

Sent: Sat, 18 Oct 2014 06:02:45 -0400

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Subject: Vice Presidential News Clips for Saturday, October 18, 2014

[VPNewsClips141018.doc](#)

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TO: THE VICE PRESIDENT AND STAFF

DATE: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2014 -- 7:00 AM EDT

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

BIDEN IN THE NEWS:

- + Before Ebola, New Czar Handled Political Crises (NYT)
- + Amid Assurances On Ebola, Obama Is Said To Seethe (NYT)
- + Ron Klain, Chief Of Staff To 2 Vice Presidents, Is Named Ebola Czar (NYT)
- + The Ebola Panic (WSJ)
- + Obama Appoints Lawyer To Handle Ebola Response (WP)
- + Obama Naming Ebola Czar Follows Long White House Practice (BLOOM)
- + Obama's Pick For Ebola Coordinator Draws Criticism (BLOOM)
- + White House Touts Ebola Czar Ron Klain's Ties To Congress (CQRC)
- + Ebola Czar Ron Klain Was A Fannie Mae And Cigna Lobbyist (WASHEX)
- + 'Ebola Czar' Brings Decades Of Washington Experience (LAT)
- + Obama Naming Former Biden Staffer Ebola 'czar' (NYPOST)
- + White House: We Didn't Want 'an Ebola Expert' To Be The Ebola Czar (WT)
- + How A Term For Russian Royalty Worked Its Way Into American Government (SLATEMAG)
- + Surprise: Americans Are Confident In Government's Ability To Handle Ebola (WP)
- + Former Biden Chief Of Staff To Lead Ebola Response (AP)
- + Ragland: After Early Blows In Ebola Fight, Dallas Is Getting Back On Its Feet (DMN)
- + Ebola 'Czar' Knows Washington, But Not Medicine (AP)
- + Obama To Name Ron Klain As Ebola Czar (NEWREP)
- + Ron Klain's Resume: From Recounts To Stimulus To Ebola (USAT)
- + Who Is Ron Klain, Who Will Lead The Obama Administration's Response To Ebola? (WP)
- + Biden's Son Fails Drug Test, Is Discharged From Navy (USAT)

- + Commander: Hunter Biden Knew Drug Test Was Coming (USAT)
- + Biden Son Said Discharged From Navy Reserve On Drug Test (BLOOM)
- + Joe Biden's Son Discharged From Navy For Cocaine Use (PHILMAG)
- + Biden Son Booted From Navy. What's The Backstory? (CSM)
- + Biden Son Out Of Navy After Drug Test (AP)
- + Who Is Hunter Biden? (CNN)
- + Report: Hunter Biden Discharged From Navy After Failing Drug Test (CNN)
- + Should Joe Biden's Son Have Been Kicked Out Of The Navy For Drug Use? (HUFFPOST)
- + Hunter Biden's Cocaine Use And Vice President Biden's Evolving Perspective On The Drug War (HUFFPOST)
- + Biden's Son Faces No Bar Review After Discharge (CHAROBS)
- + Vice President Joe Biden To Appear At Event On Domestic Violence In Duluth Next Week (AP)
- + Joe Biden, Mariska Hargitay Team Up To Help Domestic Abuse Victims (HUFFPOST)
- + Vice President Biden To Visit Minnesota (ROCHSTER)
- + VP Biden Coming To Range (HIBBING)
- + Obama Pushes To Save Illinois Gov. Quinn (USAT)
- + Uphill Battle Continues For Renteria (HNFRDSENT)
- + Jill Biden Comes To Atlanta (MYAJC)
- + It's Time To Watch Out For An October Surprise (CHIT)
- + Early Voting Starts This Week, With Changes (CHIT)
- + Honduras Boosts Air Force In Fight Against Drug Smugglers (REU)
- + 8 Things You Didn't Know About Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor (PBS)

NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS:

- + Small Schools Work In New York (NYT)
- + Vatican Signals On Gays And Remarriage Are A Hopeful Beginning (NYT)
- + The White Teeth Monopoly (NYT)
- + Failures Of Competence (NYT)
- + Start Helping The Helpers (NYT)
- + Free Pigs From The Abusive Crates (NYT)
- + What Is A Catholic Family? (NYT)
- + New Rules Could Limit Methane Emissions' Effects On The Atmosphere (WP)
- + L.A. Schools Superintendent John Deasy A Casualty Of Politics In Schools (WP)
- + A Health-care Plan Worse Than Obamacare (WP)
- + The Government Wants To Study 'social Pollution' On Twitter (WP)
- + Fan Fiction, From Florida's Fagate Through History (WP)
- + Mayoral Candidates Wave Promises Across D.C. (WP)

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES:

- + Biden Knew Drug Test Was Coming (WILNJ)
- + Plan To Expansion Wilmington Port Called A "Game Changer" (WILNJ)
- + Liberians In Delaware Fight Ebola Stigma (WILNJ)

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL EDITORIALS:

- + Hunter Biden's Special Exceptions Raise Questions (WILNJ)
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BIDEN IN THE NEWS:

BEFORE EBOLA, NEW CZAR HANDLED POLITICAL CRISES (NYT)

By Julie Hirschfeld Davis

New York Times, October 18, 2014

WASHINGTON - Ron Klain wanted Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. to prepare for the worst.

So as he coached Mr. Biden through weeks of preparations for his vice-presidential debates in 2008, he assembled a notebook filled with questions - and calculated the precise percentage

chance that each one would be asked.

"Ron could anticipate the questions to be asked of the candidate within a range of about 95 percent," said Tom Donilon, President Obama's former national security adviser and Mr. Klain's partner during that round of debate preparations.

Now Mr. Klain, named on Friday by the president to be the administration's Ebola response coordinator, will have to put his knack for anticipating worst-case scenarios to work on what has rapidly become not just a public health mess for the White House, but a political one.

A seasoned crisis-response operative and veteran of Democratic administrations and campaigns, Mr. Klain, 53, is charged with managing the federal efforts to monitor and contain the deadly virus that has touched off a wave of anxiety in the United States and raised questions about the competence of Mr. Obama's administration.

After Mr. Biden was elected vice president, Mr. Klain became his chief of staff, the same job he had served in under Al Gore. He is known for his ability to handle high-stakes and fast-moving political and policy challenges. Mr. Klain was the lead Democratic lawyer for Mr. Gore during the 2000 election recount, and was later played by Kevin Spacey in "Recount," the HBO drama about the disputed contest.

His appointment came as Mr. Obama and his team stepped up their efforts to monitor Ebola, which has sown mounting fear among the public despite having infected only three people in the United States.

It has also intensified criticism of the Obama administration's management of a major national challenge, fueled in recent days by reports that two health care workers were infected while caring for an Ebola-afflicted patient at a Dallas hospital, and one worker who subsequently flew on an airplane with a fever.

"What we were looking for is not an Ebola expert but rather an implementation expert, and that's exactly what Ron Klain is," said Josh Earnest, the White House press secretary. "He is somebody who has extensive experience in the federal government. He's somebody that has extensive management experience when it comes to the private sector."

Mr. Klain, who left Mr. Biden's office in 2011, is currently the president of Case Holdings and the general counsel at Revolution L.L.C., companies that were founded by Steve Case, the former chief executive of AOL.

Now, Mr. Earnest said, he will be focusing "100 percent of his time on coordinating this whole-of-government response."

The appointment drew criticism from congressional Republicans who said Mr. Klain - who has no record or expertise in Ebola specifically or public health in general - was the wrong person for the job.

"Ebola is a health crisis, yet the president has appointed as his new Ebola 'czar' a partisan loyalist whose expertise is politics - not health," said Senator Jeff Sessions, Republican of Alabama. "One would think, faced with the prospect of an epidemic, the president would task an expert in epidemiology, not an expert in political spin."

Yet some former co-workers said Mr. Klain is uniquely positioned to help Mr. Obama get tighter control of a multifaceted government effort to combat Ebola's spread, and rein in a story that has spiraled out of the White House's control.

"He can see 10 steps ahead, and he's got the leadership skills, the management skills and the substantive knowledge to figure out how to get in front of this - get out of a reactive stance and into a proactive stance," said Stephanie Cutter, a former senior White House adviser. "He's able to solve problems before they happen."

He is also known, including by Republicans, as someone who is empowered to make key decisions and cut deals. John Ulyot, a Republican strategist and communications consultant who worked with him in the private sector and on Capitol Hill, said it was Mr. Klain who met privately with Arlen Specter, the former Pennsylvania senator, to persuade him to switch his party affiliation in 2009 from Republican to Democrat.

"Bringing him in is a clear signal to Washington that you have a real decision-maker with the ear of the president to be able to walk in and get a very quick decision on the thorniest issue," said Mr. Ulyot.

Former colleagues say Mr. Klain has a track record of successfully dispatching with knotty problems, policy or political. They point to his work helping Mr. Biden oversee the \$787 billion

stimulus package, although the initiative has also earned him criticism, since it gave rise to a deal with the solar-panel company Solyndra, which went bankrupt after receiving \$535 million in federal loan guarantees.

"Ron will hit the ground running," Mr. Donilon said. "He has deep relationships, he can master huge amounts of information quickly, pull together a staff quite quickly and well, and he will be able to operate at the cabinet level."

Mr. Klain, a graduate of Harvard Law School who was a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice Byron R. White, will report directly to Lisa O. Monaco, Mr. Obama's counterterrorism adviser and Susan E. Rice, his national security adviser.

AMID ASSURANCES ON EBOLA, OBAMA IS SAID TO SEETHE (NYT)

By Michael D. Shear And Mark Landler

New York Times, October 18, 2014

WASHINGTON - Beneath the calming reassurance that President Obama has repeatedly offered during the Ebola crisis, there is a deepening frustration, even anger, with how the government has handled key elements of the response.

Those frustrations spilled over when Mr. Obama convened his top aides in the Cabinet room after canceling his schedule on Wednesday. Medical officials were providing information that later turned out to be wrong. Guidance to local health teams was not adequate. It was not clear which Ebola patients belonged in which threat categories.

"It's not tight," a visibly angry Mr. Obama said of the response, according to people briefed on the meeting. He told aides they needed to get ahead of events and demanded a more hands-on approach, particularly from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "He was not satisfied with the response," a senior official said.

The difference between the public and private messages illustrates the dilemma Mr. Obama faces on Ebola - and a range of other national security issues - as he tries to galvanize the response to a public health scare while not adding to the sense of panic fueled by 24-hour cable TV and the nonstop Twitter chatter.

On Friday, Mr. Obama took a step to both fix that response and reassure the public, naming Ron Klain, a former aide to Vice President Joseph R. Biden, to coordinate the government's efforts on Ebola.

The appointment followed the president's statement Thursday that the job was necessary "just to make sure that we are crossing all the t's and dotting all the i's going forward." "Part of the challenge is to be assertive, to be in command, and yet not feed a kind of panic that could easily evolve here," said David Axelrod, a close adviser to the president in his first term. "It's not enough to doggedly and persistently push for answers in meetings. You have to be seen doggedly and persistently pushing for answers."

For two turbulent weeks, White House officials have sought to balance those imperatives: insisting the dangers to the American public were being overstated in the media, while also moving quickly to increase the president's demonstration of action.

The Ebola outbreak in West Africa, and its arrival in the United States, is the latest in a cascade of crises that have stretched Mr. Obama's national security staff thin. As the White House scrambled to stop the spread of Ebola beyond a handful of cases, officials were also grappling with an escalating military campaign against the Islamic State, the specter of a new Cold War with Russia over Ukraine, and the virtual disintegration of Yemen, which has been a seedbed for Al Qaeda. Senior officials said they pushed Mr. Obama to name an Ebola coordinator as a way of easing pressure on the staff at the National Security Council.

At the meeting on Wednesday, officials said, Mr. Obama placed much of the blame on the C.D.C., which provided shifting information about which threat category patients were in, and did not adequately train doctors and nurses at hospitals with Ebola cases on the proper protective procedures.

On Thursday night, in televised remarks, Mr. Obama sought to reassure the public about the dangers from Ebola. But the sense of crisis that emanated from the White House was in sharp contrast to Sept. 30, when Thomas Eric Duncan, a Liberian who had traveled to Dallas, tested positive for Ebola. Mr. Obama received a telephone briefing from Dr. Thomas R. Frieden, the director of the C.D.C., after which the White House issued a sanguine statement that concluded:

"We have the infrastructure in place to respond safely and effectively."

In the days that followed, Mr. Obama carried on as usual while his aides gamely added Ebola to their bulging portfolios. On Oct. 1, Mr. Obama met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, and later had dinner with friends at the RPM Steakhouse in Chicago, where he had traveled for fund-raisers and to deliver an economic speech.

By early October, as questions about the Dallas hospital's treatment of Mr. Duncan mounted, federal officials began reassessing their response, even as they continued to express confidence. C.D.C. officials publicly dismissed the effectiveness of screening for Ebola at airports in the United States. But Jeh Johnson, the secretary of Homeland Security, found a way to make it work over the weekend of Oct. 4. Mr. Obama announced the screening protocol the following Monday. Even after Mr. Duncan's death on Oct. 8, officials betrayed little sense of a change in approach. Mr. Obama traveled to California for campaign fund-raising and on his return to Washington, received a briefing from his secretary of health and human services about the announcement that a nurse who treated Mr. Duncan had contracted Ebola.

The business-as-usual sentiment at the White House changed abruptly, officials said, when a second nurse in Dallas contracted the disease early Wednesday morning. The fact that she had traveled on a Frontier Airlines flight despite having a fever added to the concern, officials said. "This Frontier thing took it out of the abstract thing and to this level where people could identify with and made them scared," a senior official said. Within hours, White House aides canceled a planned trip by Mr. Obama to Connecticut and New Jersey. Hours later, Thursday's trip to Rhode Island and New York City was also scrubbed.

In their place, officials quickly designed two frenetic days of presidential activity: meetings, phone calls, statements to the press. All other subjects were shelved - at least publicly - to allow Mr. Obama and his senior advisers to confront the management of the Ebola crisis directly and to demonstrate the administration's resolve publicly.

Susan E. Rice, the national security adviser, has been leading the effort to prod Britain, Germany, France, and other countries to do more to respond to the outbreak. One of Ms. Rice's deputies, Lisa Monaco, who is responsible for homeland security and counterterrorism issues, has been coordinating the domestic response, which involves working with the C.D.C., state and local health authorities, and the Transportation Security Administration on issues like scanning of incoming passengers.

Administration officials insist the president has been deeply engaged since late August, when he played host to African leaders, in prodding them to ramp up the fight against Ebola in West Africa. Last month, he warned world leaders at the United Nations General Assembly to do more.

"It's not that people aren't doing anything," a senior official said. "It's that they're not yet doing enough."

Complicating the administration's international push, it is also pressing European allies to contribute military resources to the campaign against the Islamic State. Officials said they were satisfied with Britain and Germany, but that France had been dragging its heels.

Administration officials also said Mr. Obama felt that the United States needed to intensify its efforts because the World Health Organization was "slow to react to this," an official said.

On Friday afternoon, even before Mr. Klain started, the White House showed signs of returning to normal.

Mr. Obama chaired a meeting of the National Security Council to discuss the state of the fight against the Islamic State, which has become a grinding campaign in recent days, with American officials urging Iraq's new government to deploy its troops more aggressively. The president is scheduled to campaign for candidates running for governor in Maryland and Illinois on Sunday.

RON KLAIN, CHIEF OF STAFF TO 2 VICE PRESIDENTS, IS NAMED EBOLA CZAR (NYT)

By Julie Hirschfeld Davis And Michael D. Shear

New York Times, October 18, 2014

WASHINGTON - President Obama on Friday named Ron Klain, a seasoned Democratic crisis-response operative and White House veteran, to manage the government's response to the deadly virus as public anxiety grows over its possible spread.

Mr. Klain, a former chief of staff for Vice Presidents Al Gore and Joseph R. Biden Jr., is known for his ability to handle high-stakes and fast-moving political challenges. He was the lead Democratic

lawyer for Mr. Gore during the 2000 election recount, and was later played by Kevin Spacey in the HBO drama "Recount" about the disputed contest.

"Obviously right now, the news is dominated by Ebola, and we've got an all-hands-on-deck approach across government to make sure that we're keeping the American people safe," Mr. Obama said on Friday at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, where he was announcing new antifraud measures for government-issued debit cards.

Mr. Klain's appointment, announced by a White House official, came as Mr. Obama and his team increased their efforts to monitor and contain Ebola, which has sown mounting fear among the public despite the fact that only two people have been confirmed to have contracted Ebola in the United States.

The virus has also threatened to raise questions about the Obama administration's competence, fueled in recent days by reports that two health care workers were infected while caring for an Ebola-afflicted patient at a Dallas hospital, and one subsequently flew on an airplane with a fever. Mr. Klain is uniquely positioned to help Mr. Obama counter such questions and rein in a story that has sometimes seemed to spiral out of the White House's control, said one Democratic operative. "He'll control the message better than most people would, which is really important from an economic standpoint, from a health standpoint, but it's also important from a political perspective," the operative said, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

"If anybody can get the way this is being reported and discussed under control in a short period of time, he's the one," the operative added.

The White House official said that Mr. Klain "comes to the job with strong management credentials, extensive federal government experience overseeing complex operations and good working relationships with leading members of Congress, as well as senior Obama administration officials, including the president."

After learning this week that an infected nurse had traveled by air, Mr. Obama scrapped most of his schedule in favor of meetings with top national security and public health officials. While praising their work to date on Ebola, the president said they had full plates - including the fight against the Islamic State and the onset of flu season - and another person might be needed "just to make sure that we are crossing all the t's and dotting all the i's going forward."

Mr. Klain will report directly to Lisa Monaco, Mr. Obama's homeland security adviser, and Susan E. Rice, his national security adviser, the official said. His appointment was first reported by CNN. He is currently the president of Case Holdings and the general counsel at Revolution LLC, companies that were founded by Steve Case, the former chief executive of AOL. A graduate of Harvard Law School, Mr. Klain served as a law clerk for Justice Byron R. White and worked as an aide in the Senate, as well as in several Democratic campaigns.

Mr. Klain was chief of staff to Mr. Biden from 2009 to 2011, and held the same post from 1995 to 1999 for Mr. Gore. He was director of rapid response for Mr. Gore's 2000 presidential campaign.

THE EBOLA PANIC PANIC (WSJ)

Can they quarantine Jeanne Shaheen?

By James Taranto

Wall Street Journal, October 18, 2014

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

OBAMA APPOINTS LAWYER TO HANDLE EBOLA RESPONSE (WP)

By Juliet Eilperin

Washington Post, October 18, 2014

President Obama Friday tapped longtime Democratic operative Ron Klain to coordinate the federal government's response to the threat of widespread infection from the Ebola virus. The move came as the president and his administration faced mounting criticism about its handling of the disease. The appointment of Klain, an experienced Washington lawyer who served as chief of staff to both Vice President Biden and former vice president Al Gore, signaled the administration's recognition that an Ebola outbreak in the United States could overwhelm its management capacity.

In Klain, 53, Obama has enlisted a legal expert and Democratic strategist with a reputation for handling complex projects such as the administration's economic stimulus package during

Obama's first term and the Democratic effort to challenge the 2000 presidential election results. Despite repeated reassurances from the White House and federal public health officials that the chances of widespread infection remain small, the public anxiety about the disease continued to build, and it is increasingly becoming a political issue as Election Day draws near.

A growing chorus of Democrats - several of whom are embroiled in tight reelection contests - are calling for increased travel restrictions on passengers from West Africa, even though the administration and public health experts warn such a move would be counterproductive.

White House press secretary Josh Earnest said Obama, who spoke to Klain by phone Friday morning, had chosen him because he "recognized that the response would benefit from having someone who could devote a hundred percent of their time to this specific task - that is, coordinating the response - and somebody like Mr. Klain, who has a strong management track record both inside government and in the private sector, is the right person for the job."

While the president's homeland security and counterterrorism adviser, Lisa Monaco, has been coordinating the domestic side of the inter-agency response to the outbreak since March, a White House official who spoke on the condition of anonymity said the administration began reassessing that approach after the issue "exploded on her agenda." This week, the official added, the White House started seriously contemplating the idea of bringing in outside help.

Earnest noted that Monaco, who also helps direct the administration's strategy to confront the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, "has significant responsibilities when it comes to other national security priorities as well."

Klain will report to Monaco and Susan E. Rice, the president's national security adviser.

In another move to ramp up the White House response Friday, Obama decided to designate senior personnel on the ground in Dallas, including an experienced Federal Emergency Management Agency coordinator and a White House liaison.

Klain is tasked with coordinating domestic preparedness efforts and the U.S. military operation to help control the virus's spread in West Africa. His appointment drew plaudits from Democrats but little praise from Republicans. Most GOP lawmakers questioned why the president was drawing on someone with a political and management pedigree rather than someone with public health or infectious disease credentials. And some faulted Obama for not taking more aggressive action to halt the flow of people from Ebola-affected countries into the United States.

"We don't need another so-called 'czar'; we need presidential leadership. This is a public health crisis, and the answer isn't another White House political operative," said Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) in a statement. "The answer is a commander in chief who stands up and leads, banning flights from Ebola-afflicted nations and acting decisively to secure our southern border."

Even Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), who had endorsed the idea of empowering a single person to oversee the federal response, tweeted that Klain was "not what I had in mind" and he preferred a Cabinet member "accountable to Congress."

House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Edward R. Royce (R-Calif.) questioned Klain's lack of medical credentials, asking in a statement, "Why didn't the president pick an individual with a noteworthy infectious disease or public health background?"

"The fact of the matter is this is much broader than just a medical response," Earnest said Friday. "What we were looking for is not an Ebola expert but rather an implementation expert, and that's exactly what Ron Klain is."

Klain emerged from the Al Gore 2000 and John F. Kerry 2004 presidential campaigns with a reputation as one of the Democrats' most able strategists.

"I wouldn't call him a policy wonk by any means, but he was someone who got [that] you couldn't formulate good strategy without understanding the policy," said Chris Jennings, who served as a top White House health policy adviser under former president Bill Clinton and Obama.

A Harvard Law School graduate, Klain clerked for Supreme Court Justice Byron White before rising through the staff ranks in the Senate to secure the job of Gore's chief of staff at just 31. Klain became close with Biden while serving as a staffer for the Senate Judiciary Committee when Biden served as chairman and helped advise Biden during the 2008 campaign.

During Obama's pre-inaugural transition, the newly-elected president wanted to find a role for Klain in the West Wing, and his name was mentioned as a potential White House communications director, according to a person familiar with the internal deliberations. But Biden also wanted him and convinced Klain to join the vice president's office as chief of staff. More recently, Klain was a

serious contender for the post of White House counsel - though W. Neil Eggleston ultimately took the job.

Mark Gitenstein, a former Obama administration ambassador to Romania, said Klain developed a strong relationship with Obama while helping prepare the then-senator from Illinois for the presidential debates against Republican nominee John McCain (R-Ariz.) in 2008. Klain had served in a similar role for Kerry's 2004 campaign.

Klain is an enthusiastic Facebook user who frequently posts about his family. He is married to Monica Medina, who served as a top National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration official during Obama's first term and is the National Geographic Society's senior director for international ocean policy.

Gitenstein said he believed that Klain's management of the economic stimulus push in the first year of the Obama administration helped him prepare for the challenges that he'll face managing the Ebola response. "It was a very difficult job - a management problem and a problem of getting the money to the right places, which required coordination with other Cabinet secretaries. . . . Ron really got his arms around the problem as fast as anyone I've seen.

Klain is taking a leave of absence as president of Case Holdings, the holding company for the business and philanthropic interests of former AOL chairman Steve Case, and general counsel of Case's venture capital firm Revolution LLC. No start date has been set for his new White House job, but Earnest said he would start "soon" and is expected to work for roughly five to six months on the Ebola initiative.

The Klain announcement came as Ebola fears continued to reverberate across the country. Friday brought news that a health-care worker from the Dallas hospital that has been the epicenter of Ebola in the United States had been isolated on a cruise ship that left Texas on Sunday.

This health-care worker had no direct contact with Thomas Duncan, the Liberian man who was diagnosed with Ebola and later died after flying to Texas last month. But, according to Jen Psaki, spokeswoman for the State Department, the person "may have had contact with" fluid samples from Duncan during his treatment. Mexican authorities did not allow the cruise ship to make a scheduled visit to Cozumel on Friday, according to Carnival Cruise Lines. It is scheduled to return to Galveston, Tex., on Sunday morning.

In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced late Thursday that another large group of people had to be contacted and screened. The CDC had said it was reaching out to anyone who was on the Frontier Airlines flight taken by Amber Vinson, the second Dallas nurse to contract Ebola, when she traveled from Cleveland to Texas on Monday. However, the CDC says it is reaching out to passengers on the Frontier flight she had taken to Ohio on Oct. 10 to see whether they are deemed to be at potential risk.

OBAMA NAMING EBOLA CZAR FOLLOWS LONG WHITE HOUSE PRACTICE (BLOOM)

By Jim Snyder And Kathleen Hunter

Bloomberg News, October 18, 2014

They've been used for everything from retooling for World War I to cleaning up the nation's largest offshore oil spill.

But history shows the appointment of special presidential coordinators, as President Barack Obama did today to combat Ebola, doesn't always work.

"We've had dozens of them over the decades and I'd say they have a 50-50 success record at best," said Paul Light, a public service professor at New York University. "I'm having a hard time thinking of any who really made very much of a difference."

Obama plans to appoint Ron Klain, 53, a former chief of staff to both Vice President Joe Biden and former Vice President Al Gore, as an Ebola coordinator who'll direct various agency activities to stop the spread of the deadly disease.

In doing so, he's following in footsteps that go back at least to President Woodrow Wilson, who chose Bernard Baruch, a businessman, to prepare the country for World War I, said Mitchel Sollenberger, an associate provost at the University of Michigan in Dearborn, who co-wrote a book about the history of policy coordinators, often referred to as "czars."

"The problem with creating czars is they add that other layer of bureaucracy," he said in an interview. "It's much more about optics and politics than in resolving issues."

Appointing an adviser doesn't always help achieve White House goals. Production of military

equipment actually declined during Baruch's service, Sollenberger said.

Obama has faced pressure from Republicans in Congress to take additional steps to ease public fears about Ebola, including from Senator John McCain of Arizona, who called for the naming of "some kind of czar" in a talk show interview.

Today lawmakers welcomed the creation of the post though questioned whether Klain's experience - he has no background in health care - is the right fit.

"What has been missing from this administration's response to Ebola is not a new figurehead," said Fred Upton, a Michigan Republican and chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. "What we need is a strategy to get ahead of this, and restore the public's faith that they are safe."

Thomas Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was questioned yesterday by a congressional panel for what at times has seemed like an uncertain response to the outbreak following the diagnosis of Thomas Eric Duncan, who contracted Ebola in Liberia, in a Dallas hospital. Since Duncan died Oct. 8, two of his nurses have also been diagnosed with the disease.

Klain's appointment could put pressure on government agencies to better respond to the crisis because he "knows how the government works," said Gilbert Burnham, co-director of the Center for Refugee and Disaster Response at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

Burnham said a week ago he thought it wasn't necessary to create such a position but recent missteps in the response have led him to change his mind.

One of Duncan's nurses at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital, Amber Vinson, flew on a commercial flight from Cleveland back to Dallas with a slight fever earlier this week. Frieden has said that the nurse shouldn't have flown though he acknowledged that the CDC had given her approval to travel.

In the days since, schools in Ohio and Texas have closed as a precaution and Frontier Airlines has notified passengers and crews on the plane's subsequent flights of the possible exposure. Klain's experience appeared to be a good fit because the response to Ebola requires coordination of various federal agencies, Burnham said.

Pedro Greer, a Miami doctor who won the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009 for treating the poor, agreed.

"You have all the scientists and experts at the CDC but what you need is a manager," Greer, who also teaches at Florida International University's medical school in Miami, said. "With all due respect, we scientists are not the best managers."

White House policy coordinators have a mixed record of success though at managing crises.

Presidents usually make such appointments when pressure mounts for action, Sollenberger said. Dozens of people have been appointed in recent decades to direct action on issues including drug abuse, education reform, faith-based initiatives, climate change, and executive pay.

Sollenberger said he and co-author Mark Rozell, a public policy professor at George Mason University in Arlington, Virginia, tallied 11 appointed czars under President George W. Bush and 21 under Obama.

One of the go-to advisers for presidents recently has been former U.S. Coast Guard Admiral Thad Allen, who directed the Bush administration's response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and went on to serve the Obama White House as commander of the response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010.

Special advisers often have no legal authority to direct actions. Their power instead rests however with their political ties to the president, said John Harrison, a law professor at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

"They're like the chief of staff of the White House, who legally speaking can't order anyone to do anything, but whose suggestions to officials, including cabinet officials, are generally complied with because they are in effect from the president," Harrison said in an e-mail.

Maintaining a high profile can help Klain bring publicity to official pronouncements, which could provide additional motivation for government agencies to act, Harrison said.

Tom Ridge, who was special assistant on Homeland Security to Bush, said Klain's success may depend on his level of access to Obama.

"It wasn't lost on anyone that I was in the White House every day, with a report to the president," said Ridge, who was later confirmed as the first secretary of the Department of Homeland

Security.

