do something to help, from mentoring to picking up trash. But he also told residents if they see crime and don't report it, "you're part of the problem."

Williams, who talked of people helping him avoid a negative life on the streets, also promised continuing emphasis on activities for youth, job development and massive increase in police presence. But he also warned residents that he didn't want people complaining when it happens.

"We're getting ready to get tough," he said.

After the meeting, Shabazz gathered many of the residents for a neighborhood walk, handing out papers with phone numbers for services and to report crime.

About a mile west of the meeting, friends and family of Brown gathered in the 1000 block of Seventh St. to hold a vigil for her. A photo of Brown was taped to her aunt's front porch, which was surrounded by stuffed animals. Candles were lit in her honor. A set of small white candles shaped her initials, with a set of red candles making the shape of a heart.

Her mother was surrounded by many who came to pay their respects. She said she was not ready to be interviewed.

Harry Brown, who said his mother was holding him up, said his sister visited him over the weekend in Magnolia, where he has his home. He fought back his emotions when remembering he had not told her he loved her when she left his home Sunday afternoon.

"I'm realizing that I need to seize every opportunity I have to tell the people that I love that I love them," he said. "Yesterday I didn't do that. But I think she knew that I loved her."

Others described Brown, who recently started working as a collections agent in Dover, as a person who would give the shirt off her back for anyone.

"She was like everybody's best friend," said 32-year-old Shavon Richardson, one Brown's close friends. "She was everybody's protector. If you needed advice, she was always there for you. She was just a great friend and she will be missed."

Tiffany Smith, another of Brown's close friends, said this senseless act adds to the list of people she knows who have been killed.

"I live in Wilmington – born and raised," she said. "Every other day, I'm hearing about a childhood friend, someone I went to school with, someone I grew up with, someone who I used to play with is dying."

"I have gone to so many funerals, I cannot count. I have so many obituaries, I cannot count. I just want it to stop."

Smith said the city needed to do more in order to keep people occupied and away from violence.

"Put the guns down," she said. "You are killing people left and right, innocent people. It's a shame that now we have to bury my sister, my best friend, who was so sweet and so innocent. She was such a lovable, caring person."

The vigil started about 6:30 p.m., almost a block and a half from where Brown was shot.

'They're just pulling out guns'

About 6 hours earlier on Monday, an undercover officer in an unmarked vehicle saw a silver Buick speeding in the area of West 35th and North Market streets, said Cpl. Mark Ivey, a Wilmington police spokesman.

As the officer followed the vehicle, an occupant fired at the officer's vehicle multiple times, and gunfire hit the passenger's side window.

The Buick crashed into a parked car in the 2800 block of N. West St. about 12:45 p.m., and three people fled from the vehicle, Ivey said. Two were taken into custody after a brief foot chase; the third remained at large Monday, he said.

A multitude of Wilmington police officers, some with assault rifles, fanned out in the area as residents, including children, walked about.

A young boy was standing near the police crime tape at North West and West 29th streets when Wanda Lee came up and recognized him. She sternly told him to go home, then told him "I love you."

"The young children, they're being exposed to too much and they have no regard for life whatsoever. None whatsoever," she said.

"It's sad. People are losing their loved ones just for something so mediocre. They're not discussing what's going on. They're just pulling out guns."

Lee said with Sunday night's homicide and the shootings previous to that, the city feels like it's lost its way.

"This is just too much. Too much," she said. "We need to take control of the city."

Wilmington police also were called out to other shooting incidents during the 41-hour period that started on Saturday, including the arrest of 23-year-old Shavar Watson after he drew a gun in front of patrolling officers.

Wilmington Officers Danielle Watson and Jose Vasquez were on patrol about 8:25 p.m. Saturday when they heard several gunshots near the 200 block of N. Van Buren Street. The officers then saw Watson standing and pointing a handgun north on that block.

The officers chased Watson, who discarded a 9mm handgun as he fled. When he was captured, Ivey said, Watson was in possession of 54 bags of heroin. Watson was taken to Wilmington Hospital for treatment for a small puncture to his foot.

He's charged with with weapon offenses, and possession with intent to deliver heroin and resisting arrest.

About 7 hours later, a 26-year-old city man was shot in the abdomen.

The preliminary investigation suggests the man was standing in the area of West Fifth and North Madison streets when he heard gunfire and was shot shortly after 2:30 a.m. Sunday. The man, who was driven by private vehicle to Wilmington Hospital, was uncooperative with investigators, Ivey said.

He was listed stable condition Monday.

Lamotte X, the head of the Wilmington Peacekeepers, an anti-violence group, said it can get discouraging, but the community must come together if they want to reduce the violence.

"It's not going to be the Peacekeepers one day hitting the nail on the head and everybody is going to say 'Hurray. Everything stopped,' " he said. "We can't put it on the police officers, we can't put it on the mayor. It's going to take the community."

The group was in the 800 block of Pine Street over the weekend trying to bring awareness to the June 21 killing of Jason Turner, 32, and the June 30 homicide of Brian Rivers, 35. He said young children passing by inspired him and others in the group to continue fighting against the violence. The two were killed on or near the 800 block of Pine Street.

"When you see the little children, that is encouraging," he said. "Because we get a chance to talk to them and then maybe they'll come up and live a different way."

The group plans to march in the 600 block of Adams Street this Thursday to bring awareness to Brown's killing.

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Police Clear Bomb Threat At UD

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

A bomb scare Monday night caused the evacuation of a dorm complex at the University of Delaware.

The University of Delaware sent out an alert Monday night to the campus community after receiving a bomb threat shortly before 8 p.m.

"Report of suspicious activity at Dickinson Complex; Police are on scene; please avoid the area until an all clear alert is received," read an alert to the university community following a threat called in to university police shortly before 8 p.m.

As of 11:34 p.m., K-9 units from the University of Delaware, Delaware State and New Castle County police departments completed their search and found no explosives, said Andrea Boyle, a university spokeswoman.

The university evacuated three students from the complex, located off Hillside Road in Newark, she said. The low number was because of the summer break, she said.

For hours, officers blocked traffic at Hillside and Apple roads and also prevented pedestrians from entering the area off Elkton Road.

Customers and employees at the nearby Buffalo Wild Wings Grill & Bar on South Main Street said they were not aware of the situation.

Customer Douglas Foust said he was surprised to learn of the bomb threat, which was the first he ever heard of on campus.

UD students Neha Luthra and Rashmi Gupta said they were concerned when they got the alert about police activity that didn't say what was happening.

The women, who live in the apartments above Buffalo Wild Wings, said they didn't know anyone who was evacuated.

Avoiding the complex was no problem, since they had no plans to go there Monday night, they said.

Still, the UD alert left them curious.

"There have been a lot of armed robberies, so I just figured that was what it was," said Gupta, a junior from Cumberland, Rhode Island.

"I think it would have freaked me out more to know it was a bomb threat," said sophomore Luthra.

She said her father called her to check in after he got the alert.

Luthra and Gupta said they were relieved to learn that only a few people were in the building when UD police received the call.

They said they had no idea why anyone would make such a threat involving college dorms.

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Kent Sports Complex's Future Unknown

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

Cars speed north along Del. 1, passing 85 acres of farmland. The only thing to see is a sign planted nearby that's been there for almost two years, advertising the future home of the Kent County Regional Sports Complex.

The proposed \$24 million, 15-field sports venue for tournaments is shovel-ready since last year, but has recently faced major setbacks that have supporters concerned that the plan will get lost in the shuffle or its backers could walk away. A proposed \$25 million interchange supporters say is vital to the complex's success was delayed and \$3.2 million earmarked for the project was diverted by lawmakers to bail out the state's three ailing casinos.

Frederica residents and Kent County officials say now matters have fallen into their own hands and they need to make enough noise to remind people that this project, with a potential multi-million dollar economic impact, is vital to Delaware. A community meeting about the project is scheduled at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Frederica Volunteer Fire Hall.

"It's such a potential home run. It would change the landscape of not just Kent County, but the state," said Kent County Levy Court Commissioner Eric Buckson.

"People need to understand that while the wind might have been temporarily taken out of the sails, the boat is still moving," said Bob Murphy, a local resident who organized the meeting. "Sometimes things get worse before they get better."

Residents plan to organize a citizens group, the Friends of the Kent County Regional Sports Complex, to remind state lawmakers and officials about the importance of this project, he said.

"We have elections coming up and one thing legislators do pay attention to are voters," he said.

The public's involvement comes at a time when the project's stakeholders are conducting "a deliberate review" of their potential options, which include moving the plans to another location in Kent County or walking away entirely, said Bill Strickland, past president of the nonprofit Greater Kent Committee, which is partnering with the county on the project.

The groups already have identified two other potential sites, including one along Del. 1, Strickland said.

But he said he is optimistic the project would get done in its proposed location. A decision on the project's future should come by summer's end, he said.

Should it not work out, it would not be because of the casino money. Supporters say they understand why it was diverted and trust it will be returned next year, as promised and written in legislation passed last week.

Instead, the property would remain vacant because of a stalemate between the project's stakeholders and DelDOT over the proposed south Frederica overpass project, Strickland said. Officials this year delayed the \$25 million interchange project until fiscal year 2017.

The project will only get funding from the banks if the overpass is built, Strickland said.

The interchange, proposed in the 1990s, was high on DelDOT's priority list at one point, but not after DelDOT began using a data-driven decision-making and prioritizing process.

The complex project, supported by the interchange, would create 300 jobs and have an estimated economic impact of \$10 million to \$18 million. Murphy said he's not sure how that's not a driving priority.

"The governor spent \$13 million on bicycle paths, and while I have nothing against people who ride bicycle paths, it neither created revenue or jobs as far as I know," Murphy said.

The overpass isn't needed purely to ensure the safety of people using the facilities, said DelDOT secretary Shailen Bhatt. There are also concerns about spending \$25 million in public funds for a project that's seen its financing plan change multiple times, Bhatt said.

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Overcome Addictions With Plenty Of Programs In Delaware

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

Addiction to drugs and alcohol touches everyone, devastating individuals and families.

It impacts people who are rich and poor, old and young, from the hardened addict who steals to support his habit to the teenager who slips pills from her parents' medicine cabinet.

Addiction also has a serious impact on an individual's health.

People with substance abuse issues are at increased risk for illnesses and injuries. Drinking too much alcohol makes it more likely someone will fall or be hurt in an accident. Overindulging in alcohol also contributes to heart and liver disease, and increases the risk of some cancers, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention attributes 88,000 deaths a year to excessive drinking.

Drug abuse puts users at risk for HIV, hepatitis, heart problems, kidney disease and other illnesses, says the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Additionally, more people are dying from overdoses, according to the CDC, which reported 38,329 fatal overdoses in 2010, more than twice the 16,849 deaths reported in 1999.

There also has been an alarming spike in heroin use throughout the United States. A 2012 survey by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration revealed about 669,000 people older than 12 used heroin that year. In contrast, fewer than 400,000 people used heroin in 2007, the agency said. Heroin overdose deaths increased 45 percent between 2006 and 2010. In Delaware this year, there are 12 to 15 drug deaths from heroin each month.

Addiction is a complex illness that causes changes in the brain. That is why it is difficult for addicts to control their behavior and make good decisions – or to understand and accept they have a problem.

Addictions to drugs and alcohol start for a variety of reasons, related to a combination of genetic, environmental, social, cultural and behavioral factors. It's important, however, to recognize that once folks are addicted, they have a disease that needs treatment.

People become "hooked" on drugs due to their potential for overstimulation of the brain's pleasure centers. Drugs of addiction cause a flood of dopamine, a brain hormone (neurotransmitter), which create a pleasure sensation that may be as much as 10 times greater than everyday pleasures.

While addiction is a difficult problem to treat, many people are able to reclaim their lives with help from medical professionals and treatment programs.

Unfortunately, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, relapse rates after treatment can be as high as 60 percent. Getting those who have "slipped" back to treatment, with understanding and support, is important to do, as repeat treatments can be successful.

Under the Affordable Care Act, treatment for drug and alcohol addiction is listed among the 10 essential benefits that must be included in health plans. Coverage is included in the plans offered by the insurance exchanges, as well as Medicaid, the government health plan for people who are poor or have a disability.

There is tremendous value in rehabilitation and other treatments for addiction. Various estimates conclude that every dollar invested in treatment programs saves up to \$12 in health care costs and costs related to crime. Recovery also leads to more productive and fulfilling lives.

In Delaware, there are many resources to help people fight drug and alcohol addiction. If you or someone you love needs help with addiction, seek treatment. A good place to start is by checking out resources throughout the state through the Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health. To learn more, go to <http://dhss.delaware.gov/dsamh> and click on “substance abuse.”

Innovative approaches to treatment are also developing. One example, “Project Engage,” is a partnership between Christiana Care Health System and Brandywine Counseling & Community Services. It pairs patients with addictions with counselors who are themselves in recovery.

The counselors engage the patients at an important time – while they are still in the hospital – and refer them directly to treatment and other resources to help them continue their recovery when they return to the community.

Results from this program, which provides crucial connection and support outside the hospital, indicate that fewer patients return to the hospital or the emergency department.

This type of program helps us envision ways in which we can integrate medical care with community programs for those in need.

Dr. Michael Rosenthal is chair of the Department of Family & Community Medicine at Christiana Care Health System.

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1m9U0RH>

University Of Delaware Tuition, Fees To Increase

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

Students at the University of Delaware will have a heftier bill in the upcoming academic year.

In-state students at UD will pay \$12,342 in tuition and fees for the 2014-15 school year, an increase of \$230, officials announced Monday.

The 1.9 percent growth is the smallest percentage increase in more than 30 years.

For out-of-state students, tuition and fees will grow by \$760 to \$30,692, an increase of 2.54 percent. Mandatory fees include the Student Health Service Fee, Student Center Fee and Student Comprehensive Fee.

Including room and board, the total cost of attending UD will be \$23,900 for in-state students and \$42,250 for out-of-state students.

For graduate students, tuition will be \$1,625 per credit hour, an increase of 3 percent or \$47 a credit hour. Full-time graduate students will, however, see a 7 percent reduction in their mandatory fees.

Sustaining fees, which grad students pay while they are working on dissertations but not taking credit hours, will remain at \$621 for master’s students and \$938 for doctoral students.

Tuition at UD, like at most colleges across the country, has steadily climbed over the past few years.

In the 2004 school year, undergraduate tuition and fees for in-state students were \$6,954; in 2014, they will be \$12,342. That’s an increase of more than 75 percent.

UD is not alone in seeing such increases – nationwide, the average cost of a four-year public university, including tuition, fees, room and board soared from \$9,196 in 2001 to \$16,789 in 2011, according to the latest figures available from the National Center for Education Statistics. That’s a growth of 82 percent.

The state's other publicly funded university did not raise tuition and fees for the second year in a row. Delaware State University students will pay \$7,336 for in-state tuition and \$15,962 for those outside Delaware.

Still, a 1.9 percent increase is easily the smallest percentage increase in the past decade at UD, where students were sometimes hit with hikes of as much as 9.7 percent. The average increase over the last 10 years was 6.6 percent.

UD Provost Domenico Grasso said the most recent increase is necessary to cover growing costs of things like energy, salary increases and growth in health benefits. He said university officials are concerned about the cost of attending school, and have made affordability a key plank of their recently-launched strategic planning process.

"This is very high on our priority list. It is something we are certainly concerned about," he said. "But, at the same time, President Harker and the faculty and staff of this university have been committed to Delawareans, and I think people know this institution is a tremendous value."

Grasso said UD has pointed to the Commitment to Delawareans, UD's program aimed at in-state families that meets a student's full demonstrated financial need and caps student loans at 25 percent of the cost of a four-year-degree.

All told, UD students received more than \$74 million in scholarships and grants, more than double the amount five years ago, the university said.

School officials also pointed to reports from the Princeton Review and Kiplinger's Personal Finance that each named UD a "best value" institution based on its academics and cost.

"This is a top-ranked research university of the first caliber," Grasso said. "If you look at the net cost of the University of Delaware, we're competitive with the best."

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WILMINGTON JOURNAL NEWS EDITORIALS

Rethink City Worker Law In Wilmington

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

Revisiting the city of Wilmington's mandatory residency requirement for its workers was bound to keep cropping up since the mandatory employment rule took effect two decades ago.

It's no secret that it has left plenty of potential good hires grumbling over the years. Until the late 1990s, anyone hired by the city had to live in Wilmington. The law was later changed. New hires now must live in the city for five years.

And courts have backed this idea for decades now, judging them "not irrational." According to a Fraternal Order of Police case in Iowa, the benefits outweighed the criticism – "such things as having employees available for emergency calls, employees having a stake in the community, enhancing the tax base, improving community attitudes and cooperation, increasing loyalty to the community, and reducing absenteeism."

Mayor Dennis Williams essentially outlined the same benefits a few months ago to The News Journal Editorial Board. He cited city workers' loyalty to their hometown and commitment to the state's largest municipal government even during such tough economic times. He judged these employees more valuable than contracting their jobs to outside vendors, despite the purported cost savings. And he made a point that often the costs savings to such outside vendors don't stay stagnant.

So shouldn't such loyalty on the mayor's part to these employees be reciprocated with all workers' compliance to the residency requirement? However, not all city workers are held to such a requirement. There are several special cases, mostly in management, where workers have knowingly skirted the intent of the law. Some rent apartments or stay with relatives during the weekdays, while visiting and maintaining their primary residence outside the city.

Rather than revisiting the lack of compliance to the existence requirement, it's clear that living in the city is a hurdle for workers who might be good at what they do, but just don't want to follow the residency rule beyond the spirit of the law. They should not be subjected to public shame, though. City Councilman Michael Brown wants to "review the residencies of certain employees by calling them in for a hearing." That's a wasteful side show in the making, one that will only scare off potential good candidates for city jobs, who do meet the requirements.

To be fair to all workers – regardless of their position or address – the city has two choices. Drop the residency requirement entirely, which would draw a wider pool of potential hires. Former Mayor James Baker urges as much, because he found it interfered with his administration getting the best talent.

Or the city could do what the law originally intended – only hire workers who are committed to the city and who demonstrate it by complying with the residency rule of living within city limits for the five-year requirement.

Read or Share this story: <http://delonline.us/1IOQJ5r>

The Right Way To Help Students With Disabilities

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

Over the last several days, The News Journal has focused on the issue of standardized testing in Delaware public schools for students who have disabilities. This provides a useful opportunity to talk more broadly about how Delaware can better help its students with disabilities fulfill their potential.

Much of our time in public office has been dedicated to advocating for children with disabilities. We believe strongly that there is much more the state and its schools should do to help students with disabilities fulfill their potential.

We believe just as strongly, though, that it is not all about standardized tests. Tracking how our students are progressing is important, and the state must be diligent and disciplined about doing so. But, if the state does not provide a sufficient number of teachers and specialists to work with children with special needs, and if the state does not provide those professionals with the time and training to hone their skills, then standardized tests will do our students no good. Simply saying that we should have high expectations for our students – then giving them tests – will not help them achieve.

The reality is that educating students with disabilities is often more expensive than educating students who are lucky enough not to have those extra hurdles. Advocates for children with disabilities have had to be vigilant over the past several years as policymakers at state and local levels have sought to divert funds that should be spent educating students with special needs into other funding streams. If the state is serious about helping students with disabilities improve academically, it should make a concerted effort to ensure that resources are available to teachers and schools to provide the individualized, skilled attention that those students require.