Klain will report directly to Lisa Monaco, Obama's national security adviser. One of Klain's first steps should be to identify one or two people who can talk effectively about the Ebola response, and it shouldn't be him, Ridge said.

"He should take a cue from his title - Ebola crisis coordinator," Ridge said. "He cannot and should not be the messenger. He's apparently a brilliant lawyer with excellent credentials, but he's not a health care professional."

OBAMA'S PICK FOR EBOLA COORDINATOR DRAWS CRITICISM (BLOOM)

By Angela Greiling Keane, Kathleen Hunter And Toluse Olorunnipa

Bloomberg News, October 18, 2014

President Barack Obama's choice of a long-time Democratic political operative as the nation's Ebola response coordinator drew scorn from administration critics who said someone with a medical background is needed.

Ron Klain, 53, a lawyer and former chief of staff to Vice President Joe Biden and to former Vice President Al Gore, was appointed amid rising alarm from lawmakers and the public about the government's handling of the first three cases of the Ebola to emerge in the U.S.

Representative Tim Murphy, a Pennsylvania Republican who led a hearing this week where lawmakers grilled federal officials about the Ebola response, called Klain's selection "shocking and frankly tone deaf to what the American people are concerned about."

White House press secretary Josh Earnest defended the choice, saying Klain's management expertise is necessary to coordinate the multiple departments and agencies involved, and he has established relationships with members of Congress.

"This is much broader than just a medical response," Earnest said at a White House briefing yesterday. "He is the right person to make sure that we are integrating the inter-agency response to this significant challenge."

Representative Fred Upton, the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, said Obama should have appointed someone with a background in health care or infectious disease.

"What has been missing from this administration's response to Ebola is not a new figurehead," the Michigan Republican, said in an e-mailed statement. "What we need is a strategy to get ahead of this, and restore the public's faith that they are safe."

Until he opened the door to appointing a single coordinator on Oct. 16, Obama had said his existing staff of advisers could handle Ebola, which is the subject of growing fear in the U.S., with some schools closing in Texas and Ohio and quarantines of health-care workers.

"It's not that they haven't been doing an outstanding job really working hard on this issue, but they also are responsible for a whole bunch of other stuff," Obama said at the White House after meeting with members of his team.

As part of the administration effort, Obama plans to assign senior personnel to serve on the ground in Dallas, including an experienced FEMA coordinator and a White House liaison to make sure all of the region's needs are met, according to a White House statement.

Republican lawmakers have faulted the response by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in trying to keep Ebola infections contained and the public informed. After a Liberian man visiting Dallas died of Ebola last week, two nurses who treated him became the first people infected with the virus in the U.S.

Klain will report to National Security Adviser Susan Rice and the president's homeland security adviser, Lisa Monaco. Klain has a long background in politics, including representing Gore in the Florida recount in 2000. His official biography lists no experience in public health.

Picking someone with a medical background would have been prudent from both health and political perspectives, said John Thomas, a law professor at Quinnipiac University who previously taught public health.

"We have a public who's very, very fearful, lots of exaggeration about how the virus might be transmitted," he said in an interview. "If we had a czar with a background, it might lead to a little more confidence in the speaker."

Klain has the ability to bridge partisan divides, given his time as a staff member on the Senate Judiciary Committee, said Jon Leibowitz, a friend of Klain since they worked together on the panel in the late 1980s.

"Ron has very good relations with Republicans, particularly in the Senate," Leibowitz, who was chairman of the Federal Trade Commission until last year, said in an interview. Klain is "one of the most gifted people I know" and has the energy and ability to learn new topics quickly to do the job well, said Leibowitz, now a partner at the Davis Polk law firm in Washington. Pedro Greer, a Miami doctor who won the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009 for treating the poor and teaches at Florida International University's medical school, said Klain's lack of background in public health isn't necessarily a deficit for the job of a coordinator. "You have all the scientists and experts at the CDC but what you need is a manager," Greer said. "With all due respect, we scientists are not the best managers." One of the key parts of the job will be better informing the public about the virus and containment efforts, he said. "There's a hysteria going on about it," Greer said. "What you need to have is a very well-educated public and that requires a lot of work." Klain is currently general counsel at Revolution LLC and president of Case Holdings, two companies founded and run by former AOL chief executive Steve Case. Case said in a statement on the company's website the Klain will be taking a leave of absence. He called him "a talented manager" who understands government and business. John Ulyot, a former Senate Republican aide, called Klain "a real roll-up-your sleeves kind of guy" who "knows all the angles on a problem." Klain's appointment is "a signal they are bringing in someone very senior who can cut through any red tape as needed and get a decision from the Oval Office any time it's necessary," Ulyot said.

WHITE HOUSE TOUTS EBOLA CZAR RON KLAIN'S TIES TO CONGRESS (CQRC)

By Steven Dennis

Roll Call, October 18, 2014

President Barack Obama has picked Ron Klain to be the Ebola czar, according to the White House, a move that appears aimed at quelling a firestorm from Congress and the public over the handling of the crisis.

Klain is a longtime Washingtonian and Harvard-educated lawyer who previously served as Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s chief of staff. He isn't known for his work in health care, but the White House emphasized his management background and relationships with Congress.

But congressional criticism of the pick came almost immediately via Twitter.

"Worst ebola epidemic in world history and Pres. Obama puts a government bureaucrat with no healthcare experience in charge. Is he serious?" tweeted Rep. Andy Harris, R-Md., an anesthesiologist.

Sen. Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y., was the first out of the gate to laud the pick.

"I've known Ron Klain for over twenty years," he said in a statement. "He is smart, aggressive, and levelheaded; exactly the qualities we need in a czar to steer our response to Ebola. He is an excellent choice."

Klain also has a sense of public relations - something the White House could use given the harsh criticism of officials who have been the face of the Ebola response, including Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Thomas Frieden.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., who has been calling for an Ebola coordinator since early September, said Klain "understands the importance of clear communications to the containment of a crisis like this."

Klain's congressional experience includes stints as staff director of the Senate Democratic Leadership Committee, and the chief counsel of the Senate Judiciary Committee, but it's not clear how strong his ties are to the House.

An aide to Speaker John A. Boehner, R-Ohio, was unaware of any Klain ties to the House, but said the White House did give Boehner's office notice about the pick.

It's also not entirely clear yet what the Obama administration will be seeking from Congress - although Press Secretary Josh Earnest noted yesterday that Congress controls the purse strings. Democrats have been pushing for more funding for public health and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has said the CDC should get the money it needs to battle the Ebola virus. Unlike, say, a new surgeon general, Klain's newly created position does not need Senate confirmation - a bonus given that the Senate is in the middle of a lengthy pre-election recess.

The news was first reported by CNN.

A White House official confirmed the pick in a memo:

EBOLA RESPONSE COORDINATOR

The President has asked Ron Klain to take on the task of coordinating his administration's whole of government Ebola response. He will report directly to the President's Homeland Security Advisor Lisa Monaco and the President National Security Advisor Susan Rice as he ensures that efforts to protect the American people by detecting, isolating and treating Ebola patients in this country are properly integrated but don't distract from the aggressive commitment to stopping Ebola at the source in West Africa. Klain's role is consistent with the view the President articulated in the Oval Office last night that Monaco, Rice and others have done outstanding work in confronting this challenge so far - but given their management of other national and homeland security priorities, additional bandwidth will further enhance the government's Ebola response. Klain, an attorney, comes to the job with strong management credentials, extensive federal government experience overseeing complex operations and good working relationships with leading members of Congress, as well as senior Obama administration officials, including the President.

KLAIN BIO

Ron Klain is President of Case Holdings and General Counsel at Revolution LLC, a technology-oriented venture capital firm based in Washington, DC. Prior to joining Revolution, Ron was a Partner and National Practice Group Chair at O'Melveny & Myers LLP.

In addition to his career in law and business, Ron has extensive public service experience, most recently as a senior White House aide to President Obama and Chief of Staff to Vice President Biden. In that position, on behalf of Vice President Biden, he helped oversee implementation of the Recovery Act, a major interagency and intergovernmental project. Earlier, he served as Chief of Staff for Vice President Al Gore, and before that, as Chief of Staff for Attorney General Janet Reno. He has also served as the Staff Director of the Senate Democratic Leadership Committee, and the Chief Counsel of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Ron is a summa cum laude graduate of Georgetown University and holds a JD, magna cum laude, from Harvard Law School, where he was an Editor of the Harvard Law Review and won the Sears Prize for the highest grade average in 1985. He served as a law clerk to Supreme Court Justice Byron White.

EBOLA CZAR RON KLAIN WAS A FANNIE MAE AND CIGNA LOBBYIST (WASHEX)

By Timothy P. Carney

Washington Examiner, October 17, 2014

K Street Democratic operative Ron Klain is now Obama's Ebola czar. Klain served as chief of staff to Janet Reno and then Al Gore in the 1990s, and as Joe Biden's chief of staff recently. In between, of course, he was a corporate lobbyist. Klain

"They won't work in my White House!" candidate Obama proclaimed about lobbyists. This was never true. Obama has hired about 100 lobbyists, and now he's just promoted one of them: revolving-door K Street Democratic operative Ron Klain is now Obama's Ebola czar.

Klain served as chief of staff to Janet Reno and then Al Gore in the 1990s, and as Joe Biden's chief of staff recently. In between, of course, he was a corporate lobbyist.

Klain worked at O'Melveny & Myers, lobbying on behalf of Fannie Mae, U.S. Airways, Time Warner, Cigna, ImClone, and other companies and industry groups.

Lobbying on "regulatory issues concerning Fannie Mae" in 2004, as disclosure forms indicate Klain did, involved convincing Congress and Fannie Mae's regulators that Fannie Mae wasn't doing anything dangerous, and wasn't exposing taxpayers to risk. In other words, Ron Klain got paid to help fuel the housing bubble up until a couple of years before it popped.

'EBOLA CZAR' BRINGS DECADES OF WASHINGTON EXPERIENCE (LAT)

By Matt Hansen

Los Angeles Times, October 18, 2014

The man tapped to be the country's "Ebola czar" is a veteran Washington advisor and Democratic strategist who will oversee a multi-agency response to the outbreak in West Africa and the U.S. cases, the White House announced Friday.

In a change from a career spent mainly behind the scenes, Ron Klain becomes the Obama administration's point person leading a complicated and highly-visible government Ebola strategy. Klain, a longtime confidant to Democratic presidents and presidential candidates, brings to the job an in-depth knowledge of federal agencies and processes, former colleagues said. Republicans, however, challenged the appointment, calling him a political appointee with little relevant medical background.

"What we were looking for is not an Ebola expert but rather an implementation expert, and that's exactly what Ron Klain is," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said Friday. "He is somebody who has extensive experience in the federal government. He's somebody that has extensive management experience when it comes to the private sector."

Klain previously served as chief of staff for Vice President Joe Biden, and currently is president of Case Holdings and general counsel for Revolution LLC, a venture firm founded by Steve Case, the former chief executive of AOL. He will take a leave of absence from the firm to accept the new position, the company said.

The goal of the new position is to coordinate response to the cases in the United States while maintaining efforts in West Africa, the White House said. Klain will report to Homeland Security advisor Lisa Monaco and national security advisor Susan Rice.

The government's Ebola response now encompasses a wide array of federal agencies, from medical research facilities like the National Institutes of Health to the U.S. military, which is helping with relief efforts in West Africa.

President Obama created the job Friday after a Senate hearing Thursday in which lawmakers criticized Ebola efforts, including those led by U.S. Centers for Disease Control head Thomas Frieden, as inadequate. The government's response has come under fire since two Dallas nurses were infected with the deadly virus while treating a Liberian man who presented the first case of Ebola diagnosed on American soil.

After the hearing, Obama said he would consider appointing a director to ensure government efforts were well-coordinated.

"It may make sense for us to have one person to have a more regular process just to make sure that we're crossing all the T's and dotting all the I's," he told reporters Thursday.

But the president's choice Friday has not gone without criticism. Klain's lack of specific medical experience and his ties to the Democratic Party made him an easy target for Republicans.

"This appointment is both shocking and frankly tone deaf to what the American people are concerned about," Rep. Tim Murphy (R- Penn.) said in a statement. "Installing yet another political appointee who has no medical background or infectious disease control experience will do little to reassure Americans who are increasingly losing confidence with the administration's Ebola strategy."

Colleagues who worked with Klain said they expected him to handle the logistical, not the medical, response to the epidemic.

"I do expect that the medical experts will still deal with the medical issues," said Neera Tanden, a former advisor to the president on healthcare reform. "But it's important to have someone who understands what the public could be worried about tomorrow or the next day."

Though Tanden said she was unsure whether the White House would make Klain the public face of the Ebola response, she said he had experience communicating with the public and would understand how important outreach would be.

Most important, she said, he had the experience necessary to manage a complicated federal process.

"I think at this point in the public health challenge we're facing with Ebola, it's a multi-agency issue," she said. "It's a significant management issue, and Ron Klain is a fantastic manager."

Others cited Klain's close working relationship with both the president and the vice-president as an asset.

"He has a very good personal relationship with [Vice President Joe] Biden and with the president, and that close personal relationship will give him the influence he needs and the credibility he needs," said Brian Boyle, a former legal colleague of Klain who attended law school with him.

An attorney, Klain has had a long career as a trusted aide to Democratic presidents. In the Clinton administration, he worked as chief of staff for Vice President Al Gore and Atty. Gen. Janet Reno. Under Biden, he coordinated the launch of the 2009 Recovery Act, the Obama administration's

national stimulus package intended to spur job growth nationwide.

Apart from policy decisions, Klain has been equally active behind the scenes in Democratic politics, helping candidates Obama, Clinton, Gore and John Kerry in debate preparations. He also helped lead the recount effort for Gore in the 2000 election, which led to a moment of celebrity when Kevin Spacey portrayed him in an HBO television movie.

People familiar with Klain's background say that his experience in Washington will serve him well yet his status outside the administration will enable him to get things done.

"He's not a part of the bureaucracy, so he can come in and stomp on bureaucratic toes if that's what it takes to get action here," said Evan Bayh, a former Indiana senator who knows Klain well.

"He's a short timer, so he can make tough decisions and cross bureaucratic barriers to get people to collaborate and get the job done."

OBAMA NAMING FORMER BIDEN STAFFER EBOLA 'CZAR' (NYPOST)

New York Post, October 17, 2014

WASHINGTON - President Barack Obama is naming Ron Klain, a former chief of staff to Vice President Joe Biden and a trusted adviser at the Obama White House, as the point man on the U.S. government's response to the Ebola crisis.

Obama has been under pressure to name an Ebola "czar" to oversee health security in the U.S. and actions to help stem the outbreak in West Africa.

Klain has been out of government since leaving Biden's office during the Obama's first term. The White House said that Klain would report to national security adviser Susan Rice and to homeland security and counterterrorism adviser Lisa Monaco.

Klain, a lawyer, also served as chief of staff for Vice President Al Gore. He previously served under Attorney General Janet Reno in the Clinton administration.

WHITE HOUSE: WE DIDN'T WANT 'AN EBOLA EXPERT' TO BE THE EBOLA CZAR (WT)

By Ben Wolfgang

Washington Times, October 18, 2014

To manage the government's response to the Ebola outbreak, the Obama administration says it wasn't looking for someone who is an expert on Ebola.

The White House on Friday named Ron Klain as its "Ebola response coordinator," though he's quickly become known as the "Ebola czar." Mr. Klain is an attorney who worked for vice presidents Joseph R. Biden and Al Gore and is general counsel at Revolution LLC, a tech-focused venture capital firm.

He also is president of Case Holdings, which handles business interests for former AOL CEO Steve Case.

What Mr. Klain is not is a medical expert, nor is he someone who has any particular knowledge about Ebola.

Despite that, the administration says he is the right man for the job.

"It is not solely a medical response. That's why someone with Mr. Klain's credentials, somebody that has strong management experience both inside government but also in the private sector ... all of that means he is the right person for the job," White House press secretary Josh Earnest told reporters Friday. "The president wanted somebody who could serve in a coordinating function to manage our implementation of a whole-of-government approach to this Ebola situation ... What we were looking for is not an Ebola expert but rather an implementation expert. That's exactly what Ron Klain is."

HOW A TERM FOR RUSSIAN ROYALTY WORKED ITS WAY INTO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT (SLATEMAG)

By Ben Zimmer

Slate Magazine, October 18, 2014

On Friday, President Obama chose Ron Klain, a former chief of staff to Vice President Joe Biden, to be the nation's "Ebola czar." But what does an American "czar" do? And why do we even call them czars? In a 2008 piece for Slate, Ben Zimmer explains the term's history. The original article is printed below.

Ron Klain, above in New York City in 2008, was named the Ebola czar by President Obama on

Oct. 17, 2014.

Photo by Andrew H. Walker/Getty Images

When Benjamin Franklin wanted to describe our national indifference to royal pomp and circumstance, he would compare Americans to a London porter whose heavy load once jostled Czar Peter the Great. When told he had just bumped into the czar, the porter responded: "Poh! We are all czars here!"

Franklin's porter could have been describing the incoming Obama administration. Already Tom Daschle has been tapped for "health czar" and Carol Browner for "climate czar." Adolfo Carrión is expected to be the "urban affairs czar." There's also been talk of a "technology czar" and a "copyright czar." Plans for a "car czar" recently fell apart on Capitol Hill, but Obama and the incoming Congress will try, try again in the new year.

This efflorescence of czars—those interagency point people charged with cutting through red tape to coordinate policy—has people wondering: Why do we use a term from imperial Russia to describe bureaucratic troubleshooters?

Czar first entered English back in the mid-16th century, soon after Baron Sigismund von Herberstein used the word in a Latin book published in 1549. The more correct romanization, tsar, became the standard spelling in the late 19th century, but by that time czar had caught on in popular usage, emerging as a handy label for anyone with tyrannical tendencies.

On the American scene, czar was first bestowed on one of Andrew Jackson's foes: Nicholas Biddle, president of the Bank of the United States. Jackson vehemently opposed the centralized power of the bank, which he called a "hydra of corruption," and his clash with Biddle exploded into the "Bank War" of 1832-36. One of Jackson's staunchest allies in this fight, Washington Globe Publisher Frank Blair, dubbed Biddle "Czar Nicholas"—a potent image at a time when Russia's Nicholas I was at the height of his repressive nationalist regime. (Jackson's opponents fought fire with fire, calling him King Andrew I.)

After the Civil War, journalist David Ross Locke (writing under the moniker "Petroleum V. Nasby") lampooned Andrew Johnson's mishandling of Reconstruction, anointing him "the Czar uv all the Amerikas." But it wasn't until 1890 that the "czar" label became an American political staple. Republican House Speaker Thomas Reed incensed Democrats by disallowing a favored stalling tactic of the minority party: not responding to a quorum call. When Reed pushed through a rule that allowed the speaker to count members as present for the quorum even if they didn't respond, Democratic congressmen erupted with cries of "Czar! Despot! Tyrant!"

The "Czar Reed" image stuck; the speaker would be known as "czar" for the rest of his career, after which time an even more potent House speaker, Joe Cannon, would inherit the title. As Reed's biographer William A. Robinson observed, the nickname "had no pleasant connotations" at the time. "In 1890, it brought to the mind the Russian autocrat himself," along with images of "the Cossacks, Siberia, and the knout" (a whip used for flogging).

That would all change after the Russian Revolution deposed the last real-life czar in 1917; painful images of imperial repression quickly faded to the background and Communist leaders became the new dictatorial icons. Accordingly, kinder, gentler "czars" made their way into American public life. When Kenesaw Mountain Landis became the first commissioner of baseball in 1920, "czar of baseball" worked just fine for the headline writers. New York had its "boxing czar" (Athletic Commission Chairman William Muldoon) and its "beer czar" (Alcoholic Beverage Control Board Chairman Edward Mulrooney). And when Nicholas Longworth served as House speaker in the late '20s, he distinguished himself from his predecessors Reed and Cannon as the "genial czar."

The newly benign term evolved again during World War II, when Roosevelt expanded the government rapidly and appointed a host of brand-new federal overseers. The Washington Post reported in 1942 on the sudden rush of "executive orders creating new czars to control various aspects of our wartime economy," and a cartoon from that year shows "czar of prices" Leon Henderson, "czar of production" Donald Nelson, and "czar of ships" Emory S. Land all cramming onto one throne.

In the postwar era, the rise of the "czar" has accompanied the expanding role of the executive office in promoting policy initiatives; the term tends to be used when presidents create special new posts for the individuals charged with pushing those initiatives through. Nixon succumbed to czarmania, appointing the first "drug czar," Jerome Jaffe, in 1971 (long before William Bennett took the mantle in 1988). But it was the title of "energy czar" that got the most attention during

those days of OPEC embargoes and gas rationing. Though John A. Love first held the title in 1973, his more powerful successor William E. Simon really got the "czar" ball rolling. Doonesbury cartoonist Garry Trudeau found the "czar" title fitting, depicting Simon imperiously asking for his "signet ring and hot wax." Simon, for his part, enjoyed the sendup and took pleasure in colleagues calling him "your czarship."

When Nixon offered him the job, Simon would later recall, the president himself used the term energy czar and discomfitingly likened the role to that of Hitler's minister of armaments, Albert Speer. Subsequent presidents, however, have shied away from the C-word and its domineering, anti-democratic connotations. Most recently, President Bush has been careful not to call Lt. Gen. Douglas Lute his "war czar," even though he's universally labeled that in the press. It's sure a lot easier than saying his official title: assistant to the president and deputy national security adviser for Iraq and Afghanistan.

Now we hear that the Obama team doesn't like czar either. No wonder: Even now, the word evokes either old-fashioned despotism or latter-day caricatures of tin-pot tyrants. But it's safe to say it's not going anywhere, as long as that compact word keeps doing its job, glibly condensing bureaucratic mouthfuls.

SURPRISE: AMERICANS ARE CONFIDENT IN GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO HANDLE EBOLA (WP)

By Paul Waldman

Washington Post, October 18, 2014

This morning the White House announced that Ron Klain, who was formerly the chief of staff to Vice President Biden, will coordinate the government's response to Ebola. Klain will be the "czar" Republicans were asking for, I suppose because they had to demand the administration do something it wasn't yet doing (thus is the nature of opposition). Which seems like a perfectly reasonable idea - you can never have too much coordination, and Klain is generally respected for his organizational skills.

But as much as Republicans have been arguing that everything is spinning out of control and the government isn't protecting us from a deadly disease that might just bring about a zombie apocalypse, it turns out that the public isn't going quite as crazy as you might think.

Don't get me wrong - there are plenty of people who are reacting irrationally to a disease that has so far infected a grand total of two people in this nation of 316 million, both of whom were health care workers treating a man dying of Ebola (if that doesn't describe you, you're safe). But the growing number of Ebola polls shows that the public actually has a pretty good amount of confidence that the government can handle this.

That's not what you might think if you tuned into the panic-a-thon that is cable news, or even much other news. Every evening news show is leading with Ebola every night, and every newspaper has multiple stories every day about the disease. There's a danger that we could create a self-fulfilling prophecy, one in which the public is portrayed as losing their collective minds, which makes it more likely that they will end up doing so.

But let's look at what they're actually saying. It turns out that on some questions, partisanship has a big impact, which is actually encouraging in a way. It tells us that Ebola is much like other issues, where politics provides the filter through which things are being viewed. Whether it's the economy or health reform or national security, Republicans are always going to be less likely to express confidence in the ability of a government run by Democrats to do anything right (and vice-versa).

So, via Eric Boehlert, in the latest Washington Post poll, 62 percent of respondents said they were very confident or somewhat confident in the government's ability to respond to an Ebola outbreak. Among Democrats, the number was 76 percent, while among Republicans it was a still-healthy 54 percent. A Pew Research Center poll taken two weeks ago found something similar: 69 percent of Democrats said they had a great deal or fair amount of confidence in the government's ability to handle Ebola, while 48 percent of Republicans agreed. Pew pointed out that in 2005, when George W. Bush was president, the same question was asked about bird flu and the numbers were reversed (with Democrats then expressing even less confidence than Republicans do now). That tells a story not of widespread public hysteria but of rather ordinary partisanship. And a new Kaiser Family Foundation poll also shows a more reasonable public than you might expect if you were just watching the panic-a-thon on cable news. Among the questions Kaiser asked was this:

Which do you think is more likely: Ebola will spread and there will be a widespread outbreak in the U.S.; or Ebola will be contained to a small number of cases in the U.S.?

Ebola will be contained: 73

There will be a widespread outbreak: 22

And people in both parties expressed confidence in the Centers for Disease Control, with 79 percent of Democrats and 70 percent of Republicans saying they'd have confidence in the CDC to contain the disease and prevent it from spreading if there were a case of Ebola in their area.

As a news story, Ebola lends itself perfectly to sensationalistic, ratings-grabbing news. It's mysterious, threatening, dramatic, and carries the theoretical potential for global disaster. But so far, despite the non-stop coverage and Republicans' insistence that chaos reigns, most of the public seems to think that our government is capable of handling it.

FORMER BIDEN CHIEF OF STAFF TO LEAD EBOLA RESPONSE (AP)

By Jim Kuhnhenn

Associated Press, October 17, 2014

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Barack Obama is naming Ron Klain, a former chief of staff to Vice President Joe Biden and a trusted adviser at the Obama White House, as the point man on the U.S. government's response to the Ebola crisis, the White House said Friday.

Obama has been under pressure to name an Ebola "czar" to oversee health security in the U.S. and actions to help stem the outbreak in West Africa, where nearly 4,500 people have died from the virus.

Klain has been out of government since leaving Biden's office during the Obama's first term. The White House said that Klain would report to national security adviser Susan Rice and to homeland security and counterterrorism adviser Lisa Monaco.

Klain, a lawyer, also served as chief of staff for Vice President Al Gore and was a key figure during the 2000 Florida presidential election recount. He previously served under Attorney General Janet Reno in the Clinton administration.

The White House is calling the new post an "Ebola response coordinator."

White House officials had initially resisted congressional calls to name a lead figure on Ebola, arguing that various agencies had distinct responsibilities, including the Centers for Disease Control, The Department of Defense, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

But on Thursday, Obama conceded that such a point person might in fact be necessary even as he praised his adviser for doing "an outstanding job."

But he said that several of his advisers, including Monaco and CDC director Dr. Thomas Frieden, are also confronting other priorities. He noted that Frieden is also dealing with flu season and Monaco and Rice are having to spend time on the Islamic State extremists in the Middle East.

"It may make sense for us to have one person ... so that after this initial surge of activity we can have a more regular process just to make sure we are crossing all the Ts and dotting all the Is," he said.

Klain comes to the job with strong management credentials, extensive federal government experience overseeing complex operations and good working relationships with leading members of Congress, as well as senior Obama administration officials, including the president.

In a statement, the White House noted that as Biden's chief of staff, Klain helped with the implementation of the White House stimulus package of 2009 created as a response to the recession and the financial crisis.

Klain is President of Case Holdings and General Counsel at Revolution LLC, a technology venture capital firm based in Washington, DC.

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RAGLAND: AFTER EARLY BLOWS IN EBOLA FIGHT, DALLAS IS GETTING BACK ON ITS FEET (DMN)

By James Ragland

Dallas Morning News, October 18, 2014

Zachary Thompson came up with an apt metaphor for our nation's battle with Ebola.

The Dallas County Health and Human Services director likened it to a boxing match.

"In some people's mind, you might have thought this was one punch and done," Thompson said Friday. "But we found out we've got to go 12 rounds."

We also found out that we need all hands on deck: mayors, county health officials, governors - all the way up to the president.

Not everyone is on board with President Barack Obama's pick to be the "Ebola czar," Ron Klain, a former chief of staff to Vice Presidents Joe Biden and Al Gore

That's politics for you.

But just about everyone realizes we need someone to coordinate the efforts of local, state and federal health officials who admittedly have been staggered by Ebola's first few blows.

"We're all working together," said Thompson. "My take is all public health is local. But all of this is uncharted territory. That's clearly been shown."

Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings applauded the concerted effort being made to keep the virus in check. He and Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins got more animated after seeing critical systemic breakdowns.

"We did not want to be a Chicken Little and say, 'The sky is falling,' but you must take this seriously," Rawlings said.

When the second nurse who'd treated Thomas Eric Duncan was diagnosed with Ebola, that really got everyone's attention, Rawlings said.

The fact that the nurse, Amber Joy Vinson, was allowed to take a commercial flight from Dallas to Ohio and back demonstrated a need to clarify and tighten controls.

Vinson was given the green light to fly from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta even after she reported she had a slight temperature.

Now, virtually everyone who flew on the plane from Cleveland back to Dallas with Vinson is worried. They're all being monitored. And that single flight caused a ripple effect in Ohio and beyond.

That shouldn't have happened, said Rawlings, who joined Jenkins in pushing for travel restrictions for all the workers who treated Duncan at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital.

"Having that second health care worker become positive demonstrated to me the significant repercussion of what was happening in the health care world," Rawlings said. "It also allowed Judge Jenkins and me to draw a line in the sand on the city's and county's role in being advocates for the citizens of our community."

Their concerns "were heard" in Austin, Atlanta and Washington, Rawlings said, adding "and you see the response we're getting."

Aside from the political machinations in Austin and Washington, Dallas also got another shot in the arm Friday.

One of the 48 people who first came in contact with Ebola virus victim Duncan last month was released from quarantine.

What that means is that the unidentified man developed no symptoms of Ebola in the 21 days since he last had contact with Duncan at the Ivy Apartments in northeast Dallas.

Duncan's fiancée, Louise Troh, and other immediate family members remain under quarantine through Sunday. But they've shown no symptoms, Thompson said.

And once those 48 original contacts all are cleared, Thompson said, that "gives us some breathing room."

The city also got some breathing room from having both of the infected nurses - Vinson and Nina Pham - flown to specialized hospitals in Atlanta and Bethesda, Md.

"I do not believe we're at a turning point because these wonderful heroes are being treated outside of Dallas," Rawlings said. "But that was the right tactical decision. We needed to let that hospital breathe in case any new patients came in."

Thompson put it this way. "The fact that we've got two patients removed, that's good," he said.

"But now we have to brace ourselves mentally in case there are additional confirmed cases."

Rawlings nailed it earlier this week when he said "the only way we're going to beat" the Ebola virus and keep it from spreading is "moment by moment, detail by detail."

"It may get worse before it gets better," he said, "but it will get better."

Finally, we're beginning to see promising signs of that. The big challenge now is keeping everyone in the same corner.

EBOLA 'CZAR' KNOWS WASHINGTON, BUT NOT MEDICINE (AP)

By Josh Lederman

Associated Press, October 18, 2014

WASHINGTON -

If there's one thing the "Ebola czar" knows, it's government.

Ron Klain, President Barack Obama's new point man on Ebola, has no medical or public health background. But he does have a wealth of experience managing unruly federal bureaucracies in times of crisis. The White House says that makes him the perfect candidate to shepherd the government's response to a deadly, growing outbreak.

Yet after demanding that Obama appoint a "czar," some Republicans are balking at the president's choice of a Washington insider and political operative to handle a public health emergency that has many Americans in fear.

And though Klain has tackled the national financial crisis and served as chief of staff to two vice presidents - he's even been portrayed by Kevin Spacey in an HBO film - his latest gig may prove his toughest challenge.

"He's there to get the job done, not win the Nobel Prize in medicine," said Bruce Reed, another former chief of staff to Vice President Joe Biden. Reed worked with Klain in both the Obama and Clinton administrations.

Under immense pressure to step up his response, Obama turned to Klain on Friday. He's being asked to synchronize an alphabet blizzard of federal agencies: the CDC, NIH, HHS, DHS, FDA and DOD, to name a few. All are working in one fashion or another to stem Ebola in the U.S. and in West Africa, but breakdowns in the system that led to two health workers contracting Ebola in Dallas have raised concerns that the government isn't doing enough.

No, his title isn't "czar." He's the government's Ebola response coordinator.

Klain was Obama's first choice for the job, said White House spokesman Josh Earnest. He's expected to stay on the job just five or six months and will report to Obama's homeland security adviser, Lisa Monaco, and his national security adviser, Susan Rice. Those two advisers have been at the forefront of the Ebola operation at the White House, but with other threats competing for their attention, Earnest said Obama saw a need to bring on outside help to focus exclusively on Ebola.

An attorney and longtime Democratic operative, Klain served as Vice President Al Gore's chief of staff and was a key figure during the 2000 Florida presidential election recount, leading to his portrayal by Spacey in the HBO film "Recount." He previously served under Attorney General Janet Reno in the Clinton administration and later as Biden's chief of staff.

During Obama's first term, Klain helped spearhead the roughly \$800 billion stimulus package in 2009 in response to the financial crisis - a massive, cross-government project that Klain's supporters say offers parallels to the challenge he is now undertaking with Ebola. Out of government since 2011, Klain is currently president of the holding company of former AOL chairman Steve Case and general counsel for a Washington-based technology venture capital firm.

Yet Republicans criticized Obama's selection, calling Klain's experience insufficient and wondering why the president didn't choose someone with a background in, say, infectious disease control. With the midterm elections closing in, GOP lawmakers argued that picking a Democratic operative was tone-deaf to the public's growing concerns about Ebola and declining confidence in the government's competence.

"Leave it to President Obama to put a liberal political activist in charge of the administration's Ebola response," said Rep. John Fleming, R-La., himself a physician.

Former colleagues describe Klain as a born problem-solver with little patience for disorganization, waste or tardiness. When he oversaw the stimulus, his associates say, he was known for forcing agencies that didn't get along to cooperate.

"These situations can be pretty dark and seem extremely hopeless," said Jared Bernstein, Biden's former chief economist. "Ron's ability to see the best path to success keeps him and those around him focused in a pretty positive way."

Associated Press writer Jim Kuhnhenn contributed to this report.

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OBAMA TO NAME RON KLAİN AS EBOLA CZAR (NEWREP)

New Republic, October 17, 2014

It appears the federal government's Ebola response now has a czar. According to multiple media reports, President Obama will name Ron Klain, former chief of staff to Vice President Biden, to coordinate the agencies handling Ebola.

Many Americans know Klain, who was a close adviser to former Vice President Al Gore, from Kevin Spacey's portrayal of him in the HBO movie "Recount." Washington insiders know Klain as a smooth, seasoned manager with a feel for both politics and policy. "He is one of the most capable people I've ever worked with in government," Jared Bernstein, who was Biden's chief economist, said via e-mail. "[He] brings with him a deep understanding of politics and policy along with a lot of experience working across agencies and departments."

One thing Klain does not have is deep expertise in medicine or emergency preparedness -and that surprised me. Why not pick somebody whose resume includes a stint at the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Homeland Security, or maybe the Federal Emergency Management Agency? This is not the first time the federal government has confronted a biological menace. An official who'd lived through and worked intensely on responses to SARS, Avian flu, or even HIV might bring critical and beneficial experience to the table.

Still, the Administration doesn't lack for expertise on disease and potential outbreaks. The Centers for Disease Control has made some mistakes, but nobody I know questions the expertise of Tom Frieden, CDC's director, or Anthony Fauci, who is in charge of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Fauci, in particular, has been working on these sorts of issues since the 1980s, when he was a key player in the government response to AIDS. (If there's a need for more medical knowledge, perhaps the Senate could act on Obama's nominee for Surgeon General?) In addition, the primary tasks of a czar are to coordinate action and advice among the different agencies

-and to serve as a reassuring public spokesman. Klain has done that. A Harvard-trained lawyer, Klain worked on Capitol Hill before becoming Gore's Chief of Staff during the Clinton years -a role he reprised, from 2009 to 2011, in Biden's office. He has a reputation for knowing the ins and outs of government

-and how to make things happen. "He knows exactly where everything is," Democratic strategist Donna Brazile told the Washington Post in 2008, when Biden tapped him.

On Friday, Neera Tanden, another veteran of the Clinton and Obama Administrations, had a similar reaction.

RON KLAİN'S RESUME: FROM RECOUNTS TO STIMULUS TO EBOLA (USAT)

By Gregory Korte

USA Today, October 17, 2014

WASHINGTON - President Obama's new Ebola "czar," Ron Klain, has an extensive résumé at the top levels of politics and government - if not in battling infectious diseases.

He was the chief of staff for two vice presidents, Joe Biden and Al Gore, and one attorney general, Janet Reno. He served as a senior White House aide to President Obama.

After leaving the White House for the private sector in 2011, Klain became a partner in the Washington lobbying firm of O'Melveny & Myers. He was not himself a registered lobbyist, which means the White House ban on hiring lobbyists doesn't apply.

He's president of Case Holdings, which manages the assets of AOL founder Steve Case, and general counsel of Case's venture capital firm, Revolution.

Case said Klain would take a leave of absence and planned to return to his company. "Ron is a talented manager and a wise counselor who understands government, business and the non-profit sectors," Case said in a statement. "We look forward to welcoming him back soon."

As Biden's chief of staff, Klain had a key role in implementing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and signed off on one of its most controversial projects: a \$535 million loan guarantee to solar panel maker Solyndra.

"Sounds like there are some risk factors here - but that's true of any innovative company that POTUS would visit," Klain wrote to Department of Energy officials May 24, 2010, a day before

Obama visited a company factory. "It looks like it is OK to me, but if you feel otherwise, let me know."

Earlier in his career, he served as the staff director of the Senate Democratic Leadership Committee and chief counsel of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"I've known Ron Klain for over 20 years. He is smart, aggressive and levelheaded; exactly the qualities we need in a czar to steer our response to Ebola. He is an excellent choice," said Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., in a statement.

Klain served as the top lawyer on the Gore-Lieberman Recount Committee after the 2000 election and was portrayed by actor Kevin Spacey in the 2008 film Recount.

He is a graduate of Georgetown University and Harvard Law School. He served as a law clerk to Supreme Court Justice Byron White.

He is married to Monica Medina, an environmental lawyer at the National Geographic Society who previously headed the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the Obama Administration. They have three children.

WHO IS RON KLAİN, WHO WILL LEAD THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S RESPONSE TO EBOLA? (WP)

By Katie Zezima

Washington Post, October 18, 2014

Ron Klain, who was named as the Obama administration's Ebola response coordinator, is no stranger to the White House.

Even in a city populated with seasoned operatives, Klain's experience stands out. Klain, 53, served as a senior aide to President Obama and chief of staff to Vice President Biden from 2009 to 2011. Klain had been one of the names floated for Obama's chief of staff after Rahm Emanuel departed. He helped oversee implementation of the 2009 stimulus act. Klain was also involved in the controversial deal with Solyndra, a solar company that went bankrupt after receiving \$535 million in federal guarantees.

Klain, 53, is now a president at Case Holdings, the holding company for business and philanthropic interests of former AOL chairman Steve Case. Klain is also general counsel for Revolution LLC, an investment firm founded by Case and others.

"Ron Klain has been asked by the President to coordinate the U.S. Ebola response, so he will be taking a leave of absence," Steve and Jean Case said in a statement. "We applaud the President's selection, as Ron is a talented manager and a wise counselor who understands government, business, and the non-profit sectors. We wish him the best as he takes on this important task, and we look forward to welcoming him back soon."

Klain worked at Revolution before he was tapped by Biden; in 2007, Klain said he spent most of his time working in the firm's health-care arm.

"It's been an exciting chance to try to make some positive changes in health care from the business side rather than the policy side," he told the Wall Street Journal.

The White House is stressing Klain's management acumen and experience working in Congress and the broader federal government, skills and contacts he will need as he coordinates an effort across numerous agencies and with countless stakeholders. Klain served as chief of staff to Vice President Al Gore and Attorney General Janet Reno. Klain was also chief counsel of the Senate Judiciary Committee. He has also worked as a lobbyist.

Klain was general counsel for Gore's recount committee in 2000. He was played by Kevin Spacey in the HBO film "Recount."

Klain graduated from Georgetown University and Harvard Law School, where he won the Sears Prize for highest grade point average in 1985. He was a law clerk to Supreme Court Justice Byron White. Klain is married and has three children.

His appointment came less than 24 hours after Obama acknowledged shortcomings in how the nation handled Ebola and said it might be necessary to have a point person to handle the government's response.

"It may make sense for us to have one person," who will "make sure we're crossing all the t's and dotting all the i's," Obama said. He spoke after a meeting on Ebola on Thursday night that lasted more than two hours.

Klain will report to homeland security adviser Lisa Monaco and national security adviser Susan E.

Rice. A White House official reiterated Obama's view that Monaco and Rice have done "outstanding work" in confronting Ebola. But given "their management of other national and homeland security priorities, additional bandwidth will further enhance the government's Ebola response," the official wrote in an e-mail.

Sen. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) said Klain was an excellent choice to deal with the outbreak. A Liberian man died of the virus in Dallas earlier this month, and two nurses who cared for him are now stricken.

"I've known Ron Klain for over twenty years," Schumer said in a statement. "He is smart, aggressive, and levelheaded; exactly the qualities we need in a czar to steer our response to Ebola. He is an excellent choice."

Rep. Andy Harris (R-Md.), an anesthesiologist, isn't so sure.

Worst ebola epidemic in world history and Pres. Obama puts a government bureaucrat with no healthcare experience in charge. Is he serious?

- Rep. Andy Harris, MD (@RepAndyHarrisMD) October 17, 2014

BIDEN'S SON FAILS DRUG TEST, IS DISCHARGED FROM NAVY (USAT)

By William H. McMichael And Jonathan Starkey

USA Today, October 17, 2014

The younger son of Vice President Joe Biden failed a drug test for cocaine, a month after his commissioning last year into the Navy Reserve and was discharged.

Hunter Biden, an ensign, had been selected for commission as a reserve officer through the Direct Commission Officer program in 2012, according to Cmdr. Ryan Perry, a Navy spokesman. He was commissioned into the Navy Reserve unit for Navy Public Affairs Support Element East in Norfolk, Va. Biden, who had no prior military experience, was one of six officers commissioned nationally into the Navy Reserve public affairs division.

"It was the honor of my life to serve in the U.S. Navy, and I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge," Biden said in statement issued through his lawyer. "I respect the Navy's decision. With the love and support of my family, I'm moving forward." The incident was first reported late Thursday in The Wall Street Journal. Citing "people familiar with the matter," it reported that Biden was given a drug test in June 2013 that tested positive for cocaine.

Biden, 44, was discharged from the Navy Reserve in February. He has worked as a lawyer, lobbyist and managing partner at the investment firm Rosemont Seneca Partners in Washington. He was hired in May to join the board of Burisma Holdings, Ukraine's largest private oil and gas producer, and be in charge of its legal department.

A spokeswoman for the vice president declined to comment.

The term "administrative discharge" can cover several types of military discharges from honorable to general to other-than-honorable conditions. Perry would provide no other details.

"Like other junior officers, the details of Ensign Biden's discharge are not releasable under the Privacy Act," he said.

Asked whether Biden's commissioning had anything to do with his father's high position in the government, Perry said, "No, it didn't."

"All candidates were considered based on the merits of their application, and Mr. Biden met the qualifications for commission," Perry said.

Biden also is the brother of Delaware Attorney General Beau Biden.

Applicants to the direct commissioning program for the Public Affairs Reserve must hold a baccalaureate degree or higher from an accredited institution, preferably in the fields of communication, English, journalism, broadcasting, public relations, rhetoric/speech, marketing, international studies or public administration. Applicants may not have passed their 42nd birthday at time of commissioning or an age waiver is required. The board meets twice annually and, on average, about 35 people apply, Ryan said.

Hunter Biden sought and received a waiver to join the service because of his age.

Hunter Biden received a second waiver because of a "drug-related incident when he was a young man," The Wall Street Journal reported. The report added that such waivers are not uncommon.

Hunter Biden waits for the start of his father's debate in October 2011 at Centre College in Danville, Ky. (Photo: Pablo Martinez Monsivais, AP)

Vice President Joe Biden joked in January 2013 about his younger son's decision to join the military late in life during a speech at the American Legion's Salute to Heroes Inaugural Ball, which honors Medal of Honor recipients.

"We have a lot of bad judgment in my family. "My son, who is over 40, just joined the United States Navy. He's about to be sworn in as an officer," Joe Biden said.

But Hunter Biden joining the military was a source of pride for the Bidens, and military service runs in the family.

Beau Biden is a major in the Delaware Army National Guard and served in Iraq from October 2008 to September 2009.

Jill Biden talked about Hunter Biden joining the Navy during a November 2012 event with Navy Secretary Ray Mabus.

"I'm looking forward to standing with our son, Hunter, when he is commissioned as an ensign in the United States Navy," Jill Biden said at the time, according to a Navy transcript. "He follows in the footsteps of two of his grandfathers, who have also served in the Navy."

William H. McMichael and Jonathan Starkey also report for The (Wilmington, Del.) News Journal.

COMMANDER: HUNTER BIDEN KNEW DRUG TEST WAS COMING (USAT)

By Esteban Parra And William H. McMichael, Usa Today

USA Today, October 17, 2014

WILMINGTON, Del. - There should have been no question in Hunter Biden's mind about the possibility of a random drug test.

So says the commander of the Norfolk, Va.-based unit where Vice President Joe Biden's youngest son was assigned until his February discharge due to a drug test failure a month after his 2013 commissioning.

"All sailors would be advised of the zero-tolerance policies when reporting aboard," said Capt. Jack Hanzlik, who commands the Navy Public Affairs Support Element based in Norfolk. "And they would be advised of the testing practices of the organization, as well."

The importance of adherence to such policies continues after new arrivals, active or reservists, are assigned to their units.

"We have this kind of conversation with our sailors all the time - about expectations for performance," Hanzlik said. "Expectations for standards. Reliability on one another."

At least once a year but perhaps more frequently, members of the military - active and reserve - can expect to be given an unannounced urinalysis test for illegal drug use. Navy laboratories screen about 2.5 million urine specimens yearly, searching for drugs ranging from marijuana to heroin to cocaine - the drug that reportedly led to Hunter Biden's discharge.

"It's a random process," said Hanzlik. "The expectation, always, is that you need to be ready. Because you could have to give a sample today, you might have to give a sample again tomorrow. And two weeks from now, you might have to give a sample."

Hanzlik said he'd had no interaction with Biden. He commands the overall 275-member unit, but their reserve times didn't coincide during Biden's tenure with the unit.

Testing would have occurred while Biden was present for duty at the Navy Operational Support Center Norfolk, the reserve center where he reported for work.

The Navy says 15 percent of all personnel at a given unit are tested each time a test is administered.

A U.S. Department of Health and Human Services official said the length of time traces of a drug remain in a person's system varies with an individual's size and frequency of use. On average, it takes 48 to 72 hours to leave the system, but it can take up to five days.

Biden, who had no prior military experience, was selected for commission as a reserve officer through the Direct Commission Officer program in 2012, according to the Navy. He was commissioned as an ensign in early May 2013 - one of six officers commissioned nationally into the public affairs division of the Navy Reserve.

In June 2013, Biden, then 43, was given a drug test that tested positive for cocaine, according to The Wall Street Journal, which broke the story late Thursday night. The paper cited "people familiar with the matter." The Navy would not comment, citing the Privacy Act.

He wasn't discharged until February. "Until an issue like that is adjudicated, the member continues to serve," Hanzlik said.

Hunter, who could not be reached, is the younger brother of Delaware Attorney General Beau Biden, who is a major in the Delaware Army National Guard.
Parra and McMichael also report for The (Wilmington, Del.) News Journal

BIDEN SON SAID DISCHARGED FROM NAVY RESERVE ON DRUG TEST (BLOOM)

By Tony Capaccio And Angela Greiling Keane

Bloomberg News, October 18, 2014

Hunter Biden, the son of Vice President Joe Biden, was discharged from the Navy Reserve this year after testing positive for cocaine use, according to a U.S. government official familiar with the matter.

Biden, 44, had been assigned as an ensign to the Reserve's public affairs unit in Norfolk, Virginia, in May 2013, and was discharged in February, according to Commander Ryan Perry, a spokesman for the Navy. He didn't give a reason for the discharge.

A drug test given to Biden when he reported to his unit in June 2013 was positive, according to the official familiar with the matter. The Wall Street Journal reported the news late yesterday.

"It was the honor of my life to serve in the U.S. Navy, and I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge," Hunter Biden said today in a statement through his lawyer, Thomas Gallagher with Pepper Hamilton LLP in Philadelphia. "I respect the Navy's decision. With the love and support of my family, I'm moving forward."

Biden, a founding partner of Oldaker Biden & Belair, a Washington-based law firm, was recommended in 2012 for a direct commission to the Reserves, Perry said. In a 2007 profile, Politico called him "the very model of a modern major lobbyist."

The vice president's office referred inquiries to Gallagher. Eric Schultz, a White House spokesman, declined to comment.

Biden is chairman of the board of directors of the World Food Program USA, a United Nations program that delivers food aid around the world and responds to natural disasters. He's also been on the board of Amtrak, the U.S. long-distance passenger railroad.

In 2009, he won dismissal of a fraud lawsuit alleging he backed out of a deal to acquire an interest in Paradigm Global Advisors LLC parent Paradigm Cos. The Paradigm fund was run by members of the Biden family. It was marketed by billionaire R. Allen Stanford, who was convicted of defrauding investors and sentenced to 110 years in prison.

Joe Biden is in his second term as vice president, having previously been a Democratic U.S. senator from Delaware. Hunter is a son of Biden's late wife, who was killed in a car accident that injured Hunter when he was a child.

JOE BIDEN'S SON DISCHARGED FROM NAVY FOR COCAINE USE (PHILMAG)

By Dan McQuade

Philadelphia Magazine, October 17, 2014

Hunter Biden, son of Vice President Joe, was discharged from the Navy earlier this year after failing a drug test for cocaine. Hunter Biden, a lawyer, was in a part-time position as an ensign in the Naval Reserves.

Biden actually came to the military incredibly late in life; he needed a waiver to be able to join the Navy because of his age (43) when he joined. He received a second waiver for an earlier drug-related incident; the Wall Street Journal reports these are relatively common. He was discharged in February of this year after his drug test came up positive.

To sum it up: Hunter Biden is now 44 years old and in June 2013 did enough cocaine to fail a drug screen. Hunter Biden parties harder than you did in college.

"I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge," Hunter Biden said in a statement. "I respect the Navy's decision. With the love and support of my family, I'm moving forward."

Joe Biden, of course, created the drug czar's office.

BIDEN SON BOOTED FROM NAVY. WHAT'S THE BACKSTORY? (CSM)

By Peter Grier

Christian Science Monitor, October 17, 2014

Washington - Joe Biden's son Hunter has been kicked out of the Navy for drug use, according to a

report in The Wall Street Journal. Cocaine was the controlled substance in question: The younger Biden tested positive for the drug last year and was subsequently discharged from the Navy Reserve, where he served as an ensign in a public affairs unit based in Norfolk, Va.

Thus ends an unusual, or at least unusually timed, military career. A lawyer by training who has worked as a lobbyist and currently serves as a managing partner at an investment firm, Hunter Biden began the process of joining the military in 2012, when he was 42. Most reservists sign up when they're younger and still building families and careers.

In 2013, Mr. Biden was commissioned an ensign through the Direct Commission Officer Program, which each year selects a small number of applicants with civilian skills applicable to military needs. He received a waiver for his age and a second waiver for a drug-related incident in his youth, according to multiple news reports.

In June of last year, Biden failed a urinalysis after reporting to his Norfolk unit. He was formally discharged this past February, according to The Wall Street Journal.

"It was the honor of my life to serve in the U.S. Navy, and I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge," he said in a statement.

A few Biden family biographical notes might be apropos here. The first is that Hunter's older brother, Beau, has had a successful military reservist career. It's entirely possible Hunter was hoping to follow in his bro's footsteps.

Beau Biden, also a lawyer, joined the Delaware Army National Guard in 2003 as a member of the Judge Advocate General's Corps. He was subsequently promoted to major and served a tour of duty in Iraq in 2008-2009.

Currently, Beau Biden is Delaware's attorney general. He was elected to that post in 2006. In 2008, there was talk in the state that he would run for his dad's old Senate seat, but the Biden son declined to pursue the position.

Second, VP Joe Biden does not have a soft-on-drugs reputation. If anything, he is seen in the White House as someone arguing against wider legalization of marijuana.

"The former Delaware senator has a harsh record when it comes to the drug war," wrote Nick Wing of The Huffington Post in 2012.

Third, for those of a certain age in Washington, the Biden boys, both of them, are remembered for the tragedy of their early years.

On Dec. 18, 1972, Joe Biden's first wife, Neilia, and his year-old daughter Naomi were killed in an auto accident in exurban Wilmington, Del., after Christmas shopping. Beau and Hunter were in the car but survived with injuries. Joe Biden had just won election to the Senate the preceding month. He considered resigning but did not. Both boys were able to attend his swearing-in. Mr. Biden commuted home from Washington each night on the train to be with Beau and Hunter, a practice he continued throughout his Senate career.

BIDEN SON OUT OF NAVY AFTER DRUG TEST (AP)

By JOSH LEDERMAN And ROBERT BURNS

Associated Press, October 17, 2014

WASHINGTON Hunter Biden, the youngest son of Vice President Joe Biden, has been expelled from the military after testing positive for cocaine, two people familiar with the matter say.

The Navy said that Biden, a former lobbyist who works at a private equity firm, was discharged in February - barely a year after he was selected for the part-time position as a public affairs officer in the Navy Reserve. Citing privacy laws, the Navy did not give a reason for the discharge, which was not disclosed until it emerged in the media on Thursday.

In a statement released by his attorney, Biden said he respected the Navy's decision and was moving forward with his family's love and support. He did not give a reason for his discharge.

"It was the honor of my life to serve in the U.S. Navy," Biden said. "I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge."

The vice president's office declined to comment. Hunter Biden's attorney didn't respond to inquiries about whether Biden had used cocaine.

Two people familiar with the situation said Biden, 44, was discharged because he failed a drug test last year. They weren't authorized to discuss the incident by name and requested anonymity. The Wall Street Journal first reported Biden's discharge and failed drug test.

An attorney by training, Biden applied to join the Navy Reserve as a public affairs officer and was

selected in 2012 - one of seven candidates recommended for a direct commission for public affairs. A board of senior Navy officers interviewed Biden before making the recommendation. Because he was 42 at the time, he needed a special waiver to be accepted. Cmdr. Ryan Perry, a spokesman for the Navy, said Biden had been assigned to the Navy Public Affairs Support Element East, based in Norfolk, Virginia.

The terms of Biden's separation from the Navy were unclear. Typically, military members discharged for failing drug tests don't receive an honorable discharge.

The vice president speaks about his children frequently during public appearances. In December, Hunter Biden and one of his daughters accompanied the elder Biden on a trip to Asia, where the vice president praised his son's work around the world as the chairman of the World Food Program USA.

"I'm so incredibly proud of him," Vice President Biden said.

Earlier this year, Hunter Biden raised eyebrows when he joined the board of a private Ukrainian gas company, just as his father and the Obama administration were working to wean Ukraine off Russian energy. At the time, the vice president's office brushed aside questions about the arrangement by saying that the younger Biden was a "private citizen."

Biden, a managing partner at investment firm Rosemont Seneca Partners, has three children. His older brother, Beau Biden, is Delaware's attorney general and an Army National Guard member who served a yearlong deployment in Iraq.

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WHO IS HUNTER BIDEN? (CNN)

By Justin Peligri

CNN, October 17, 2014

Washington (CNN) - Hunter Biden, Vice President Joe Biden's son, was discharged from the Navy Reserve this year after failing a drug test, The Wall Street Journal reported Thursday night.

Biden, who got the boot after testing positive for cocaine, served part time in the reserves in Norfolk, Va. while also working as a partner at an investment firm.

Who is Hunter Biden?

Hunter graduated from Georgetown University and earned a law degree from Yale. After graduation he was a member of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest.

He's lesser known than his older brother, Beau Biden, now the Delaware attorney general, who served a year-long deployment in Iraq and has announced plans for a 2016 gubernatorial run in the state.

Biden's son discharged from Navy after testing positive for cocaine

What did he do in the military?

Hunter's membership in the American armed forces was brief: He enlisted in the Navy Reserves less than two years ago.

In January 2013, the Vice President joked about his son's decision to join the military later in life.

"We have a lot of bad judgment in my family," Biden said.

The Vice President's office has not yet released a comment about Hunter's discharge. But the announcement might not fare well for the Second Family, which touts their status as a military family in speeches and public appearances.

Hunter Biden said in a statement that it was "the honor of my life to serve in the U.S. Navy, and I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge. I respect the Navy's decision. With the love and support of my family, I'm moving forward."

Does he have much experience in politics or Washington?

Yes - both in the public and private sectors.

He was appointed by President Bill Clinton to serve as a director in the Department of Commerce handling ecommerce policy issues, a post he held from 1998 to 2001.

From 2001 to 2008, he worked as a lawyer and federal lobbyist at a firm he co-founded. He resigned from this post when his father was asked by then-Senator Barack Obama, who at the time refused donations from lobbyists, to join his presidential ticket.

Along the way, he's enjoyed stints as chairman of PARADIGM, a hedge fund agency. He also held a job as senior vice president at MBNA Corporation, the world's largest independent credit-card

issuer at the time.

In 2006, President George Bush nominated Hunter to serve on the Amtrak board of directors. He served a five-year term after a unanimous confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

What has he been up to recently?

In May 2014, Hunter signed on as a lawyer and board member of Burisma Holdings Ltd., a large Ukrainian gas production company.

The appointment caused a stir, given that it occurred around the same time that his father and the White House were engaged in diplomatic missions in the region to wean Ukraine off Russian energy sources. Critics argued that Hunter's work for a country promoting Ukrainian energy independence was a blatant conflict of interest.

But, the Vice President's office brushed off the controversy, insisting that Hunter is a private citizen whose actions don't represent the views of the government.

That brings us to the present day. Hunter may no longer be in the Navy, but he still has his hands in public service. He's the board chairman at World Food Program USA, an organization fighting poverty and hunger, and he serves on the President's Advisory board of the Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington.

Hunter also has a job at his alma mater as an adjunct professor at Georgetown's School of Foreign Service. He is married and has three daughters.

REPORT: HUNTER BIDEN DISCHARGED FROM NAVY AFTER FAILING DRUG TEST (CNN)
CNN, October 17, 2014

(CNN)-- The Vice President's son was discharged from the Navy Reserve this year, after testing positive for cocaine.