When it comes to truly assessing students, Delaware is as rigorous as almost any state in the country. Eighty-eight percent of students with disabilities in Delaware take the DCAS – the same standard assessment that all students take.

By national standards, that is a very high percentage. The federal Department of Education criticized Delaware for having a low participation rate among students with disabilities on a separate assessment that the federal government conducts, the results of which are never revealed to Delaware teachers and are never used to help any individual student or evaluate any individual teacher or school. We are more concerned with student participation on assessments that actually measure how individual students are doing.

The remaining students with disabilities take an alternate test called the DCAS Alternate. For some students with disabilities, the DCAS Alternate is a good assessment that accurately charts their progress. But for some of our students with very significant cognitive disabilities, the DCAS Alternate tells us little or nothing about their progress.

Many of these students have very limited ability to communicate.

They take the test year after year, they are relentlessly prepared for the test by school personnel trying to follow the rules, and year after year, they are unable to produce any usable results on the test. Parents object to their children being tested, but still, they are tested. Legislation that we authored with State Rep. Longhurst this year was designed to deal with that small subgroup of students.

The bill that we authored was supported by 60 of the 62 members of the General Assembly. Senate Bill 229 simply says that for students with very severe cognitive disabilities, whose parents and schools don't believe a standardized test like the DCAS Alternate is appropriate, the state must provide a different assessment that is based on a portfolio of the student's work. It doesn't say that those students won't be assessed; it just says that they will be assessed in a way that provides some meaningful results. And it will only apply to students who qualify medically and whose parents and schools think it is the right thing to do.

This is not a novel idea. Massachusetts, which was rated by the federal government as having a good record of educating children with disabilities, uses a portfolio assessment for all of its students with disabilities who do not take the standard assessment.

People who try to simplify the issue of educating students with disabilities by saying it is just about expectations and assessments do those students no good. High expectations are important, and assessments are necessary.

But, providing adequate staffing in our schools, ensuring a high level of professional development for those who work with our kids, and exercising some common sense and discretion when it comes to assessments are even more important.

We believe that students with disabilities can excel – and, more than that – we believe that it is our moral obligation to help them do so. But doing so will require a real investment by the state, not just a test.

Matt Denn is Delaware's lieutenant governor. State Sen. Nicole Poore represents the 12th District.

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Time To Separate Health Care Coverage And Work?

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

I was thrilled to work for the federal government for six years. I believe passionately in the importance of public service, and I had both job security in a field I care deeply about and amazing co-workers. It never occurred to me that my employment placed me at any disadvantage – until I came face to face with special laws that restricted my reproductive choices. I suppose I shouldn't have been surprised, given increasing attempts across the United States to limit women's access to reproductive health care, in some cases with the backing of the Supreme Court.

I've been on the pill for most of my adult life, and I've always had irregular menstruation, routinely going three or four months without a period. That's why I didn't worry when I missed a period last fall. It wasn't until I began to suffer extreme nausea and fatigue that I began to think something was wrong. A home pregnancy test on a Thursday night led to phone calls Friday morning and then a quickly scheduled doctor's appointment for Monday.

Already struggling with the idea of a very unplanned and unwanted pregnancy, I was beyond shocked when my doctor informed me I was already eight weeks and three days pregnant. Abortion wasn't an automatic choice for me, but it was one I was strongly considering, and the method I preferred – drug-induced abortion – can't be performed after nine weeks. I had only days to consider my choices.

My doctor and nurse were supportive and informative, and I felt relieved to be in their care. But after leaving to do some of the required paperwork, the nurse quickly returned and sat down with me, holding my hand as she told me that, as a federal employee enrolled in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, my health-care coverage is barred by Congress from paying for abortion services except in cases of rape or incest or when the life of the woman is in danger. If I wanted to terminate my pregnancy, I was on my own.

So I ran out of my doctor's office to call Planned Parenthood before its appointment line shut down for the day, despite not yet knowing whether I was going to choose an abortion. My ability to make my own decision was rapidly diminishing. I wanted to preserve all my options.

By the time of my appointment, two days later, I knew what I wanted to do. After a long morning of exams and conversations, I had an abortion.

The procedure cost around \$480, due immediately. I am fortunate: I was able to pay for the abortion without affecting my ability to honor other financial commitments. But not that long ago, I couldn't have managed that, and I fear for the women who can neither afford the procedure nor wait for their next payday to take action. The clinic I went to was only minutes from both my house and my workplace, so I didn't have to find a way to pay for last-minute travel expenses.

I'm not ashamed that, as a 29-year-old woman, I'm sexually active and I have a healthy, functioning reproductive system. In fact, I'm quite happy to be able to state this. I was also fortunate to have an accommodating workplace, supportive family and friends and the financial resources to handle unexpected expenses.

Abortion opponents often argue that impediments such as the ones I faced lead women to consider more carefully the decisions they are making. But I am fully capable of making appropriate decisions, in consultation with my doctor, about my health, my body and my life.

In the end, I would have gotten an abortion with or without the restrictions placed upon me as a federal employee. It was the right decision for me. Restricting my access to health coverage didn't prevent my pregnancy, and it certainly didn't influence my choice. All it did was punish me, financially and otherwise, for making a responsible, physician-approved health-care decision.

I've now left federal government to pursue a master's degree, and I am proud of the years I spent working with the federal government to keep the American public safe and secure. However, the mission of preserving my health and well-being rests solely with me and my doctors, and it requires no interference from my government or its politicians.

Loren Clark-Moe is a former Department of Homeland Security analyst.

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Our Disappearing Role As A Global Leader

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

Coaches know that there is nothing more dangerous for a sports team than retreating into passivity out of fear of making a mistake. Whether it is because of a desire to sit on a lead or because of nerves following a setback, failing to advance aggressively is almost always a strategic error.

What is true in athletic competition is all too true in the life of nations. While imprudence is never good, excessive caution in the name of prudence or expediency can have grave consequences. A nation will never have more power or influence than it has ambition to shape the global system. A sense of fatalism can become a self-fulfilling prophecy as adversaries are emboldened and allies move either to appease rivals or to provide for their own security.

At a time of high tension in Europe, with Russian adventurism in Ukraine, pervasive conflict and instability in the Middle East and rising tensions within Asia as China makes its presence ever more strongly felt, the choices the United States makes will have far-reaching consequences. It is no exaggeration to say that there is more doubt about our willingness to stand behind our allies, resist aggression and support a stable global system than at any time in decades.

Effective engagement at flash points is essential, but crisis response is never as good as crisis prevention. Somewhat lost as the world focuses on global hot spots is the danger that the United States will abdicate the responsibility it has taken for 70 years – since World War II – for supporting a more integrated, increasingly rule-based and faster-growing global economy. It is the success of this project that explains why history played out so differently after the Second World War than after the first, and it is this project that won the Cold War by demonstrating that capitalism, rather than communism, was the best way forward for the world's people.

At a time when authoritarian mercantilism has emerged as the principal alternative to democratic capitalism, Congress is flirting with eliminating the Export-Import Bank, which at no cost to the government enables U.S. exporters to compete on a more level playing field with those of competitor nations, all of whom have similar vehicles. Only by maintaining a capacity to counter foreign subsidies can we hope to maintain a level global trading system and to avoid ceding ground to mercantilists. Eliminating the Export-Import Bank without extracting concessions from foreign governments would be the economic equivalent of unilateral disarmament.

No one with any sophistication supposes that the world has seen the last major financial crisis or that we can prosper in a world in crisis. Yet the United States, having pushed successfully for major increases in International Monetary Fund resources and for important reforms in its governance, now is the lone nation blocking these measures from going into effect as Congress is unwilling to pass the relevant authorizing legislation. The IMF enables us to do in the economic area what we are unable to do in the security area: place most of the burden for supporting a functioning global system on all global stakeholders.

The key strategic thrust proclaimed in U.S. foreign policy over the past five years has been the pivot, or rebalance, toward Asia. This is entirely appropriate given the shift in the global economic center of gravity. The reality, though, is that little has changed. The most important potential positive change in the next several years would be the achievement of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Yet the combined likelihood that a deal will be negotiated and that it will receive congressional approval seems much too low for comfort, and there is little evidence that the issue commands urgency beyond the relatively narrow international trade community. The prospects for a trade agreement with Europe seem even more remote.

Then there is the economic assistance dimension. When Latin America faced a profound debt crisis in the 1980s, when the Berlin Wall fell and the nations of central Europe and the former Soviet Union needed to transform their economies, when financial crisis struck Asia in 1997, when debt burdens stunted Africa's growth around the turn of the century, the United States, working with its allies and the international financial institutions, crafted strong if imperfect responses to restore growth and hope. No comparably large and generous effort is visible today with respect to the Middle East or Ukraine, even as China is emerging as a greater presence in much of Africa and Latin America than the United States.

A failure to engage effectively with global economic issues is a failure to mount a strong forward defense of U.S. interests. That we cannot do everything must not become a reason not to do anything. While elections may turn on domestic preoccupations, history's judgment will turn on what the United States does internationally. Passivity's moment has passed.

Lawrence Summers is a professor at and past president of Harvard University. He was treasury secretary from 1999 to 2001 and economic adviser to President Obama from 2009 through 2010.

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BIDEN IN THE NEWS

Biden: Don't Forget About Me

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 8, 2014

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

Haslam To Visit Southeast Tenn. Before NGA Meeting

[Associated Press](#), July 8, 2014

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Gov. Bill Haslam will be in southeast Tennessee early in the week then return to Nashville to host the National Governors Association summer meeting July 10-13.

On Tuesday, the Republican governor will visit Pikeville, Dunlap and Monteagle to make agriculture and transportation grant announcements.

He is scheduled to be back in Nashville by Thursday for the beginning of the NGA meeting being held at the Omni Hotel.

Vice President Joe **Biden** is also scheduled to attend the opening session of the meeting, which concludes on Sunday.

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John Walsh, CNN's New Anti-NRA Advocate

[Politico](#), July 8, 2014

John Walsh, the host of CNN's new primetime series "The Hunt," looks set to replace Piers Morgan as the cable network's in-house gun control advocate.

"We have a serious problem with guns in this country, and we refuse to address it," Walsh, the creator and host of "America's Most Wanted," told reporters on Monday. "The NRA solution to arm every grammar school 80-year-old teacher with a gun is absolutely ludicrous."

Walsh also said that Vice President Joe **Biden** had agreed with his claim that politicians are "scared s--less" of the NRA.

Walsh says he once told **Biden**, "'90 percent of Americans are for a responsible background check for a gun, and you know what this Congress has done? Not voted on it, not brought it to the floor, not introduced a bill... They're all scared shitless of the NRA, aren't they?'"

"John, every one of them," **Biden** replied, according to Walsh. "'Because the NRA will run a tea bagger against you. ... They'll put 5 million bucks against you.'"

Morgan, who is no longer with CNN, drew national attention in 2012 and 2013 for taking on the NRA and advocating for enhanced gun control legislation in the wake of the Sandy Hook elementary school shooting. Morgan made the issue a centerpiece of his program and hosted combative interviews with pro-gun advocates. His show was cancelled earlier this year due to low ratings.

In Monday's remarks, Walsh called Morgan "the only journalist who had the balls to tackle the gun problem straight on."

Walsh's "The Hunt," which debuts July 13, is not a political talk show – it focuses on chasing criminals, similar to "America's Most Wanted" – so debates over gun control will not figure prominently in his program. Still, Walsh's association with CNN will likely invite criticism from anti-gun control conservatives.

Walsh is a gun owner and a hunter. He has been reporting on crime since his six-year-old son was killed by a serial murderer in 1981.

See more of Walsh's remarks on gun control at The Wrap.

Biden: 'Tea Baggers' Preventing New Gun-Control Laws

[National Review](#), July 8, 2014

Vice president Joe **Biden** has disparaged gun-rights advocates as "tea baggers," CNN host John Walsh told reporters today.

Walsh, the former host of America's Most Wanted, recounted that he bonded with **Biden** over the need for more gun control and their distaste for the National Rifle Association..

"I said to Joe **Biden**, '90 percent of Americans are for a responsible background check for a gun, and you know what this Congress has done? Not voted on it, not brought it to the floor, not introduced a bill,'" he recalled to reporters during an event for his upcoming program, a crime show called The Hunt

. "I said, 'They're all scared shitless of the NRA, aren't they?'"

"John, every one of them," the vice president replied, according to Walsh

. "'Because the NRA will run a tea-bagger against you. . . . They'll put 5 million bucks against you.'"

Walsh made clear that he is a gun owner, but said the United States needs to do more to address gun violence and characterized himself as "the biggest advocate for background checks out of any gun owner in America."

Days Before Launching A New Fugitive-seeking Show On CNN, John Walsh Talks Gun Control

[New York Daily News](#), July 8, 2014

CNN's newest star has the gun lobby in his sights.

With Piers Morgan out of the picture, former "America's Most Wanted" host John Walsh is seizing the spotlight that's on him as he launches a show on the network, and turning it on the gun lobby

Walsh, whose CNN show, "The Hunt," debuts Sunday, said Monday that politicians are "scared s—less" of the NRA.

Walsh, a gun owner who says he loves to hunt, is a longtime advocate of background checks and other measures for gun sales.

He said he has "testified in every state capital multiple times" about guns.

"I've hunted all my life. I hunt quail on my ranch," he said. "And I am the biggest advocate for background checks out of any gun owner in America."

He added, "I am the guy that has seen both sides of the issue."

I've hunted all my life. I hunt quail on my ranch. And I am the biggest advocate for background checks out of any gun owner in America.

"I own guns. I'm the father of a murdered child. I've done nothing but track violence in America since my son was murdered. We have a serious problem with guns in this country. And we refuse to address it. And the NRA solution to arm every grammar-school 80-year-old teacher with a gun is absolutely ludicrous," Walsh said.

"I said to Joe **Biden**, 'Ninety percent of Americans are for a responsible background check for a gun, and you know what this Congress has done? Not voted on it, not brought it to the floor, not introduced a bill,' " Walsh said. "I said, 'They're all scared s—less of the NRA, aren't they?' "

Walsh said the vice president replied, "John, every one of them. Because the NRA will run a tea-bagger against you. . . . They'll put 5 million bucks against you."

CNN President Jeff Zucker noted that Walsh has spoken in favor of gun-control measures "many, many, many times on CNN."

Like "America's Most Wanted," "The Hunt" aims to help bring fugitives to justice and will have a heavy online component — including a tie-in with Facebook, which will send regional Amber Alerts to users.

No One Is Reading 'Hard Choices,' Either.

By Philip Bump

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

By now, the poor sales of Hillary Clinton's new book "Hard Choices" are well-documented. (Relatively poor, we will add, given the complex topography of bookselling.)

But another metric came to our attention this weekend which allows us to loosely evaluate a more interesting bit of data: how much the book is being read.

Jordan Ellenberg, a professor of mathematics at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, outlined what he calls the "Hawking Index" in the Wall Street Journal over the weekend. The index is a way to estimate how far into books people actually get. It's named for Stephen Hawking, author of the dense "A Brief History of Time" which, swear to God, I've actually read. (In part.)

It works like this: Every time people highlight something in a book on their Kindles, Amazon records that data. Ellenberg takes the top five highlights listed at the site for any given book and correlates them to a page number. Comparing the average page number of those five highlights to the length of the book gives you a sense of how many people made it how far in. (He adds: "Disclaimer: This is not remotely scientific and is for entertainment purposes only!" Which, fine.) The summer's most-read book? Donna Tartt's "The Goldfinch." Least-read? Thomas Piketty's "Capital in the Twenty-First Century," for which the notations only get about 2.4 percent of the way in.

So, naturally, we decided to apply this methodology to "Hard Choices" and other recent or comparable political books. And we have our own ranking, which we now present in order from estimated-least- to estimated-most-read.

1. "Hard Choices," by Hillary Clinton. Hawking Index: 2.04 percent.

Well, there you have it. The deepest into Hard Choices the popular highlights get is page 33, a quote about smart power. Three of the five most-popular highlights occur within the first 10 pages. We will note the same caveat that Ellenberg applies to Piketty. "Hard Choices" is fairly new, and fairly long. Still, though, one would think more people had made it past page 33.

The most popular quote? "Do all the good you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." Which, like several of the top quotes from the authors listed below, isn't actually a quote from Hillary Clinton. Instead, it's a mantra from her family's Methodist faith.

2. "Promises to Keep," by Joe **Biden**. Hawking Index: 2.78 percent.

Oh, Joe. Joe, Joe, Joe, Joe. Did you know that Joe **Biden** has a book? Joe **Biden** has a book. And people haven't read very far into it.

The most popular snippet is a bit of Bidenesque feel-goodery: "The art of living is simply getting up after you've been knocked down." There you go! But it is hard to find the most popular highlights in the book, because there simply aren't enough to warrant placement on the main Kindle page.

3. "A Fighting Chance," by Elizabeth Warren. Hawking Index: 14.38 percent.

Clinton supporters have compared "Hard Choices" to "A Fighting Chance" in the past, perhaps because they recognize it compares well on sales. And Warren's book is also the third least-deeply read – although readers are still making it a bit further in than either of the two Democrats most likely to run in 2016, apparently. The second-most highlighted quote in Warren's book is the one that goes deepest in, perhaps given the punchiness with which it begins: That the economic crisis "didn't have to happen."

4. "My Life," by Bill Clinton. Hawking Index: 15.28 percent.

The other Clinton's (extremely long) memoir apparently hasn't been read as much on the Kindle, as befits its age. While the most-highlighted passage in "Hard Choices" has been highlighted 223 times (as

of writing), the most-highlighted in “My Life” has only been selected 65 times. That passage? “I learned that what seems funny to the strong can be cruel and humiliating to the weak.”

(Note: **Biden**’s most highlighted passage has been highlighted nine times.)

5. “Living History,” by Hillary Clinton. Hawking Index: 17.88 percent.

Clinton’s first autobiography was, by all accounts, more of a crowd-pleaser. Unlike “Hard Choices,” it focused broadly on her life and time in the White House. And people appear to have read it more.

As with “Hard Choices,” the most popular quote isn’t from Clinton. It’s from Eleanor Roosevelt. “A woman is like a teabag. You never know how strong she is until she’s in hot water.” The third-most-popular highlight is a good one, deriving from Clinton’s Methodist faith: “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.”

Sound familiar?

6. “Dreams from My Father,” by Barack Obama. Hawking Index: 17.94 percent.

Doing slightly better than his 2008 nemesis, the most-highlighted quotes from Obama’s autobiography appear a little deeper into the work, on average. Most of the popular passages deal with race, but the most popular is about life’s challenges – something everyone eats up. He refers to a friend from college: “You might be locked into a world not of your own making, her eyes said, but you still have a claim on how it is shaped. You still have responsibilities.”

7. “Duty,” by Robert Gates. Hawking Index: 24.55 percent.

Shortly after “Hard Choices” was released, Clinton supporters told Politico to compare sales to Gates’s and Warren’s books. That first one was a mistake. Gates’s book has handily outsold “Hard Choices” (so far), and according to this (“not remotely scientific and for entertainment purposes only”) metric, is being out-read, too.

On the plus side for Clinton, none of the most-highlighted passages in “Duty” are from his excoriation of Clinton’s Iraq vote. But that was on page 376, and most people apparently only got as deep as page 300.