Hunter Biden's discharge was first reported by the Wall Street Journal.

The 44-year-old lawyer and investment firm partner confirmed it in a statement.

Biden was commissioned as an Ensign, a part-time position.

Biden says he deeply regrets his actions and that it was the honor of his life to serve in the Navy.

The Vice President's office has not commented on the report.

SHOULD JOE BIDEN'S SON HAVE BEEN KICKED OUT OF THE NAVY FOR DRUG USE?
(HUFFPOST)

By James Carli

Huffington Post, October 18, 2014

News broke this morning that Hunter Biden, son of Vice President Joe Biden, was expelled from the Navy just a month after receiving his commission in 2013 because he failed a drug test, testing positive for cocaine use. This is only the latest and most high-profile case of a self-imposed brain drain by the U.S. government of highly talented, intelligent, motivated young professionals, because of obsolete, outmoded, and misguided prohibitionist drug war policies.

Indeed, no small number of highly qualified professionals are dissuaded from using their talents to serve their government, something that we desperately need in this time of such global turmoil, because the U.S. government adheres to policies from another era that will reject valuable and important skills and access based solely on haphazard tests about what these people do in their own time.

Surely there are problem drinkers in the government. Just go to a cocktail party at an embassy or bureau Christmas party and you will see that analyst or special agent relax just a little too much.

These individuals will face no repercussions for overindulgence within moderation. Granted, they are professionals who have received extensive training on how to conduct themselves appropriately while under the influence, or while consuming certain mind-altering substances like alcohol, and if their use ever becomes a problem, there are protocols in place to address it.

But why is there such tolerance in high levels of government for alcohol and such admonition for other substances resoundingly less harmful? After all, just ask any jarhead what his CO is like to deal with when he's going through coffee withdrawal. It's a problem, too.

In my personal experience, I have known foreign service officers and people who work in national security who have had close brushes with their employers because of recreational marijuana consumption. Fortunately, in these cases, reason won out, and their respective organizations saw the value in overlooking these missteps because of the quality work that these people provide in

defense of the republic.

But those are definitely exceptions, and as a rule, highly-competent professionals are all too often dismissed solely because of a substance they chose to use during their off-time.

This has a very bad long-term effect of discouraging people who should be in government from working for the government. Earlier this year, in May, in the wake of Colorado and Washington's new responsible regulation of marijuana, rumors spread online that FBI Director James Comey told a young cyber-inclined man that "he should go ahead and apply" to the Bureau, despite the fact he was a marijuana aficionado. After all, the need for skilled tech people is very high in the government these days, with constant threat of state-sponsored cyber warfare and sporadic nonstate hack attacks.

It also happens that many tech-inclined young people are fond of marijuana. Comey's statement raised hopes on college campuses and think tanks around the country that maybe, just maybe, the government was on the verge of updating their policies toward reason. Nevertheless, two days later, the Director clarified his statement before the Senate Judiciary Committee with a resounding "I did not say I am going to change that ban."

This is unfortunate. The U.S. government should immediately change their hiring policies to accept individuals who may use marijuana or other drugs in a responsible manner on their own time, but should screen for people whose use is problematic, and deal with problem use in the same manner that they deal with problem alcohol use or coffee addiction.

James Carli is development communications and research coordinator at the Drug Policy Alliance. This article originally appeared on the Drug Policy Alliance blog.

HUNTER BIDEN'S COCAINE USE AND VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN'S EVOLVING PERSPECTIVE ON THE DRUG WAR (HUFFPOST)

By Tony Newman

Huffington Post, October 18, 2014

The Vice President's son, Hunter Biden is making worldwide news after the Wall Street Journal reported that he was discharged from the Navy in February after testing positive for cocaine use. I have spent the last 15 years working at the Drug Policy Alliance trying to end our country's insane war on drugs. Here are some of my reflections on the Biden family.

Drug use touches most families.

Hunter Biden, Noelle Bush, Al Gore III and Chiara de Blasio remind us that both drug use and abuse touch most families, including those running our country. Despite a \$40 billion a year "war on drugs" and political speeches about a "drug-free society," our society is swimming in drugs. Virtually all of us take drugs every single day. Caffeine, sugar, alcohol, marijuana, Prozac, cocaine, Ritalin, opiates and nicotine are just some of the substances that Americans use on a regular basis.

Drug abuse does not discriminate, but our drug policies do.

While drug abuse doesn't discriminate, it is clear that our drug policies do. Despite similar rates of drug use and drug sales across races, African Americans are 13 times more likely to go to prison for drugs. I don't think Vice President Biden's son should be in jail for his cocaine use but neither should so many others who are currently behind bars for drug use or possession.

Vice President Joe Biden's Role in Expanding Drug War

As a Senator in the late 1980s, Mr. Biden was a cheerleader for the drug war. He played a major role in creating the Drug Czar's office and in enacting the draconian mandatory minimum sentences that have filled our prisons with nonviolent drug law offenders. To the Vice President's credit, he has "evolved" a bit on the issue. In recent years, Mr. Biden has championed a number of progressive drug policy reforms - like introducing legislation to completely eliminate the 100-to-1 crack/powder cocaine sentencing disparity and rolling back the mandatory minimums he favored in the late 1980s. The crack/powder disparity wasn't completely eliminated, but was reformed under President Obama.

How Will the Biden Family Move Forward on This Issue?

Optimistically, I would like to envision Mr. Biden, realizing that drug use is so widespread that it even touches his son, would become more sympathetic to other people who use drugs. There are hundreds of thousands of people behind bars serving long prison sentences on drug charges. The realization that other people's kids are living behind bars for doing the same thing that his son did

could be a transformative experience. Perhaps Hunter's experience will strengthen his resolve. Vice President Biden and his son's response should be to join the millions of people who are challenging the ignorance and irrationality of locking up hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens because of a nonviolent drug offense. If Hunter and Joe Biden can use this experience to become involved in changing our inhumane policies, then the Biden family and our country will be better for it.

Tony Newman is the director of media relations at the Drug Policy Alliance
(>www.drugpolicy.org<)

BIDEN'S SON FACES NO BAR REVIEW AFTER DISCHARGE (CHAROBS)

Charlotte (NC) Observer, October 17, 2014

Hunter Biden, the youngest son of Vice President Joe Biden, faces no automatic review of his law license in Connecticut following his discharge from the U.S. Navy Reserve after testing positive for cocaine use, Connecticut legal authorities said Friday.

Posted: Friday, Oct. 17, 2014

WASHINGTON Hunter Biden, the youngest son of Vice President Joe Biden, faces no automatic review of his law license in Connecticut following his discharge from the U.S. Navy Reserve after testing positive for cocaine use, Connecticut legal authorities said Friday.

Hunter Biden works in Washington as a private equity executive and board director of an international energy firm, but he is admitted to practice law in Connecticut, where attorneys' privileges can be examined under a disciplinary review system. Legal clients, state lawyers, judges and any citizen can file grievances, but as of Friday, none had been filed, authorities said. Lawyers in Connecticut face automatic review of their bar admission only when they have been convicted of a crime, said Michael P. Bowler, Connecticut's Statewide Bar Counselor, who heads a team of lawyers that investigate attorney grievances. Criminal convictions have to be reviewed by a statewide grievance committee, as do other complaints, which can range from drug and alcohol abuse to inadequate legal representation.

"At this point, I'm not aware that Mr. Biden has been arrested for anything, and certainly not convicted," Bowler said. The Navy's brief confirmation of Biden's discharge did not cite any arrest or charges. Two people familiar with the matter told The Associated Press he was kicked out after testing positive for cocaine, confirming what was first reported by The Wall Street Journal. Bowler added that Biden had told state authorities in 2007 that he was also admitted to the bar in Washington, D.C. Current District of Columbia bar records do not show Biden as member. The Navy said Thursday that Biden was discharged in February from a part-time position as a public affairs officer in the Navy Reserve but did not provide a reason. Biden released a statement through his attorney saying, "I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge."

Biden, 44, a former Washington lobbyist, is a managing partner at the Rosemont Seneca Partners investment firm and a director at Burisma Holdings, a Ukraine-based energy company. A Washington lobbyist for Burisma, David Leiter, did not respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press.

Mark Dubois, the president of the Connecticut Bar Association, said that state bar and ethics officials are sensitive to news accounts involving misbehavior of lawyers admitted to practice in the state, but he said, "They have to be judicious about starting the process."

Dubois, who formerly investigated and prosecuted ethical misconduct as Connecticut Disciplinary Counsel, said authorities have initiated cases in the past involving drug and alcohol abuse by attorneys, but "only when it's a fairly extensive record of abuse."

VICE PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN TO APPEAR AT EVENT ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN DULUTH NEXT WEEK (AP)

Associated Press, October 18, 2014

DULUTH, Minn. - The White House says Vice President Joe Biden is coming to Minnesota next week.

Biden will appear at an event on domestic violence in Duluth on Thursday. More details will be released later.

Minnesota also gets a visit from first lady Michelle Obama next week as the campaigns enter the

home stretch.

The Minnesota DFL Party says Mrs. Obama will campaign for Democratic Gov. Mark Dayton and Sen. Al Franken at a get-out-the-vote rally Tuesday at Patrick Henry High School in north Minneapolis.

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JOE BIDEN, MARISKA HARGITAY TEAM UP TO HELP DOMESTIC ABUSE VICTIMS (HUFFPOST)

By Robbie Couch

Huffington Post, October 17, 2014

On Sunday, Americans' love for television binge-watching will end up helping fight domestic abuse - at least, that's what Vice President Joe Biden and actress Mariska Hargitay are hoping for.

Biden will appear alongside Hargitay in a PSA addressing domestic violence scheduled to air during a "Law and Order: Special Victims Unit" marathon on USA Network, The Washington Post reported. Maile Zambuto, who is the chief executive of Hargitay's foundation for survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse, Joyful Heart, told the outlet that episodes set to air during the marathon will focus on different aspects of the issue, including "teen dating violence, campus sexual assault, male sexual abuse [and] the cycle of violence."

The duo, who are supporting the No More campaign, aim to provide victims and their loved ones with the resources to access help.

In one of three spots that will air on Sunday, Biden and Margitay point out the difference between how domestic violence is treated on-screen and off.

"On Law and Order: SVU, witnesses frequently come forward to help detectives track down offenders," Hargitay said in the PSA.

"But in real life, too often, people look the other way," Biden continued, noting that "domestic violence is never the victim's fault."

About 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in the U.S., according to a 2010 survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Biden, who spearheaded the Violence Against Women Act as a senator in 1994, teamed up with Hargitay last year at a news conference in Maryland. The event addressed the need to reduce domestic violence deaths in the U.S. Each year, 1,300 people die from intimate partner victimizations, according to the CDC.

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN TO VISIT MINNESOTA (ROCHSTER)

By Mike Klein

Rochester (MN) Post-Bulletin, October 18, 2014

DULUTH - The White House says Vice President Joe Biden is coming to Minnesota next week. Biden will appear at an event on domestic violence in Duluth on Thursday. More details will be released later.

Minnesota also gets a visit from first lady Michelle Obama next week as the campaigns enter the home stretch.

The Minnesota DFL Party says Mrs. Obama will campaign for Democratic Gov. Mark Dayton and Sen. Al Franken at a get-out-the-vote rally Tuesday at Patrick Henry High School in north Minneapolis.

VP BIDEN COMING TO RANGE (HIBBING)

By Bill Hanna

Virginia (MN) Mesabi Daily Tribune, October 18, 2014

HIBBING - Vice President Joe Biden will make a trip to northeastern Minnesota Thursday that will include a campaign rally in Hibbing.

Democratic U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan said in a telephone interview he will travel with the vice president on Air Force 2 from Duluth to Hibbing in the early afternoon.

OBAMA PUSHES TO SAVE ILLINOIS GOV. QUINN (USAT)

By Aamer Madhani

USA Today, October 17, 2014

CHICAGO - As most Democrats across the country try to keep their distance, President Obama, whose popularity has cratered, has mostly stayed on the sidelines in this election cycle.

But in his political backyard, the president is throwing himself into saving Democratic Gov. Pat Quinn, who is locked in a tight re-election race with Republican businessman Bruce Rauner.

Weeks after headlining a fundraiser for Quinn in his adopted hometown of Chicago, Obama is scheduled to return to the Windy City on Sunday night for a campaign rally for the governor not far from the neighborhood where he started his career as a community organizer.

The loss of the Governor's Mansion in Illinois would be a political embarrassment for Obama, said Kent Redfield, a political scientist at the University of Illinois-Springfield.

"He's going to have losses in the Senate and may even lose the Senate," Redfield said. "And if he loses Illinois' governor's race, it's just one more point in that narrative that the country is moving to the right."

The White House effort to help Quinn goes beyond the president. First lady Michelle Obama campaigned on behalf of Quinn in Illinois this month, and former president Bill Clinton and Vice President Biden are scheduled to travel here next week to stump for Quinn.

Rauner's campaign has seized on the attention Obama is giving the race.

"The national Democrats are going all out to try to save THE WORST GOVERNOR IN AMERICA," Rauner wrote in a fundraising e-mail this week. "You and I know that Illinois can't take another four years of Pat Quinn."

The Illinois gubernatorial race has shaped up into one of the nastiest and most expensive in the country.

The campaigns have turned to a barrage of negative advertising in which both candidates say the other can't be trusted with leading one of the most economically fragile states.

Quinn is being outspent by Rauner, a successful venture capitalist who has poured \$17 million of his own money into the race. The candidates have raised about \$58 million combined since Rauner became the GOP nominee. Polls show Quinn holds a narrow lead as the campaign heads into its final lap.

On the stump and in ads, Quinn has blasted Rauner as anti-union and a "professional outsourcer." Rauner has charged that the governor is corrupt and a failure. More than 72% of the recent ads aired by the two candidates have been negative, according to an analysis released this week by the Wesleyan Media Project.

The governor's campaign strategy has mirrored Obama's successful effort in his 2012 re-election campaign against Mitt Romney in which the president's team hammered at the former Massachusetts governor's years as a venture capitalist and his enormous wealth.

Quinn has tried to paint Rauner, who earned more than \$60 million last year from his investments, as an out-of-touch rich guy who would increase the burden on the poor and middle class.

"All my opponent does is grow his bank account, and that hurts everyone," Quinn said at a debate in Chicago this week.

Rauner has argued that Quinn presided over one of the worst economies in the country. Illinois' unemployment stands at 6.6%, and the state is weighed down by a woefully underfunded state pension system.

"Pat Quinn has been in Springfield for decades, and he's almost been governor for six years," Rauner said. "It's a record of failure - on jobs, on taxes, on schools, on corruption and cronyism and political patronage."

The tight polling suggests the governor's fate may come down to his ability to turn out the Democratic base Nov. 4. The governor hopes Obama, whose appearance in Chicago comes the night before early voting starts in Chicago, can help him do that.

At Flecks Coffee and Cafe, a business where Rauner made a campaign stop this week, co-owner Olga Turner said there is a general malaise in her community about Quinn's stewardship of the Illinois economy that has created an opening for Rauner.

Though Turner is down on Quinn, she remains a big Obama fan. She said he's done the best job he can, considering a difficult economy and "obstruction" from his opponents.

Turner, who has never voted for a Republican and is undecided how she'll vote in the governor's race, isn't quite as charitable about Quinn.

"The way people are feeling, I don't think you can take anyone's vote for granted," she said. "I'll be interested in hearing what Obama has to say."

UPHILL BATTLE CONTINUES FOR RENTERIA (HNFRDSENT)

By Seth Nidever

Hanford (CA) Sentinel, October 18, 2014

Can Joe Biden and Hillary Clinton propel Amanda Renteria to victory?

Going up against incumbent Rep. David Valadao, R-Hanford, in a congressional district that has become difficult for Democrats, Renteria is pulling out all the stops with three-and-a-half weeks to go before Election Day.

On Oct. 7, Vice President Joe Biden gave a full-throttle stump speech in Bakersfield in support of Renteria and state Sen. Alex Padilla, the Democrat running for California Secretary of State. Valadao, who had invited Biden to tour parts of the 21st Congressional District to see drought impacts, said in a written statement that "as Valley farmers, farmworkers, and families continue to suffer under drought conditions, Vice President Biden is traveling to the Central Valley to headline a political fundraiser for our opponent."

This coming weekend, a Democratic star-studded fundraiser in the Bay Area features 2016 Democratic presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton. Renteria is scheduled to make an appearance. But is Renteria's 11th hour offensive a sign of health or a desperation heave into the end zone? The evidence suggests the latter.

With President Barack Obama unpopular and with Republicans poised to gain seats in the House and Senate, many Washington, D.C., oddsmakers have rated the district as "lean Republican." In recent weeks, Renteria spokeswoman Maria Machuca emailed a barrage of press releases attacking Valadao for his voting record, both as a California assemblyman from 2010 to 2012 and as a congressman in 2013 and 2014.

They include headlines like "FACT: Valadao voted for Radical Ryan Budget with Wrong Priorities" and "FACT: [Valadao] Voted Against Establishing A Right to Clean Water."

"When you are talking about his voting record, it's not an attack, it's a fact," Machuca said.

Republicans were happy to morph the attention-grabbing headlines into an argument that Renteria is flailing.

"Our opponent's campaign is getting more and more desperate and silly," said Valadao spokesman Tal Eslick. "She is purposely misleading voters to draw attention away from the fact that her campaign is fully funded by Bay Area liberals and environmental groups like the Environmental Defense Fund and the Natural Resources Defense Council."

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee has yanked a nearly \$1 million TV ad buy for Renteria that it was planning to air later this month. It was originally scheduled to run in early October when absentee ballots were still arriving in voters' mailboxes. According to a politico.com story published on Oct. 6, House Democrats are shifting money away from Democratic challengers and toward vulnerable Democratic incumbents in hotly-contested races.

In a poll that came out last month, SurveyUSA had Valadao beating Renteria by 19 percentage points.

Despite Democrats having a 15-percent-point voter registration edge, Valadao clobbered 2012 Democratic challenger John Hernandez 58 percent to 42 percent.

Valadao continues to dominate the fundraising competition. From July 1 to Sept. 30, he raked in \$545,065 in contributions. At the end of the period, Valadao had \$1.1 million cash on hand.

As of June 30 - the date of the last report she filed - Renteria had \$396,898 cash on hand.

Renteria's totals for the July 1 to Sept. 30 period were not available Thursday on the Federal Election Commission's website.

Renteria and Valadao did four televised debates earlier this month, but they aired at odd times - one at 8 a.m. on a Sunday - and most weren't open to the general public. That didn't help Renteria, who has faces a name-recognition challenge Valadao doesn't.

Machuca said the Renteria campaign is working "very aggressively" on a get-out-the-vote effort.

She noted that the Democratic voter registration edge has increased from 15 percent in 2012 to 17 percent today.

"We won't see the results until Election Day," Machuca said.

Ditto for Eslick, who said the incumbent isn't counting on a favorable climate to coast to victory.

"We believe that campaigns are won on the ground, in the district," Eslick said. "We're taking nothing for granted."

JILL BIDEN COMES TO ATLANTA (MYAJC)

By Jim Galloway

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, October 17, 2014

The parade of each party's more popular figures continues Friday with Dr. Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, who will be in Atlanta to raise money for the party and Democratic U.S. Senate hopeful Michelle Nunn.

Jill Biden will attend an event for the Democratic National Committee at a private Atlanta residence. (On Saturday morning, the vice president's wife will attend a public Hands On Atlanta event with Michelle Nunn, the Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate, at the Fort Street United Methodist Church).

IT'S TIME TO WATCH OUT FOR AN OCTOBER SURPRISE (CHIT)

By John Kass

Chicago Tribune, October 18, 2014

Now that President Barack Obama has installed a Democratic Party apparatchik with no scientific or medical experience as America's Ebola czar, POTUS has plenty of time for what really matters to him:

Partisan politics in Illinois, his political home.

Specifically, Obama will concentrate Sunday on Illinois gubernatorial politics (I just love that word gubernatorial) and the close race between Democratic Gov. Pat Quinn and his challenger, Republican businessman Bruce Rauner.

As some of you may have heard, the gubernatorial election is likely to shape the economic future of Illinois.

And since the president is coming to Illinois to stump for Quinn - but leaving a political guy in charge of Ebola who knows little about fluids but a lot about hanging chads - I guess that means it's OK for the rest of us to think politics too.

What I'd like you to consider are these three things:

The parade of heavy hitters being brought in for Quinn, which suggests, to me at least, that Rauner may have the momentum in the campaign; Monday night's critical debate; and the tradition of the last-minute drop of opposition research to journalists.

Obama is the heaviest of heavy Democratic Party hitters to come in for Quinn, and Sunday's rally at Chicago State University is designed in part to ramp up the African-American base that the Democrats cannot live without. But former President Bill Clinton may show up in the coming days as well, and Vice President Joe Biden.

Quinn also has his elderly mom serving as an attack dog, but she's so sweet about it.

Rauner was asked about Obama, Clinton and Biden on my WLS-AM radio program on Friday.

"It shows how desperate they are trying to shore up the weakest governor in America," Rauner said in the interview, adding that he has gained backing from some Democratic leaders who supported Obama because "Illinois has been the worst-run state in America. We've got a bunch of corrupt and incompetent politicians running this state into the ground. We're going to win this race. It's very exciting and I'm pumped up."

I would have been pumped up myself if Quinn took advantage of the airtime that's been offered to him - I'd wanted his input in this space as well - but apparently he was busy shooting hoops and perhaps preparing for the Monday WLS-TV debate.

Rauner crushed him at the end of their last debate before black civic leaders including the Chicago Urban League. That energized his supporters, particularly in the suburbs and collar counties where Rauner must pull big numbers to overcome the expected Democratic surge in Cook County. But Quinn is an experienced politician. An overconfident Rauner could make a mistake. And Quinn knows when to pounce on a mistake.

So I asked Rauner if overconfidence leading into Monday's debate could be a problem.

"Am I overconfident? No," he said. "This is going to be a close race. And Illinois politics is wild. Nobody can predict anything. This is going to be very close, very tough, and I'm taking absolutely nothing for granted."

And last, we should consider a little-discussed but highly important feature of tight campaigns like the Quinn-Rauner race:

That last-minute drop over the transom.

There are few, if any, transoms in modern newspaper buildings given we now have central air conditioning, but the time-honored tradition of peddling negative news stories on opponents remains.

So you shouldn't be surprised if you see negative media hits in the coming days that give a candidate little if any time to react.

Amazingly, almost as if by coincidence, the other camp (those who did the dropping) often has campaign ads up the minute the negative story hits the news.

There are two tactics used. One is the straight drop to a politically friendly print or TV reporter. Another method is to first feed partisans on candidate-friendly blogs. Then the campaign's social media warriors pump it up to generate buzz, hoping a broadcast or print news outlet acknowledges a "reported controversy."

Once that's done, once the news outlet mentions the "reported controversy," then others can jump in, surrogates and candidates too.

And the opposition researchers get what they wanted: a bloodied opponent without any of their telltale fingerprints.

Over the past few days I've received such calls, from Democratic and Republican operatives in different campaigns up and down the ballot. And I'm sure other reporters have received them too. I'm not passing judgment on the operatives, they're advocates doing their jobs. And clearly, reporters are free to do last-minute hits. It is the way of things and the way of all campaigns in free countries.

But I don't like it. I'll admit that years ago, I was as eager for a chunk of red meat as the next hunting dog. What you learn, though, over time is that such chunks of meat have a smell.

It smells of manipulation.

And it lingers.

Reporters love getting information, the public deserves information, and where it comes from isn't all that important. What's important is that we check it out.

But I don't like late negative stories in a tough campaign, especially one with stark philosophical differences like this race for governor.

The last couple of weeks of a campaign isn't the time for a dramatic drop. The oppo researchers had months to drop dimes on the other guy.

Now it's time for voters to concentrate, and time for candidates to sell themselves. And they have a little over two weeks to do it.

EARLY VOTING STARTS THIS WEEK, WITH CHANGES (CHIT)

Chicago Tribune, October 18, 2014

Early voting kicks off Monday in advance of the Nov. 4 statewide election, with a slew of new one-time changes that supporters say are meant to boost voter participation and critics contend have been put in place for political reasons tied to the hotly contested governor race.

With voters casting their first in-person ballots this week, the political spotlight will remain bright in the race between Gov. Pat Quinn and Republican challenger Bruce Rauner. President Barack Obama comes to Chicago on Sunday night to again stump for Quinn at a Chicago State University rally that coincides with the beginning of early voting. And former President Bill Clinton will be in town Tuesday to appear with the governor.

Vice President Joe Biden is set to attend an early voting event Wednesday in Vernon Hills with U.S. Rep. Brad Schneider, according to the Schneider campaign.

Meanwhile, voters across the region have already received thousands of ballots through the mail-in voting option that both political parties have increasingly made a focus of their campaign tactics. In 2010, the first election in which Illinois allowed "no excuse" mail-in ballots where voters could take advantage of the postal option without explaining why they couldn't instead vote on Election Day, 25,004 voters in suburban Cook County availed themselves of the opportunity, according to Cook County Clerk David Orr. By the middle of last week, more than 33,000 applications for mail-in ballots in the Cook County suburbs had already come in, Orr said.

"It remains to be seen whether these are people who wouldn't have voted otherwise, or if they are

simply using this option instead of heading to the polls," Orr said. "But certainly we have seen the parties and the candidates increasingly urging people to vote by mail. The goal is to get your people out (to vote) before Election Day, which saves the campaigns from having to use resources on Election Day to try to track down likely supporters and try to get them to go out and vote."

In Chicago, the Board of Election Commissioners had received 29,480 applications for the absentee ballots by Friday, according to board spokesman James Allen. A total of 28,365 of the mail-in ballots were cast in 2010, when governor was last the top race.

Organizations have become much more aggressive in sending out absentee applications to residences across the city, Allen said. Residents fill out the forms and return them to the third party groups, which then deliver them to election officials. "We get two to seven boxes (of applications) every other day from these clearinghouses," Allen said.

While there's nothing improper about the practice, Allen warned that there is a time lag between voters mailing the applications to the clearinghouses and the organizations dropping off the bundles of applications to the Election Board. "If we receive the application two minutes after 5 p.m. on Oct. 30, it's no good," he said.

People who want to vote early in person will have an easier time doing so this year, thanks to a series of one-time election laws signed by Quinn last summer.

The two-week early voting period, which traditionally ends the Saturday before the Tuesday election, will this year continue through Sunday, Nov. 2, at some voting locations.

In the city, five early voting locations will be open later during the second week, until 7 p.m. from Oct. 27 to Oct. 31. The later hours will be in effect at 42 suburban locations, plus the Cook County clerk's Loop location. Early voting locations across the city and suburbs will be open until 5 p.m. on other dates in the run-up to Nov. 4.

And people voting early will for the first time be able to do so without showing a photo ID such as a driver's license.

After lawmakers approved the measures on a Democratic-led vote shortly before the end of the spring session, Quinn welcomed the change.

"Democracy works best when everyone has the opportunity to participate," the governor said.

"Instead of turning away eager voters at the ballot box, (the legislation) will make sure more Illinois residents have a chance to have their voices heard."

Rauner has said he supports the concept of increasing voter registration and turnout. But some Republicans have noted the legislation put these changes in place only for this year's election and wondered whether Democrats eased the voting rules to give their candidates a boost this November.

In 2006, 24,811 Chicago voters cast early in-person ballots. That number more than tripled to 85,604 in 2010, Allen said. Chicago election officials anticipate early votes "again in that 80s range" this election, he said.

Early voting numbers will go up if voters decide well before Nov. 4 whether they want to back Quinn or Rauner, Allen said.

"For the presidential election, people made up their minds in September, so the minute we opened the doors for early voting, boom, they were lining up," he said. "If people want to wait, maybe watch one more debate or see what transpires late in the campaign, they're less likely to vote early."

Tribune reporter Monique Garcia contributed.

HONDURAS BOOSTS AIR FORCE IN FIGHT AGAINST DRUG SMUGGLERS (REU)

By Gustavo Palencia

Reuters, October 18, 2014

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

8 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT SUPREME COURT JUSTICE SONIA SOTOMAYOR (PBS)

By Nora Daly

PBS, October 18, 2014

Of all the Supreme Court Justices, Sonia Sotomayor is arguably the most visible outside of the

courtroom. Her journey from a Bronx housing project to the United States Supreme Court has been chronicled by many, including Sotomayor herself in her bestselling memoir, "My Beloved World."

In spite of all that is known about Justice Sotomayor, judicial biographer and Reuters legal affairs editor Joan Biskupic believed there was more to discover. She discussed her new book, "Breaking In: The Rise of Sonia Sotomayor and the Politics of Justice," with PBS NewsHour's Gwen Ifill.

Here are a few lesser known facts she helped uncover. 1. She helped Ruth Bader Ginsburg cope with her husband's death

In the opening pages of "Breaking In," Biskupic describes how Sotomayor shook up tradition at her first end-of-term party by asking the other justices to salsa dance with her.