Dr. Biden Invites You To Follow Her Trip To Africa

[MSNBC](#), July 8, 2014

On Tuesday, Dr. Jill **Biden** arrived in Africa with plans to take in the sights and discuss female empowerment, education, democracy, and leadership along a three-city tour.

“Dr. **Biden**’s trip to Africa will highlight the importance of girls’ education and women’s participation in government, the economy, and civil society in accelerating economic development; improving health and educational outcomes; strengthening democratic governance; and fostering peace and security,” The White House website wrote.

To help stress the importance of her trip, Dr. **Biden** used her husband’s Vice President Joe **Biden**’s Instagram Account, @VP, as well as her own Twitter account, @DrBiden, to share her travels as she embarked on her summer vacation through Africa.

Hi everybody, it’s Jill **Biden**! I’m traveling across Africa this week to promote women’s empowerment. While I’m here, I’m borrowing Joe’s Instagram account to share some photos from the road. Stay tuned for more!

Preventing and responding to gender-based violence is a cornerstone of our commitment to advancing gender equality, and earlier today, Dr. **Biden** visited Panzi Hospital in the Congo to meet with survivors and hear their stories.

Ukrainian Employer Of Joe Biden's Son Hires A D.C. Lobbyist

[TIME](#), July 8, 2014

When Vice President Joe **Biden's** son, R. Hunter **Biden**, joined the board of a private Ukrainian oil and natural gas company this spring, he explained his new job as a legal one, disconnected from any effort to influence the Obama Administration. In a press release, the younger **Biden** boasted of his abilities on issues like improving corporate transparency.

But the company, Burisma Holdings, did not disclose at the time the scope of their plans for influencing the U.S. government. Recently released documents show that **Biden's** hiring coincided with the launch of a new effort to lobby members of Congress about the role of the company in Ukraine and the country's quest for energy independence.

David Leiter, a former Senate chief of staff to Secretary of State John Kerry, signed on to work as a lobbyist for Burisma on May 20, 2014, about a week after **Biden** announced he was joining the company, according to lobbying disclosures filed this month.

Leiter's involvement in the firm rounds out a power-packed team of politically-connected Americans that also includes a second new board member, Devon Archer, a Democratic bundler and former adviser to John Kerry's 2004 presidential campaign. Both Archer and Hunter **Biden** have worked as business partners with Kerry's son-in-law, Christopher Heinz, the founding partner of Rosemont Capital, a private-equity company.

Biden's office referred questions to a Burisma spokesman, who says **Biden** has not been involved in contacting members of Congress or the Obama Administration about the company. "His role, like all board members, is to provide strategic guidance to Burisma," said Lawrence Pacheco, who works in Washington D.C. for FTI Consulting, a communications firm that is also employed by Burisma.

But Burisma is contacting officials in Washington through Leiter's lobbying firm, ML Strategies. "ML Strategies is working with Burisma to educate U.S. officials about the company and its role in creating a stable and secure energy future for Ukraine, not any specific policy or legislation," Pacheco said. "Burisma supports energy independence, economic growth, national sovereignty and regional stability and will engage as needed to encourage efforts to further these goals."

Some Democratic senators, meanwhile, have been working to secure more U.S. funding, either directly or through entities like the Export-Import Bank, to improve Ukraine's domestic energy production potential. On June 27, Sen. Edward Markey of Massachusetts, wrote President Obama a letter with three other Democratic senators calling for increased aid. "We should leverage the full resources and expertise of the U.S. government to assist Ukraine in improving its energy efficiency, increasing its domestic production, and reforming its energy markets," wrote Markey, who has also proposed legislation with about \$40 million in additional aide for Ukrainian energy development.

Markey's letter was trumpeted by Burisma Holdings as a commendable move towards securing the future security of Ukraine. "Burisma Holdings today applauded the range of U.S. legislative support for development of Ukraine's broad and untapped resources and an increase in transparency and good governance," the company said in a statement on the day the letter was released.

An aide in Markey's office told [TIME](#) that Leiter, **Biden** and Archer were not part of discussions that led to the drafting of the letter or the legislation. Staff for the other senators who signed the letter, Ron Wyden of Oregon, Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire and Christopher Murphy of Connecticut, also said they did not have contact with Leiter, who could not be reached for comment.

Burisma Holdings is owned by a Cypriot holding firm, Brociti Investments Limited, which is controlled Nikolai Zlochevskyi, a former Ukrainian government minister, according to Cypriot records. It controls

government development licenses in three regions of Ukraine, and sells to industrial customers in the country, according to the company.

By taking a job with Burisma, the younger **Biden** has put himself in the middle of a struggle between the United States and Russia, which currently provides the bulk of the natural gas supplies to Ukraine. Both the White House and European nations have recently emphasized the strategic interest in making Ukraine less dependent on Russia.

Since Hunter **Biden** took the new job, his father, Vice President Joe **Biden**, has continued to serve as the Obama Administration's point person on Ukraine, traveling to the country as recently as June for the inauguration of President Petro Poroshenko and talking to Poroshenko by phone at least five times in the last month.

"I've spent a considerable amount of time in the last two months in Ukraine," the elder **Biden** said on June 19. "You see what the Russians are doing relative to using gas as a foreign policy tool to try to alter behavior. And so it's — around the world in varying degrees it's of significant consequence in terms of security, both economic and political security of a nation."

There is no legal barrier to prohibit Hunter **Biden** from working with a company that can be impacted by the policy decisions of his father, and the White House has maintained that the Vice President has not been influenced by his son's employment. "The Vice President does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company," said his spokeswoman Kendra Barkoff.

But Hunter **Biden**'s new job, along with the association with Burisma of other politically-connected businessmen, has raised concerns among some Ukraine watchers. "It's unhelpful when we are trying to get across to the Ukrainians to clean up corruption and special deals for special folks," said Ed Chow, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a U.S. think tank. "It maybe sends the wrong message that Westerners are just hypocritical."

Additional reporting by Alex Rogers and Zeke Miller/Washington

NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS

Can Israeli And Palestinian Leaders End The Revenge Attacks?

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

In the space of a few weeks, the brutal killings of four teenagers — one Palestinian and three Israelis — have inflamed tensions in Israel and the occupied territories, potentially igniting a conflict that could be even more vicious than the intifadas of 1987 and 2000. It is the responsibility of leaders on both sides to try and calm the volatile emotions that once again threaten both peoples.

The hostilities and recriminations began with the kidnapping and murder last month of three Israeli teenagers in the West Bank: Eyal Yifrach, 19; Naftali Fraenkel, 16; and Gilad Shaar, 16. Last week, the body of Muhammad Abu Khdeir, a Palestinian teenager, was found beaten and burned in a Jerusalem forest.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, after days of near silence, condemned that killing and promised that anyone found guilty would "face the full weight of the law." Israeli officials said the murder seemed to be a revenge attack for the killing of the three Israeli teenagers. In the sweep to find those teenagers, six Palestinians were killed in confrontations with Israeli forces and about 400 Palestinians were arrested, many of them affiliated with Hamas, which Israel accused of the murders. The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, also after a delay, denounced the abductions and vowed to help catch the kidnappers. Two suspects said to have ties to Hamas have since been arrested.

After the attack on the Israeli teenagers, some Israelis gave in to their worst prejudices. During funerals for the boys, hundreds of extreme right-wing protesters blocked roads in Jerusalem chanting "Death to Arabs." A Facebook page named "People of Israel Demand Revenge" gathered 35,000 "likes" before being taken down; a blogger gave prominence to a photo, also on Facebook, that featured a sign saying: "Hating Arabs is not racism, it's values." Even Mr. Netanyahu referenced an Israeli poem that reads: "Vengeance for the blood of a small child, Satan has not yet created." Israelis have long had to cope with Hamas's violence, including a recent increase in rocket attacks from Gaza. And Palestinians have been fully guilty of hateful speech against Jews.

In an atmosphere in which each side dehumanizes the other, it shouldn't be surprising that some people would act on extremist views. According to news reports, the suspects arrested in Mr. Khdeir's murder may be fans of a soccer club known for its anti-Arab rhetoric. Commentators in the Israeli news media have been frank in analyzing the killings, especially that of Mr. Khdeir, and their effect on society. Self-criticism is a strength of democracies. An editorial in Haaretz, the Israeli newspaper, said prosecuting Mr. Khdeir's murderers is not by itself sufficient. The country's leaders "must begin raising the next generation, at least, on humanist values, and foster a tolerant public discourse."

Despite the pain and anger, there have been gestures of compassion and understanding. Mr. Khdeir's grieving father made an appeal for "both sides to stop the bloodshed." On Sunday, the uncle of Naftali Fraenkel offered his condolences in a phone call with Mr. Khdeir's father. President Shimon Peres and Reuven Rivlin, who is succeeding Mr. Peres later this month, wrote in a joint essay in Yedioth Ahronoth, an Israeli newspaper, that there would be no cover-up in the investigation of Mr. Khdeir's murder and called for an end to incitement on both sides.

These deaths should cause the two communities to think again about the need for a permanent peace, but the loss of four young men may not be motivation enough.

Germany And The Minimum Wage

By The Editorial Board

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

The federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour is obviously too low. So is the Democrats' proposed increase to \$10.10 an hour by 2016. If the minimum wage had merely kept pace over time with inflation, average wages or productivity growth, it would be between \$11 an hour and \$18 an hour today.

It would also be higher if it kept pace with what other advanced economies are prepared to pay.

Last week, the lower house of Parliament in Germany voted to set a nationwide minimum wage of 8.50 euros an hour, about \$11.60, effective in 2015. The upper house is expected to approve the measure this week. With the passage of it, Germany, France, Britain and the Netherlands have or soon will have higher minimum wages than the current and proposed minimums in the United States, and only six countries in the European Union will be without a statutory minimum wage: Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Italy and Sweden.

The expected German minimum is noteworthy not only for its level. For nearly 70 years, most wages in Germany have been set by agreements that are collectively bargained between unions and employers. In recent decades, however, and particularly following reunification with the former East Germany, the share of workers who are effectively covered by union agreements has fallen. By enacting an adequate minimum wage, the German Parliament is responding constructively to that development, because a solid wage floor ensures that economic growth is broadly shared even by those who fall outside the collectively bargained framework.

In a global economy that has long relied on low wages to lift profits, a relatively high minimum wage in Germany would also reflect a growing consensus there that a high-wage, high-productivity economy is, in fact, an advantage in stabilizing the nation economically and socially.

In Germany, as in the United States, business lobbyists and some economists have warned that a robust minimum wage will lead to job losses and higher prices, but that has not been the historical experience. Rather, higher wages for low-wage workers are generally offset by lower labor turnover, while the boost in consumer spending from higher wages is good for the economy. Boosting consumer demand is especially important in Germany, whose economy is overly reliant on exports.

Germany's move offers the United States important lessons, if only lawmakers in Washington would learn.

The Long Wait To See A Doctor

By The Editorial Board

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

Americans are already experiencing long waits to get doctor's appointments, and experts say the delays are bound to get worse when millions of previously uninsured Americans get health coverage under the Affordable Care Act. That is the sobering news from a new survey of wait times conducted by Merritt Hawkins, a physician staffing firm, which polled some 1,400 medical offices in 15 large metropolitan areas across the country.

The survey, conducted over a five-month period last year, assessed how long it would take a new patient to get an appointment for nonemergency care in five different medical specialties: cardiology, dermatology, obstetrics and gynecology, orthopedic surgery and family practice. Boston had the longest average wait times — 45 days across all specialties, well above the national average of 19 days. The findings in this survey showed little change across all specialties from two previous surveys in 2009 and 2004. Long waits have apparently become the norm in many metropolitan areas.

The findings are consistent with an international survey of 11 industrialized countries last year by the Commonwealth Fund, a foundation that analyzes health care issues. The findings punctured the illusion that our high-priced health care system, relying on private doctors, provides faster service than the national health systems in other advanced countries. When Americans got sick, 26 percent had to wait six days or longer for an appointment, better only than Canada and Norway but much worse than other countries with national health systems like Britain and the Netherlands. Patients in Britain and Switzerland also reported shorter waits to see a specialist than patients in the United States.

Experts suggest several ways to reduce wait times, like increasing primary care doctors, allowing nurses and physicians' assistants to provide more care and opening more primary care clinics. The critical ingredient is to make reduction of wait times a political issue, as happened in Britain and is now happening in American veterans' hospitals in the wake of a scandal involving falsified records to hide long wait times.

New York's Mapmaking Scandal

By The Editorial Board

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

In his 2010 campaign for governor, Andrew Cuomo promised to end "partisan gerrymandering," in which lawmakers draw their own districts. He failed to do that, and instead, as governor, signed onto a set of legislative maps in 2012 that were carefully designed to keep legislators safely in their jobs.

Then, he and lawmakers came up with a counterfeit reform, a constitutional amendment on November's ballot that would only make matters worse and make it harder to clean up the whole inbred process for years to come.

The flawed maps created in 2012 will be in use until 2022. The constitutional amendment would put a new, virtually permanent system in place for the next round of mapmaking that starts after the 2020 census. The amendment sets up a bipartisan commission, a majority of whose members are appointed by legislative leaders. The possibilities for partisan gridlock are endless, and it will take another constitutional amendment to make any corrections of what is destined to be a flawed system.

In a recent report, Common Cause/NY, New York Public Interest Research Group and Effective NY warned that the amendment would only make it easier for New York legislators to continue to draw district maps that help no one but the incumbents.

Amendment supporters say the maps would be drawn by a bipartisan, independent commission, with co-executive directors, one Democrat and one Republican. That sounds reasonable, except that it is much the same as the state's Board of Elections, one of the least effective public operations in New York. That board is also bipartisan, which often means stalemate, not compromise.

Under this new system, if the Legislature does not like the commission's maps, they can vote them down and send them back for amendments. If the maps return and the lawmakers still don't approve, they can vote them down and then draw their own, much as they do now. This amendment is not a reform. It is another way to maintain the status quo, and does not deserve voters' support.

The Messy World Of Smart Guns

By Joe Nocera

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

The Andy Raymond rant is a thing to behold.

Raymond, the co-owner of Engage Armament in Montgomery County, Md., is one of the two gun dealers who, a few months ago, tried to sell the Armatix iP1 — a.k.a., the first commercially available “smart gun” — to his customers. He thought that not only did he have every right to sell a smart gun, but that he was doing the gun world a favor by offering a gun that had the potential to expand the universe of gun owners. Instead, both Engage Armament and Oak Tree, a California-based gun dealer, backed away after receiving a torrent of hate mail and death threats from gun-rights absolutists.

In the rant, which he posted on his Facebook page, Raymond is sitting in front of an array of semiautomatic weapons. He has a bottle of what appears to be whiskey next to him. He acknowledges that he's been drinking. From time to time, he takes a puff on a cigarette. (I don't have a Facebook page, so I relied on excerpts from the rant that were shown on Chris Hayes's MSNBC show, “All In.”)

“How can the N.R.A. want to prohibit a gun when we're supposed to be pro-gun?” he says. “How hypocritical is that?” Then, after an angry, expletive-filled shout-out to those who sent him death threats, he changes direction. He denies ever selling an Armatix pistol. And then he says, “I thought my principles were correct, but maybe I was wrong.” And he apologizes. And with one last gulp of whiskey, he is done.

Which is to say, he epitomizes the state of smart guns right now. The whole thing is a bit of a mess.

I last looked into smart gun technology about a year and a half ago, and what I saw then was a lot of ferment — and genuine excitement about the potential of smart-gun technologies. I found people who had been working on smart guns for years, like Don Sebastian of the New Jersey Institute of Technology, and newcomers to the field like Ron Conway, the Silicon Valley investor who was galvanized by the massacre in Newtown, Conn., and began backing a smart-gun effort. It was also the first time I heard

about a New Jersey law that said that if smart guns became commercially available anywhere in the country, New Jersey gun dealers would be required, within three years, to sell only guns that had smart-gun technology.

The idea, said Loretta Weinberg, the New Jersey Senate majority leader who sponsored the legislation 12 years ago, was partly to spur gun innovation. Instead, it held back innovation, as traditional gun manufacturers saw no incentive in investing in smart-gun technology. It was also vehemently opposed by the National Rifle Association, which viewed it, not incorrectly, as a gun control effort. Gun advocates mocked smart-gun technologies, claiming the “bad guys” with normal guns would have the advantage over the “good guys” with smart guns.

The New Jersey law was at the heart of the objections to Oak Tree and Engage Armament selling the Armatix smart gun. The fear of gun advocates is that if someone did start selling a commercialized smart gun, the three-year clock would start ticking in New Jersey.

When I spoke to smart-gun advocates this time around, I found a great deal of mixed emotions about the New Jersey law. Jonathan Mossberg, who runs something called the iGun Technology Corporation — and is an avowed gun advocate — told me that the New Jersey mandate “needs to be repealed.”

Stephen Teret, the co-director of the Center for Law and the Public’s Health at Johns Hopkins University — and an expert on smart-gun technology — said that he thought the law would soon be irrelevant. “There will be a personalized gun sold very soon,” he told me. “It will be the Armatix gun that people are talking about.” He wouldn’t tell me who the seller would be, however.

Senator Weinberg acknowledged that her bill may have become an impediment rather than a spur to gun safety.

There is still a lot going on in smart-gun technology. Sebastian continues to plug away at a technology that would recognize an owner’s grip, and only allow that person to use the gun. Ron Conway’s group, the Smart Tech Foundation, just awarded a total of \$1 million to 15 grantees that are working on promising smart-gun technologies.

As for Weinberg, she told me that she had approached the N.R.A. as recently as two weeks ago and said she would try to get her law repealed if the N.R.A. would promise not to block smart-gun technology from reaching the marketplace. “I said we might have some common ground here.” The N.R.A. did not reply.

What a surprise.

Frank Bruni is off today.

The Creative Climate

By David Brooks

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

In the current issue of *The Atlantic*, Joshua Wolf Shenk has a fascinating description of how Paul McCartney and John Lennon created music together. McCartney was meticulous while Lennon was chaotic. McCartney emerged out of a sunny pop tradition. Lennon emerged out of an angst-ridden rebel tradition.

Lennon wrote the song “Help” while in the throes of depression. The song originally had a slow, moaning sound. McCartney suggested a lighthearted counter melody that, as Shenk writes, fundamentally changed and improved the nature of the piece.

Lennon and McCartney came from different traditions, but they had similar tastes. They brought different tendencies to the creative process but usually agreed when the mixture was right. This created the special tension in their relationship. They had a tendency to rip at each other, but each knew ultimately that he needed the other. Even just before his death, Lennon was apparently thinking of teaming up with McCartney once again.

Shenk uses the story to illustrate the myth of the lone genius, to show that many acts of genius are the products of teams or pairs, engaged in collaboration and “co-opetition.” And we have all known fertile opposites who completed each other — when they weren’t trying to destroy each other.

But the Lennon-McCartney story also illustrates the key feature of creativity; it is the joining of the unlike to create harmony. Creativity rarely flows out of an act of complete originality. It is rarely a virgin birth. It is usually the clash of two value systems or traditions, which, in collision, create a transcendent third thing.