In what Biskupic describes as the "most compelling" moment of this episode, Sotomayor approached Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, whose husband had passed away just three days prior, and asked her to dance. When Ginsburg initially refused, Sotomayor leaned in and whispered to her, "Marty would have wanted you to dance," referring to Ginsburg's late husband. After joining her on the dance floor briefly, Ginsburg placed her hands on Sotomayor's cheeks and simply said, "Thank you." 2. She was born the same year as *Brown vs. Board of Education*

Sotomayor has described herself as "the perfect affirmative action baby." In April, when the court upheld an amendment to the Michigan state constitution banning racial affirmative action, she issued a 58-page long dissent (over three times as long as the opinion upholding the law), which made clear that she believes it is the court's role to defend the civil rights of "historically marginalized groups." It is fitting that she was born shortly after this landmark ruling in favor of educational equality. 3. She poked fun at Chief Justice John Roberts

In a 2007 opinion, Chief Justice Roberts famously wrote: "The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race." In her dissent in the Michigan ruling, Sotomayor turned Roberts' words against him, writing: "The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to speak openly and candidly on the subject of race."

"She clearly was playing off of his view in a kind of mocking way," Biskupic says, "and in fact, Chief Justice Roberts criticized Justice Sotomayor for doing that...he said that she was expounding policy preferences, but then he also said that he did not like the airing of personal strains."

Sotomayor's jab at Roberts revealed a personal disagreement, but Biskupic insists the dissent as a whole was rooted in Sotomayor's professional opinion. "Most of it was based on her legal reasoning and what she thought of precedent. So she weaves in sentiment from personal experience, but it is all based in the law." 4. She "leaned in" during the nomination process

In "Breaking In," Biskupic points out that no judicial nomination moves "without some pushing and shoving," and "minorities and women...faced greater resistance." She reports that in 1991, when President George H. W. Bush nominated Sotomayor to the U.S. District Court, minorities accounted for only around 10 percent of federal judges, a mere 12 percent were female and, in the state of New York, there were no Hispanic federal judges.

Biskupic was surprised to learn how active Sotomayor was in pushing for her own nomination. Biskupic was surprised to learn how active Sotomayor was in pushing for her own nomination. "I didn't know how much she had been an agent for herself," Biskupic said, in discussing how Sotomayor worked, first with Democratic New York Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan to secure her nomination to the U.S. District Court, and later with Republican New York Sen. Al D'Amato, to ensure a Senate floor vote on her elevation to the Second Circuit. "She was accustomed to pushing overtly for what she wanted," Biskupic writes in "Breaking In," adding that "her confidence surprised Moynihan" when the two first met to discuss her nomination. 5. She wields influence behind the scenes

There have been many times, Biskupic says, when Sotomayor "has been willing to break off and write some solo dissents or concurring opinions that break from her liberal colleagues ... It's a variety of cases where she'll go a little bit further to left." However, in "Breaking In," Biskupic tells of at least one instance where the justice agreed to compromise.

Prior to ruling on the Michigan state ban on affirmative action, the court heard another case that challenged the race-sensitive admissions policy of the University of Texas at Austin. This case presented an even greater challenge to affirmative action by calling into question a precedent-setting ruling. In her book, Biskupic reveals that Sotomayor, greatly concerned about the way the

Court appeared to be leaning, wrote a fiery dissent that was circulated privately among the justices, and ultimately led some of her more conservative colleagues to agree to a compromise. "It all went on in secret," Biskupic told NewsHour's Gwen Ifill, "it was her work behind the scenes that...in effect, saved affirmative action for another day."6. She shops at Costco. Back in June, Sotomayor appeared to surprise Hillary Clinton at her own book signing at an Arlington, Virginia, Costco. The justice picked up a copy of the former secretary of state's book and shook hands before departing. While some speculated that the meeting was in fact a planned photo-op, Sotomayor told The Washington Post that it was pure coincidence. "A nice lady at the pharmacy counter recognized me, and we started chatting, and she says, 'Are you here with the other lady?' And I said, 'What other lady?' And she mentioned Madam Secretary, and that's how I found out."7. She rescheduled on the Vice President of the United States. When Vice President Biden requested that Justice Sotomayor swear him in at the January 2013 inauguration ceremony, she agreed, but asked that the event be rescheduled from 12 p.m. to 8 a.m. because she had committed to a book signing in New York City later in the day. Some eyebrows were raised when it was revealed that the vice president and the president would not be sworn in at the same time, but Biden himself did not seem to mind. At the conclusion of the ceremony, Biskupic writes, Biden thanked Justice Sotomayor, saying it was "a wonderful honor" to be sworn in by her. "We are going to walk out," he continued, "you see her car's waiting so she can catch a train I hope I haven't caused her to miss." U.S. Vice President Joe Biden takes the oath of office from Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor as his wife Jill Biden holds the family bible while family members look on at the U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington January 20, 2013. Photo by Kevin Lamarque/Reuters8. She is a workaholic. Below is video evidence that the justice couldn't even step away from the bench long enough to have a cup of coffee with a friend!

NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS:

SMALL SCHOOLS WORK IN NEW YORK (NYT)

New York Times, October 18, 2014

Mayor Bill de Blasio has been critical of the signature education strategy of his predecessor, Mike Bloomberg, a strategy that involved closing large, failing high schools and replacing them with smaller specialized schools that offer a more rigorous curriculum and a more personal brand of instruction. But over the last few years, the Bloomberg approach has been vindicated by an innovative, multiyear study showing that the poor, minority students who attend small specialized schools do better academically than students in a control group who attend traditional high schools.

The latest installment of the study, released this week by the nonprofit research group MDRC, contains even more impressive news: The disadvantaged students who make up a vast majority of the small-school enrollment are also more likely than those in the control group to enroll in college. The challenge facing Mr. de Blasio and his advisers is how to build on this impressive foundation. New York City started talking about small schools in the 1990s, but it did not begin translating this into actual policy until the early 2000s, when Mr. Bloomberg began aggressively closing down large, factory-style high schools. Some of these big schools had enrollments of 3,000 or more students and graduation rates of less than 40 percent.

By contrast, the new smaller high schools, typically in black or Hispanic neighborhoods, serve about 100 students per grade. More than 90 percent of the students attending these schools are black or Hispanic. Nearly 85 percent qualify for free or reduced price lunches. Three-fourths of them began their high school careers performing below grade level in reading or math. These smaller schools have several other things in common. They have a rigorous curriculum. They offer a personalized approach to education, with teachers responsible for keeping close tabs on the performance of their students. They are organized around themes - social justice, law or science. They get valuable support from community partners - colleges, cultural organizations or social service groups - that sometimes assist with funding, the hiring of new staff members or providing ways for students to connect their schoolwork with the world of work.

The multiyear study is tracking more than 21,000 students through their high school careers and into college. Among the startling results are these: Students at small high schools have a graduation rate of 71.6 percent, compared with 62.2 percent for their peers in larger schools. The small-school students are also more likely to graduate in four years and go straight to college. The gains are especially impressive among young black men, 42.3 percent of whom enroll in college as opposed to 31 percent of their peers in the control group. Young black women and young Hispanic men and women also matriculated at higher rates than their large-school peers. The small high schools managed to achieve these gains at a lower cost per graduate than the traditional schools, partly because more students graduated on time and did not need a costly fifth year of education.

The teachers union supported the school closure strategy at first, even though it requires teachers to reapply for their jobs and, in many cases, move elsewhere. But it withdrew support when it decided that Mr. Bloomberg was unnecessarily ramming through closures. The de Blasio administration has said that it will first pursue an as yet undefined strategy to help improve schools before deciding to shut them down.

The administration is right when it says that every school can't be a small one. But given the clear benefits that have accrued to the city's most vulnerable students, Mr. de Blasio should not shy away from the option of shutting down big schools and remaking them from scratch, particularly in cases where the school has been failing for a long time and its culture is beyond repair.

VATICAN SIGNALS ON GAYS AND REMARRIAGE ARE A HOPEFUL BEGINNING (NYT)

New York Times, October 18, 2014

A half-century after the historic changes of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Francis is showing his intent to drive a comparably ambitious agenda for the Roman Catholic Church in the 21st century.

The current synod of bishops in Rome, called by Francis to encourage reform and modernization, set a ringing tone of compassion this week with an opening call for a more welcoming attitude toward gay people, unmarried couples, divorced Catholics who remarry, and children in these unions.

The bishops' report on their first week of private discussions did not immediately change church doctrine. But it signaled the pope's determination to have the church look anew at the realities of the modern world, including what the bishops were moved to call the "positive aspects of civil unions and cohabitation" - a formulation unthinkable in an era when the church denounced such Catholics as "living in sin."

The synod's summary language about gays and lesbians was even more remarkable.

"Homosexuals have gifts and qualities to offer to the Christian community: Are we capable of welcoming these people, guaranteeing to them a fraternal space in our communities?" asked the bishops' opening 12-page report. It maintained opposition to same-sex marriage but avoided the ritual condemnation of "intrinsically disordered" homosexuality.

The final version of the report will serve as the centerpiece for a year's debate by church leaders and laity before a concluding synod next October.

The whole effort is subject to fierce debate among the bishops, but the very fact that Francis ordered church leaders to address these challenges seems a landmark in Vatican history.

Such an overdue and refreshing agenda should also be well received at the parish level, where many of the church's modern laity have shown themselves motivated by individual conscience more than doctrinaire prelates on such issues as birth control. The synod did not call for doctrinal changes on birth control. But it said - perhaps in a euphemistic effort to seem less than absolute on the subject - that what is required is "a realistic language that is able to start from listening to people."

Beyond specific issues, a welcome tone of conciliation and outreach defined the synod report, as in the recognition that gay Catholics yearn for "a welcoming home" in the church. In this and other ways, the synod marks a hopeful beginning of what undoubtedly will be a difficult but fascinating worldwide debate on the future of the modern church.

THE WHITE TEETH MONOPOLY (NYT)

New York Times, October 18, 2014

Should dentists alone be allowed to decide who whitens your teeth? That is the question in an antitrust case before the Supreme Court that could clarify whether antitrust laws apply to professional licensing bodies, which are often packed with people in the industry.

The case, *North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners v. Federal Trade Commission*, involves the state board's attempt to squelch competition and keep prices high by telling salons, spas and other businesses to stop offering teeth whitening services because they are not licensed dentists. The board consists mainly of dentists elected by their state-licensed colleagues. But no other body in North Carolina, including the courts or the State Legislature, had previously determined that only dentists could whiten teeth.

The F.T.C. challenged the board and told it to stop sending out cease-and-desist letters to teeth whitening businesses. The board appealed, arguing that as a state agency it had immunity from federal antitrust laws. The United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, in Richmond, Va., ruled in favor of the F.T.C.

Many state governments give doctors, dentists, lawyers and other professionals limited authority to regulate the way their occupation is practiced. But the Supreme Court has ruled on other occasions that state officials must actively supervise those professional regulatory bodies if they are to be immune from antitrust law. In this case, the board's cease-and-desist letters were not reviewed or approved by North Carolina.

The dental board argued, as did other professional groups and associations in their briefs to the court, that subjecting it to antitrust laws would weaken its authority and discourage professionals from serving on regulatory bodies. During this week's arguments, even Justice Stephen Breyer wondered whether a ruling in favor of the F.T.C. could create a situation where bureaucrats, not neurologists, would decide who could conduct brain surgery.

Those concerns are misplaced. Each antitrust case is different, and a ruling for the F.T.C. in this case will not paralyze professional regulatory bodies. The dental board clearly overstepped its authority and the law. If the board was concerned about the safety of consumers, it could have tried to make the case in court that teeth whitening can be performed only by a licensed dentist - perhaps by suing the teeth whitening services and convincing a judge that the services were violating North Carolina law. Alternatively, as the F.T.C. said, it could have issued rules regulating teeth whitening. These rules would become effective if they were approved by a commission appointed by the North Carolina Legislature.

Either way, the board could not unilaterally tell the teeth whiteners to stop their business. States have the right to regulate competition in the public interest. But they cannot blindly outsource that responsibility to professionals who stand to benefit from such restrictions.

FAILURES OF COMPETENCE (NYT)

By Joe Nocera

New York Times, October 18, 2014

Et tu, C.D.C.?

For years, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been the most trusted agency in the federal government. In 2003, when Gallup did a survey to determine what the public thought of various federal agencies, the C.D.C. topped the list, with 66 percent of respondents describing it as "excellent" or "good."

Last year, a similar Gallup poll showed that the C.D.C.'s approval rating had dropped to 60 percent, which was still better than any other agency. The C.D.C. has seen the country through SARS and the swine flu virus. The general perception was not only that it did important, apolitical work, but that it was highly competent. "I used to call the C.D.C. the shining star of federal agencies," says Lawrence O. Gostin, a global health expert at Georgetown Law.

And then came Ebola.

The Ebola outbreak is not exactly enhancing the C.D.C.'s reputation for competence. At first, the agency reassured the public that American hospitals were ready to handle any Ebola cases that came their way. That has turned out not to be the case. When Thomas Eric Duncan was diagnosed with Ebola in Dallas, the C.D.C. did not immediately fly in an expert team - something that the C.D.C. director, Tom Frieden, now says it should have done. Most recently, the C.D.C. appears to have allowed one of the Dallas nurses who helped Duncan to take a flight from Ohio to Texas even though she had a slightly raised temperature. When it became clear that she had

contracted the virus - the second nurse to do so - Frieden was forced to admit that letting her on the plane was a mistake.

Meanwhile, Frieden, a highly respected public health expert, had to walk back some of his remarks. Congress - including Democrats - appears dismayed by the mistakes. Perhaps the biggest one the C.D.C. made was that its voluntary guidelines for treating Ebola patients were too lax. In The Times a few days ago, Donald G. McNeil quoted several experts saying the protocols established by the C.D.C. were, in the words of one, "absolutely irresponsible and dead wrong." One important protocol is having a "site supervisor" watching for errors. The C.D.C. has now included that guideline.

Are there extenuating circumstances? To hear infectious disease specialists tell it, the answer is yes. Like all federal agencies, the C.D.C. saw significant cuts to its funding thanks to sequestration. Another expert, Marc Lipsitch of the Harvard School of Public Health, told me in an email that because the chances of Ebola being imported to the U.S. were considered low, preparing for it was not considered a good use of scarce public money. "The budget cuts," he wrote, "have directly reduced preparedness."

In addition, the C.D.C., like many federal agencies, had its mission transformed after 9/11. Julie Gerberding, an appointee of the Bush administration, changed its emphasis to bioterrorism and other potential security threats. "She also brought in efficiency experts who were anathema to scientists," says Laurie Garrett, a senior fellow for global health at the Council on Foreign Relations and the author of the seminal 1994 book, "The Coming Plague." Morale plummeted, and many of its best scientists fled.

Fair enough. But it is also true that the C.D.C. was too hubristic in its approach to Ebola, and the consequence is that its staff now looks like bumbler. "They never challenged their own assumptions," says Dr. Richard Wenzel, an infectious disease specialist at Virginia Commonwealth University. "This is an unforgiving virus," he added, "about which there is a lot we don't know." The C.D.C.'s unfortunate habit of saying things as if they were certainties only to have to acknowledge that its judgment was questionable, says Wenzel, "can cause people to lose faith in the public health system."

When you think about it, many of the Obama administration's "scandals" have been failures of competence. The Secret Service let a man leap over the White House fence and get into the White House. The Veterans Health Administration covered up unconscionable delays in treating veterans. The error-ridden rollout of the Obamacare website was a nightmare for people trying to sign up for health insurance. The Republican right takes it as an article of faith that the national government can't do anything right. Problems like these only help promote that idea.

And now comes the C.D.C. - the most trusted agency in government - thrust in a role for which it was designed: advising us and protecting us from a potential contagion. With every new mistake, it becomes, in the public eye, just another federal agency that can't get it right.

START HELPING THE HELPERS (NYT)

By Arthur C. Brooks

New York Times, October 18, 2014

WHAT is a "helping industry"?

This question has brought me to a former battery factory in downtown San Francisco. I'm sitting in what must have been some tycoon's corner office. Four overstuffed chairs are surrounded by a full complement of hipster eclectica, from art books to lava lamps.

My hosts are not squatters. They are Nathan Blecharczyk, a 30-something co-founder of Airbnb, and several of his fellow executives. Airbnb is the start-up Internet marketplace that matches visitors to cities around the world with people who have space to rent in their homes. In just six years, the business has exploded: It is currently valued at roughly \$10 billion and employs more than 800 people.

What made these people start Airbnb? For a sure way to make a boatload of money? Not likely. According to Scott Shane, an entrepreneurship scholar at Case Western Reserve University, about a quarter of new businesses typically fail in their first year, and fewer than half are still standing after five years. A smart guy like Nate could find a career with much better odds of financial success.

Indeed, a few minutes with him dispels any delusion that money is all he cares about. To hear him

tell it, he started the business because it was fascinating and fun. And most of all, he says, because it could help ordinary people who needed an affordable place to stay or had some excess capacity in their homes. That's right - Nate sees Airbnb as a "helping industry."

Some will howl at this, because we tend to define helping industries as things like government, charities and health care.

But are those the only ways - or even the best ways - to help struggling Americans? Government and charities play an important role, especially in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis and our subsequent nonrecovery. But let's use a bit more imagination, and turn our attention back to Airbnb.

Consider Kimberly Kaye, a disabled 30-year-old New Yorker who says she has been able to stay in her home only because of Airbnb. In Ms. Kaye's own words, "for a few days each month, we vacate our one-bedroom apartment, bunk with a friend or family member and rent out our place." She reports that her earnings from the service are "modest," but they help her pay the bills and stay connected to the outside world. "It's the difference between keeping our chins above water and drowning."

Technically, Airbnb - like Uber, Lyft and other innovative companies - is helping people like Kimberly Kaye by tackling the problem of "dead capital." This term, coined by the Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto, refers to potentially productive assets owned by ordinary people who could use them if they could only find a way. As Daniel M. Rothchild of the Mercatus Center points out, there are 1.5 bedrooms for every man, woman and child in the United States. The owners or renters of many of these dormant bedrooms could use extra money in a lousy economy. Ordinary people, especially vulnerable people without power and privilege, find Airbnb empowering and useful. It lifts Americans up with zero cost to the taxpayer. And people like it. Shouldn't we encourage this?

Instead, state and local governments have met the service with antagonism, seeking to limit Airbnb's operations or shut it down. Just this week, the attorney general of New York issued a new report insisting that a majority of Airbnb's operations in New York City are illegal, and says it is planning a major regulatory crackdown. Uber, Lyft and similar services that enliven dead capital have met with similar treatment from government officials.

Nobody wants zero regulation, and every company should follow the law. But policy should begin with admiration for new ways that citizens can build their lives, not with hostility to profits or the impulse to protect entrenched industries. Governments have their own golden opportunity to exercise creativity in service of the common good, whether that entails rethinking anachronistic zoning laws or adjusting tax policies that treat someone's spare bedroom the same as a Marriott suite.

Any of us can work in a helping industry. That includes teachers, nurses, stay-at-home parents, entrepreneurs who want to empower ordinary people, and government officials who welcome novel industries as opportunities to evolve instead of nuisances to be squashed.

The blessing of our free enterprise system is that any of us can sanctify our work. We just need to ask if what we are doing truly lifts others up.

Arthur C. Brooks, a contributing opinion writer, is president of the American Enterprise Institute.

FREE PIGS FROM THE ABUSIVE CRATES (NYT)

By Bill Maher

New York Times, October 18, 2014

WOULD you cram a dog into a crate for her entire life, never letting her out, until you took her to the pound to kill her?

Of course you wouldn't, and yet that's effectively what happens to most mother pigs in this country. They spend their lives in what are called gestation crates, tiny stalls that house pregnant sows. They cannot even turn around, and are immobilized in these crates until they are taken to the slaughterhouse.

Pigs are smart animals - the brainiacs of the barnyard, basically. They have outperformed dogs on tests of behavioral and cognitive sophistication. In fact, they learn rudimentary video games as quickly as chimpanzees, one of our closest living relatives.

The primatologist Jane Goodall writes that "farm animals feel pleasure and sadness, excitement and resentment, depression, fear and pain. They are far more aware and intelligent than we ever

imagined ... they are individuals in their own right."

But when abnormally enclosed, their muscles and bones waste away, and they go insane from boredom. Just as you would if you couldn't move.

Fortunately, we're seeing changes. Animal protection organizations are putting pressure on corporations to change, and so we're seeing policies to get rid of these crates from the likes of McDonald's, Burger King and Smithfield Foods.

We've also seen bills or initiatives passed in nine states that require that all pigs be given at least enough space to turn around.

It's a modest improvement, but the pork producers are fighting it. A spokesman for the National Pork Producers Council actually said to a reporter for National Journal, "I don't know who asked the sow if she wanted to turn around." (The council later issued a statement regretting the comment.)

These laws are bipartisan: California passed a ban on crates, not surprisingly, but so did the more conservative states of Florida and Arizona.

New Jersey would be the 10th. A poll conducted last month by Mason-Dixon Polling and Research found that 93 percent of New Jersey voters wanted to see these crates banned - including 94 percent of Democrats and independents, and 92 percent of Republicans. Both chambers of the State Legislature have now passed it. What could go wrong?

Unfortunately, we've seen this movie before. A year ago, Gov. Chris Christie vetoed a similar bill that had passed the Assembly and Senate by huge bipartisan majorities - 60 to 5 in the Assembly and 29 to 4 in the Senate.

Governor Christie claimed to be vetoing the bill based on merits, but I cannot imagine that he thinks it's O.K. to confine pigs in their own waste, immobile, for years at a time.

There must be more to it. Could it be that a possible presidential candidate is aware that Iowa is the No. 1 pig state in the country, and that Republican primary voters there are strongly anti-regulation?

It is no more acceptable to abuse a pig than it would be to abuse a dog, which is illegal. These crates should already be illegal under the New Jersey animal welfare laws, but since they aren't, Mr. Christie should sign the bill this time. It would hardly put pigs into luxurious settings. It doesn't force pig producers to choose a specific kind of housing; it merely says the animals have to be allowed to turn around, lie down, stand up and fully extend their limbs.

When Governor Christie vetoed the bill, he said he was concerned that it bypassed the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, so the bill's sponsors changed it so that it works through that department. So Mr. Christie really has no excuse to veto it again.

I have been involved in the animal rights cause for decades, and nothing makes me angrier than cramming animals into environments where they can't move.

We should not play politics with animals' lives. Banning crates in my native state of New Jersey is the right thing to do.

Bill Maher is the host of "Real Time With Bill Maher" on HBO.

WHAT IS A CATHOLIC FAMILY? (NYT)

By Peter Manseau

New York Times, October 18, 2014

ANNAPOLIS, Md. - GATHERED in Rome last week to discuss marriage, divorce and the widening array of domestic arrangements with which they now must contend, a group of Roman Catholic bishops released a statement that included a theological turn of phrase that proved more telling than intended. "We must not forget that the church that preaches about the family is a sign of contradiction."

This was not meant as a self-aware nod to the incongruity of a cohort of celibate men discussing the place of birth control, child-rearing and marital relations in the lives of millions of noncelibate Catholics, nor as an acknowledgment that the church has held conflicting views on the family from the beginning. A "sign of contradiction" here alludes to a prophecy given to Mary early in the Gospel of Luke that the infant Jesus would be a "sign that is spoken against" by the people he had come to save.

For Christians, this sign is a call to stand apart from society, enduring scorn for the sake of religious truth. Referring to their synod on the family this way, the bishops were not humbly

admitting their inability to speak from experience, but making a lofty claim to a higher authority. Still, the contradictions most evident in the aftermath of the bishops' statement were those within their own ranks. A recap of discussions held during the first half of a two-week meeting convened by Pope Francis, the report was greeted with outsize praise and alarm for its willingness to engage in unexpected ways with issues including homosexuality and what the church used to call "living in sin."

Within hours of the Hungarian Cardinal Peter Erdo's affirmation in the prepared statement that "cultural and socio-economic factors" may influence the choice to begin, delay or end a marriage, and that same-sex unions could provide "precious support in the life of the partners," other high-ranking clergymen stepped forward to claim that the media's focus on such sentiments was "manipulating" the synod's words.

"The message has gone out that this is what the synod is saying, this is what the Catholic Church is saying," Cardinal Wilfrid Fox Napier of South Africa, who participated in the meetings, complained. "It's not what we're saying at all."

Such disagreement was perhaps to be expected. The statement read by Cardinal Erdo was a *relatio post disceptationem*, a "report after debate" that attempted to wrangle a week's worth of competing positions into a seamless account of continuing deliberations. Almost immediately, commentary on the document walked back the very statements that earned it such unanticipated attention.

In another sign of the synod's internal contradictions, the Vatican released a new translation of the report three days after the uproar that greeted its original release. A section titled "Welcoming homosexual persons" became the entirely less welcoming "Providing for homosexual persons" and "partners" in same-sex unions became "these persons." This last was a particularly puzzling rendering given that the phrase originally translated as "life of the partners" appears as "la vita dei partners" in the synod's official Italian text.

Yet even if the effects of the "pastoral earthquake" described by one longtime Vatican correspondent turn out to be as lasting as the wall-shaking rumble of a passing diesel truck, something undeniably significant did happen at the synod last week. More than just a momentary softening of rhetoric, it was an indication that the idea of family is again evolving in Rome.

While Catholic defenders of traditional marriage may act as if family life has always been the highest good in the church's eyes, for much of its history marriage was plainly seen as a lesser path to holiness. Just as the bishops' report noted that "unions between people of the same sex cannot be considered on the same footing as matrimony between man and woman," much the same was said for centuries regarding the difference between marriage and the consecrated virginal state.

Marriage was messy, full of situations regarded as unpleasant by the saintly, and bound up in cultural conditions that shifted over time. In the fourth century, Saint Jerome wrote that he valued marriage only because it produced potential virgins. Throughout the Middle Ages, manuals for confessors noted the many ways in which relations between husbands and wives could be deemed immoral.

At the 16th-century Council of Trent, when matrimony formally became a sacrament of the church, bishops weighed in on the pressing marital issues of their day by reflecting on the performance of nuptials in the cases of "vagrants" (best to be avoided), kidnapped brides (only after a released abductee gave her consent "in a safe and free place" could the church sanction such a union), and priests (if anyone says they can marry, the council canons warn, "let him be anathema").

In every instance, the question of who might constitute a family was a matter of how far those involved fell short of an unattainable ideal.

Which is perhaps not so far from the supposedly "wounded" and "irregular" families that are largely the focus of the synod's report: the divorced, the remarried, the cohabitating; the two-faith marriages, the two-mother households, the two grooms who walked down the aisle. By including those long regarded by the church as beyond the bounds of Catholic propriety within their discussion of family as the "school of humanity" that is a "source of joys and trials," the synod's bishops have not opened a big tent welcoming all those mentioned to fully participate in the life of the Catholic Church, and indeed they are unlikely to do so.

Yet even quibbling over words of qualified welcome, they have reminded the faithful that their church has developed over time through conflict and contradiction, and may again.

What family is not wounded? As Cardinal Erdo read the bishops' relation in a Vatican conference hall last week, anyone watching carefully could see on the desk before him a small sculpture of the holy family: Mary, Joseph and Jesus. To Catholics it is a depiction of a woman who conceived a child before she was married, a chaste stepfather who nearly divorced her as a result, and that original sign of contradiction, the human son of God. A church that claims to descend from this most untraditional of domestic arrangements might ask itself: Was any family ever more irregular than that?

Peter Manseau is the author of the forthcoming book "One Nation, Under Gods: A New American History."

NEW RULES COULD LIMIT METHANE EMISSIONS' EFFECTS ON THE ATMOSPHERE (WP)

Washington Post, October 18, 2014

THE OBAMA administration spent all summer mulling new measures to cut air pollution from the booming natural gas industry. Now federal officials are nearing a decision on whether and how to limit emissions from wells, storage tanks and other places from which gas can leak. Whether you believe that the country's fracking boom is an economic godsend or an environmental disaster - or both - you should favor measures to limit the industry's effects on the atmosphere.

Unlocking vast natural gas reserves trapped in U.S. shale rock formations has drastically cut the cost and price volatility of the fuel in the United States. That has kept energy costs down, encouraged domestic and foreign manufacturers to invest here and reduced the burning of coal, a much dirtier fuel. On the other hand, natural gas produces some carbon dioxide emissions when burned - about half those of coal - and is a potent greenhouse gas in its own right when it escapes into the air unburned. That's because it contains a lot of methane, which, when allowed to escape uncombusted, is dozens of times more potent a warming agent than carbon dioxide. Methane from various sources now accounts for 9 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, and that number is rising with the expansion of domestic drilling.

Some environmentalists oppose any increase in natural-gas burning because (unlike wind, solar or nuclear power) it releases greenhouse gases. Others put more stock in its relative benefits over coal and believe it can fit into a strategy to contain emissions, if the government adopts a plan to move the nation toward carbon-free energy sources over the coming decades. Both sides should recognize the value of preventing more unburned gas from escaping into the air. Relatively inexpensive measures could diminish gas leaks and allow more fuel to be used instead of wasted. The Obama administration has already promulgated regulations that will limit methane emissions from some natural gas wells. But some facilities remain uncovered, including so-called wet gas operations, from which companies retrieve trapped oil as well as gas. If the Environmental Protection Agency can find a way short of new regulations that will significantly slash methane leakage, so much the better. But there's a strong case for common rules applying across the varied drilling operations around the country, rather than a piecemeal approach. No one should be surprised or dismayed if the Obama administration concludes that the only effective way to ensure natural gas isn't uselessly and harmfully released is to demand a little more effort from energy companies.

L.A. SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT JOHN DEASY A CASUALTY OF POLITICS IN SCHOOLS (WP)

Washington Post, October 18, 2014

IN THE 3½ years that John Deasy led the public schools in Los Angeles, student test scores climbed, suspensions dropped and the high school graduation rate rose to an all-time high. So one would think that the school board would do everything in its power to keep Mr. Deasy. Instead, it pretty much showed him the door - a vivid demonstration of how political interests trump results when it comes to America's broken schools.

Mr. Deasy resigned as head of the Los Angeles Unified School District on Thursday after reaching an agreement with a school board that had made no bones about wanting him out. The seven-member board was to meet this month to review his performance, but there had been reports the board had already authorized its attorneys to discuss a departure agreement. Ramon C. Cortines, who preceded Mr. Deasy as superintendent in Los Angeles and also did a stint in New York City, was named interim chief. It's not a prudent trade to cashier a hard-charging superintendent with a

proven record of success in favor of someone who, at best, will be a caretaker.

Mr. Deasy always had an edgy relationship with the board (he came close to resigning last year), but things got worse because of stepped-up attacks from a newly radicalized teachers union and changes on the school board that made it less reform-minded.

Mr. Deasy, whose leadership of Prince George's schools we admired, brought refreshing reforms to the sprawling system. That included breakfast in the classroom and tying teacher review to student test scores. Clearly, he made mistakes: He admitted being single-minded to the point of being bull-headed. What one writer called his trademark impatience caused him to so badly bungle a plan to equip every student with an iPad that it has been placed on hold and the bidding process subjected to scrutiny. But that misstep and the complaints about his style were mere pretexts for critics with an agenda that is not served by Mr. Deasy's push for change.

Foremost among the reactionaries is the teachers union, United Teachers Los Angeles, which led the charge for Mr. Deasy to be held "accountable" by the board. The union has new leadership and is in the midst of contract negotiations in which there are differences on issues like teacher pay and evaluations. Another factor was Mr. Deasy's decision to testify on behalf of plaintiffs who successfully challenged California's archaic tenure laws.

But Mr. Deasy's departure cannot be blamed on the teachers union. Its mission, after all, is to protect teachers' interests. Mr. Deasy is gone because neither the school board nor the city's political leadership were willing to give their support to a superintendent who made student interests his first priority.

A HEALTH-CARE PLAN WORSE THAN OBAMACARE (WP)

Washington Post, October 18, 2014

REPUBLICANS CALLING for repeal of the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, are a dime a dozen. Fewer offer a plan to replace the law with something they claim would work better. To his credit, Virginia's Ed Gillespie, a GOP Senate candidate, is in the more select group. Meanwhile, his Democratic opponent, Sen. Mark Warner, favors tweaking the law without upsetting its framework.

Mr. Gillespie's proposal was developed by a conservative group called the 2017 Project, which, as the name implies, aims to provide templates for Republican policymaking after the next presidential election. It is a real plan, which is to be commended. But it would be worse than the Affordable Care Act.

The proposal aims to reduce government spending on health care for the young and middle-aged. Much of what it does allow would pay for tax credits to help people buy health insurance. Everyone - lower-, middle- and upper-class - of a certain age group would get the same amount of help, even if some wouldn't need it to pay premiums and others would struggle to make premium payments of any kind without assistance. The 2017 proposal insists that this system is fairer, lacking Obamacare's "obsession with income."

By cutting overall spending and diverting subsidy dollars toward those who need them less, the plan leaves itself with relatively little for the most vulnerable, who would not be able to afford any more than a bare-bones "catastrophic" plan. For a while, they could finance out-of-pocket costs with extra money the government would deposit in health spending accounts, but that would only be a one-time credit.

Those with preexisting conditions would find some protection in Mr. Gillespie's program but with strict limits. If they went without health insurance for even relatively brief amounts of time, for example, insurance companies would be able to hike their rates or refuse them coverage, locking them out of the ordinary insurance market. In addition, the repeal of Obamacare's consumer protections would allow insurance companies to deter high-risk patients by carefully shaping their coverage plans - refusing to cover certain HIV or cancer medications, for example.

The plan would set aside an amount for states to create "high-risk pools" for sick patients outside of the ordinary insurance market. Health-care experts wonder whether that amount would cover the price tag for a large number of high-cost patients without forcing them to somehow pay large bills, through deductibles, co-payments or coverage limitations.

States could try to make the system more generous to the vulnerable within their borders, but the plan would allow people to buy insurance across state lines. Healthy people would flock to the cheapest plans, in-state or out, leaving a larger proportion of sick patients in state systems that

seek to guarantee a higher standard without also offering higher subsidies. And the Gillespie plan would increase the fiscal deficit. The Affordable Care Act raises all the money it spends, and more. By repealing ACA revenue-raising measures, Mr. Gillespie's alternative would leave nearly \$300 billion less in the treasury over 10 years, even after all its spending cuts.

THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO STUDY 'SOCIAL POLLUTION' ON TWITTER (WP)

By Ajit Pai

Washington Post, October 17, 2014

If you take to Twitter to express your views on a hot-button issue, does the government have an interest in deciding whether you are spreading "misinformation"? If you tweet your support for a candidate in the November elections, should taxpayer money be used to monitor your speech and evaluate your "partisanship"?

My guess is that most Americans would answer those questions with a resounding no. But the federal government seems to disagree. The National Science Foundation, a federal agency whose mission is to "promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity and welfare; and to secure the national defense," is funding a project to collect and analyze your Twitter data.

The project is being developed by researchers at Indiana University, and its purported aim is to detect what they deem "social pollution" and to study what they call "social epidemics," including how memes - ideas that spread throughout pop culture - propagate. What types of social pollution are they targeting? "Political smears," so-called "astroturfing" and other forms of "misinformation." Named "Truthy," after a term coined by TV host Stephen Colbert, the project claims to use a "sophisticated combination of text and data mining, social network analysis, and complex network models" to distinguish between memes that arise in an "organic manner" and those that are manipulated into being.

But there's much more to the story. Focusing in particular on political speech, Truthy keeps track of which Twitter accounts are using hashtags such as #teaparty and #dems. It estimates users' "partisanship." It invites feedback on whether specific Twitter users, such as the Drudge Report, are "truthy" or "spamming." And it evaluates whether accounts are expressing "positive" or "negative" sentiments toward other users or memes.

The Truthy team says this research could be used to "mitigate the diffusion of false and misleading ideas, detect hate speech and subversive propaganda, and assist in the preservation of open debate."

Hmm. A government-funded initiative is going to "assist in the preservation of open debate" by monitoring social media for "subversive propaganda" and combating what it considers to be "the diffusion of false and misleading ideas"? The concept seems to have come straight out of a George Orwell novel.

The NSF has already poured nearly \$1 million into Truthy. To what end? Why is the federal government spending so much money on the study of your Twitter habits?

Some possible hints as to Truthy's real motives emerge in a 2012 paper by the project's leaders, in which they wrote ominously of a "highly-active, densely-interconnected constituency of right-leaning users using [Twitter] to further their political views."

Truthy reminds me of another agency-funded study, in which the Federal Communications Commission sought to insert itself into newsrooms across the country. That project purported to examine whether news outlets were meeting what researchers determined were the "critical information needs" of the American people. And it involved sending out government-funded researchers to ask editors and reporters questions about their news philosophy and editorial judgment.

Once this study was brought to the attention of the American people, howls of protest from across the political spectrum led the FCC to scrap the project - thankfully. The episode reaffirmed that the American people, not their government, determine what their critical information needs are and that the First Amendment means the government has no place in the newsroom.

That principle applies here. Truthy's entire premise is false. In the United States, the government has no business entering the marketplace of ideas to establish an arbiter of what is false, misleading or a political smear. Nor should the government be involved in any effort to squint for

and squelch what is deemed to be "subversive propaganda." Instead, the merits of a viewpoint should be determined by the public through robust debate. I had thought we had learned these lessons long ago.

Now, I do understand the motivation behind this scheme, even though I disagree with it. To those who wish to shape the nation's political dialogue, social media is dangerous. No longer can a cadre of elite gatekeepers pick and choose the ideas to which Americans will be exposed. But today's democratization of political speech is a good thing. It brings into the arena countless Americans whose voices previously might have received inadequate or slanted exposure.

The federal government has no business spending your hard-earned money on a project to monitor political speech on Twitter. How should it instead have reacted when funding for Truthy was proposed? The proper response wouldn't have required anywhere near 140 characters. It could have been, and should have been, #absolutelynot.

FAN FICTION, FROM FLORIDA'S FANGATE THROUGH HISTORY (WP)

By Alexandra Petri

Washington Post, October 17, 2014

There's lots of real, serious news going on in the world. (There always is.)

But this week, the Internet was galvanized - or, if you like, set abuzz - by "Fangate." This saw former Florida governor Charlie Crist alone onstage with an electric fan for several minutes at Wednesday night's gubernatorial debate, while his opponent, Rick Scott, either fumed or waited patiently for further instructions from debate organizers backstage, depending on your source. Crist insisted that the debate rules allowed him a fan. Scott thought they didn't. It turns out that Crist and this fan travel everywhere together and have made something of a life with one another, even going on radio interviews, where a constant whirring noise is generally frowned upon.

The fan is less an electronic accessory to Crist at this point than a friend and confidant. As Molly Ball pointed out, in his years since leaving the governor's mansion, the fan has been his only pet. Fans make admirable companions. They do everything a politician could possibly want: turn on a dime, generate buzz and blow hot air. And unlike more traditional pets, they never whine and whine until you succumb and take them for walks in the middle of a rainstorm, when they decide to just sit there and stare at a bush and do nothing.

"Thanks for sticking up for me, Charlie," the fan murmured to Crist, during the ride home. "It means a lot."

"Are you kidding?" Crist replied. "Of course I would. You are my number one fan."

How often in your life do you get the chance to write fan fiction about an actual fan? Not all that often, as my eighth-grade livejournal can attest.

Bizarre requests for accessories at debates have a long history.

Back in the Lincoln-Douglas days in 1858, Stephen A. Douglas always requested a footstool so that he could be seen over the podium. He never got the footstool, which explains his performance. Lincoln always requested the opportunity to wear a different face, but he never got this either.

The fact that there were no official presidential debates until 1960 actually stemmed from the demands made by the candidates. Rutherford B. Hayes and Samuel Tilden both requested electric fans at the debate in 1876, then both refused to take part after the organizers denied their request on the grounds that electric fans would not be invented for another six years.

At the debate between Wendell Willkie and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Willkie made an outrageous request: that Roosevelt show up. Instead, Roosevelt refused but said that Willkie could have as many fans onstage as he wanted.

John F. Kennedy refused to debate unless Nixon didn't have a fan.

During the vice presidential debate between Lloyd Bentsen and Dan Quayle, Quayle requested a fan, but this request backfired when his responses could still be heard over the noise it made.

Both Clinton and George H.W. Bush requested a fan onstage, but debate organizers put Ross Perot there instead.

Al Gore asked for a large hand-fan with a poem written on it made in the traditional Japanese style, so as to avoid causing the earth any undue discomfort by plugging something into her, and so he could have a poem to read during commercials. This request was denied. Every time Gore thought of his missing fan, he sighed loudly. George W. Bush, meanwhile, asked for "lots of fans,

yeah, let's pack the whole debate with fans and give them big foam fingers that say 'WI!' until someone took him aside and explained what people were talking about. In 2012, Mitt Romney asked that he be replaced onstage with a fan on the grounds that the fan seemed comparatively warm and human and polled better with female voters, but this request was denied.

It seems like a lot of fanfare over something so small. "Are we," as Charlie Crist asked, "really going to debate a fan?" But especially with debates, you never know what's going to seal the deal. These things always seem trivial right until the moment they aren't. It's not enough to win the debate. You have to appear to win the debate. In the battle of appearances, is it better to be onstage with a fan or not onstage at all?

The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind.

MAYORAL CANDIDATES WAVE PROMISES ACROSS D.C. (WP)

By Colbert I. King

Washington Post, October 17, 2014

"I'd rather give up than give in to this

So promise me only one thing, would you?

Just don't ever make me promises,

No promises."

- "Promises, Promises," by Incubus

Too late for that. Election Day is around the corner, and the politicians feel compelled to tell us what they think we want to hear, even if it means making promises that can't be kept.

But set cynicism aside. Assume they mean what they say. Nagging questions remain: What will those promises cost? How will they be paid?

Those concerns were reinforced after I read nearly cover to cover the campaign manifesto of Democratic mayoral nominee Muriel Bowser, "Moving Forward Together: Priorities for the District's Future"; independent candidate David Catania's "Vision to Secure Our City's Future"; and independent Carol Schwartz's more modest position papers on affordable housing, education and growth.

The worthiness of the promises in those documents is not at issue. Many have value. Some, however, clearly come with huge costs. And many of the price tags are missing.

Let's start with Schwartz.

Schwartz, a fiscal hawk, makes her share of promises in those position papers. She says she would increase funding for tenant assistance programs, double the funding for the Local Rental Support Program, commit \$50 million to jump-start affordable housing programs and offer a "Welcome Back" tax credit to entice former residents to return to the city. She would expand magnet and vocational schools. She also says she would offer incentives to businesses to set up shop in enterprise zones, propose a system that allows large organizations to claim a tax credit for purchasing a percentage of their services and supplies from small, locally owned businesses and support minority business growth through increased funding.

\$

But when it comes to really making promises, make way for Catania.

If elected mayor, Catania promises to: invest more capital funds in the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), create a local low-income housing tax credit and increase funding for the Home Purchase Assistance Program.

\$\$

He also promises to double down on investments for college access and career training, fund and build a "D.C. Business Portal" to centralize and simplify permitting and licensing processes; expand the D.C. Health Professional Recruitment Program to ensure that every neighborhood has high-quality primary care; and ensure universal access to school nurses for all public school students.

And Catania promises to invest in programs that "help young people grow into productive members of our communities" and provide resources to get former inmates back on their feet. He pledges to invest in emergency preparedness and expand substance-abuse and mental-health treatment, including school-based mental-health services. He promises to "properly resource and empower" the Office on Aging, expand the presence of senior villages throughout the city and

provide resources to "sustain this model in low-income communities." He also wants to increase the investigative capacity of Adult Protective Services.

Catania says he will seek to build an east-west and north-south streetcar system and more priority bus lanes and expand bicycle infrastructure to all areas of the city.

\$\$\$

Bowser's priorities, too, are chock-full of promises.

Bowser says she will, if elected: transform all middle schools by 2020, including "renovation and/or construction of new buildings"; expand early childhood education programs; increase science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) options across the city; provide additional resources to chronically underperforming schools; expand career and technical education; increase investment in UDC and the D.C. Community College; work to double the number of "community schools" in the city; and increase investment in professional development for teachers of students with disabilities.

Cha-ching

Bowser also promised to: invest in job creation; target financial support to growing small businesses; invest in new industries through a series of incentives and benefits; and launch a General Services and Public Works Academy.

Cha-ching

On public safety, Bowser promised to: bring the police force up to its authorized strength of 4,000; allocate funding for the purchase of body cameras; upgrade and modernize police headquarters and stations across the city; modernize fleet maintenance operations of the Fire and Emergency Services Department; and give that department money to hire more staff.

Cha-ching

Bowser cuts loose on the housing and environment fronts. She says she will dedicate \$100 million every year to meet the District's affordable housing production goals; increase resources for single-family rehab programs; improve tax subsidies for longtime residents; double the amount of down-payment assistance under the Home Purchase Assistance Program from \$40,000 to \$80,000; focus greater public subsidies on mixed-income development; end family homelessness by 2018 and all homelessness by 2025; and make solar power - now prohibitively expensive - accessible and affordable to all residents.

Cha-ching, cha-ching, cha-ching.

And the money to pay for all this?

Promise everything, give them . . .

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES:

BIDEN KNEW DRUG TEST WAS COMING (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, October 17, 2014

There should have been no question in Hunter Biden's mind about the possibility of a random drug test.

So says the commander of the Norfolk, Va.-based unit where Vice President Joe Biden's youngest son was assigned until his February discharge due to a drug test failure a month after his 2013 commissioning.

"All sailors would be advised of the zero-tolerance policies when reporting aboard," said Capt. Jack Hanzlik, who commands the Navy Public Affairs Support Element in Norfolk. "And they would be advised of the testing practices of the organization, as well."

The importance of adherence to such policies continues after new arrivals, active or reservists, are assigned to their units.

"We have this kind of conversation with our sailors all the time - about expectations for performance," Hanzlik said. "Expectations for standards. Reliability on one another."

At least once a year but perhaps more frequently, members of the military - active and reserve - can expect to be given an unannounced urinalysis test for illegal drug use. Navy laboratories screen about 2.5 million urine specimens yearly, searching for drugs ranging from marijuana to heroin to cocaine - the drug that reportedly led to Hunter Biden's discharge.

"It's a random process," said Hanzlik. "The expectation, always, is that you need to be ready."

Because you could have to give a sample today, you might have to give a sample again tomorrow. And two weeks from now, you might have to give a sample."

Hanzlik said he'd had no interaction with Biden. He commands the overall 275-member unit, but their reserve times didn't coincide during Biden's tenure with the unit. "He did drill with our unit on a couple of weekends" after his May indoctrination, Hanzlik said.

Testing would have occurred while Biden was present for duty at the Navy Operational Support Center Norfolk, the reserve center where he reported for work.

The Navy says 15 percent of all personnel at a given unit are tested each time a test is administered.

A U.S. Department of Health and Human Services official said the length of time traces of a drug remain in a person's system varies with an individual's size and frequency of use. On average, it takes 48 to 72 hours to leave the system, but it can take up to five days.

Biden, who had no prior military experience, was selected for commission as a reserve officer through the Direct Commission Officer program in 2012, according to the Navy. He was commissioned as an ensign in early May 2013 - one of six officers commissioned nationally into the public affairs division of the Navy Reserve.

In June 2013, Biden, then 43, was given a drug test that tested positive for cocaine, according to The Wall Street Journal, which broke the story late Thursday night. The paper cited "people familiar with the matter." The Navy would not comment, citing the Privacy Act.

He wasn't discharged until February. "Until an issue like that is adjudicated, the member continues to serve," Hanzlik said.

Hunter, who could not be reached, is the younger brother of Delaware Attorney General Beau Biden, who is a major in the Delaware Army National Guard.

Drug testing

Some of the first drug tests in America were developed by the military during the Vietnam era as a significant number of service members were using marijuana and heroin, according to the Department of Defense.

In June 1971, then-President Richard Nixon directed a military drug urinalysis program to identify service members returning from Vietnam for rehabilitation. In the 1980s, screenings expanded as Ronald Reagan's War on Drugs pushed for testing programs for employers, including regulations requiring that any company with a contract over \$25,000 with the federal government provide a Drug-Free Workplace.

It's now estimated that more than 50 million people across the country are tested yearly for drug use in the work place, said Ron Flegel, division of workplace programs for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The agency is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

About 75 percent of those tested are in the private sector, Flegel said. Most of this is done for safety reasons, especially for industries that are regulated by federal agencies such as the Department of Transportation and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The aim is to avoid injury or injuries to others.

"When you look at anyone carrying guns or badges or any safety sensitive issue where you are driving a truck or flying a plane, there is always a safety sensitive issue around the public," Flegel said.

While there are different forms of testing, the most common is a urine test. In the military, someone watches as the specimen is being provided.

"You physically go into the bathroom with a person observing you going to the bathroom in a cup," Flegel said.

Results are returned in about three working days. No further testing is needed for negative results, however, "presumptive positive specimens" will be tested using gas chromatography/mass spectrometry. It takes seven working days to get these results.

"That in itself looks specifically at the ions in that drug," Flegel said. "So it's very, very accurate as to what drug it's picking up."

PLAN TO EXPANSION WILMINGTON PORT CALLED A "GAME CHANGER" (WILNJ)

By Maureen Milford

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, October 18, 2014

A proposed expansion of the Port of Wilmington to an undeveloped site on the Delaware River in New Castle could generate significantly more than 4,000 high-paying jobs, maritime consultant Ed Zimny told a standing-room only crowd of 150 longshoremen, elected officials and community activists Friday.

Zimny, of Paul F. Richardson Associates Inc. in Holmdel, N.J., spoke for nearly two hours at a Wilmington forum held by the International Longshoremen's Association Locals 1883 and 1694. He called the maritime sector an "unbelievable economic sector" that beats banking, retail, insurance and other industries.

And he believes the private sector, including pension funds, would be willing to foot the bill for a \$400 million to \$600 million terminal development on 176 acres in the Riveredge Industrial Park located just south of the Delaware Memorial Bridge.

Zimny had the audience at the Sheraton Suites Wilmington Downtown Hotel on his side. In the crowd were several people from the Diamond State Port Corp., state lawmakers, Wilmington officials and New Castle County Council members.

"It's a win-win situation," said Marietta "Peaches" Whalen, a director of the Diamond State Port Corp., a corporate entity that owns and operates the Port of Wilmington.

Nick Ferrara Jr., president of Parkway Gravel, which has owned Riveredge Park for 20 years, called the proposed expansion a "game-changer for the state."

The expansion of the Port of Wilmington to the Delaware River has been a vision of the high-paid port workers who have been concerned for years about the transformation of the shipping industry with the advent of a new global fleet of mega-ships.

The port workers worry that Wilmington could miss out on an opportunity to capture some of these larger ships, which can carry almost double the containers of the previous generation of vessels.

At stake are high-paying jobs, said Ronald "Kimoko" Harris, business agent with International Longshoremen's Association Clerks and Checkers Local 1883, whose members work to load and unload cargo. Longshoremen are among the highest-paid blue-collar workers, with some earning more than \$100,000 a year.

The expansion proposal calls for a public-private partnership, with a public entity owning the land and the private sector operating the port on a long-term basis. Zimny said it would be much different than the recent proposal to have a private operator for the Port of Wilmington.

An attempt to lease the port to Kinder Morgan, the largest independent terminal operator in North America, met with fierce opposition from labor and lawmakers who felt the move would hurt blue-collar employment. Kinder Morgan dropped its bid in March.

Zimny said the Riveredge arrangement differs dramatically from the Kinder Morgan deal.

Riveredge would be planned, developed and operated in a cooperative fashion, rather than a takeover of a public asset by a private company, Zimny said.

He envisions a long-term lease of 30 years or more by the public sector to an operator who would assume the financial, technical and operational risk. At the end of the lease, the port would revert to the public sector, he said.

According to Zimny, the Riveredge site is a "clean piece of canvas," that could position Wilmington to capture some of the larger ships. Work is already underway to reach out to potential investors, including pension funds, Zimny said.

For example, the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan is a major investor in container terminals, he said. According to the pension plan's website, it is invested in GCT Global Container Terminals Inc., which operates GCT Bayonne in Jersey City, N.J., and GCT New York in Staten Island.

Zimny said he cannot disclose at this point who the port promoters are talking with because of non-disclosure agreements.

The proposed Delaware project envisions a single large pier at Riveredge with enough berths to accommodate four or more ships. Six or more large container cranes could work on the larger container ships that have enormous capacity.

The site has enough space to accommodate warehouses, but New Castle County Executive Tom Gordon envisions capitalizing on the existing rail line near the properties to tie the Riveredge operation with the Port of Wilmington and the former General Motors assembly plant on Boxwood Road near Newport.

Gordon, a longtime supporter of the project, said an expansion at Riveredge could be a "gold mine" that would go a long way toward curbing crime in the city.

Gov. Jack Markell did not attend, but Gordon said he met with Markell about the project and Markell indicated he would be behind the development "if the numbers are real." The governor "is always interested in opportunities to have hundreds of millions of dollars of private investment and more people put to work in Delaware," said Markell spokesman Jonathon Dworkin.

"If people are interested in making significant investments in this effort, he would definitely want to sit down with them," Dworkin said.

U.S. Rep. John Carney, D-Del., who attended the forum, said it's clear that Delaware needs more jobs that pay a livable wage.

Community activist Muhammad Salaam voiced an opinion expressed by many when he said it's time to put politics aside.

"Joblessness has no color. Crime has no color," Salaam said. "We don't want to play politics with this industry."

LIBERIANS IN DELAWARE FIGHT EBOLA STIGMA (WILNJ)

By Jon Offredo

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, October 17, 2014

Pastor Moses Ndama constantly prays for his 85-year-old father.

Ndama's father moved back to his birthplace in Liberia last year, a village a day's drive from the country's capital, Monrovia. He wanted to end his career and his life where it began, Ndama, pastor of Dover-based Freedom Christian Fellowship, said.

Now though, the Ebola epidemic threatens everything. Friends, family, and a way of life that has only emerged after a long civil war have all become casualties of the virus that has ravaged the West African country colonized by the United States.

The disease has killed many of the people Ndama knew in the village, including the people helping his father with everyday chores, like cooking and laundry. To date, 2,458 Liberians have died from the disease.

"It has taken a toll on him. We try to talk to him quite often to make him feel like we are still around, and that life goes on," Ndama said. "We tell him, 'please don't die now, we want to get back to give you a good burial.' "

If his father were to pass away now, while Ebola still ravages the country, he would have to be cremated. That's not the burial Ndama and his brother want for his father, who worked his whole life to give his family the opportunities to succeed.

The Ebola epidemic has taken a toll on those Liberians who have moved to the United States.

For those living stateside, the Ebola epidemic means something else aside from the constant worry for their loved ones. There's a prejudice they face just because they are Liberian.

Mollyn Jarbo, a Delaware resident who was crowned Miss Liberia USA (and wishes to compete in Liberia for the chance to represent Liberia in the Miss World Competition) last year, said she gets weird looks when she says she's from Liberia, even though she moved here when she was little, and hasn't been back in years. She's now an American citizen.

"Not everyone that is coming from Liberia or traveling from Liberia. ... means they are affected by Ebola," Jarbo said. "At the end of the day, treat others like humans."

"We are Liberian, not the virus," she said.

Like many, Ndama and Jarbo are doing all they can to aid those who are still in Liberia. Since the outbreak, Jarbo said she's been in touch with many people in the area trying to raise awareness about the issue at home and collect goods like bleach, Clorox wash and other vital items in the fight against the virus.

Jarbo, her sister and mother left Liberia when she was young, fleeing the civil war that was tearing the country apart. But she still has family and friends, including her father, in Liberia. They talk often and when he speaks of the situation, Jarbo said she knows he's not sharing every detail so as not to worry her.

"It just breaks my heart to just know that I can't really help them or do anything but pray for them," she said.

Good hygiene saves lives

For Mohammed Nasser, who lives in Monrovia and worked with Liberia's youth for the government, daily life in the capital could at times be terrible.

"It's painful, especially when you drive out of the house. You see a lot of people standing along the street fighting for taxis..." said Nasser, who is currently staying in Delaware. "Sometimes you drive to some places in town, you see bodies lying along the street."

"It's terrible," he said, but added that the influx of aid and assistance is bringing hope to residents and things are getting a little better.

Nasser and his son flew into New York earlier this month. At the airport he was questioned and given a number to call if he had any problems. He said he was scheduled to go to a conference in Florida on youth development, but he and several other attendees from the region decided it was better not to go. No one displayed any symptoms or signs of sickness, but in light of the Ebola scare they wanted to play it safe, limit contact and avoid causing any concern.

Everyone in Liberia is taking the precautions health officials have recommended, he said. Hygiene is especially important to combat the spread of the virus, especially in a country that has a custom of shaking hands. Though he did not know anyone who became sick and neither he or his children ever displayed symptoms, they ardently followed health guidelines.

"We always wash our hands with chlorine and Clorox water wherever we go and whatever we touch," he said. "If I go to the supermarket to shop, I always wash my hands before I enter and before I come out. I don't know who touched what in our supermarket."

Ebola is spread person-to-person through infected body fluids, like blood, urine, feces, sweat, semen and breast milk. Transmission requires direct contact, meaning the virus can be spread through sexual intercourse, cuts or if infected fluids get into a person's eyes, nose or mouth.

The disease is not airborne, but can be passed through mucus membranes if an infected person coughs on someone and saliva touches a person's eyes, nose or mouth. It can be passed on the same way with mucus if an Ebola patient sneezes on someone.

Household cleaners, like bleach, can kill the virus, but it can live outside the body for a couple of hours on a surface such as a counter top and up to six days in fluid, such as blood. The threat of infection depends on many things, including the symptoms of the already infected person.

"It's important to remember that in the United States this is a public health challenge, not a health crisis," said U.S. Sen. Chris Coons, chair of the Senate's Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs.

"The difference between our public health systems is vast," Coons said.

Delaware's junior senator has spent a majority of his life traveling to the countries in Africa for advocacy, business and research. A little over a year ago, he traveled to Liberia.

He's optimistic that state health officials will be able to contain any suspected cases, but his constituents are still concerned about what is taking place overseas.

One constituent, a man of Liberian descent who lives in Delaware, lost his entire extended family living in Liberia to the virus, Coons said. Now the man wants to start a charity to help Liberian children who lost their parents to Ebola.

Coons said the crisis is another blow to a country that has been devastated by a civil war and failed to have their infrastructure and education systems bounce back.

"Now this is happening and it's going to make things difficult," he said.