Shakespeare combined the Greek honor code (thou shalt avenge the murder of thy father) with the Christian mercy code (thou shalt not kill) to create the torn figure of Hamlet. Picasso combined the traditions of European art with the traditions of African masks. Saul Bellow combined the strictness of the Jewish conscience with the free-floating go-getter-ness of the American drive for success.

Sometimes creativity happens in pairs, duos like Lennon and McCartney who bring clashing worldviews but similar tastes. But sometimes it happens in one person, in someone who contains contradictions and who works furiously to resolve the tensions within.

When you see creative people like that, you see that they don’t flee from the contradictions; they embrace dialectics and dualism. They cultivate what Roger Martin called the opposable mind — the ability to hold two opposing ideas at the same time.

If they are religious, they seek to live among the secular. If they are intellectual, they go off into the hurly-burly of business and politics. Creative people often want to be strangers in a strange land. They want to live in dissimilar environments to maximize the creative tensions between different parts of themselves.

Today we live in a distinct sort of creative environment. People don’t so much live in the contradiction between competing worldviews. We live in a period of disillusion and distrust of institutions.

This has created two reactions. Some monads withdraw back into the purity of their own subcultures. But others push themselves into the rotting institutions they want to reinvent. If you are looking for people who are going to be creative in the current climate, I’d look for people who are disillusioned with politics even as they go into it; who are disenchanted with contemporary worship, even as they join the church; who are disgusted by finance even as they work in finance. These people believe in the goals of their systems but detest how they function. They contain the anxious contradictions between disillusionment and hope.

This creative process is furthest along, I’d say, in the world of B corporations. There are many people today who are disillusioned both with the world of traditional charity and traditional capitalism. Many charities have been warmheartedly but wastefully throwing money at problems, without good management or market discipline. Capitalists have been obsessed with the short-term maximization of shareholder return without much concern for long-term prosperity or other stakeholders.

B corporations are a way to transcend the contradictions between the ineffective parts of the social sector and myopic capitalism. Kyle Westaway, a lawyer in this field and the author of the forthcoming “Profit & Purpose,” notes that benefit corporation legal structures have been established in 22 states over the last four years. The 300 or so companies that have registered in this way, like Patagonia or Method,

can't be sued if they fail to maximize profits in order to focus on other concerns. They are seeking to reinvent both capitalism and do-gooder-ism, and living in the contradiction between these traditions.

This suggests a final truth about creativity: that, in every dialectic, there is a search for creative synthesis. Or, as Albert Einstein put it, "You can never solve a problem on the level on which it was created."

Should Germans Read 'Mein Kampf'?

By Peter Ross Range

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

WASHINGTON — GERMANY is once again passing through the wringer of its past. At issue this time are not the deeds but the words of Adolf Hitler and the planned republication of his infamous manifesto-as-autobiography, "Mein Kampf," a book that has been officially suppressed in the country since the end of World War II.

But while the prospect of the Führer's words circulating freely on the German market may shock some, it shouldn't. The inoculation of a younger generation against the Nazi bacillus is better served by open confrontation with Hitler's words than by keeping his reviled tract in the shadows of illegality.

Hitler wrote the first draft of his deeply anti-Semitic, race-based ideological screed in 1924, while in prison for leading a failed coup; by the time of his death 21 years later, it had sold 10 million copies.

Since then, although "Mein Kampf" has maintained a shadow presence — on the back shelves of used bookstores and libraries and, more recently, online — its copyright holder, the state of Bavaria, has refused to allow its republication, creating an aura of taboo around the book.

All that is about to change. Bavaria's copyright expires at the end of 2015; after that, anyone can publish the book: a quality publisher, a mass-market pulp house, even a neo-Nazi group.

The release of "Mein Kampf" into Germany's cultural bloodstream is sure to be a sensational moment. In a nation that still avidly buys books — and loves to argue in public — the book will again ignite painful intergenerational debates on talk shows and in opinion pages about how parents and grandparents let themselves be so blindly misled.

Like the 1996 uproar caused by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's controversial book "Hitler's Willing Executioners," which accused ordinary Germans of being capable of mass-murdering Jews, this publishing event will shape contemporary politics and feed Germany's deep-rooted postwar pacifism. Germany's involvement — or noninvolvement — in international crises like Kosovo, Afghanistan, Libya and, most recently, Mali is profoundly influenced by such impassioned debates. "Germany is a haunted land, still living in Hitler's shadow," the German Jewish writer Henry M. Broder told me recently.

Racing to be first to publish the book is the Institute for Contemporary History, a noted center in Munich for the study of Nazism, which has a five-scholar team at work on an annotated "critical edition" of Hitler's 700-page ramble.

The institute's version will double the size of the book and create an academic baseline for all future study of the ur-text of Hitlerism, said the team's leader, Christian Hartmann. The book's extensive notations, he added, will "encircle" Hitler's story line with a "collage" of commentary to demystify and decode it, an alternative subtext and historical context that will strip it of its allegedly hypnotizing power.

Unsurprisingly, the "Mein Kampf" project has stirred uproar in some Jewish circles. Charlotte Knobloch, president of the Israelite Cultural Community of Munich and Upper Bavaria, said "there is still a danger" of catalyzing far-right sentiments. Uri Chanoch, an 86-year-old Israeli Holocaust survivor, added

that Germans “somewhere in their hearts still have a hatred for us” and has campaigned aggressively against the book’s republication, calling for international pressure on Bavaria to block it.

After such sentiments were expressed to Bavaria’s premier, Horst Seehofer, during a trip to Israel, he decided to halt his state’s planned participation in the “Mein Kampf” project and cancel the \$684,000 it had given in research funding.

That decision, in turn, triggered an outcry among academics and in the Bavarian Legislature, which had earlier approved the book. Even some Jewish leaders were taken aback. “I was astonished by this decision,” said Salomon Korn, the leader of Frankfurt’s 7,000-strong Jewish community. “We should have already had a critical edition of ‘Mein Kampf.’”

In an awkward dance, Mr. Seehofer’s government was forced to reconsider its reconsideration. It agreed to leave the money in place while withholding its governmental seal of approval. This reverse fig leaf may or may not mollify opponents, especially in Israel, who thought they had stopped the book.

But with the funding in hand, the institute is proceeding. Its edition will serve a political purpose, countering the negative impact on Germany’s image and political culture of raw reprints of the book that might flood the market. Whether it impedes such publications or not, the academic edition can always be held up as authoritative, especially in schools and universities. This is a good thing. Sixty-nine years after World War II, it no longer makes sense for Germans not to have unfettered access to the same book that can be easily bought in other countries. Keeping Hitler’s dreary and often incomprehensible diatribe under wraps, out of misplaced fear of a Nazi revival, is a vast overreaction: Germany’s only pseudo-Nazi party received 1 percent in the recent European Parliament vote; in France, the far right received nearly 25 percent.

In 1959, West Germany’s first postwar president, Theodor Heuss, recommended republishing “Mein Kampf” as a cautionary document for the German people. Not yet ready for such a confrontation, the political establishment ignored him. Today, 55 years and 10 presidents later, Heuss’s good idea is finally coming to fruition.

Peter Ross Range is a journalist who writes frequently on Germany.

The Promise Of Aleppo’s Radicals

By Matthieu Aikins

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

ALEPPO, Syria — As a rebel fighter shined his flashlight onto a clump of blankets and clothes scattered around the concrete basement floor, I wondered if this was where my friend Sultan had spent the last moments of his life. A goofy, gap-toothed 22-year-old who worked for a local fixer, he was part of a group of Syrian activists, journalists and rebel fighters who had been arrested by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria and taken to this makeshift prison in the basement of a former hospital.

The building had served as the Sunni extremist group’s headquarters in Aleppo, Syria’s largest city, but now the pitch-dark corridors were deserted. By the stairs, we found a long cable of copper wires taped together. One of the rebels picked it up and mimicked a whipping gesture — former prisoners who were held here reported being tortured. Farther down was a room that served as a cafeteria, with signs in English attesting to the presence of foreign jihadists among ISIS’s ranks. “Fear Allah! Remember that he is watching you so please do not waste food and clean up after you have eaten,” read one. Another advised “brothers who want to receive their families from outside Syria” to coordinate with the “Mujahedeen Services Office.”

ISIS began as the Iraqi affiliate of Al Qaeda but split off at the beginning of this year over its ambitions to expand into Syria and establish itself as a new caliphate. After its stunning takeover of much of western Iraq last month, it now calls itself simply the Islamic State.

But ISIS is gone from Aleppo, having been forced out by local Syrian rebels in January. This military reversal, one of the group's few, highlights the dilemma facing the West: Its best potential allies against ISIS are other Sunni Islamists.

The fighters who accompanied me during a weeklong visit to Aleppo in mid-June were members of the Islamic Front, a rebel coalition dominant in the city and much of northern Syria. The Islamic Front is a fierce and effective opponent of ISIS but also, in its Islamist platform and indirect connections with Al Qaeda, a far cry from the "appropriately vetted elements of the moderate Syrian armed opposition" for whom the Obama administration recently requested \$500 million in military training and funding.

ISIS's abandoned headquarters in Aleppo are just across from another large building that serves as the base for Tawhid Brigade, one of the largest of the seven rebel groups that joined together in November to form the Islamic Front. ISIS had been present in opposition-held Aleppo since the beginning of 2013, but by the end of the year tensions with rebel groups had reached a crisis. Considering itself a sovereign state, ISIS was refusing to accept mediation for any dispute, and it had taken to kidnapping those it considered to be critics or enemies, including people who worked with foreign journalists, like Sultan.

On Jan. 7, ISIS carried out a surprise attack on Tawhid Brigade's headquarters. It was held off. The next day, Tawhid Brigade forces from around the city counterattacked and surrounded the hospital. "We cut them off and prevented them from bringing any support," said the commander who led the offensive and who goes by the nom de guerre of Abu Assad.

Around 3 a.m., the ISIS fighters trapped inside the hospital asked to be allowed to leave the city, and Abu Assad, not wanting further bloodshed, agreed. When he and his men searched the hospital at first light, they discovered that ISIS had massacred its captives. "We found a group of bodies every ten meters," said Abu Assad. Most of them had been shot in the head while bound. "They were real revolutionaries, journalists, doctors. If we had known what ISIS had done, we wouldn't have let them escape alive."

Not long after the battle, half a globe away, I watched footage of its aftermath that rebels had recorded and uploaded to YouTube, and recognized Sultan among the corpses.

The battle against ISIS in Aleppo is part of a larger conflict that started at the beginning of this year, as rebel groups across the northern provinces of Idlib and Aleppo — including the powerful Syrian Al Qaeda affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra — fought a pitched battle to expel ISIS. The face-off left the Islamic Front pre-eminent. It controls the key border crossing with Turkey at Azaz and, with its estimated 50,000 to 60,000 fighters, is thought to be the largest and most militarily potent rebel alliance in Syria.

The Islamic Front is entirely Syrian in leadership, and its central goal is overthrowing President Bashar al-Assad — good credentials in the eyes of Western governments hoping to roll back ISIS without strengthening the Syrian regime. Many of the group's most powerful members — including Tawhid Brigade and one of the largest factions fighting in the Damascus suburbs, Jaish al-Islam — are not particularly ideological, and were once allied with the Western-backed Free Syrian Army.

But they are far from secular. The Islamic Front draws on support from pre-war Islamist resistance networks, including wealthy, religious donors across the Muslim world and the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, an exiled Islamist group. More problematic from a Western perspective, one of the

coalition's key members, Ahrar al-Sham, has links to Al Qaeda's core leadership, and the Islamic Front as a whole closely coordinates operations with Jabhat al-Nusra.

The commanders I spoke to in Aleppo said the Islamic Front has not, as a result, directly received any military aid from Washington or other Western governments. But can the West meaningfully influence the military situation in Syria while continuing to eschew Islamist groups, now that they are dominant among the rebels? "The Free Syrian Army has been weak and divided," said Richard Barrett, a former British intelligence official. "And so the Islamic Front is really the only game in town if you want to attack ISIS in Syria."

Rebel commanders in Aleppo were dismissive of the supposedly "secular" Free Syrian Army groups linked to the government in exile, which the West has been backing. "They're like NGOs. They know how to say what the donor wants to hear," said Abu Bilal, Tawhid Brigade's chief of operations. "In reality, they're diesel smugglers who control a little of the border. They don't do any serious fighting."

If Washington and its partners want to push back against both Assad and ISIS at once, they will have to be less squeamish about picking allies in Syria. Otherwise, they may not find any left at all.

Matthieu Aikins is a magazine writer living in Kabul.

Thai Rice And Nigerian Politics

By Adewale Maja-Pearce

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

LAGOS, Nigeria — In Nigeria, as elsewhere, the will of the people is fickle. The recent gubernatorial race in Ekiti State is a case in point.

On one side was the incumbent, Kayode Fayemi, who was seeking a second, four-year term. Even the opposition agreed that he was a fine gentleman, an intellectual with a doctorate in social science from King's College London, and solid credentials as a pro-democracy activist during the dark years of military rule. Moreover, he had already proved to be an able, conscientious administrator. He built roads, saw that pensioners received their due, and had begun cleaning up corruption and incompetence in the public school system.

His rival was Ayo Fayose, a former governor suspected by human rights advocates of having political opponents killed, who is facing court hearings this month on corruption charges stemming from his first term, which ended abruptly a year early in 2006 when he was impeached and forced to flee the country. Although Mr. Fayose had fallen from favor with the leaders of his People's Democratic Party, including President Olusegun Obasanjo, he was able to return to the fold in 2007 after Mr. Obasanjo left office.

Mr. Fayose is a proven vote-getter, so it was no surprise that the People's Democratic Party chose him to challenge Mr. Fayemi in the election on June 21. After all, the old party bosses — known as "godfathers" in Nigeria — are willing to embrace certain political truths many of us are loath to acknowledge. Responsible leadership is all very well, but it doesn't always win out over those who know how to play the politics of hunger, especially in a poor place like Ekiti. Thus, the godfathers were willing to bet that their sometime fugitive would beat the squeaky-clean Ph.D. hands down.

Still, they were taking no chances, for they had been burned before in Ekiti State. After Mr. Fayose's 2006 impeachment, the P.D.P. had pulled out all the stops to ensure that its candidate, Segun Oni, would defeat the newcomer, Mr. Fayemi, in the 2007 election. So they sent in senators and other party heavyweights — including the usual thugs paid to terrorize voters — and Mr. Oni won. But Mr. Fayemi

challenged the validity of the election in the courts, won a three-year legal battle, and finally took up residence in the governor's house in 2010.

With national elections approaching in 2015, several opposition parties have allied to form the All Progressives Congress in the hope of defeating President Goodluck Jonathan and the governing People's Democratic Party next February. The election in Ekiti on June 21 was to be the first test of its popularity in a state it already controlled.

Once again, the P.D.P. left nothing to chance. Both the national ministers of defense and police affairs flooded the state with truckloads of soldiers and national police who came to "aid" local security forces. Many people testified to witnessing outright harassment and intimidation of Mr. Fayemi's supporters.

Nevertheless, election observers — including representatives from the United States and the European Union — declared that the voting had been reasonably free and fair. Mr. Fayose won by a wide margin — 200,000 votes to Mr. Fayemi's 120,000 — in a high turnout of eligible voters. When the results were announced, many observers in Ado-Ekiti, the state capital, noted the jubilation in the streets. Even Mr. Fayemi, in keeping with his graceful disposition, was quick to congratulate his "brother," who is set to take his place on Oct. 15.

So where, exactly, did Kayode Fayemi go wrong?

The first problem was Mr. Fayemi himself. He may be an exemplary governor, but he is no man of the people. Like most states in Nigeria, Ekiti is predominantly rural, populated by farmers far removed from Government House discussions about the importance of education, infrastructure and economic development in the age of globalization. As governor, Mr. Fayemi never hesitated to grant newspaper interviews, had a massive following on Twitter and was widely liked on Facebook. But, in the words of Jibrin Ibrahim of the Center for Democracy and Development, "most of the farmers and teachers in Ekiti State are not on Twitter or Facebook and do not read newspapers."

Mr. Fayose, by contrast, has the common touch. He knows how to milk media coverage, whether it be by escorting elderly people to the bank to open an account, or by stopping his convoy at a roadside bar to buy drinks all around. "We love his simplicity, we love his style," one constituent wrote in *The Nigerian Tribune*. "He dined with us, we saw him on our streets in his shirts and shorts and could ask him for a handshake which he gladly obliged."

It is difficult to convince uneducated, undernourished farmers that big projects like constructing roads will benefit them in the long term by making it easier to get their produce to the market. While Mr. Fayemi tried to do so, Mr. Fayose hit the campaign trail armed with huge quantities of Thai rice (several years past the recommended consumption date, according to news reports), handing bags out to hungry voters.

The tactic, hugely successful, points to the challenge that faces all "developing" countries: how to negotiate a compromise between the immediate demands of an impoverished, mostly illiterate populace, and the urgent need for capital projects that will lift them out of poverty. Hungry people will always be susceptible to immediate inducements of the kind offered by politicians like Mr. Fayose.

This after all is politics, and the first duty of a politician is to win. If the able Mr. Fayemi had had the common sense to make a show of channeling more state resources to the local level, he would not have enabled the triumph of a so-called friend of the people, who will continue to pursue his own interests. Sadly, Ekiti State is now destined for another four years of underdevelopment under the guidance of the people's choice.

Adewale Maja-Pearce is a writer and critic, and the author of “Remembering Ken Saro-Wiwa, and Other Essays.”

Taking Sides In Libya

By Frederic Wehrey

[New York Times](#), July 8, 2014

MARJ, Libya — Two days before she was murdered in Benghazi on June 25, the Libyan human rights activist Salwa Bugaighis walked into a Tripoli hotel guarded by Islamist militias wearing three-inch heels and no veil.

She had little patience for such gunmen and their political backers, whom she accused of terrorizing Libya and derailing the country’s struggling democracy: “We have five courthouses in Benghazi and they are all shut down,” she told me. “If these Islamists say they are committed to defending the state, they should defend the state’s institutions.”

Ms. Bugaighis was at the vanguard of the 2011 revolution and had recently been appointed the deputy head of a national dialogue commission. She had criticized the United States for inflating the stature of Islamist figures like the ex-jihadist Abdelhakim Belhaj and the grand mufti, whose religious edicts had stymied her fight for women’s rights.

Her murder shocked a country facing two divergent paths toward security: repression or reconciliation.

When she was killed, I was in eastern Libya meeting with Gen. Khalifa Hifter, who, for the past month, has been leading a military campaign against Islamist militias in Benghazi and other eastern cities.

General Hifter, a septuagenarian mustachioed man in a crisply starched uniform with golden epaulets, could not be a stronger counterpoint to Ms. Bugaighis.

He received me at a sprawling military base littered with rusting T-72 tanks, after I was ushered through an extraordinary security gauntlet that involved an invasive pat-down by men with assault rifles. I was not allowed to take my own pen and paper into the meeting.

The general’s military campaign is called “Operation Dignity” and his self-styled “Libyan National Army” taps support from tribes, civil society, defected army units and militias to the west of Tripoli, who were fed up with the spate of daily assassinations in Benghazi and other eastern cities. It burst onto the scene with relentless artillery strikes and aerial bombardment of Islamist militia bases in and around Benghazi and other cities; the Islamists have responded with rocket attacks of their own.