Jarbo said she's thankful for the help from the United States. Hundreds of U.S. troops have gone to Liberia to combat the spread and Jarbo and other Liberians say they are eternally grateful for the help, especially since they are putting themselves at risk for a country that is not theirs. The troop's presence gives hope to those both in the country and their relatives still stateside.

"This used to be one country's problem, then it became West Africa's problem," Jarbo said. "Now it has become the world's problem. We all need to come together and solve this together."

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL EDITORIALS:

HUNTER BIDEN'S SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS RAISE QUESTIONS (WILNJ)

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, October 17, 2014

Conservative talk show hosts and writers appear to be having a good time chatting about Hunter Biden's discharge from the U.S. Navy. The commentators, often-vociferous critics of Mr. Biden's father, the vice president, see an opportunity to score political points against the White House and prominent Democrats.

Personalities aside, the story raises important questions about politics and influence in Washington. By now, most people know the outline: Vice President Biden's youngest son joined the Navy last year. At age 43, it was an unusual decision. He had to win a special exemption from the Navy to do so. He also sought to be made an officer, again an unusual step. He had to win special permission because he did not have previous military experience, did not attend a military academy and did not serve in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps - the usual routes to being commissioned an officer. According to reports, he was discharged when he failed a routine drug test.

That is unfortunate for him and his family. However, several questions remain.

Age limits are waived under special circumstances. Likewise, it supposedly takes the same sort of circumstances to turn a military rookie into an officer without training. According to reports, only a handful of such cases arise each year. The military has a program that allows for such exceptions. An older individual can be admitted to the service and be made an officer if that individual fills a critical need.

That makes sense. Why let a critical need go unmet because of age or a few weeks' officers' prep time? One can imagine someone with rare skills answering his or her country's call at a crucial moment.

Hunter Biden, a lawyer by training, was made a public affairs officer and stationed with a Reserve outfit in Norfolk, Virginia. It is hard to imagine there ever being a critical need for a public affairs officer. Their skills involve putting out press releases, writing speeches, answering reporters' questions and giving tours of the base. How did this happen? Did anyone pull strings? Probably, no one had to. An illustration from the late David Halberstam's book, "The Best and the Brightest," offers a good explanation. He tells of the early years after World War II when Gen. George Marshall became secretary of state. The secretary may have dressed in civilian clothes, but when he spoke, everyone heard the voice of the five-star general who won the war.

Hunter Biden may have applied for his exceptions as an average American, but all of those Navy careerists filling out the paperwork saw him as the vice president's son, whether he told them or not.

That is an element of soft corruption. No laws were violated, but certainly, allowances were made. Institutions like the Navy have regulations for a purpose. Mr. Biden's dismissal after failing a routine drug test is the result of one of those regulations. Whichever commander made that decision did the right thing. The Navy, indeed the whole system, should be faulted for the actions at the other end.

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TO: THE VICE PRESIDENT AND STAFF
DATE: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2014 -- 7:00 AM EDT

TODAY'S EDITION

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BIDEN IN THE NEWS

Before Ebola, New Czar Handled Political Crises

By Julie Hirschfeld Davis

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

WASHINGTON — Ron Klain wanted Senator Joseph R. **Biden** Jr. to prepare for the worst.

So as he coached Mr. **Biden** through weeks of preparations for his vice-presidential debates in 2008, he assembled a notebook filled with questions — and calculated the precise percentage chance that each one would be asked.

"Ron could anticipate the questions to be asked of the candidate within a range of about 95 percent," said Tom Donilon, President Obama's former national security adviser and Mr. Klain's partner during that round of debate preparations.

Now Mr. Klain, named on Friday by the president to be the administration's Ebola response coordinator, will have to put his knack for anticipating worst-case scenarios to work on what has rapidly become not just a public health mess for the White House, but a political one.

A seasoned crisis-response operative and veteran of Democratic administrations and campaigns, Mr. Klain, 53, is charged with managing the federal efforts to monitor and contain the deadly virus that has touched off a wave of anxiety in the United States and raised questions about the competence of Mr. Obama's administration.

After Mr. **Biden** was elected vice president, Mr. Klain became his chief of staff, the same job he had served in under Al Gore. He is known for his ability to handle high-stakes and fast-moving political and policy challenges. Mr. Klain was the lead Democratic lawyer for Mr. Gore during the 2000 election recount, and was later played by Kevin Spacey in "Recount," the HBO drama about the disputed contest.

His appointment came as Mr. Obama and his team stepped up their efforts to monitor Ebola, which has sown mounting fear among the public despite having infected only three people in the United States.

It has also intensified criticism of the Obama administration's management of a major national challenge, fueled in recent days by reports that two health care workers were infected while caring for an Ebola-afflicted patient at a Dallas hospital, and one worker who subsequently flew on an airplane with a fever.

"What we were looking for is not an Ebola expert but rather an implementation expert, and that's exactly what Ron Klain is," said Josh Earnest, the White House press secretary. "He is somebody who has extensive experience in the federal government. He's somebody that has extensive management experience when it comes to the private sector."

Mr. Klain, who left Mr. **Biden**'s office in 2011, is currently the president of Case Holdings and the general counsel at Revolution L.L.C., companies that were founded by Steve Case, the former chief executive of AOL.

Now, Mr. Earnest said, he will be focusing "100 percent of his time on coordinating this whole-of-government response."

The appointment drew criticism from congressional Republicans who said Mr. Klain — who has no record or expertise in Ebola specifically or public health in general — was the wrong person for the job.

"Ebola is a health crisis, yet the president has appointed as his new Ebola 'czar' a partisan loyalist whose expertise is politics — not health," said Senator Jeff Sessions, Republican of Alabama. "One would think, faced with the prospect of an epidemic, the president would task an expert in epidemiology, not an expert in political spin."

Yet some former co-workers said Mr. Klain is uniquely positioned to help Mr. Obama get tighter control of a multifaceted government effort to combat Ebola's spread, and rein in a story that has spiraled out of the White House's control.

"He can see 10 steps ahead, and he's got the leadership skills, the management skills and the substantive knowledge to figure out how to get in front of this — get out of a reactive stance and into a proactive stance," said Stephanie Cutter, a former senior White House adviser. "He's able to solve problems before they happen."

He is also known, including by Republicans, as someone who is empowered to make key decisions and cut deals. John Ulyot, a Republican strategist and communications consultant who worked with him in the private sector and on Capitol Hill, said it was Mr. Klain who met privately with Arlen Specter, the former Pennsylvania senator, to persuade him to switch his party affiliation in 2009 from Republican to Democrat.

"Bringing him in is a clear signal to Washington that you have a real decision-maker with the ear of the president to be able to walk in and get a very quick decision on the thorniest issue," said Mr. Ulyot.

Former colleagues say Mr. Klain has a track record of successfully dispatching with knotty problems, policy or political. They point to his work helping Mr. **Biden** oversee the \$787 billion stimulus package, although the initiative has also earned him criticism, since it gave rise to a deal with the solar-panel company Solyndra, which went bankrupt after receiving \$535 million in federal loan guarantees.

"Ron will hit the ground running," Mr. Donilon said. "He has deep relationships, he can master huge amounts of information quickly, pull together a staff quite quickly and well, and he will be able to operate at the cabinet level."

Mr. Klain, a graduate of Harvard Law School who was a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice Byron R. White, will report directly to Lisa O. Monaco, Mr. Obama's counterterrorism adviser and Susan E. Rice, his national security adviser.

Amid Assurances On Ebola, Obama Is Said To Seethe

By Michael D. Shear And Mark Landler

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

WASHINGTON — Beneath the calming reassurance that President Obama has repeatedly offered during the Ebola crisis, there is a deepening frustration, even anger, with how the government has handled key elements of the response.

Those frustrations spilled over when Mr. Obama convened his top aides in the Cabinet room after canceling his schedule on Wednesday. Medical officials were providing information that later turned out

to be wrong. Guidance to local health teams was not adequate. It was not clear which Ebola patients belonged in which threat categories.

"It's not tight," a visibly angry Mr. Obama said of the response, according to people briefed on the meeting. He told aides they needed to get ahead of events and demanded a more hands-on approach, particularly from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "He was not satisfied with the response," a senior official said.

The difference between the public and private messages illustrates the dilemma Mr. Obama faces on Ebola — and a range of other national security issues — as he tries to galvanize the response to a public health scare while not adding to the sense of panic fueled by 24-hour cable TV and the nonstop Twitter chatter.

On Friday, Mr. Obama took a step to both fix that response and reassure the public, naming Ron Klain, a former aide to Vice President Joseph R. **Biden**, to coordinate the government's efforts on Ebola.

The appointment followed the president's statement Thursday that the job was necessary "just to make sure that we are crossing all the t's and dotting all the i's going forward." "Part of the challenge is to be assertive, to be in command, and yet not feed a kind of panic that could easily evolve here," said David Axelrod, a close adviser to the president in his first term. "It's not enough to doggedly and persistently push for answers in meetings. You have to be seen doggedly and persistently pushing for answers."

For two turbulent weeks, White House officials have sought to balance those imperatives: insisting the dangers to the American public were being overstated in the media, while also moving quickly to increase the president's demonstration of action.

The Ebola outbreak in West Africa, and its arrival in the United States, is the latest in a cascade of crises that have stretched Mr. Obama's national security staff thin. As the White House scrambled to stop the spread of Ebola beyond a handful of cases, officials were also grappling with an escalating military campaign against the Islamic State, the specter of a new Cold War with Russia over Ukraine, and the virtual disintegration of Yemen, which has been a seedbed for Al Qaeda.

Senior officials said they pushed Mr. Obama to name an Ebola coordinator as a way of easing pressure on the staff at the National Security Council.

At the meeting on Wednesday, officials said, Mr. Obama placed much of the blame on the C.D.C., which provided shifting information about which threat category patients were in, and did not adequately train doctors and nurses at hospitals with Ebola cases on the proper protective procedures.

On Thursday night, in televised remarks, Mr. Obama sought to reassure the public about the dangers from Ebola. But the sense of crisis that emanated from the White House was in sharp contrast to Sept. 30, when Thomas Eric Duncan, a Liberian who had traveled to Dallas, tested positive for Ebola. Mr. Obama received a telephone briefing from Dr. Thomas R. Frieden, the director of the C.D.C., after which the White House issued a sanguine statement that concluded: "We have the infrastructure in place to respond safely and effectively."

In the days that followed, Mr. Obama carried on as usual while his aides gamely added Ebola to their bulging portfolios. On Oct. 1, Mr. Obama met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, and later had dinner with friends at the RPM Steakhouse in Chicago, where he had traveled for fund-raisers and to deliver an economic speech.

By early October, as questions about the Dallas hospital's treatment of Mr. Duncan mounted, federal officials began reassessing their response, even as they continued to express confidence.

C.D.C. officials publicly dismissed the effectiveness of screening for Ebola at airports in the United States. But Jeh Johnson, the secretary of Homeland Security, found a way to make it work over the weekend of Oct. 4. Mr. Obama announced the screening protocol the following Monday.

Even after Mr. Duncan's death on Oct. 8, officials betrayed little sense of a change in approach. Mr. Obama traveled to California for campaign fund-raising and on his return to Washington, received a briefing from his secretary of health and human services about the announcement that a nurse who treated Mr. Duncan had contracted Ebola.

The business-as-usual sentiment at the White House changed abruptly, officials said, when a second nurse in Dallas contracted the disease early Wednesday morning. The fact that she had traveled on a Frontier Airlines flight despite having a fever added to the concern, officials said.

"This Frontier thing took it out of the abstract thing and to this level where people could identify with and made them scared," a senior official said. Within hours, White House aides canceled a planned trip by Mr. Obama to Connecticut and New Jersey. Hours later, Thursday's trip to Rhode Island and New York City was also scrubbed.

In their place, officials quickly designed two frenetic days of presidential activity: meetings, phone calls, statements to the press. All other subjects were shelved — at least publicly — to allow Mr. Obama and his senior advisers to confront the management of the Ebola crisis directly and to demonstrate the administration's resolve publicly.

Susan E. Rice, the national security adviser, has been leading the effort to prod Britain, Germany, France, and other countries to do more to respond to the outbreak. One of Ms. Rice's deputies, Lisa Monaco, who is responsible for homeland security and counterterrorism issues, has been coordinating the domestic response, which involves working with the C.D.C., state and local health authorities, and the Transportation Security Administration on issues like scanning of incoming passengers.

Administration officials insist the president has been deeply engaged since late August, when he played host to African leaders, in prodding them to ramp up the fight against Ebola in West Africa. Last month, he warned world leaders at the United Nations General Assembly to do more.

"It's not that people aren't doing anything," a senior official said. "It's that they're not yet doing enough."

Complicating the administration's international push, it is also pressing European allies to contribute military resources to the campaign against the Islamic State. Officials said they were satisfied with Britain and Germany, but that France had been dragging its heels.

Administration officials also said Mr. Obama felt that the United States needed to intensify its efforts because the World Health Organization was "slow to react to this," an official said.

On Friday afternoon, even before Mr. Klain started, the White House showed signs of returning to normal.

Mr. Obama chaired a meeting of the National Security Council to discuss the state of the fight against the Islamic State, which has become a grinding campaign in recent days, with American officials urging Iraq's new government to deploy its troops more aggressively. The president is scheduled to campaign for candidates running for governor in Maryland and Illinois on Sunday.

Ron Klain, Chief Of Staff To 2 Vice Presidents, Is Named Ebola Czar

By Julie Hirschfeld Davis And Michael D. Shear

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

WASHINGTON — President Obama on Friday named Ron Klain, a seasoned Democratic crisis-response operative and White House veteran, to manage the government's response to the deadly virus as public anxiety grows over its possible spread.

Mr. Klain, a former chief of staff for Vice Presidents Al Gore and Joseph R. **Biden Jr.**, is known for his ability to handle high-stakes and fast-moving political challenges. He was the lead Democratic lawyer for Mr. Gore during the 2000 election recount, and was later played by Kevin Spacey in the HBO drama "Recount" about the disputed contest.

"Obviously right now, the news is dominated by Ebola, and we've got an all-hands-on-deck approach across government to make sure that we're keeping the American people safe," Mr. Obama said on Friday at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, where he was announcing new antifraud measures for government-issued debit cards.

Mr. Klain's appointment, announced by a White House official, came as Mr. Obama and his team increased their efforts to monitor and contain Ebola, which has sown mounting fear among the public despite the fact that only two people have been confirmed to have contracted Ebola in the United States.

The virus has also threatened to raise questions about the Obama administration's competence, fueled in recent days by reports that two health care workers were infected while caring for an Ebola-afflicted patient at a Dallas hospital, and one subsequently flew on an airplane with a fever.

Mr. Klain is uniquely positioned to help Mr. Obama counter such questions and rein in a story that has sometimes seemed to spiral out of the White House's control, said one Democratic operative.

"He'll control the message better than most people would, which is really important from an economic standpoint, from a health standpoint, but it's also important from a political perspective," the operative said, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

"If anybody can get the way this is being reported and discussed under control in a short period of time, he's the one," the operative added.

The White House official said that Mr. Klain "comes to the job with strong management credentials, extensive federal government experience overseeing complex operations and good working relationships with leading members of Congress, as well as senior Obama administration officials, including the president."

After learning this week that an infected nurse had traveled by air, Mr. Obama scrapped most of his schedule in favor of meetings with top national security and public health officials. While praising their work to date on Ebola, the president said they had full plates — including the fight against the Islamic State and the onset of flu season — and another person might be needed "just to make sure that we are crossing all the t's and dotting all the i's going forward."

Mr. Klain will report directly to Lisa Monaco, Mr. Obama's homeland security adviser, and Susan E. Rice, his national security adviser, the official said. His appointment was first reported by CNN.

He is currently the president of Case Holdings and the general counsel at Revolution LLC, companies that were founded by Steve Case, the former chief executive of AOL. A graduate of Harvard Law School, Mr. Klain served as a law clerk for Justice Byron R. White and worked as an aide in the Senate, as well as in several Democratic campaigns.

Mr. Klain was chief of staff to Mr. **Biden** from 2009 to 2011, and held the same post from 1995 to 1999 for Mr. Gore. He was director of rapid response for Mr. Gore's 2000 presidential campaign.

The Ebola Panic Panic

Can they quarantine Jeanne Shaheen?

By James Taranto

[Wall Street Journal](#), October 18, 2014

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

Obama Appoints Lawyer To Handle Ebola Response

By Juliet Eilperin

[Washington Post](#), October 18, 2014

President Obama Friday tapped longtime Democratic operative Ron Klain to coordinate the federal government's response to the threat of widespread infection from the Ebola virus. The move came as the president and his administration faced mounting criticism about its handling of the disease.

The appointment of Klain, an experienced Washington lawyer who served as chief of staff to both Vice President **Biden** and former vice president Al Gore, signaled the administration's recognition that an Ebola outbreak in the United States could overwhelm its management capacity.

In Klain, 53, Obama has enlisted a legal expert and Democratic strategist with a reputation for handling complex projects such as the administration's economic stimulus package during Obama's first term and the Democratic effort to challenge the 2000 presidential election results.

Despite repeated reassurances from the White House and federal public health officials that the chances of widespread infection remain small, the public anxiety about the disease continued to build, and it is increasingly becoming a political issue as Election Day draws near.

A growing chorus of Democrats — several of whom are embroiled in tight reelection contests — are calling for increased travel restrictions on passengers from West Africa, even though the administration and public health experts warn such a move would be counterproductive.

White House press secretary Josh Earnest said Obama, who spoke to Klain by phone Friday morning, had chosen him because he "recognized that the response would benefit from having someone who could devote a hundred percent of their time to this specific task — that is, coordinating the response — and somebody like Mr. Klain, who has a strong management track record both inside government and in the private sector, is the right person for the job."

While the president's homeland security and counterterrorism adviser, Lisa Monaco, has been coordinating the domestic side of the inter-agency response to the outbreak since March, a White House official who spoke on the condition of anonymity said the administration began reassessing that approach after the issue "exploded on her agenda." This week, the official added, the White House started seriously contemplating the idea of bringing in outside help.

Earnest noted that Monaco, who also helps direct the administration's strategy to confront the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, "has significant responsibilities when it comes to other national security priorities as well."

Klain will report to Monaco and Susan E. Rice, the president's national security adviser.

In another move to ramp up the White House response Friday, Obama decided to designate senior personnel on the ground in Dallas, including an experienced Federal Emergency Management Agency coordinator and a White House liaison.

Klain is tasked with coordinating domestic preparedness efforts and the U.S. military operation to help control the virus's spread in West Africa. His appointment drew plaudits from Democrats but little praise from Republicans. Most GOP lawmakers questioned why the president was drawing on someone

with a political and management pedigree rather than someone with public health or infectious disease credentials. And some faulted Obama for not taking more aggressive action to halt the flow of people from Ebola-affected countries into the United States.

"We don't need another so-called 'czar'; we need presidential leadership. This is a public health crisis, and the answer isn't another White House political operative," said Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) in a statement. "The answer is a commander in chief who stands up and leads, banning flights from Ebola-afflicted nations and acting decisively to secure our southern border."

Even Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), who had endorsed the idea of empowering a single person to oversee the federal response, tweeted that Klain was "not what I had in mind" and he preferred a Cabinet member "accountable to Congress."

House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Edward R. Royce (R-Calif.) questioned Klain's lack of medical credentials, asking in a statement, "Why didn't the president pick an individual with a noteworthy infectious disease or public health background?"

"The fact of the matter is this is much broader than just a medical response," Earnest said Friday. "What we were looking for is not an Ebola expert but rather an implementation expert, and that's exactly what Ron Klain is."

Klain emerged from the Al Gore 2000 and John F. Kerry 2004 presidential campaigns with a reputation as one of the Democrats' most able strategists.

"I wouldn't call him a policy wonk by any means, but he was someone who got [that] you couldn't formulate good strategy without understanding the policy," said Chris Jennings, who served as a top White House health policy adviser under former president Bill Clinton and Obama.

A Harvard Law School graduate, Klain clerked for Supreme Court Justice Byron White before rising through the staff ranks in the Senate to secure the job of Gore's chief of staff at just 31. Klain became close with **Biden** while serving as a staffer for the Senate Judiciary Committee when **Biden** served as chairman and helped advise **Biden** during the 2008 campaign.

During Obama's pre-inaugural transition, the newly-elected president wanted to find a role for Klain in the West Wing, and his name was mentioned as a potential White House communications director, according to a person familiar with the internal deliberations. But **Biden** also wanted him and convinced Klain to join the vice president's office as chief of staff. More recently, Klain was a serious contender for the post of White House counsel — though W. Neil Eggleston ultimately took the job.

Mark Gitenstein, a former Obama administration ambassador to Romania, said Klain developed a strong relationship with Obama while helping prepare the then-senator from Illinois for the presidential debates against Republican nominee John McCain (R-Ariz.) in 2008. Klain had served in a similar role for Kerry's 2004 campaign.

Klain is an enthusiastic Facebook user who frequently posts about his family. He is married to Monica Medina, who served as a top National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration official during Obama's first term and is the National Geographic Society's senior director for international ocean policy.

Gitenstein said he believed that Klain's management of the economic stimulus push in the first year of the Obama administration helped him prepare for the challenges that he'll face managing the Ebola response. "It was a very difficult job — a management problem and a problem of getting the money to the right places, which required coordination with other Cabinet secretaries. . . . Ron really got his arms around the problem as fast as anyone I've seen.

Klain is taking a leave of absence as president of Case Holdings, the holding company for the business and philanthropic interests of former AOL chairman Steve Case, and general counsel of Case's

venture capital firm Revolution LLC. No start date has been set for his new White House job, but Earnest said he would start “soon” and is expected to work for roughly five to six months on the Ebola initiative.

The Klain announcement came as Ebola fears continued to reverberate across the country. Friday brought news that a health-care worker from the Dallas hospital that has been the epicenter of Ebola in the United States had been isolated on a cruise ship that left Texas on Sunday.

This health-care worker had no direct contact with Thomas Duncan, the Liberian man who was diagnosed with Ebola and later died after flying to Texas last month. But, according to Jen Psaki, spokeswoman for the State Department, the person “may have had contact with” fluid samples from Duncan during his treatment. Mexican authorities did not allow the cruise ship to make a scheduled visit to Cozumel on Friday, according to Carnival Cruise Lines. It is scheduled to return to Galveston, Tex., on Sunday morning.

In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced late Thursday that another large group of people had to be contacted and screened. The CDC had said it was reaching out to anyone who was on the Frontier Airlines flight taken by Amber Vinson, the second Dallas nurse to contract Ebola, when she traveled from Cleveland to Texas on Monday. However, the CDC says it is reaching out to passengers on the Frontier flight she had taken to Ohio on Oct. 10 to see whether they are deemed to be at potential risk.

Obama Naming Ebola Czar Follows Long White House Practice

By Jim Snyder And Kathleen Hunter

[Bloomberg News](#), October 18, 2014

They’ve been used for everything from retooling for World War I to cleaning up the nation’s largest offshore oil spill.

But history shows the appointment of special presidential coordinators, as President Barack Obama did today to combat Ebola, doesn’t always work.

“We’ve had dozens of them over the decades and I’d say they have a 50-50 success record at best,” said Paul Light, a public service professor at New York University. “I’m having a hard time thinking of any who really made very much of a difference.”

Obama plans to appoint Ron Klain, 53, a former chief of staff to both Vice President Joe **Biden** and former Vice President Al Gore, as an Ebola coordinator who’ll direct various agency activities to stop the spread of the deadly disease.

In doing so, he’s following in footsteps that go back at least to President Woodrow Wilson, who chose Bernard Baruch, a businessman, to prepare the country for World War I, said Mitchel Sollenberger, an associate provost at the University of Michigan in Dearborn, who co-wrote a book about the history of policy coordinators, often referred to as “czars.”

“The problem with creating czars is they add that other layer of bureaucracy,” he said in an interview. “It’s much more about optics and politics than in resolving issues.”

Appointing an adviser doesn’t always help achieve White House goals. Production of military equipment actually declined during Baruch’s service, Sollenberger said.

Obama has faced pressure from Republicans in Congress to take additional steps to ease public fears about Ebola, including from Senator John McCain of Arizona, who called for the naming of “some kind of czar” in a talk show interview.

Today lawmakers welcomed the creation of the post though questioned whether Klain’s experience – he has no background in health care – is the right fit.

"What has been missing from this administration's response to Ebola is not a new figurehead," said Fred Upton, a Michigan Republican and chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. "What we need is a strategy to get ahead of this, and restore the public's faith that they are safe."

Thomas Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was questioned yesterday by a congressional panel for what at times has seemed like an uncertain response to the outbreak following the diagnosis of Thomas Eric Duncan, who contracted Ebola in Liberia, in a Dallas hospital. Since Duncan died Oct. 8, two of his nurses have also been diagnosed with the disease.

Klain's appointment could put pressure on government agencies to better respond to the crisis because he "knows how the government works," said Gilbert Burnham, co-director of the Center for Refugee and Disaster Response at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

Burnham said a week ago he thought it wasn't necessary to create such a position but recent missteps in the response have led him to change his mind.

One of Duncan's nurses at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital, Amber Vinson, flew on a commercial flight from Cleveland back to Dallas with a slight fever earlier this week. Frieden has said that the nurse shouldn't have flown though he acknowledged that the CDC had given her approval to travel.

In the days since, schools in Ohio and Texas have closed as a precaution and Frontier Airlines has notified passengers and crews on the plane's subsequent flights of the possible exposure.

Klain's experience appeared to be a good fit because the response to Ebola requires coordination of various federal agencies, Burnham said.

Pedro Greer, a Miami doctor who won the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009 for treating the poor, agreed.

"You have all the scientists and experts at the CDC but what you need is a manager," Greer, who also teaches at Florida International University's medical school in Miami, said. "With all due respect, we scientists are not the best managers."

White House policy coordinators have a mixed record of success though at managing crises.

Presidents usually make such appointments when pressure mounts for action, Sollenberger said. Dozens of people have been appointed in recent decades to direct action on issues including drug abuse, education reform, faith-based initiatives, climate change, and executive pay.

Sollenberger said he and co-author Mark Rozell, a public policy professor at George Mason University in Arlington, Virginia, tallied 11 appointed czars under President George W. Bush and 21 under Obama.

One of the go-to advisers for presidents recently has been former U.S. Coast Guard Admiral Thad Allen, who directed the Bush administration's response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and went on to serve the Obama White House as commander of the response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010.

Special advisers often have no legal authority to direct actions. Their power instead rests however with their political ties to the president, said John Harrison, a law professor at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

"They're like the chief of staff of the White House, who legally speaking can't order anyone to do anything, but whose suggestions to officials, including cabinet officials, are generally complied with because they are in effect from the president," Harrison said in an e-mail.

Maintaining a high profile can help Klain bring publicity to official pronouncements, which could provide additional motivation for government agencies to act, Harrison said.

Tom Ridge, who was special assistant on Homeland Security to Bush, said Klain's success may depend on his level of access to Obama.

"It wasn't lost on anyone that I was in the White House every day, with a report to the president," said Ridge, who was later confirmed as the first secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

Klain will report directly to Lisa Monaco, Obama's national security adviser. One of Klain's first steps should be to identify one or two people who can talk effectively about the Ebola response, and it shouldn't be him, Ridge said.

"He should take a cue from his title – Ebola crisis coordinator," Ridge said. "He cannot and should not be the messenger. He's apparently a brilliant lawyer with excellent credentials, but he's not a health care professional."

Obama's Pick For Ebola Coordinator Draws Criticism

By Angela Greiling Keane, Kathleen Hunter And Toluse Olorunnipa

[Bloomberg News](#), October 18, 2014

President Barack Obama's choice of a long-time Democratic political operative as the nation's Ebola response coordinator drew scorn from administration critics who said someone with a medical background is needed.

Ron Klain, 53, a lawyer and former chief of staff to Vice President Joe **Biden** and to former Vice President Al Gore, was appointed amid rising alarm from lawmakers and the public about the government's handling of the first three cases of the Ebola to emerge in the U.S.

Representative Tim Murphy, a Pennsylvania Republican who led a hearing this week where lawmakers grilled federal officials about the Ebola response, called Klain's selection "shocking and frankly tone deaf to what the American people are concerned about."

White House press secretary Josh Earnest defended the choice, saying Klain's management expertise is necessary to coordinate the multiple departments and agencies involved, and he has established relationships with members of Congress.

"This is much broader than just a medical response," Earnest said at a White House briefing yesterday. "He is the right person to make sure that we are integrating the inter-agency response to this significant challenge."

Representative Fred Upton, the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, said Obama should have appointed someone with a background in health care or infectious disease.

"What has been missing from this administration's response to Ebola is not a new figurehead," the Michigan Republican, said in an e-mailed statement. "What we need is a strategy to get ahead of this, and restore the public's faith that they are safe."

Until he opened the door to appointing a single coordinator on Oct. 16, Obama had said his existing staff of advisers could handle Ebola, which is the subject of growing fear in the U.S., with some schools closing in Texas and Ohio and quarantines of health-care workers.

"It's not that they haven't been doing an outstanding job really working hard on this issue, but they also are responsible for a whole bunch of other stuff," Obama said at the White House after meeting with members of his team.