General Hifter is unsanctioned by the Libyan government and his Libyan National Army is, quite frankly, just another militia outside the official military chain of command. Most alarmingly, his operation was aimed at the country’s elected legislature, whose Islamist members he accuses of backing the militias and blocking the rebuilding of the country’s army and police.

All of this has left Libya deeply divided. For some — as for millions of Egyptians who opened their arms to a familiar form of autocracy — General Hifter is a savior delivering long-sought stability. Others recoil at the shades of Muammar el-Qaddafi, seeing a strongman subverting democracy in the name of fighting a loosely defined threat of “terrorism.”

In person, and like Egypt’s new president, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, General Hifter is utterly convinced of his popular mandate. His language is grandiose and messianic. “Libya will be the graveyard of global terrorism,” he told me. He dismissed recent mediation efforts in Benghazi by tribal elders as producing nothing but “emotional language.” There could be no negotiations, he insisted, citing an ambush of his

forces and the killing of Ms. Bugaighis; his foes could only expect one of three outcomes: prison, death or expulsion from the country.

He was frustrated that Libya's allies, including America, had not given him more support in the form of drones and Apache helicopters. "We are fighting the world's enemies," he declared, "and the world should help us."

Amid Libya's worsening violence and polarization, room for dialogue and consensus is shrinking. Bridge builders like Ms. Bugaighis have been forced to take sides. In our last conversation before her death, she seemed to have chosen among evils: She maintained that, despite his faults, General Hifter had broken the taboo of calling out extremists and had taken action. She argued that since he couldn't be stopped, the Libyan government should bring him into the fold and legitimate him, in the hopes of somehow limiting and controlling him.

But there is a stark danger — for Libyans and their friends abroad — in backing a military strongman whose vague definition of terrorism includes nonviolent Islamist political groups like the Muslim Brotherhood. General Hifter denies the right of peaceful Islamist groups to shape the future of the post-Qaddafi state, even though they fought in the revolution, too, and played a greater role than he did. Many Libyans draw a distinction between these groups and Ansar al-Sharia. The danger is that by lumping them all in the same basket the general will radicalize the moderates.

Even more worrisome for Libya is the general's claim that he is defending democracy while threatening the country's main elected body with military force. Whether he can be tamed by being "brought into the fold" seems unlikely: History is littered with examples of such appeasement of strongmen gone horribly awry.

Supporting General Hifter would be a Faustian bargain with far-reaching negative consequences for Libya's future. To avoid throwing the country into further chaos or sending it down an authoritarian path, Libyans must focus on forging a consensus government that addresses grievances in the east. It must build security institutions overseen by elected authorities. And it should recommit itself to a broad-based national reconciliation and the drafting of an equitable constitution.

For their part, outside powers like the United States should make clear that they will not tolerate upending the rule of law in the interest of fighting General Hifter's ill-defined "terrorist" threat that includes political opponents.

Ms. Bugaighis paid the ultimate price in her quest for dignity, but General Hifter may be extracting an even higher one from Libya's future.

Frederic Wehrey, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, served as a United States military attaché in Libya before the 2011 revolution.

U.S. Should Aid Those Who Fight Terror, Not Abet Human Rights Abuses

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

IN HIS recent address at West Point, President Obama doubled down on his administration's strategy of combating terrorism and other security threats through "partnerships" with other armies. Describing the strategy as an alternative to "invading every country that harbors terrorist networks," the president said he would ask Congress to appropriate \$5 billion for a Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund to "train, build capacity and facilitate partner countries on the front lines."

There's nothing particularly new about Mr. Obama's initiative: 158 countries were already recipients of U.S. military training in 2012, and about \$15 billion has been spent annually in recent years on security assistance through the State and Defense departments. Nor is the strategy much in question; stronger

local forces are essential to countering the proliferating affiliates of al-Qaeda. But the president's request, which was sent to Congress at the end of last month, nevertheless raises some disturbing questions.

One is what to do when local armies are not up to the task of defeating al-Qaeda, even with U.S. training and help. That was the case in Mali, where a U.S.-trained officer led a coup against a democratic government and U.S.-supplied and -drilled army units crumbled in the face of an offensive by ethnic and Islamist insurgents. Now Iraq's U.S.-trained forces have allowed much of the country to be overrun by al-Qaeda and Sunni tribal fighters and appear to lack the firepower to prevent the consolidation of a terrorist-ruled state.

The capture of Mali's capital by al-Qaeda was averted only by a quick deployment of French troops in early 2013. Mr. Obama's strategy doesn't make clear how similar threats can be managed. If the new al-Qaeda state in Iraq and Syria cannot be defeated by local forces, will the United States allow it to remain?

A related problem concerns the behavior of foreign units that receive U.S. training and funding. If U.S.-backed forces commit human rights abuses, the damage is twofold: The fight against insurgents is compromised, and so is support for alliance with the United States.

Congress sought to deal with this problem in 1997 by passing the Leahy amendment, a provision named after Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) that prohibits aid to units and individuals thought to be involved in gross human rights violations. The legislation has had a far-reaching effect: In 2011, aid was withheld from 1,766 individuals or units in 46 countries, and State Department staff vetted some 200,000 individuals and units, according to the New York Times. Senior U.S. military officials have told Congress that the restrictions helped improve major U.S. aid programs in Colombia and Afghanistan. Some countries, such as Bangladesh, have taken steps to punish offenders in order to win a restoration of aid.

Such vetting ought to be built into the new partnership program. But the administration is seeking to neuter the Leahy amendment by giving the defense secretary the authority to disregard it by asserting that "it is in the national security interest to do so." In fact, allowing aid to flow to foreign military units that commit major human rights crimes cannot be in the U.S. interest in any circumstances. Congress should reject the -exemption.

Health-care Sign-up Mistakes Pose A New Challenge For Obamacare, Not A Disaster

By Editorial Board

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

ARE HUNDREDS of thousands of Americans getting government money they aren't entitled to because of Obamacare? Illegal immigrants, too? Is it all further evidence that the Obama administration is incompetent and the system unworkable?

For critics of health-care reform, these are tempting conclusions to draw from reports that the Obama administration found nearly 3 million discrepancies between what enrollees reported when they signed up for Affordable Care Act insurance and what federal records show about them.

Tempting but overblown. There's more reason for encouragement from recent news about the act than there is to decry its problems.

Defying pessimistic predictions, more than half of those who signed up in the exchanges were previously uninsured, according to a June Kaiser Family Foundation survey. The law, then, has not served merely as a vehicle to move insured people from one plan to another. It is enrolling uninsured people, its main purpose. Among those who had insurance before, more reported lower bills under Obamacare than higher, and many in both groups no doubt have better coverage. Part of the reason is

the financial help the government is providing. Some 87 percent of people enrolled in the exchange that the federal government runs for much of the country are taking government subsidies, and the average post-subsidy cost is a mere \$82 a month.

But are those figures fraught with error or fraud? The Department of Health and Human Services' inspector general revealed last week that there were 2.9 million inconsistencies between the information insurance applicants submitted to the federal exchange and data about them in government records. Most discrepancies had to do with citizenship status or income, both of which determine people's eligibility for subsidies. The administration's flawed technical systems were unable to resolve the inconsistencies quickly, so they piled up, and officials are still working through them.

Many of these discrepancies are likely to be small — incorrect documentation, misspellings or a simple absence of available records for the government to consult. Another source of error is that the government is checking applications against old tax and pay records, but applicants reported current incomes. Many ostensible errors probably did not lead to improper payments.

Problems of this sort are inherent in creating a system to distribute any means-tested benefit to millions of people, in this case a benefit that seems to be doing a lot of good. The right response is to get better at catching and resolving errors faster, not to condemn the system.

People who are getting more than they're entitled to will be on the hook to pay some back next tax season, so the government must fix major discrepancies soon. It must also be ready for the next enrollment round. People will learn their 2015 premiums this fall. It will be as important as ever to have a functioning system in place to calculate their subsidies properly — and to serve the millions more expected to sign up next year.

The Obama administration, in other words, faces another Affordable Care Act management challenge, not a policy disaster.

Eduard Shevardnadze Helped Change The World

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE had been foreign minister of the Soviet Union for less than a year when the Chernobyl nuclear power plant exploded in April 1986, sending radioactive contamination into the atmosphere. Winds carried radioactive materials over Sweden and stoked international fears. At first, the new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, was silent, and Soviet authorities covered up the scope of the disaster. But later Mr. Gorbachev admitted what happened, and the experience gave rise to his policy of glasnost, or openness. The Chernobyl experience was also searing for Mr. Shevardnadze, who wrote in his memoirs that it “tore the blindfold from our eyes and persuaded us that politics and morals could not diverge.”

To the extent that it guided Mr. Shevardnadze and Mr. Gorbachev in their “new thinking” about the world, this approach changed the course of history. Together, they abandoned the view of inexorable confrontation between two blocs and, despite fierce internal opposition, began to work with the West toward common goals. They agreed that the Soviet Union could no longer rule by threat of force and that they must find a way to ease the burden of the nuclear arms race, dramatically reversing decades of Cold War thinking.

Mr. Shevardnadze, who died Monday at age 86, was a Soviet man. He had been a Communist Party leader in Georgia, south of Stavropol, the region where Mr. Gorbachev rose to power. In a fateful conversation in 1984, during a long walk at Pitsunda on the Black Sea, they held nothing back about their troubled country. “Everything’s rotten,” Mr. Shevardnadze said. “It has to be changed.” In 1985, Mr.

Gorbachev shocked the world by naming Mr. Shevardnadze his foreign minister to replace the obdurate Andrei Gromyko.

Mr. Shevardnadze and Mr. Gorbachev told leaders in Eastern Europe that Moscow would no longer dictate to them, ultimately contributing to the fall of the Berlin Wall and unification of Germany within the North Atlantic alliance. Mr. Shevardnadze helped forge the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces agreement with President Ronald Reagan, the first treaty to eliminate an entire class of nuclear weapons. Even small and now-forgotten concessions were telling: Mr. Shevardnadze assented to the principle of on-site inspections in arms control that Moscow's secrecy-shrouded military-industrial complex had long resisted. He was Mr. Gorbachev's partner in a radical upending of the old order. His 1990 resignation, warning Mr. Gorbachev that "dictatorship is coming," was another mark of conscience.

How sad it was that Mr. Shevardnadze later ignored or forgot the lessons of his own time in Moscow. His misrule as president of independent Georgia was lamentable, a time of rampant corruption and authoritarianism. But he must be remembered, first and foremost, for those fleeting but inspiring years of glasnost and new thinking at the side of Mr. Gorbachev. The two of them were improbable revolutionaries, but what they did changed everything — and millions of people are better off for it today.

On Wall Street, The Corleone Family Fits Right In

By Richard Cohen

[Washington Post](#), July 7, 2014

FADE IN: Michael Corleone's den.

He is at his desk. Facing him are members of his organization. Michael rises and dims the lights. He starts a PowerPoint display showing the various Mafia families. The chieftains and button men are puzzled but they say nothing. Michael turns the lights back on. It is clear he is about to say something important.

Michael: "We're gonna incorporate."

The capos are shocked. They all start talking at once. "Michael, Michael, what would your old man say?"

Michael: "The Godfather is dead. So is his way of doing business. Hyman Roth showed me what we should do. We turn the Corleone family into Corleone Enterprises Ltd. We list it on the stock exchange along with the other criminals. We do what we have always done, but if we get caught, nobody goes to jail. We pay a fine and say we're sorry."

"Michael, Michael," Luca Brasi says. "It is not possible. You do the crime, you do the time."

Michael is patient. "The French bank BNP Paribas admitted it broke the law. It copped a plea. It said it helped Iran avoid sanctions. Iran is our mortal enemy and a country the Corleone family has no sympathy for. The bank helped our enemy and he who helps our enemy is also our enemy. So what happened? Tell 'em, Hyman."

Hyman says, "They paid a fine, nearly \$9 billion. A piffle for them. But it was treated like the corporation acted on its own. Nobody was in charge. Nobody benefited. A corporation is the perfect crime family."

Michael says, "Tell 'em about Credit Suisse."

"It pleaded guilty to tax evasion," Hyman says. "Tax evasion! But no one went to jail. It paid Uncle Sam almost \$2.6 billion and went on its way. Al Capone of blessed memory got 11 years for tax evasion. Why? Because even though he controlled all the rackets in Chicago and had politicians and judges in his pocket, he was not incorporated."

Michael says, "Corporations don't go to jail. And neither do the people who run the corporations. Banks have paid a fortune in penalties for cheating and lying and selling junk and ruining people's lives, and nobody goes to jail."

Fredo says, "Being a corporation is never having to say you're sorry."

Michael looks disgusted: "Fredo, you're in the wrong movie."

Luca Brasi says, "I don't know, Michael. It don't seem right. I don't know about these things. You need someone whacked, I do it. Garroted, that's me. Shot, again that's me. But this, I don't understand. It just don't seem right."

Michael ignores him. "Hyman, tell 'em the rest."

"We're going to buy a business in Switzerland. When we have control of it, we become a Swiss corporation and pay taxes there, where they are lower. This is called an inversion and is something Walgreens says it is now considering. It got tax breaks in Illinois and tax credits and training money, and it don't matter. It still might go to Switzerland, where the weather, if you ask me, is lousy."

Fredo interjects. "But we're an Italian family."

Luca Brasi: "Sicilian!"

Michael signals for quiet. "Globalization means you don't belong to any country. You have allegiances to no one except your own family or, as it happens, the corporation. Pfizer tried to buy AstraZeneca so it could move to England. But they stupidly made an offer that AstraZeneca could refuse — and it did.

"Many companies are doing this and no one says nothing about loyalty to the country or anything like that. Corporations can do anything they want. We will do the same. We will move where the taxes are lowest, and we will never speak of this matter outside of the company. We will use our people in the media who are on our payroll to say that we are studying many options to maximize stockholder value. You, Fredo, will go on CNBC and not wear a tie so you look cool. All of you, remember that phrase and use it often: Maximize stockholder value."

"Michael, Michael," Luca Brasi says. "What does it mean?"

"Nothing, everything, anything you want," Michael says. He pauses. "I am no longer Capo di tutti capi. I am the CEO. Tom Hagen is no longer consigliere. He's the general counsel. All we do is change the titles but not who we are. We're still criminals."

"Like others on Wall Street, this is the business we've chosen," Hyman Roth says.

Read more from Richard Cohen's archive.

Boehner's Unprincipled Fight With Obama Over Separation Of Powers

By Jonathan Capehart

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

House Speaker John Boehner took to CNN.com yesterday to continue to tout his intention to sue President Obama for "[circumventing] the American people and their elected representatives through executive action, changing and creating his own laws, and excusing himself from enforcing statutes he is sworn to uphold." This notion that Obama is willfully lawless and exercising powers above and beyond the Constitution has me side-eyeing so hard right now.

Last month, I dealt with the president's increasing reliance on executive orders to get around a recalcitrant Republican majority in the House and minority in the Senate to get anything done. Despite the hysteria from the right, Obama has issued fewer of them than any of his predecessors since Grover Cleveland in the late 1800s, according to a study by John Hudak at Brookings. Now, it's time to deal with

signing statements, which is a legal way for the president to reinterpret or ignore the law he is signing if it conflicts with his view of executive authority. As you know, I'm not a fan of them. But they are hardly unconstitutional and Obama hasn't abused their use in number.

Kevin Evans of Florida International University told The Post's Karen DeYoung last month that President George W. Bush "used signing statements to challenge about 1,200 provisions of 172 laws he signed — twice as many as all his predecessors combined." Meanwhile, Obama "has issued close to 30 signing statements; in the 2013 Defense Authorization Act alone, he challenged more than 20 sections of the law," DeYoung reports. "Among the challenges have been assertions of his power to close Guantanamo Bay, for instance, and to disregard whistleblower protections."

The DeYoung article points out that use of signing statements were "relatively rare until Ronald Reagan began using [them] as a means of asserting the power of the executive against the legislative branch." Thanks to Tobias Gibson, a political science professor at Westminster College in Missouri writing at Monkey Cage, we know Samuel Alito is the reason.

Before Bush nominated Alito to the Supreme Court in 2005, he had been a Reagan-appointed deputy assistant attorney general in the Office of Legal Counsel. In 1986, Alito penned a six-page memo that provides the legal underpinnings for expanded use of signing statements by the president. The subject of the opinion says it all: "Using Presidential Signing Statement to Make Fuller Use of the President's Constitutionally Assigned Role in the Process of Enacting Law."

Our primary objective is to ensure that Presidential signing statements assume their rightful place in the interpretation of legislation.....

The novelty of the proposal previously discussed by this Group is the suggestion that Presidential signing statements be used to address questions of interpretation. Under the Constitution, a bill becomes law only when passed by both houses of Congress and signed by the President (or enacted over his veto). Since the President's approval is just as important as that of the House or Senate, it seems to follow that the President's understanding of the bill should be just as important as that of Congress....

From the perspective of the Executive Branch, the issuance of interpretive signing statements would have two chief advantages. First, it would increase the power of the Executive to shape the law. Second, by forcing some rethinking by courts, scholars, and litigants, it may help to curb some of the prevalent abuses of legislative history.

This view of presidential power is accepted on the right and the left. Laurence Tribe, the renowned Harvard constitutional law professor who taught Obama and went on to advise him during his first campaign, is among them."The objection to signing statements is completely misplaced," he told me yesterday via e-mail. "There is nothing at all wrong with a president signing a bill and simultaneously giving everyone, including the executive officials who answer to him, notice of how he intends to interpret and apply the bill he has signed, as well as notice of any provision that he regards as constitutionally void even though it has not yet been struck down by the Supreme Court."

Tribe, co-author of "Uncertain Justice: The Roberts Court and the Constitution" with Joshua Matz, went on to say, "The proper objection is not to the fact that a signing statement has been issued, but to the substance of a particular statement. For example, if a signing statement reflects an essentially unlimited view of presidential power and rests on the premise that Congress has no authority to regulate the exercise of that power, then we are all better off knowing in advance that that is the president's position — a position that is, in my view, indefensible. But it is not the fact of a signing statement having been issued that is indefensible; it is what particular signing statements SAY in a particular case that may reflect an exaggerated view of presidential authority."

So, there is nothing extraordinary about Obama's use of executive orders or signing statements. But Boehner makes strong allegations against Obama without articulating specific violations of the separation of powers. That's not to say there aren't areas of concern. When I asked Tribe last month about whether Boehner would have standing to bring what I called a frivolous lawsuit, he was not as skeptical as I thought he would be.

The House as an institution may well have standing to challenge at least some of the President's unilateral suspensions and revisions of statutory deadlines and specific mandates in the Affordable Care Act and other congressional legislation, including legislation governing deportations. It's not an open-and-shut case, but the House would have at least a plausible basis for claiming standing.

On the merits, at least some of the actions the House might challenge are probably consistent with the separation of powers, but others arguably are not.

This makes sense. I totally get it. We should at least judge Boehner's lawsuit on the merits. But what is so dispiriting is that the motivation behind the litigation strikes me as less about having a principled fight over the separation of powers and more about doing serious harm to this president and his ability to get anything done. That's why I'm convinced that Boehner's sideshow of a lawsuit is really a dress rehearsal for impeachment.

Once Boehner's raucous caucus and their constituents realize that such litigation probably would not be resolved until long after Obama left the White House, I have no doubt they will insist he be punished while in office. If the GOP succeeds in taking the Senate in the November midterms, then impeachment becomes a scarily viable option.

Follow Jonathan on Twitter: @Capehartj

Zero-tolerance Policies Are Destroying The Lives Of Black Children

By Andre M. Perry

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

President Obama wants to limit the number of students expelled every year from high schools. He believes the rates of suspensions and expulsions are racially biased, arbitrary and ineffective. "Although African-American students represent 15 percent of students in the CRDC, they make up 35 percent of students suspended once, 44 percent of those suspended more than once, and 36 percent of students expelled," writes the Education Department. "Further, over 50 percent of students who were involved in school-related arrests or referred to law enforcement are Hispanic or African-American." So the administration sent to educational leaders a Dear Colleague guidance letter on civil rights and discipline. To close the racial gap, he said, go easy with the zero-tolerance policies. Predictably, the ed-reform types, rending their garments and gnashing their teeth, see this as a disastrous stripping of school autonomy.

The guidance "would certainly compromise the operation of schools," according to Richard Epstein, professor of law at New York University. Some critics argue that schools need to sweat the small things — uniform violations, smoking, tardiness and singing — if they want to create a positive school culture in which students and teachers are focused on learning. For the sake of those who are focused on learning, those who aren't ready must be forced to leave. Epstein adds that schools with zero-tolerance policies offer "no taint of any purported civil-rights violation." And he's right when he says, "Disproportionate rates should not be regarded as unjustified merely because they reflect higher rates of improper behavior by minority students than by white students." Expulsions are easily justified and aren't inherently racist. More importantly, they can be a very effective way to increase learning outcomes.

In fact, the complainers are right: Obama's plan has a major flaw. But curbing the option to expel students is not it. The trouble is his rationale. The real reason to stop expulsions is that, in the noble cause of closing the black-white achievement gap, schools are insidiously giving up on black children by expelling those who are considered not ready to learn. While zero-tolerance expulsions myopically help the school and the majority of students in it, they destroy the student — and, ultimately, the community, too.

Zero-tolerance policies have many allies. Parents are often the most ardent supporters. (If a kid injured your son or daughter, you'd want expulsion, too.) Moreover, teachers and principals will tell you that ridding the school of disruptive behaviors accelerates achievement for the overwhelming majority of its students. Educational leaders embrace no-tolerance policies on the ground that they provide the greatest good for the greatest number.

The trouble is that when students are out of school, they're still learning — just not the things society wants them to. Many districts don't require that suspended and expelled students receive homework support or tutoring, so they fall further behind their peers. In addition, expelled students abandon activities that lead to college and take up activities that lead to prison. Expulsion also correlates with court involvement. (A modest proposal: Whenever a young person sees a judge, he or she should be accompanied by the principal of the last school attended.) This is why a suspension for infractions such as chewing gum, not wearing a uniform correctly or even fighting hurts the larger goal of meeting the child's needs.

And what happens to expelled children can have large consequences on the entire community. Schools are contributing to the explosion of young adults who are not working or in school in major cities. New Orleans, where I worked, provides an example of a city already in a bad way. According to "Building an Inclusive, High-Skill Workforce for New Orleans' Next Economy," a report from the Greater New Orleans Data Center, 14,000 youths ages 16 to 24 in the New Orleans metro are neither enrolled in school nor employed. This is a terrible enough social trend that we should fight in every way we can to reverse, rather than letting schools exacerbate it.

Here's some perspective for that number: 14,000 exceeds the number of registered students at Tulane or the University of New Orleans. It's a greater number than the combined enrollments of Loyola, Dillard and Xavier universities. Fourteen thousand youths is about one-third the number of students who attend public schools in Orleans Parish. The number is about 4,000 seats shy of a full house at a Pelicans game. If a company hired 14,000 youths, it would be the largest employer in the city. Although expulsion isn't the only cause of these numbers, it certainly doesn't help. At some point, institutions must do the very hard work of educating children with extraordinary challenges.

The goal has to be to keep children in school. Kudos to the Recovery School District of New Orleans for being proactive in creating a uniform expulsion policy that is in line with Obama's goal but for also recognizing the community need for curbing expulsions.

That doesn't mean Obama's conceit is flawless. It is important for schools to be able to credibly threaten reprisals for the malcontents. Some behaviors do warrant out-of-school time: Weapons and schools don't mix. Fighting may require separating a child from the school to assess and calm a situation.

But schools are great places to instill character, critical thinking and ethical decision-making. They may be the best places to safely resolve conflicts. Obama is right to want to keep kids in school. The policy addresses a significant systemic problem — the fact that schools abdicate the responsibility to educate the most challenging students, handing that power instead to the streets, the criminal justice system or parents who we should assume are not good educators or disciplinarians. The problem with

the guidance is that the data the administration puts forth about discrimination and disparate impact neither support the charge nor address the deeper issues head on. Then again, neither do Obama's critics.

The achievement gap for black children is not a sufficient reason to push underperformers out. (It's no better, and no less preposterous, than another path to close the gap: stop educating white people.) If schools don't have everything they need to instill positive behaviors in their toughest kids, then let's find the resources and staff for them to do it. Instead of lobbying for more disciplinary autonomy for schools, let's petition for wrap-around services, restructured in-school suspensions, conflict mediation, restorative justice programs, parenting courses, out-of school behavioral services or a host of other interventions that address the problem. Just as long as we keep the kids in school.

The Divided States Of Obama

By Michael Gerson

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

The headline — “Poll: Obama worst president since World War II” — was both provocative and misleading. The Quinnipiac University survey did, indeed, place President Obama at the top of the worst since FDR. But this was largely a measure of partisan concentration. Republicans were united in their unfavorable historical judgment of Obama. Democrats divided their votes (and would insist, I'd imagine, that they have more options to choose from).

We already know that Obama is a highly polarizing figure. But beneath the headline, the poll identified serious problems for the president. Fifty-four percent of respondents said the Obama administration is “not competent running the government.” (Shout-out to HealthCare.gov.) A majority believes the president does not have “strong leadership qualities.” Obama is solidifying a perception that he is out of his depth. Once made, such an impression is difficult to unmake.

And the failings of the Obama era are contributing to a deeper crisis for liberalism. Public confidence that government generally does the right thing is near an all-time low. In a recent Gallup poll, 79 percent of Americans agreed that corruption is “widespread throughout the government” — up from 59 percent in 2006. During a presidency that placed considerable trust in government, public trust in government has been badly shaken.

Obama is left with a job approval rating — in the low to mid-40s — that is about the same as when his party lost 63 House seats during the 2010 midterm elections. On the stump, his strategy is a ferocious peevishness. Republicans “don't do anything except block me and call me names” — an accusation in the best rhetorical tradition of school yards everywhere. His promised use of executive power seems more like a confession of powerlessness in the normal political realms of persuasion and legislation.

On his executive orders, Obama challenges the House speaker: “So sue me.” As a former speechwriter, I'd advise greater care in the choice of catchphrases. When Ronald Reagan goaded Congress on tax increases with “Go ahead, make my day,” he was channeling Clint Eastwood. “So sue me” sounds like the guy who steals your parking space and taunts you afterward. Petulance does not signal strength.

On policy issues, Obama has few places to turn. Public impressions of the economy seem set. Obamacare is enduringly controversial. The IRS and Veterans Affairs scandals continue to unfold. Foreign policy hardly offers a refuge — as years of disengagement in the Middle East now require engagement on dramatically less favorable terms.

Obama therefore turns to the two issues that Democrats keep in their back pocket, confident that broad social currents are running in their favor: immigration and contraception. (I suppose many Americans, not just Democrats, keep contraception in their back pocket.) In the long run, the political analysis that informs this strategy is correct. The U.S. electorate is becoming more demographically diverse and more culturally liberal on some issues. When it comes to Hispanic voters, younger voters and single voters, Republicans can seem out of touch (because they mostly are).

So the midterm contest sets up: “Out of his depth” vs. “Out of touch.”

But both of Obama’s surefire issues offer complications. The appearance of chaos at the border — fueled, in part, by rumors of an immigration free pass — may lead the Obama administration to seek procedural reforms that expedite the deportation of children. The only successful immigration legislation this session may be a border-control measure — signed by a president whose administration has already deported more than 2 million immigrants.

And the “war on women” conducted by the Supreme Court turns out to be a narrow exception to a 2011 Health and Human Services regulation — an exception allowing a family-owned company to provide 16 types of contraception to its employees instead of 20. The court ordered the Obama administration, when it substantially burdens a religious belief, to pursue the “least restrictive means” of achieving its goal — which has been the law since Bill Clinton signed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in 1993.

It is hard to imagine that the president’s use of cultural wedge issues will have much effect in battleground Senate races, conducted (this time around) mainly in red states. But even if it does — even if a deep blue appeal moves voters substantially — a historical reputation will be set.

“I don’t want to pit red America against blue America,” Obama once said. Now he organizes the sorting of America between red and blue. Best president or worst, he has left a nation more divided.

Read more from Michael Gerson’s archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook .

NSA’s Misguided Snooping On Innocent People

By Eugene Robinson

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

Even those who believe the National Security Agency’s vacuum-cleaner surveillance of electronic communications does not trample privacy rights should be troubled by this practical implication: If you try to know everything, you end up knowing nothing.

An investigation by The Post, which examined a cache of intelligence reports provided by fugitive NSA contractor Edward Snowden, illustrates my point. The agency is gathering and warehousing enormous amounts of private information, most of it irrelevant because it concerns innocent individuals — mostly foreigners but some U.S. citizens as well.

By “innocent,” I mean the NSA is convinced these people have no involvement with any activity that poses a threat. But the agency keeps their information anyway.

Reporter Barton Gellman, researcher Julie Tate and security consultant Ashkan Soltani spent four months analyzing more than 160,000 instant-messaging conversations, e-mails, social network exchanges and other communications sucked in by the NSA’s surveillance programs. The material Snowden provided was associated with roughly 11,400 individuals, perhaps half of them Americans.

Of those whose lives were rummaged through, only 11 percent are identified by the NSA as legitimate targets who warrant surveillance. This means that about nine out of 10 just happened to be snagged in the NSA's net.

It is important to clarify that I'm not talking about content-free metadata, such as the NSA's controversial log of domestic phone calls. These are actual e-mails, instant-messaging exchanges and social media posts that the NSA gathered under surveillance programs known as PRISM and Upstream. The Post reported that the content includes "stories of love and heartbreak, illicit sexual liaisons, mental-health crises, political and religious conversions, financial anxieties and disappointed hopes."

It's also important to note that the 11 percent deemed legitimate targets included some people I definitely want our spies to be watching. The Post said the surveillance records it examined included information that led to the captures of a Pakistan-based terrorist bomb-maker and a suspect in an Indonesian bomb attack. Other successes were withheld by government officials' request. Perhaps these cases could have been cracked by means other than mass surveillance. Perhaps not.

My point is not that this surveillance is incapable of helping authorities find and apprehend genuine terrorists. I just believe the snooping should be more targeted — and clearly irrelevant information about innocent people should be quickly erased.

The NSA seeks something like omniscience regarding electronic communications. But it is not enough to have a crucial tidbit of information stored on a server somewhere. For that information to be useful, it has to be identifiable and accessible. The more indiscriminately you amass data, the harder it is to find the relevant bits.

The NSA's position is essentially that the bigger the haystack it can gather, the more needles it can find. But given the ever-increasing volume of electronic communications around the world, what sense does it make for the NSA to clutter its data banks with information about people — foreign and domestic — who pose no threat? Retaining this material, apparently for up to five years, is not just an invasion of the targets' privacy but also a waste of the NSA's capacity for storage and analysis.

If NSA officials are so confident they can manage the unimaginably vast quantities of data the agency is assembling, then why have they repeatedly given public assurances that Snowden — whom they frequently describe as a lowly analyst — had no access to the kind of sensitive data he gave to The Post? Does the agency really have any idea of what is already in its databases? Does the NSA know who might be sifting through this material? And for what purposes?

These NSA programs are designed to snoop on foreigners. Snowden has expressed the view that citizens of other countries have privacy rights, too. You don't have to agree with him to wonder why the personal e-mails of, say, a college professor in Germany or an insurance salesman in Brazil should not be purged once the material is determined irrelevant to any investigation.

Snowden also believes there are legitimate threats and targets. He gave the information to The Post with the understanding that nothing would be published that could harm U.S. national security or endanger lives. Indeed, the newspaper said it withheld details about "a secret overseas nuclear project, double-dealing by an ostensible ally, a military calamity that befell an unfriendly power, and the identities of aggressive intruders into U.S. computer networks."

Investigate that stuff, NSA. Stop wasting time and effort on people who mean us no harm.

Millennials Get Cut Off At The Polls

By Catherine Rampell

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

First they came for blacks, and we said nothing. Then they came for Latinos, poor people and married women, and we again ignored the warning signs.

Now, after our years of apathy, they're coming for us: the nation's millennials.

Across the country, Republican state policymakers have hoisted barriers to voting by passing voter-ID laws and curtailing electoral accommodations such as same-day registration and early voting. These policy changes are allegedly intended to eradicate the imagined scourge of voter fraud, but the real point seems to be voter suppression.

For a time, the targeted populations were primarily racial, ethnic and income groups that traditionally vote Democratic. Now they happen to include Gen-Y'ers, more specifically my college-age brethren. We millennials may be fickle in our loyalties, generally distrustful of government institutions and unaligned with any political party, but our generation's motley, liberal-to-libertarian-leaning ideological preferences still threaten red-state leadership.

In response, Republicans have set out to erect creative, if potentially unconstitutional, Tough-Mudder-style obstacle courses along our path to the polls.

Last year in Ohio, for example, Republican legislators proposed a measure that would effectively strip hundreds of millions of dollars from state schools if they continued to provide students paying out-of-state tuition with the paperwork necessary to register to vote in the state (as courts have said college students are legally allowed to do). In Maine, the secretary of state investigated 200 university students for voter fraud; he found no evidence of wrongdoing but then sent a threatening letter telling them that they must either obtain a Maine driver's license and register their vehicles or cancel their state voter registrations. In Texas, photo identification is required to vote and, while concealed handgun licenses count, state-school-issued student IDs don't.

North Carolina's efforts have been particularly aggressive, perhaps because young people represent an especially threatening voting bloc to the Republicans in control there. Without the strong turnout of young voters in 2008, after all, Barack Obama would not have become the first Democratic presidential candidate in more than two decades to carry the Tar Heel state.

Like other states, North Carolina has eliminated many accommodations disproportionately used by young people and other first-time voters, such as same-day registration, and instituted voter-ID requirements that don't recognize student IDs. But it has also stopped allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to fill out voter-registration forms early so that they can be automatically registered upon reaching majority age. Another state Senate bill last year would have effectively raised taxes on parents of students who registered to vote where they attend college.

Perhaps it is unsurprising, then, that the state faces a lawsuit filed by college students, aided by several voter registration advocacy groups, as the New York Times reported Sunday. The suit essentially claims that the state is engaging in age discrimination. Age discrimination accusations may be off-limits to young people in employment settings — federal law doesn't protect workers under age 40 — but when it comes to elections, the plaintiffs have a shot. The 26th Amendment, which lowered the federal voting age to 18 in 1971, guarantees that the right to vote "shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age."

Republican lawmakers may feel threatened by the political proclivities of millennials, but the truth is, aside from 2008, young people are not usually much of a concern to either party because our turnout

rates are so poor. Of all age groups, Americans 18 to 29 consistently have the lowest participation rates — even in the 2008 election, when our generation was galvanized around an unusually inspiring presidential candidate promising hope and change. That year, just 51 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds cast ballots. Sadly, it was the first time since 1972 that a majority of young people voted.

For years, get-out-the-vote groups such as Rock the Vote and Citizen Change have tried to market voting as rebellious and enviably adult (including by enlisting celebrity spokespeople who were unregistered themselves, and at least one who was possibly barred from voting due to felony records). If Paris Hilton, 50 Cent and Madonna can't convince young people to vote, maybe a bunch of old white men trying to bar their path will do the job.

Obama's 'imperial Presidency' Doesn't Rule Much Of Anything

By Dana Milbank

[Washington Post](#), July 8, 2014

On either end of Lafayette Square on Monday, you could observe the receding power of the Obama presidency.

On the north side, across from the White House, stands St. John's Episcopal Church, "the Church of the Presidents," where every president since James Madison has worshiped. But there was no sanctuary for Obama at St. John's on Monday; it was hosting a protest against him.

More than 100 Latinos — a constituency that has been a reliable part of Obama's political base — stood on the church steps as speakers denounced Obama's pledge to hasten deportations of children illegally crossing the southern border. Addressing the participants, many of whom held signs saying "President Obama: STOP!!," immigration advocate Gustavo Torres charged that "the president has failed to act with the urgency and competence that is required."

At that very moment on the other side of the square, the White House was acting with urgency on Obama's latest executive action, the "Excellent Educators for All" initiative. Eight hundred feet from the church protest, Education Secretary Arne Duncan was in the White House briefing room, talking about "differential compensation," "systemic inequities" and the administration's plans to spend \$4.2 million on a new "educator equity support network."

Duncan said the administration would prefer to act with Congress rather than use executive authority, "but we just can't continue to wait."

Certainly, the matter of teacher quality for poor kids is important, but Duncan and his administration colleagues are in for a semester at the school of hard knocks if they think a \$4.2 million initiative (that's about 0.0001 percent of the federal budget) will get attention when there's a crisis on the border, a crisis in Iraq and Syria, and other fires to be extinguished at home and abroad.

Indeed, the first question for Duncan on Monday wasn't about his new initiative but about the National Education Association's call over the weekend for Duncan's resignation after several policy disagreements. Duncan said he doesn't get involved in "local union politics."

Local? The NEA is the nation's largest teachers union and a key component of Obama's political base — just like the Latino activists protesting across the square.

This is why the oft-leveled accusation that Barack Obama is running an "imperial presidency" is a bit silly. As imperial rulers go, this president has about as much oppressive might and raw dictatorial clout as Prince Hans-Adam II of Liechtenstein. Republicans have never respected Obama's authority. And now, as his popularity slips, he seems to be losing his ability to influence foreign allies, congressional Democrats and some of his previously loyal supporters.

Both the puny executive action and the criticism from erstwhile allies on Monday showed why the Obama presidency these days is falling a good bit short of imperial on the Alexander the Great scale. Education was the White House's message du jour — lunch with teachers on the South Lawn was the only item on Obama's publicly released schedule other than his intelligence briefing — but it didn't have a chance of wresting the national narrative away from less pleasant affairs.

On Tuesday, Obama plans to ask Congress for additional funds to process child immigrants. But then he's going on a fundraising trip to Colorado and Texas that, his spokesman confirmed Monday, doesn't include a stop at the border. This could put Obama further on the defensive by inviting the sort of criticism that followed George W. Bush's Hurricane Katrina flyover.

In recent days, Obama has spoken in scattershot fashion about education, jobs, the Highway Trust Fund, immigration legislation and Republicans' threat to sue him for his supposedly monarchical behavior. But his success in shaping the agenda has been negligible. He has been at the mercy of events, reacting to matters not of his choosing and taking executive actions that, for all the criticism, don't have the permanence or reach of legislation.

Following Duncan's visit to the briefing room, new White House press secretary Josh Earnest had the unpleasant task of responding to all the other problems generated by supposed friends.

Ed Henry of Fox News inquired about Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-Tex.), who on Sunday called the administration "one step behind" on the border crisis. The Associated Press's Julie Pace asked about Germany's complaint that one of its intelligence operatives was allegedly a U.S. double agent. And Mark Landler of the New York Times asked why Iraqi leaders seem to be "brushing aside" the administration's pleas to form a new government.

To that last question, Earnest said he had "been pretty candid, I think, over the last couple of weeks, in articulating our disappointment."

Articulating disappointment! Does the arrogance of this imperial presidency know no bounds?

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES

Firefighters, Others Walk Out Of Council Meeting

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

WILMINGTON – Dozens of firefighters, police and administration members stormed out of a city council committee meeting Monday night after a call to vote on controversial proposals was made without the committee allowing the fire chief to address the panel.

Public Safety Committee Chairman Mike Brown, said he was planning to let Fire Chief Anthony Goode speak after the committee voted to move the items to the full council for consideration.

"We wanted to hear from council members and others. The fire chief was going to have an opportunity to give his remarks," Brown said after the meeting. "I don't let people tell me what to do. I run this meeting. Every council chairperson has a way of running their meetings."

Chief of Staff Cleon Cauley notified council members he was leaving as Brown attempted to call for a vote without allowing Goode to comment on the proposals.

Firefighters and police applauded Cauley's move and followed him out of the door.

One firefighter compared Brown's handling of the meeting to a dictatorship. Others shouted "you're a disgrace" and "good thing you're not running again." to Brown.

Goode called Brown's behavior inappropriate and said he felt disrespected.

"Tonight's meeting was something unique," Goode said following the meeting.

"I've never been to a public safety meeting where the chief was not even allowed to sit down. Then they offered public comment before they had me address any of the concerns," he said.

Goode acknowledged he and Brown had personal issues in the past, but he didn't elaborate.

Monday's meeting considered proposals that would, among other things, eliminate seven vacant firefighter positions and require the police and fire chiefs to go before council before starting academy classes for new recruits. Currently, each department can start academies when their uniformed strength falls below 95 percent of staffing guidelines.

Goode has said the fire department meets conditions to start an academy.

Before leaving, Cauley called the academy proposal a burden. "I question whether it's a step into the executive branch of government," he said.

Council President Theo Gregory, said the legislation wouldn't change the agencies' ability to address shortages.

"We want to make sure at a certain threshold that a class is started," Gregory responded. "So it's just a matter of accountability.

"We ... have to ensure and always ask, 'Why hasn't a class started yet? It may be a good reason or there may not be a good reason. And that's where the dialogue starts."

But Cauley challenged the need for a formal process.

"You want to have a review or conversation, my door's always open," Cauley said. "Come ask the question, and you'll have answers. I don't think we can legislate conversations. We just need to talk. Just come across the hall, and we'll let you know."

The proposal to cut seven vacant firefighter positions would help the city save \$447,000. The legislation is a direct suggestion from the Berkshire report, a 2012 study on the fire department. Council members said they're looking at the fire department because of concerns from the public that city spending has not been checked.

But council members also said they're looking at other departments for cost-savings, as well.

Councilman Robert Williams, a former city police officer, said the city could be taking a big public safety risk by killing positions, even if no one is occupying them.

"[The study] was put together as a proposal on how to go about saving money," he said. "From the onset, it wasn't looking for better of the city of Wilmington. It was looking for a way to save money."

Goode and other fire leaders said eliminating the vacancies would significantly speed up the rate at which the department hands out overtime. When the department hands out overtime to more than three firefighters, it has to shut a fire engine down, thereby creating a coverage gap and increasing response times, Goode said.

The vacant positions and academy proposals were each sent to full council on 3-1 votes. The items will be considered at a future council session. The council meets again on Thursday.

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Christiana Care Marks One Year Of Cord Blood Banking

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

More than 1,000 mothers who delivered babies in Delaware in the past year made use of a free option to donate their umbilical cord blood for research purposes or life-saving transfusions, officials at Christiana Care Health System said.

“It’s just a great gift to society and to the child,” Kim Petrella, a labor and delivery nurse at Christiana Care, said of cord blood banking. “This is something we used to throw away, and now we’re realizing it could be the holy grail.”

Christiana Care notched its 1,036th donation in July since an arrangement with a public cord blood bank, CORD:USE, took effect in July 2013, hospital officials said. The hospital handles about 6,500 deliveries a year, meaning about 16 percent of expecting mothers took the option, which adds no cost to a patient’s bill after giving birth.

Blood retrieved from a woman’s umbilical cord, minutes after she gives birth, is sought-after in modern medicine because it contains a rich supply of stem cells – young cells that can serve as a kind of template for making blood cells.

Such cells are increasingly used to treat people with diseases like leukemia and lymphoma that cause their own bodies’ blood-forming cells to become diseased, according to the federal Health Resources and Services Administration, which promotes cord blood donation. They’re not the same thing as embryonic stem cells, either, so they carry none of the bioethical baggage attached to those kinds of stem cells.

When Congress passed the Stem Cell Act of 2005, it gave the federal government authority to work with cord blood banks to develop an inventory of 150,000 units of transplantable cord blood. By May 2011, there had been 41,000 units of blood banked with the federally developed National Cord Blood Inventory and 94,000 units of cord blood in other U.S. registries, according to the Government Accountability Office.

Since cord blood therapies have become more widespread, expectant parents have been offered the chance to bank their infants’ cord blood for their own family’s use alone. This private cord blood banking can cost between \$900 and \$2,500 at first, with yearly storage fees that follow.

Christiana Care has for years offered its patients an option to donate cord blood instead, which builds up supplies of publicly available cord blood, much like donating blood to the Red Cross. The hospital worked with a New Jersey blood bank, Community Blood Services, until 2012, and started its partnership with CORD:USE, a Florida company affiliated with researchers at Duke University, in July 2013.

Blood donated by mothers giving birth can be used for transplants when the recipient’s blood type is a match. It can also be used for research purposes by scientists trying to extend the usefulness of cord blood in treatments.

If cord blood isn’t saved for public use or privately banked, it’s just discarded as medical waste, never extracted from the umbilical cord and placenta.

Dr. Richard J. Derman, who chairs Christiana Care’s obstetrics and gynecology department, called the past year’s surpassed goal of getting to 1,000 cord blood donations “a rather dramatic step forward.”

“We’re dealing with cells that are much more undeveloped than bone marrow,” Derman said. “They have much more capacity for adapting.” The process of getting the blood out of the umbilical cord and placenta immediately after birth, Derman said, is quick and usually unnoticed by the mother, since it’s done when she is first holding the baby.

“It does not affect the birth of the baby. There’s no danger to mom,” Petrella said. “That’s usually the part where the parents are counting the fingers and the toes. We’ve had people ask, did you do it already?”

Christiana Care is the only Delaware hospital that facilitates free public cord blood donations, according to the Parent’s Guide to Cord Blood Foundation.

Petrella said more people who donate cord blood choose to make a public donation than opt to privately bank it and pay for its storage themselves.

Some researchers in Christiana Care's own cancer center have even made use of the hospital's donated blood for their work, she said, which means "the newborns that are born at Christiana are going to be helping the sickest of the sick in our own state."

For Jessica Papp McNemar of Wilmington, who gave birth to her daughter Moxie at Christiana Care in February, donating her cord blood was a no-brainer. "I'm sort of a helping person by nature. I know there's so much research and so much that can be done with cord blood," McNemar said. She considered private banking, she said, but thought it didn't seem "urgent" to set aside the blood only for her family to use.

Getting the task of donating done only required filling out some paperwork in advance, McNemar said, and right after delivery, she never noticed the quick extra procedure.

"I didn't even know they were doing it," she said. "I was looking at the baby the whole time."

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Resources

- The Parent's Guide to Cord Blood Foundation provides a wealth of information about donating, privacy protections for donors and what treatments can be carried out with donated cord blood: parentsguidecordblood.org.

- The company Christiana Care partners with to process cord blood donations, CORD:USE, has information on its public bank and retrieval process at corduse.com.

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Wilmington Violence: 'So Many Funerals'

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

WILMINGTON – Crystal Brown and her cousins stopped at Adams Market to grab some food Sunday night.

A few moments later, the 43-year-old woman left the store, walking right into a crossfire of bullets outside the corner store located at Adams and Seventh streets. A stray bullet struck her in the chest, fatally wounding her in front of relatives, some of whom were preteens, her brother Harry Brown said Monday.

"That's the other unfortunate thing," said Brown, who along with about 30 people gathered outside his aunt's house Monday for a vigil held for his baby sister. "They saw that and now we have to deal with that on top of everything else."

The shooter remained at large Monday.

Her killing puts Wilmington on pace to surpass the number of people killed in the city in the last three years. There have been 13 homicides so far this year – that's one more than in 2011 and 2012 and five more than last year.

Her homicide came in the midst of a 41-hour period of violence in the city that included a noontime shooting Monday in which suspects shot at police officers. No injuries were reported in that incident, but an undercover police vehicle was struck by gunfire while following a vehicle believed to have been involved in a previous shooting.

The ongoing gun violence in the city of about 71,000 residents had Mayor Dennis P. Williams on Monday promising police saturation in some of the more crime-ridden areas, including Pine Street where two men were killed last month during two separate shootings.

"This is our community, these are our folks killing each other and it anguishes me every day," Williams said at a Central Baptist Church gathering.

"I truly apologize for the violence in your community. I accept responsibility and truly apologize," said Williams. The plan is expected to begin in mid-July and would include going after slumlords.

City police will not put up with "people who are running around here being Al Capone, shooting up the place," he added. "We are going to clean up Pine Street, but it's not going to be a piece of cake."

About three dozen residents heard Williams speak at the neighborhood meeting called by City Councilwoman Hanifa Shabazz.

"We are sounding the alarm," she said. "We're no longer living in this condition. ... We want our neighborhoods back."

Like Williams and Wilmington Police Chief Bobby Cummings, Shabazz called on residents to work with police to end the violence that is destroying families and neighborhoods.

Jack McDonough, from the state Department of Justice, urged residents to report houses of known drug activity or storage as nuisance properties – especially in the focus area of Sixth to 10th and Lombard to Spruce streets – and report probationers loitering on blocks where they have no connections, so they can be restricted from doing so.

Williams said everyone can do something to help, from mentoring to picking up trash. But he also told residents if they see crime and don't report it, "you're part of the problem."

Williams, who talked of people helping him avoid a negative life on the streets, also promised continuing emphasis on activities for youth, job development and massive increase in police presence. But he also warned residents that he didn't want people complaining when it happens.

"We're getting ready to get tough," he said.

After the meeting, Shabazz gathered many of the residents for a neighborhood walk, handing out papers with phone numbers for services and to report crime.

About a mile west of the meeting, friends and family of Brown gathered in the 1000 block of Seventh St. to hold a vigil for her. A photo of Brown was taped to her aunt's front porch, which was surrounded by stuffed animals. Candles were lit in her honor. A set of small white candles shaped her initials, with a set of red candles making the shape of a heart.

Her mother was surrounded by many who came to pay their respects. She said she was not ready to be interviewed.

Harry Brown, who said his mother was holding him up, said his sister visited him over the weekend in Magnolia, where he has his home. He fought back his emotions when remembering he had not told her he loved her when she left his home Sunday afternoon.

"I'm realizing that I need to seize every opportunity I have to tell the people that I love that I love them," he said. "Yesterday I didn't do that. But I think she knew that I loved her."

Others described Brown, who recently started working as a collections agent in Dover, as a person who would give the shirt off her back for anyone.

"She was like everybody's best friend," said 32-year-old Shavon Richardson, one Brown's close friends. "She was everybody's protector. If you needed advice, she was always there for you. She was just a great friend and she will be missed."

Tiffany Smith, another of Brown's close friends, said this senseless act adds to the list of people she knows who have been killed.

"I live in Wilmington – born and raised," she said. "Every other day, I'm hearing about a childhood friend, someone I went to school with, someone I grew up with, someone who I used to play with is dying.

"I have gone to so many funerals, I cannot count. I have so many obituaries, I cannot count. I just want it to stop."

Smith said the city needed to do more in order to keep people occupied and away from violence.

"Put the guns down," she said. "You are killing people left and right, innocent people. It's a shame that now we have to bury my sister, my best friend, who was so sweet and so innocent. She was such a lovable, caring person."

The vigil started about 6:30 p.m., almost a block and a half from where Brown was shot.

'They're just pulling out guns'

About 6 hours earlier on Monday, an undercover officer in an unmarked vehicle saw a silver Buick speeding in the area of West 35th and North Market streets, said Cpl. Mark Ivey, a Wilmington police spokesman.

As the officer followed the vehicle, an occupant fired at the officer's vehicle multiple times, and gunfire hit the passenger's side window.

The Buick crashed into a parked car in the 2800 block of N. West St. about 12:45 p.m., and three people fled from the vehicle, Ivey said. Two were taken into custody after a brief foot chase; the third remained at large Monday, he said.

A multitude of Wilmington police officers, some with assault rifles, fanned out in the area as residents, including children, walked about.

A young boy was standing near the police crime tape at North West and West 29th streets when Wanda Lee came up and recognized him. She sternly told him to go home, then told him "I love you."

"The young children, they're being exposed to too much and they have no regard for life whatsoever. None whatsoever," she said.

"It's sad. People are losing their loved ones just for something so mediocre. They're not discussing what's going on. They're just pulling out guns."

Lee said with Sunday night's homicide and the shootings previous to that, the city feels like it's lost its way.

"This is just too much. Too much," she said. "We need to take control of the city."

Wilmington police also were called out to other shooting incidents during the 41-hour period that started on Saturday, including the arrest of 23-year-old Shavar Watson after he drew a gun in front of patrolling officers.

Wilmington Officers Danielle Watson and Jose Vasquez were on patrol about 8:25 p.m. Saturday when they heard several gunshots near the 200 block of N. Van Buren Street. The officers then saw Watson standing and pointing a handgun north on that block.

The officers chased Watson, who discarded a 9mm handgun as he fled. When he was captured, Ivey said, Watson was in possession of 54 bags of heroin. Watson was taken to Wilmington Hospital for treatment for a small puncture to his foot.

He's charged with with weapon offenses, and possession with intent to deliver heroin and resisting arrest.

About 7 hours later, a 26-year-old city man was shot in the abdomen.

The preliminary investigation suggests the man was standing in the area of West Fifth and North Madison streets when he heard gunfire and was shot shortly after 2:30 a.m. Sunday. The man, who was driven by private vehicle to Wilmington Hospital, was uncooperative with investigators, Ivey said.

He was listed stable condition Monday.

Lamotte X, the head of the Wilmington Peacekeepers, an anti-violence group, said it can get discouraging, but the community must come together if they want to reduce the violence.

"It's not going to be the Peacekeepers one day hitting the nail on the head and everybody is going to say 'Hurray. Everything stopped,' " he said. "We can't put it on the police officers, we can't put it on the mayor. It's going to take the community."

The group was in the 800 block of Pine Street over the weekend trying to bring awareness to the June 21 killing of Jason Turner, 32, and the June 30 homicide of Brian Rivers, 35. He said young children passing by inspired him and others in the group to continue fighting against the violence. The two were killed on or near the 800 block of Pine Street.

"When you see the little children, that is encouraging," he said. "Because we get a chance to talk to them and then maybe they'll come up and live a different way."

The group plans to march in the 600 block of Adams Street this Thursday to bring awareness to Brown's killing.

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Police Clear Bomb Threat At UD

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

A bomb scare Monday night caused the evacuation of a dorm complex at the University of Delaware.

The University of Delaware sent out an alert Monday night to the campus community after receiving a bomb threat shortly before 8 p.m.

"Report of suspicious activity at Dickinson Complex; Police are on scene; please avoid the area until an all clear alert is received," read an alert to the university community following a threat called in to university police shortly before 8 p.m.

As of 11:34 p.m., K-9 units from the University of Delaware, Delaware State and New Castle County police departments completed their search and found no explosives, said Andrea Boyle, a university spokeswoman.

The university evacuated three students from the complex, located off Hillside Road in Newark, she said. The low number was because of the summer break, she said.

For hours, officers blocked traffic at Hillside and Apple roads and also prevented pedestrians from entering the area off Elkton Road.

Customers and employees at the nearby Buffalo Wild Wings Grill & Bar on South Main Street said they were not aware of the situation.

Customer Douglas Foust said he was surprised to learn of the bomb threat, which was the first he ever heard of on campus.

UD students Neha Luthra and Rashi Gupta said they were concerned when they got the alert about police activity that didn't say what was happening.

The women, who live in the apartments above Buffalo Wild Wings, said they didn't know anyone who was evacuated.

Avoiding the complex was no problem, since they had no plans to go there Monday night, they said. Still, the UD alert left them curious.

"There have been a lot of armed robberies, so I just figured that was what it was," said Gupta, a junior from Cumberland, Rhode Island.

"I think it would have freaked me out more to know it was a bomb threat," said sophomore Luthra.

She said her father called her to check in after he got the alert.

Luthra and Gupta said they were relieved to learn that only a few people were in the building when UD police received the call.

They said they had no idea why anyone would make such a threat involving college dorms.

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Kent Sports Complex's Future Unknown

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

Cars speed north along Del. 1, passing 85 acres of farmland. The only thing to see is a sign planted nearby that's been there for almost two years, advertising the future home of the Kent County Regional Sports Complex.

The proposed \$24 million, 15-field sports venue for tournaments is shovel-ready since last year, but has recently faced major setbacks that have supporters concerned that the plan will get lost in the shuffle or its backers could walk away. A proposed \$25 million interchange supporters say is vital to the complex's success was delayed and \$3.2 million earmarked for the project was diverted by lawmakers to bail out the state's three ailing casinos.

Frederica residents and Kent County officials say now matters have fallen into their own hands and they need to make enough noise to remind people that this project, with a potential multi-million dollar economic impact, is vital to Delaware. A community meeting about the project is scheduled at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Frederica Volunteer Fire Hall.

"It's such a potential home run. It would change the landscape of not just Kent County, but the state," said Kent County Levy Court Commissioner Eric Buckson.

"People need to understand that while the wind might have been temporarily taken out of the sails, the boat is still moving," said Bob Murphy, a local resident who organized the meeting. "Sometimes things get worse before they get better."

Residents plan to organize a citizens group, the Friends of the Kent County Regional Sports Complex, to remind state lawmakers and officials about the importance of this project, he said.

"We have elections coming up and one thing legislators do pay attention to are voters," he said.

The public's involvement comes at a time when the project's stakeholders are conducting "a deliberate review" of their potential options, which include moving the plans to another location in Kent County or walking away entirely, said Bill Strickland, past president of the nonprofit Greater Kent Committee, which is partnering with the county on the project.

The groups already have identified two other potential sites, including one along Del. 1, Strickland said.

But he said he is optimistic the project would get done in its proposed location. A decision on the project's future should come by summer's end, he said.

Should it not work out, it would not be because of the casino money. Supporters say they understand why it was diverted and trust it will be returned next year, as promised and written in legislation passed last week.

Instead, the property would remain vacant because of a stalemate between the project's stakeholders and DelDOT over the proposed south Frederica overpass project, Strickland said. Officials this year delayed the \$25 million interchange project until fiscal year 2017.

The project will only get funding from the banks if the overpass is built, Strickland said.

The interchange, proposed in the 1990s, was high on DelDOT's priority list at one point, but not after DelDOT began using a data-driven decision-making and prioritizing process.

The complex project, supported by the interchange, would create 300 jobs and have an estimated economic impact of \$10 million to \$18 million. Murphy said he's not sure how that's not a driving priority.

"The governor spent \$13 million on bicycle paths, and while I have nothing against people who ride bicycle paths, it neither created revenue or jobs as far as I know," Murphy said.

The overpass isn't needed purely to ensure the safety of people using the facilities, said DelDOT secretary Shailen Bhatt. There are also concerns about spending \$25 million in public funds for a project that's seen its financing plan change multiple times, Bhatt said.

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Overcome Addictions With Plenty Of Programs In Delaware

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

Addiction to drugs and alcohol touches everyone, devastating individuals and families.

It impacts people who are rich and poor, old and young, from the hardened addict who steals to support his habit to the teenager who slips pills from her parents' medicine cabinet.

Addiction also has a serious impact on an individual's health.

People with substance abuse issues are at increased risk for illnesses and injuries. Drinking too much alcohol makes it more likely someone will fall or be hurt in an accident. Overindulging in alcohol also contributes to heart and liver disease, and increases the risk of some cancers, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention attributes 88,000 deaths a year to excessive drinking.

Drug abuse puts users at risk for HIV, hepatitis, heart problems, kidney disease and other illnesses, says the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Additionally, more people are dying from overdoses, according to the CDC, which reported 38,329 fatal overdoses in 2010, more than twice the 16,849 deaths reported in 1999.

There also has been an alarming spike in heroin use throughout the United States. A 2012 survey by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration revealed about 669,000 people older than 12 used heroin that year. In contrast, fewer than 400,000 people used heroin in 2007, the agency said. Heroin overdose deaths increased 45 percent between 2006 and 2010. In Delaware this year, there are 12 to 15 drug deaths from heroin each month.

Addiction is a complex illness that causes changes in the brain. That is why it is difficult for addicts to control their behavior and make good decisions – or to understand and accept they have a problem.

Addictions to drugs and alcohol start for a variety of reasons, related to a combination of genetic, environmental, social, cultural and behavioral factors. It's important, however, to recognize that once folks are addicted, they have a disease that needs treatment.

People become "hooked" on drugs due to their potential for overstimulation of the brain's pleasure centers. Drugs of addiction cause a flood of dopamine, a brain hormone (neurotransmitter), which create a pleasure sensation that may be as much as 10 times greater than everyday pleasures.

While addiction is a difficult problem to treat, many people are able to reclaim their lives with help from medical professionals and treatment programs.

Unfortunately, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, relapse rates after treatment can be as high as 60 percent. Getting those who have "slipped" back to treatment, with understanding and support, is important to do, as repeat treatments can be successful.

Under the Affordable Care Act, treatment for drug and alcohol addiction is listed among the 10 essential benefits that must be included in health plans. Coverage is included in the plans offered by the insurance exchanges, as well as Medicaid, the government health plan for people who are poor or have a disability.

There is tremendous value in rehabilitation and other treatments for addiction. Various estimates conclude that every dollar invested in treatment programs saves up to \$12 in health care costs and costs related to crime. Recovery also leads to more productive and fulfilling lives.

In Delaware, there are many resources to help people fight drug and alcohol addiction. If you or someone you love needs help with addiction, seek treatment. A good place to start is by checking out resources throughout the state through the Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health. To learn more, go to <http://dhss.delaware.gov/dsamh> and click on "substance abuse."

Innovative approaches to treatment are also developing. One example, "Project Engage," is a partnership between Christiana Care Health System and Brandywine Counseling & Community Services. It pairs patients with addictions with counselors who are themselves in recovery.

The counselors engage the patients at an important time – while they are still in the hospital – and refer them directly to treatment and other resources to help them continue their recovery when they return to the community.

Results from this program, which provides crucial connection and support outside the hospital, indicate that fewer patients return to the hospital or the emergency department.

This type of program helps us envision ways in which we can integrate medical care with community programs for those in need.

Dr. Michael Rosenthal is chair of the Department of Family & Community Medicine at Christiana Care Health System.

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University Of Delaware Tuition, Fees To Increase

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

Students at the University of Delaware will have a heftier bill in the upcoming academic year.

In-state students at UD will pay \$12,342 in tuition and fees for the 2014-15 school year, an increase of \$230, officials announced Monday.

The 1.9 percent growth is the smallest percentage increase in more than 30 years.

For out-of-state students, tuition and fees will grow by \$760 to \$30,692, an increase of 2.54 percent. Mandatory fees include the Student Health Service Fee, Student Center Fee and Student Comprehensive Fee.

Including room and board, the total cost of attending UD will be \$23,900 for in-state students and \$42,250 for out-of-state students.

For graduate students, tuition will be \$1,625 per credit hour, an increase of 3 percent or \$47 a credit hour. Full-time graduate students will, however, see a 7 percent reduction in their mandatory fees.

Sustaining fees, which grad students pay while they are working on dissertations but not taking credit hours, will remain at \$621 for master's students and \$938 for doctoral students.

Tuition at UD, like at most colleges across the country, has steadily climbed over the past few years.

In the 2004 school year, undergraduate tuition and fees for in-state students were \$6,954; in 2014, they will be \$12,342. That's an increase of more than 75 percent.

UD is not alone in seeing such increases – nationwide, the average cost of a four-year public university, including tuition, fees, room and board soared from \$9,196 in 2001 to \$16,789 in 2011, according to the latest figures available from the National Center for Education Statistics. That's a growth of 82 percent.

The state's other publicly funded university did not raise tuition and fees for the second year in a row. Delaware State University students will pay \$7,336 for in-state tuition and \$15,962 for those outside Delaware.

Still, a 1.9 percent increase is easily the smallest percentage increase in the past decade at UD, where students were sometimes hit with hikes of as much as 9.7 percent. The average increase over the last 10 years was 6.6 percent.

UD Provost Domenico Grasso said the most recent increase is necessary to cover growing costs of things like energy, salary increases and growth in health benefits. He said university officials are concerned about the cost of attending school, and have made affordability a key plank of their recently-launched strategic planning process.

"This is very high on our priority list. It is something we are certainly concerned about," he said. "But, at the same time, President Harker and the faculty and staff of this university have been committed to Delawareans, and I think people know this institution is a tremendous value."

Grasso said UD has pointed to the Commitment to Delawareans, UD's program aimed at in-state families that meets a student's full demonstrated financial need and caps student loans at 25 percent of the cost of a four-year-degree.

All told, UD students received more than \$74 million in scholarships and grants, more than double the amount five years ago, the university said.

School officials also pointed to reports from the Princeton Review and Kiplinger's Personal Finance that each named UD a "best value" institution based on its academics and cost.

"This is a top-ranked research university of the first caliber," Grasso said. "If you look at the net cost of the University of Delaware, we're competitive with the best."

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WILMINGTON JOURNAL NEWS EDITORIALS

Rethink City Worker Law In Wilmington

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

Revisiting the city of Wilmington's mandatory residency requirement for its workers was bound to keep cropping up since the mandatory employment rule took effect two decades ago.

It's no secret that it has left plenty of potential good hires grumbling over the years. Until the late 1990s, anyone hired by the city had to live in Wilmington. The law was later changed. New hires now must live in the city for five years.

And courts have backed this idea for decades now, judging them "not irrational." According to a Fraternal Order of Police case in Iowa, the benefits outweighed the criticism – "such things as having employees available for emergency calls, employees having a stake in the community, enhancing the tax base, improving community attitudes and cooperation, increasing loyalty to the community, and reducing absenteeism."

Mayor Dennis Williams essentially outlined the same benefits a few months ago to The News Journal Editorial Board. He cited city workers' loyalty to their hometown and commitment to the state's largest municipal government even during such tough economic times. He judged these employees more valuable than contracting their jobs to outside vendors, despite the purported cost savings. And he made a point that often the costs savings to such outside vendors don't stay stagnant.

So shouldn't such loyalty on the mayor's part to these employees be reciprocated with all workers' compliance to the residency requirement? However, not all city workers are held to such a requirement. There are several special cases, mostly in management, where workers have knowingly skirted the intent of the law. Some rent apartments or stay with relatives during the weekdays, while visiting and maintaining their primary residence outside the city.

Rather than revisiting the lack of compliance to the existence requirement, it's clear that living in the city is a hurdle for workers who might be good at what they do, but just don't want to follow the residency rule beyond the spirit of the law. They should not be subjected to public shame, though. City Councilman Michael Brown wants to "review the residencies of certain employees by calling them in for a hearing." That's a wasteful side show in the making, one that will only scare off potential good candidates for city jobs, who do meet the requirements.

To be fair to all workers – regardless of their position or address – the city has two choices. Drop the residency requirement entirely, which would draw a wider pool of potential hires. Former Mayor James Baker urges as much, because he found it interfered with his administration getting the best talent.

Or the city could do what the law originally intended – only hire workers who are committed to the city and who demonstrate it by complying with the residency rule of living within city limits for the five-year requirement.

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The Right Way To Help Students With Disabilities

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

Over the last several days, The News Journal has focused on the issue of standardized testing in Delaware public schools for students who have disabilities. This provides a useful opportunity to talk more broadly about how Delaware can better help its students with disabilities fulfill their potential.

Much of our time in public office has been dedicated to advocating for children with disabilities. We believe strongly that there is much more the state and its schools should do to help students with disabilities fulfill their potential.

We believe just as strongly, though, that it is not all about standardized tests. Tracking how our students are progressing is important, and the state must be diligent and disciplined about doing so. But, if the state does not provide a sufficient number of teachers and specialists to work with children with special needs, and if the state does not provide those professionals with the time and training to hone their skills, then standardized tests will do our students no good. Simply saying that we should have high expectations for our students – then giving them tests – will not help them achieve.

The reality is that educating students with disabilities is often more expensive than educating students who are lucky enough not to have those extra hurdles. Advocates for children with disabilities have had to be vigilant over the past several years as policymakers at state and local levels have sought to divert funds that should be spent educating students with special needs into other funding streams. If the state is serious about helping students with disabilities improve academically, it should make a concerted effort to ensure that resources are available to teachers and schools to provide the individualized, skilled attention that those students require.

When it comes to truly assessing students, Delaware is as rigorous as almost any state in the country. Eighty-eight percent of students with disabilities in Delaware take the DCAS – the same standard assessment that all students take.

By national standards, that is a very high percentage. The federal Department of Education criticized Delaware for having a low participation rate among students with disabilities on a separate assessment that the federal government conducts, the results of which are never revealed to Delaware teachers and are never used to help any individual student or evaluate any individual teacher or school. We are more concerned with student participation on assessments that actually measure how individual students are doing.

The remaining students with disabilities take an alternate test called the DCAS Alternate. For some students with disabilities, the DCAS Alternate is a good assessment that accurately charts their progress. But for some of our students with very significant cognitive disabilities, the DCAS Alternate tells us little or nothing about their progress.

Many of these students have very limited ability to communicate.

They take the test year after year, they are relentlessly prepared for the test by school personnel trying to follow the rules, and year after year, they are unable to produce any usable results on the test. Parents object to their children being tested, but still, they are tested. Legislation that we authored with State Rep. Longhurst this year was designed to deal with that small subgroup of students.

The bill that we authored was supported by 60 of the 62 members of the General Assembly. Senate Bill 229 simply says that for students with very severe cognitive disabilities, whose parents and schools don't believe a standardized test like the DCAS Alternate is appropriate, the state must provide a different assessment that is based on a portfolio of the student's work. It doesn't say that those students won't be assessed; it just says that they will be assessed in a way that provides some meaningful results. And it will only apply to students who qualify medically and whose parents and schools think it is the right thing to do.

This is not a novel idea. Massachusetts, which was rated by the federal government as having a good record of educating children with disabilities, uses a portfolio assessment for all of its students with disabilities who do not take the standard assessment.

People who try to simplify the issue of educating students with disabilities by saying it is just about expectations and assessments do those students no good. High expectations are important, and assessments are necessary.

But, providing adequate staffing in our schools, ensuring a high level of professional development for those who work with our kids, and exercising some common sense and discretion when it comes to assessments are even more important.

We believe that students with disabilities can excel – and, more than that – we believe that it is our moral obligation to help them do so. But doing so will require a real investment by the state, not just a test.

Matt Denn is Delaware's lieutenant governor. State Sen. Nicole Poore represents the 12th District.

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Time To Separate Health Care Coverage And Work?

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

I was thrilled to work for the federal government for six years. I believe passionately in the importance of public service, and I had both job security in a field I care deeply about and amazing co-workers. It never occurred to me that my employment placed me at any disadvantage – until I came face to face with special laws that restricted my reproductive choices. I suppose I shouldn't have been surprised, given increasing attempts across the United States to limit women's access to reproductive health care, in some cases with the backing of the Supreme Court.

I've been on the pill for most of my adult life, and I've always had irregular menstruation, routinely going three or four months without a period. That's why I didn't worry when I missed a period last fall. It wasn't until I began to suffer extreme nausea and fatigue that I began to think something was wrong. A home pregnancy test on a Thursday night led to phone calls Friday morning and then a quickly scheduled doctor's appointment for Monday.

Already struggling with the idea of a very unplanned and unwanted pregnancy, I was beyond shocked when my doctor informed me I was already eight weeks and three days pregnant. Abortion wasn't an automatic choice for me, but it was one I was strongly considering, and the method I preferred – drug-induced abortion – can't be performed after nine weeks. I had only days to consider my choices.

My doctor and nurse were supportive and informative, and I felt relieved to be in their care. But after leaving to do some of the required paperwork, the nurse quickly returned and sat down with me, holding my hand as she told me that, as a federal employee enrolled in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, my health-care coverage is barred by Congress from paying for abortion services except in cases of rape or incest or when the life of the woman is in danger. If I wanted to terminate my pregnancy, I was on my own.

So I ran out of my doctor's office to call Planned Parenthood before its appointment line shut down for the day, despite not yet knowing whether I was going to choose an abortion. My ability to make my own decision was rapidly diminishing. I wanted to preserve all my options.

By the time of my appointment, two days later, I knew what I wanted to do. After a long morning of exams and conversations, I had an abortion.

The procedure cost around \$480, due immediately. I am fortunate: I was able to pay for the abortion without affecting my ability to honor other financial commitments. But not that long ago, I couldn't have managed that, and I fear for the women who can neither afford the procedure nor wait for their next

payday to take action. The clinic I went to was only minutes from both my house and my workplace, so I didn't have to find a way to pay for last-minute travel expenses.

I'm not ashamed that, as a 29-year-old woman, I'm sexually active and I have a healthy, functioning reproductive system. In fact, I'm quite happy to be able to state this. I was also fortunate to have an accommodating workplace, supportive family and friends and the financial resources to handle unexpected expenses.

Abortion opponents often argue that impediments such as the ones I faced lead women to consider more carefully the decisions they are making. But I am fully capable of making appropriate decisions, in consultation with my doctor, about my health, my body and my life.

In the end, I would have gotten an abortion with or without the restrictions placed upon me as a federal employee. It was the right decision for me. Restricting my access to health coverage didn't prevent my pregnancy, and it certainly didn't influence my choice. All it did was punish me, financially and otherwise, for making a responsible, physician-approved health-care decision.

I've now left federal government to pursue a master's degree, and I am proud of the years I spent working with the federal government to keep the American public safe and secure. However, the mission of preserving my health and well-being rests solely with me and my doctors, and it requires no interference from my government or its politicians.

Loren Clark-Moe is a former Department of Homeland Security analyst.

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Our Disappearing Role As A Global Leader

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), July 7, 2014

Coaches know that there is nothing more dangerous for a sports team than retreating into passivity out of fear of making a mistake. Whether it is because of a desire to sit on a lead or because of nerves following a setback, failing to advance aggressively is almost always a strategic error.

What is true in athletic competition is all too true in the life of nations. While imprudence is never good, excessive caution in the name of prudence or expediency can have grave consequences. A nation will never have more power or influence than it has ambition to shape the global system. A sense of fatalism can become a self-fulfilling prophecy as adversaries are emboldened and allies move either to appease rivals or to provide for their own security.

At a time of high tension in Europe, with Russian adventurism in Ukraine, pervasive conflict and instability in the Middle East and rising tensions within Asia as China makes its presence ever more strongly felt, the choices the United States makes will have far-reaching consequences. It is no exaggeration to say that there is more doubt about our willingness to stand behind our allies, resist aggression and support a stable global system than at any time in decades.

Effective engagement at flash points is essential, but crisis response is never as good as crisis prevention. Somewhat lost as the world focuses on global hot spots is the danger that the United States will abdicate the responsibility it has taken for 70 years – since World War II – for supporting a more integrated, increasingly rule-based and faster-growing global economy. It is the success of this project that explains why history played out so differently after the Second World War than after the first, and it is this project that won the Cold War by demonstrating that capitalism, rather than communism, was the best way forward for the world's people.

At a time when authoritarian mercantilism has emerged as the principal alternative to democratic capitalism, Congress is flirting with eliminating the Export-Import Bank, which at no cost to the

government enables U.S. exporters to compete on a more level playing field with those of competitor nations, all of whom have similar vehicles. Only by maintaining a capacity to counter foreign subsidies can we hope to maintain a level global trading system and to avoid ceding ground to mercantilists. Eliminating the Export-Import Bank without extracting concessions from foreign governments would be the economic equivalent of unilateral disarmament.

No one with any sophistication supposes that the world has seen the last major financial crisis or that we can prosper in a world in crisis. Yet the United States, having pushed successfully for major increases in International Monetary Fund resources and for important reforms in its governance, now is the lone nation blocking these measures from going into effect as Congress is unwilling to pass the relevant authorizing legislation. The IMF enables us to do in the economic area what we are unable to do in the security area: place most of the burden for supporting a functioning global system on all global stakeholders.

The key strategic thrust proclaimed in U.S. foreign policy over the past five years has been the pivot, or rebalance, toward Asia. This is entirely appropriate given the shift in the global economic center of gravity. The reality, though, is that little has changed. The most important potential positive change in the next several years would be the achievement of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Yet the combined likelihood that a deal will be negotiated and that it will receive congressional approval seems much too low for comfort, and there is little evidence that the issue commands urgency beyond the relatively narrow international trade community. The prospects for a trade agreement with Europe seem even more remote.

Then there is the economic assistance dimension. When Latin America faced a profound debt crisis in the 1980s, when the Berlin Wall fell and the nations of central Europe and the former Soviet Union needed to transform their economies, when financial crisis struck Asia in 1997, when debt burdens stunted Africa's growth around the turn of the century, the United States, working with its allies and the international financial institutions, crafted strong if imperfect responses to restore growth and hope. No comparably large and generous effort is visible today with respect to the Middle East or Ukraine, even as China is emerging as a greater presence in much of Africa and Latin America than the United States.

A failure to engage effectively with global economic issues is a failure to mount a strong forward defense of U.S. interests. That we cannot do everything must not become a reason not to do anything. While elections may turn on domestic preoccupations, history's judgment will turn on what the United States does internationally. Passivity's moment has passed.

Lawrence Summers is a professor at and past president of Harvard University. He was treasury secretary from 1999 to 2001 and economic adviser to President Obama from 2009 through 2010.

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