As part of the administration effort, Obama plans to assign senior personnel to serve on the ground in Dallas, including an experienced FEMA coordinator and a White House liaison to make sure all of the region's needs are met, according to a White House statement.

Republican lawmakers have faulted the response by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in trying to keep Ebola infections contained and the public informed. After a Liberian man visiting Dallas died of Ebola last week, two nurses who treated him became the first people infected with the virus in the U.S.

Klain will report to National Security Adviser Susan Rice and the president's homeland security adviser, Lisa Monaco. Klain has a long background in politics, including representing Gore in the Florida recount in 2000. His official biography lists no experience in public health.

Picking someone with a medical background would have been prudent from both health and political perspectives, said John Thomas, a law professor at Quinnipiac University who previously taught public health.

"We have a public who's very, very fearful, lots of exaggeration about how the virus might be transmitted," he said in an interview. "If we had a czar with a background, it might lead to a little more confidence in the speaker."

Klain has the ability to bridge partisan divides, given his time as a staff member on the Senate Judiciary Committee, said Jon Leibowitz, a friend of Klain since they worked together on the panel in the late 1980s.

"Ron has very good relations with Republicans, particularly in the Senate," Leibowitz, who was chairman of the Federal Trade Commission until last year, said in an interview.

Klain is "one of the most gifted people I know" and has the energy and ability to learn new topics quickly to do the job well, said Leibowitz, now a partner at the Davis Polk law firm in Washington.

Pedro Greer, a Miami doctor who won the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009 for treating the poor and teaches at Florida International University's medical school, said Klain's lack of background in public health isn't necessarily a deficit for the job of a coordinator.

"You have all the scientists and experts at the CDC but what you need is a manager," Greer said. "With all due respect, we scientists are not the best managers."

One of the key parts of the job will be better informing the public about the virus and containment efforts, he said.

"There's a hysteria going on about it," Greer said. "What you need to have is a very well-educated public and that requires a lot of work."

Klain is currently general counsel at Revolution LLC and president of Case Holdings, two companies founded and run by former AOL chief executive Steve Case.

Case said in a statement on the company's website the Klain will be taking a leave of absence. He called him "a talented manager" who understands government and business.

John Ulliot, a former Senate Republican aide, called Klain "a real roll-up-your sleeves kind of guy" who "knows all the angles on a problem."

Klain's appointment is "a signal they are bringing in someone very senior who can cut through any red tape as needed and get a decision from the Oval Office any time it's necessary," Ulliot said.

White House Touts Ebola Czar Ron Klain's Ties To Congress

By Steven Dennis

[Roll Call](#), October 18, 2014

President Barack Obama has picked Ron Klain to be the Ebola czar, according to the White House, a move that appears aimed at quelling a firestorm from Congress and the public over the handling of the crisis.

Klain is a longtime Washingtonian and Harvard-educated lawyer who previously served as Vice President Joseph R. **Biden** Jr.'s chief of staff. He isn't known for his work in health care, but the White House emphasized his management background and relationships with Congress.

But congressional criticism of the pick came almost immediately via Twitter.

“Worst ebola epidemic in world history and Pres. Obama puts a government bureaucrat with no healthcare experience in charge. Is he serious?” tweeted Rep. Andy Harris, R-Md., an anesthesiologist.

Sen. Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y., was the first out of the gate to laud the pick.

“I’ve known Ron Klain for over twenty years,” he said in a statement. “He is smart, aggressive, and levelheaded; exactly the qualities we need in a czar to steer our response to Ebola. He is an excellent choice.”

Klain also has a sense of public relations — something the White House could use given the harsh criticism of officials who have been the face of the Ebola response, including Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Thomas Frieden.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., who has been calling for an Ebola coordinator since early September, said Klain “understands the importance of clear communications to the containment of a crisis like this.”

Klain’s congressional experience includes stints as staff director of the Senate Democratic Leadership Committee, and the chief counsel of the Senate Judiciary Committee, but it’s not clear how strong his ties are to the House.

An aide to Speaker John A. Boehner, R-Ohio, was unaware of any Klain ties to the House, but said the White House did give Boehner’s office notice about the pick.

It’s also not entirely clear yet what the Obama administration will be seeking from Congress — although Press Secretary Josh Earnest noted yesterday that Congress controls the purse strings.

Democrats have been pushing for more funding for public health and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has said the CDC should get the money it needs to battle the Ebola virus.

Unlike, say, a new surgeon general, Klain’s newly created position does not need Senate confirmation — a bonus given that the Senate is in the middle of a lengthy pre-election recess.

The news was first reported by CNN.

A White House official confirmed the pick in a memo:

EBOLA RESPONSE COORDINATOR

The President has asked Ron Klain to take on the task of coordinating his administration’s whole of government Ebola response. He will report directly to the President’s Homeland Security Advisor Lisa Monaco and the President National Security Advisor Susan Rice as he ensures that efforts to protect the American people by detecting, isolating and treating Ebola patients in this country are properly integrated but don’t distract from the aggressive commitment to stopping Ebola at the source in West Africa. Klain’s role is consistent with the view the President articulated in the Oval Office last night that Monaco, Rice and others have done outstanding work in confronting this challenge so far – but given their management of other national and homeland security priorities, additional bandwidth will further enhance the government’s Ebola response.

Klain, an attorney, comes to the job with strong management credentials, extensive federal government experience overseeing complex operations and good working relationships with leading members of Congress, as well as senior Obama administration officials, including the President.

KLAIN BIO

Ron Klain is President of Case Holdings and General Counsel at Revolution LLC, a technology-oriented venture capital firm based in Washington, DC. Prior to joining Revolution, Ron was a Partner and National Practice Group Chair at O’Melveny & Myers LLP.

In addition to his career in law and business, Ron has extensive public service experience, most recently as a senior White House aide to President Obama and Chief of Staff to Vice President **Biden**. In that position, on behalf of Vice President **Biden**, he helped oversee implementation of the Recovery Act,

a major interagency and intergovernmental project. Earlier, he served as Chief of Staff for Vice President Al Gore, and before that, as Chief of Staff for Attorney General Janet Reno. He has also served as the Staff Director of the Senate Democratic Leadership Committee, and the Chief Counsel of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Ron is a summa cum laude graduate of Georgetown University and holds a JD, magna cum laude, from Harvard Law School, where he was an Editor of the Harvard Law Review and won the Sears Prize for the highest grade average in 1985. He served as a law clerk to Supreme Court Justice Byron White.

Ebola Czar Ron Klain Was A Fannie Mae And Cigna Lobbyist

By Timothy P. Carney

[Washington Examiner](#), October 17, 2014

K Street Democratic operative Ron Klain is now Obama's Ebola czar. Klain served as chief of staff to Janet Reno and then Al Gore in the 1990s, and as Joe **Biden's** chief of staff recently. In between, of course, he was a corporate lobbyist. Klain

"They won't work in my White House!" candidate Obama proclaimed about lobbyists. This was never true. Obama has hired about 100 lobbyists, and now he's just promoted one of them: revolving-door K Street Democratic operative Ron Klain is now Obama's Ebola czar.

Klain served as chief of staff to Janet Reno and then Al Gore in the 1990s, and as Joe **Biden's** chief of staff recently. In between, of course, he was a corporate lobbyist.

Klain worked at O'Melveny & Myers, lobbying on behalf of Fannie Mae, U.S. Airways, Time Warner, Cigna, ImClone, and other companies and industry groups.

Lobbying on "regulatory issues concerning Fannie Mae" in 2004, as disclosure forms indicate Klain did, involved convincing Congress and Fannie Mae's regulators that Fannie Mae wasn't doing anything dangerous, and wasn't exposing taxpayers to risk. In other words, Ron Klain got paid to help fuel the housing bubble up until a couple of years before it popped.

'Ebola Czar' Brings Decades Of Washington Experience

By Matt Hansen

[Los Angeles Times](#), October 18, 2014

The man tapped to be the country's "Ebola czar" is a veteran Washington advisor and Democratic strategist who will oversee a multi-agency response to the outbreak in West Africa and the U.S. cases, the White House announced Friday.

In a change from a career spent mainly behind the scenes, Ron Klain becomes the Obama administration's point person leading a complicated and highly-visible government Ebola strategy.

Klain, a longtime confidant to Democratic presidents and presidential candidates, brings to the job an in-depth knowledge of federal agencies and processes, former colleagues said.

Republicans, however, challenged the appointment, calling him a political appointee with little relevant medical background.

"What we were looking for is not an Ebola expert but rather an implementation expert, and that's exactly what Ron Klain is," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said Friday. "He is somebody who has extensive experience in the federal government. He's somebody that has extensive management experience when it comes to the private sector."

Klain previously served as chief of staff for Vice President Joe **Biden**, and currently is president of Case Holdings and general counsel for Revolution LLC, a venture firm founded by Steve Case, the

former chief executive of AOL. He will take a leave of absence from the firm to accept the new position, the company said.

The goal of the new position is to coordinate response to the cases in the United States while maintaining efforts in West Africa, the White House said. Klain will report to Homeland Security advisor Lisa Monaco and national security advisor Susan Rice.

The government's Ebola response now encompasses a wide array of federal agencies, from medical research facilities like the National Institutes of Health to the U.S. military, which is helping with relief efforts in West Africa.

President Obama created the job Friday after a Senate hearing Thursday in which lawmakers criticized Ebola efforts, including those led by U.S. Centers for Disease Control head Thomas Frieden, as inadequate. The government's response has come under fire since two Dallas nurses were infected with the deadly virus while treating a Liberian man who presented the first case of Ebola diagnosed on American soil.

After the hearing, Obama said he would consider appointing a director to ensure government efforts were well-coordinated.

"It may make sense for us to have one person to have a more regular process just to make sure that we're crossing all the T's and dotting all the I's," he told reporters Thursday.

But the president's choice Friday has not gone without criticism. Klain's lack of specific medical experience and his ties to the Democratic Party made him an easy target for Republicans.

"This appointment is both shocking and frankly tone deaf to what the American people are concerned about," Rep. Tim Murphy (R- Penn.) said in a statement. "Installing yet another political appointee who has no medical background or infectious disease control experience will do little to reassure Americans who are increasingly losing confidence with the administration's Ebola strategy."

Colleagues who worked with Klain said they expected him to handle the logistical, not the medical, response to the epidemic.

"I do expect that the medical experts will still deal with the medical issues," said Neera Tanden, a former advisor to the president on healthcare reform. "But it's important to have someone who understands what the public could be worried about tomorrow or the next day."

Though Tanden said she was unsure whether the White House would make Klain the public face of the Ebola response, she said he had experience communicating with the public and would understand how important outreach would be.

Most important, she said, he had the experience necessary to manage a complicated federal process.

"I think at this point in the public health challenge we're facing with Ebola, it's a multi-agency issue," she said. "It's a significant management issue, and Ron Klain is a fantastic manager."

Others cited Klain's close working relationship with both the president and the vice-president as an asset.

"He has a very good personal relationship with [Vice President Joe] **Biden** and with the president, and that close personal relationship will give him the influence he needs and the credibility he needs," said Brian Boyle, a former legal colleague of Klain who attended law school with him.

An attorney, Klain has had a long career as a trusted aide to Democratic presidents. In the Clinton administration, he worked as chief of staff for Vice President Al Gore and Atty. Gen. Janet Reno. Under **Biden**, he coordinated the launch of the 2009 Recovery Act, the Obama administration's national stimulus package intended to spur job growth nationwide.

Apart from policy decisions, Klain has been equally active behind the scenes in Democratic politics, helping candidates Obama, Clinton, Gore and John Kerry in debate preparations. He also helped lead the recount effort for Gore in the 2000 election, which led to a moment of celebrity when Kevin Spacey portrayed him in an HBO television movie.

People familiar with Klain's background say that his experience in Washington will serve him well yet his status outside the administration will enable him to get things done.

"He's not a part of the bureaucracy, so he can come in and stomp on bureaucratic toes if that's what it takes to get action here," said Evan Bayh, a former Indiana senator who knows Klain well. "He's a short timer, so he can make tough decisions and cross bureaucratic barriers to get people to collaborate and get the job done."

Obama Naming Former Biden Staffer Ebola 'czar'

[New York Post](#), October 17, 2014

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama is naming Ron Klain, a former chief of staff to Vice President Joe **Biden** and a trusted adviser at the Obama White House, as the point man on the U.S. government's response to the Ebola crisis.

Obama has been under pressure to name an Ebola "czar" to oversee health security in the U.S. and actions to help stem the outbreak in West Africa.

Klain has been out of government since leaving **Biden's** office during the Obama's first term. The White House said that Klain would report to national security adviser Susan Rice and to homeland security and counterterrorism adviser Lisa Monaco.

Klain, a lawyer, also served as chief of staff for Vice President Al Gore. He previously served under Attorney General Janet Reno in the Clinton administration.

White House: We Didn't Want 'an Ebola Expert' To Be The Ebola Czar

By Ben Wolfgang

[Washington Times](#), October 18, 2014

To manage the government's response to the Ebola outbreak, the Obama administration says it wasn't looking for someone who is an expert on Ebola.

The White House on Friday named Ron Klain as its "Ebola response coordinator," though he's quickly become known as the "Ebola czar." Mr. Klain is an attorney who worked for vice presidents Joseph R. **Biden** and Al Gore and is general counsel at Revolution LLC, a tech-focused venture capital firm.

He also is president of Case Holdings, which handles business interests for former AOL CEO Steve Case.

What Mr. Klain is not is a medical expert, nor is he someone who has any particular knowledge about Ebola.

Despite that, the administration says he is the right man for the job.

"It is not solely a medical response. That's why someone with Mr. Klain's credentials, somebody that has strong management experience both inside government but also in the private sector ... all of that means he is the right person for the job," White House press secretary Josh Earnest told reporters Friday. "The president wanted somebody who could serve in a coordinating function to manage our implementation of a whole-of-government approach to this Ebola situation ... What we were looking for is not an Ebola expert but rather an implementation expert. That's exactly what Ron Klain is."

How A Term For Russian Royalty Worked Its Way Into American Government

By Ben Zimmer

[Slate Magazine](#), October 18, 2014

On Friday, President Obama chose Ron Klain, a former chief of staff to Vice President Joe **Biden**, be the nation's "Ebola czar." But what does an American "czar" do? And why do we even call them czars? In a 2008 piece for Slate, Ben Zimmer explains the term's history. The original article is printed below.

Ron Klain, above in New York City in 2008, was named the Ebola czar by President Obama on Oct. 17, 2014.

Photo by Andrew H. Walker/Getty Images

When Benjamin Franklin wanted to describe our national indifference to royal pomp and circumstance, he would compare Americans to a London porter whose heavy load once jostled Czar Peter the Great. When told he had just bumped into the czar, the porter responded: "Poh! We are all czars here!"

Franklin's porter could have been describing the incoming Obama administration. Already Tom Daschle has been tapped for "health czar" and Carol Browner for "climate czar." Adolfo Carrión is expected to be the "urban affairs czar." There's also been talk of a "technology czar" and a "copyright czar." Plans for a "car czar" recently fell apart on Capitol Hill, but Obama and the incoming Congress will try, try again in the new year.

This efflorescence of czars—those interagency point people charged with cutting through red tape to coordinate policy—has people wondering: Why do we use a term from imperial Russia to describe bureaucratic troubleshooters?

Czar first entered English back in the mid-16th century, soon after Baron Sigismund von Herberstein used the word in a Latin book published in 1549. The more correct romanization, tsar, became the standard spelling in the late 19th century, but by that time czar had caught on in popular usage, emerging as a handy label for anyone with tyrannical tendencies.

On the American scene, czar was first bestowed on one of Andrew Jackson's foes: Nicholas Biddle, president of the Bank of the United States. Jackson vehemently opposed the centralized power of the bank, which he called a "hydra of corruption," and his clash with Biddle exploded into the "Bank War" of 1832-36. One of Jackson's staunchest allies in this fight, Washington Globe Publisher Frank Blair, dubbed Biddle "Czar Nicholas"—a potent image at a time when Russia's Nicholas I was at the height of his repressive nationalist regime. (Jackson's opponents fought fire with fire, calling him King Andrew I.)

After the Civil War, journalist David Ross Locke (writing under the moniker "Petroleum V. Nasby") lampooned Andrew Johnson's mishandling of Reconstruction, anointing him "the Czar uv all the Amerikas." But it wasn't until 1890 that the "czar" label became an American political staple. Republican House Speaker Thomas Reed incensed Democrats by disallowing a favored stalling tactic of the minority party: not responding to a quorum call. When Reed pushed through a rule that allowed the speaker to count members as present for the quorum even if they didn't respond, Democratic congressmen erupted with cries of "Czar! Despot! Tyrant!"

The "Czar Reed" image stuck; the speaker would be known as "czar" for the rest of his career, after which time an even more potent House speaker, Joe Cannon, would inherit the title. As Reed's biographer William A. Robinson observed, the nickname "had no pleasant connotations" at the time. "In 1890, it brought to the mind the Russian autocrat himself," along with images of "the Cossacks, Siberia, and the knout" (a whip used for flogging).

That would all change after the Russian Revolution deposed the last real-life czar in 1917; painful images of imperial repression quickly faded to the background and Communist leaders became the new dictatorial icons. Accordingly, kinder, gentler “czars” made their way into American public life. When Kenesaw Mountain Landis became the first commissioner of baseball in 1920, “czar of baseball” worked just fine for the headline writers. New York had its “boxing czar” (Athletic Commission Chairman William Muldoon) and its “beer czar” (Alcoholic Beverage Control Board Chairman Edward Mulrooney). And when Nicholas Longworth served as House speaker in the late ‘20s, he distinguished himself from his predecessors Reed and Cannon as the “genial czar.”

The newly benign term evolved again during World War II, when Roosevelt expanded the government rapidly and appointed a host of brand-new federal overseers. The Washington Post reported in 1942 on the sudden rush of “executive orders creating new czars to control various aspects of our wartime economy,” and a cartoon from that year shows “czar of prices” Leon Henderson, “czar of production” Donald Nelson, and “czar of ships” Emory S. Land all cramming onto one throne.

In the postwar era, the rise of the “czar” has accompanied the expanding role of the executive office in promoting policy initiatives; the term tends to be used when presidents create special new posts for the individuals charged with pushing those initiatives through. Nixon succumbed to czarmania, appointing the first “drug czar,” Jerome Jaffe, in 1971 (long before William Bennett took the mantle in 1988). But it was the title of “energy czar” that got the most attention during those days of OPEC embargoes and gas rationing. Though John A. Love first held the title in 1973, his more powerful successor William E. Simon really got the “czar” ball rolling. Doonesbury cartoonist Garry Trudeau found the “czar” title fitting, depicting Simon imperiously asking for his “signet ring and hot wax.” Simon, for his part, enjoyed the sendup and took pleasure in colleagues calling him “your czarship.”

When Nixon offered him the job, Simon would later recall, the president himself used the term energy czar and discomfitingly likened the role to that of Hitler’s minister of armaments, Albert Speer. Subsequent presidents, however, have shied away from the C-word and its domineering, anti-democratic connotations. Most recently, President Bush has been careful not to call Lt. Gen. Douglas Lute his “war czar,” even though he’s universally labeled that in the press. It’s sure a lot easier than saying his official title: assistant to the president and deputy national security adviser for Iraq and Afghanistan.

Now we hear that the Obama team doesn’t like czar either. No wonder: Even now, the word evokes either old-fashioned despotism or latter-day caricatures of tin-pot tyrants. But it’s safe to say it’s not going anywhere, as long as that compact word keeps doing its job, glibly condensing bureaucratic mouthfuls.

Surprise: Americans Are Confident In Government’s Ability To Handle Ebola

By Paul Waldman

[Washington Post](#), October 18, 2014

This morning the White House announced that Ron Klain, who was formerly the chief of staff to Vice President **Biden**, will coordinate the government’s response to Ebola. Klain will be the “czar” Republicans were asking for, I suppose because they had to demand the administration do something it wasn’t yet doing (thus is the nature of opposition). Which seems like a perfectly reasonable idea — you can never have too much coordination, and Klain is generally respected for his organizational skills.

But as much as Republicans have been arguing that everything is spinning out of control and the government isn’t protecting us from a deadly disease that might just bring about a zombie apocalypse, it turns out that the public isn’t going quite as crazy as you might think.

Don't get me wrong — there are plenty of people who are reacting irrationally to a disease that has so far infected a grand total of two people in this nation of 316 million, both of whom were health care workers treating a man dying of Ebola (if that doesn't describe you, you're safe). But the growing number of Ebola polls shows that the public actually has a pretty good amount of confidence that the government can handle this.

That's not what you might think if you tuned into the panic-a-thon that is cable news, or even much other news. Every evening news show is leading with Ebola every night, and every newspaper has multiple stories every day about the disease. There's a danger that we could create a self-fulfilling prophecy, one in which the public is portrayed as losing their collective minds, which makes it more likely that they will end up doing so.

But let's look at what they're actually saying. It turns out that on some questions, partisanship has a big impact, which is actually encouraging in a way. It tells us that Ebola is much like other issues, where politics provides the filter through which things are being viewed. Whether it's the economy or health reform or national security, Republicans are always going to be less likely to express confidence in the ability of a government run by Democrats to do anything right (and vice-versa).

So, via Eric Boehlert, in the latest Washington Post poll, 62 percent of respondents said they were very confident or somewhat confident in the government's ability to respond to an Ebola outbreak. Among Democrats, the number was 76 percent, while among Republicans it was a still-healthy 54 percent. A Pew Research Center poll taken two weeks ago found something similar: 69 percent of Democrats said they had a great deal or fair amount of confidence in the government's ability to handle Ebola, while 48 percent of Republicans agreed. Pew pointed out that in 2005, when George W. Bush was president, the same question was asked about bird flu and the numbers were reversed (with Democrats then expressing even less confidence than Republicans do now).

That tells a story not of widespread public hysteria but of rather ordinary partisanship. And a new Kaiser Family Foundation poll also shows a more reasonable public than you might expect if you were just watching the panic-a-thon on cable news. Among the questions Kaiser asked was this:

Which do you think is more likely: Ebola will spread and there will be a widespread outbreak in the U.S.; or Ebola will be contained to a small number of cases in the U.S.?

Ebola will be contained: 73

There will be a widespread outbreak: 22

And people in both parties expressed confidence in the Centers for Disease Control, with 79 percent of Democrats and 70 percent of Republicans saying they'd have confidence in the CDC to contain the disease and prevent it from spreading if there were a case of Ebola in their area.

As a news story, Ebola lends itself perfectly to sensationalistic, ratings-grabbing news. It's mysterious, threatening, dramatic, and carries the theoretical potential for global disaster. But so far, despite the non-stop coverage and Republicans' insistence that chaos reigns, most of the public seems to think that our government is capable of handling it.

Former Biden Chief Of Staff To Lead Ebola Response

By Jim Kuhnhen

[Associated Press](#), October 17, 2014

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama is naming Ron Klain, a former chief of staff to Vice President Joe **Biden** and a trusted adviser at the Obama White House, as the point man on the U.S. government's response to the Ebola crisis, the White House said Friday.

Obama has been under pressure to name an Ebola “czar” to oversee health security in the U.S. and actions to help stem the outbreak in West Africa, where nearly 4,500 people have died from the virus.

Klain has been out of government since leaving **Biden’s** office during the Obama’s first term. The White House said that Klain would report to national security adviser Susan Rice and to homeland security and counterterrorism adviser Lisa Monaco.

Klain, a lawyer, also served as chief of staff for Vice President Al Gore and was a key figure during the 2000 Florida presidential election recount. He previously served under Attorney General Janet Reno in the Clinton administration.

The White House is calling the new post an “Ebola response coordinator.”

White House officials had initially resisted congressional calls to name a lead figure on Ebola, arguing that various agencies had distinct responsibilities, including the Centers for Disease Control, The Department of Defense, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

But on Thursday, Obama conceded that such a point person might in fact be necessary even as he praised his adviser for doing “an outstanding job.”

But he said that several of his advisers, including Monaco and CDC director Dr. Thomas Frieden, are also confronting other priorities. He noted that Frieden is also dealing with flu season and Monaco and Rice are having to spend time on the Islamic State extremists in the Middle East.

“It may make sense for us to have one person ... so that after this initial surge of activity we can have a more regular process just to make sure we are crossing all the Ts and dotting all the Is,” he said.

Klain comes to the job with strong management credentials, extensive federal government experience overseeing complex operations and good working relationships with leading members of Congress, as well as senior Obama administration officials, including the president.

In a statement, the White House noted that as **Biden’s** chief of staff, Klain helped with the implementation of the White House stimulus package of 2009 created as a response to the recession and the financial crisis.

Klain is President of Case Holdings and General Counsel at Revolution LLC, a technology venture capital firm based in Washington, DC.

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Ragland: After Early Blows In Ebola Fight, Dallas Is Getting Back On Its Feet

By James Ragland

[Dallas Morning News](#), October 18, 2014

Zachary Thompson came up with an apt metaphor for our nation’s battle with Ebola.

The Dallas County Health and Human Services director likened it to a boxing match.

“In some people’s mind, you might have thought this was one punch and done,” Thompson said Friday. “But we found out we’ve got to go 12 rounds.”

We also found out that we need all hands on deck: mayors, county health officials, governors — all the way up to the president.

Not everyone is on board with President Barack Obama’s pick to be the “Ebola czar,” Ron Klain, a former chief of staff to Vice Presidents Joe **Biden** and Al Gore

That’s politics for you.

But just about everyone realizes we need someone to coordinate the efforts of local, state and federal health officials who admittedly have been staggered by Ebola’s first few blows.

"We're all working together," said Thompson. "My take is all public health is local. But all of this is uncharted territory. That's clearly been shown."

Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings applauded the concerted effort being made to keep the virus in check. He and Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins got more animated after seeing critical systemic breakdowns.

"We did not want to be a Chicken Little and say, 'The sky is falling,' but you must take this seriously," Rawlings said.

When the second nurse who'd treated Thomas Eric Duncan was diagnosed with Ebola, that really got everyone's attention, Rawlings said.

The fact that the nurse, Amber Joy Vinson, was allowed to take a commercial flight from Dallas to Ohio and back demonstrated a need to clarify and tighten controls.

Vinson was given the green light to fly from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta even after she reported she had a slight temperature.

Now, virtually everyone who flew on the plane from Cleveland back to Dallas with Vinson is worried. They're all being monitored. And that single flight caused a ripple effect in Ohio and beyond.

That shouldn't have happened, said Rawlings, who joined Jenkins in pushing for travel restrictions for all the workers who treated Duncan at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital.

"Having that second health care worker become positive demonstrated to me the significant repercussion of what was happening in the health care world," Rawlings said. "It also allowed Judge Jenkins and me to draw a line in the sand on the city's and county's role in being advocates for the citizens of our community."

Their concerns "were heard" in Austin, Atlanta and Washington, Rawlings said, adding "and you see the response we're getting."

Aside from the political machinations in Austin and Washington, Dallas also got another shot in the arm Friday.

One of the 48 people who first came in contact with Ebola virus victim Duncan last month was released from quarantine.

What that means is that the unidentified man developed no symptoms of Ebola in the 21 days since he last had contact with Duncan at the Ivy Apartments in northeast Dallas.

Duncan's fiancée, Louise Troh, and other immediate family members remain under quarantine through Sunday. But they've shown no symptoms, Thompson said.

And once those 48 original contacts all are cleared, Thompson said, that "gives us some breathing room."

The city also got some breathing room from having both of the infected nurses — Vinson and Nina Pham — flown to specialized hospitals in Atlanta and Bethesda, Md.

"I do not believe we're at a turning point because these wonderful heroes are being treated outside of Dallas," Rawlings said. "But that was the right tactical decision. We needed to let that hospital breathe in case any new patients came in."

Thompson put it this way. "The fact that we've got two patients removed, that's good," he said. "But now we have to brace ourselves mentally in case there are additional confirmed cases."

Rawlings nailed it earlier this week when he said "the only way we're going to beat" the Ebola virus and keep it from spreading is "moment by moment, detail by detail."

"It may get worse before it gets better," he said, "but it will get better."

Finally, we're beginning to see promising signs of that. The big challenge now is keeping everyone in the same corner.

Ebola 'Czar' Knows Washington, But Not Medicine

By Josh Lederman

[Associated Press](#), October 18, 2014

WASHINGTON —

If there's one thing the "Ebola czar" knows, it's government.

Ron Klain, President Barack Obama's new point man on Ebola, has no medical or public health background. But he does have a wealth of experience managing unruly federal bureaucracies in times of crisis. The White House says that makes him the perfect candidate to shepherd the government's response to a deadly, growing outbreak.

Yet after demanding that Obama appoint a "czar," some Republicans are balking at the president's choice of a Washington insider and political operative to handle a public health emergency that has many Americans in fear.

And though Klain has tackled the national financial crisis and served as chief of staff to two vice presidents — he's even been portrayed by Kevin Spacey in an HBO film — his latest gig may prove his toughest challenge.

"He's there to get the job done, not win the Nobel Prize in medicine," said Bruce Reed, another former chief of staff to Vice President Joe **Biden**. Reed worked with Klain in both the Obama and Clinton administrations.

Under immense pressure to step up his response, Obama turned to Klain on Friday. He's being asked to synchronize an alphabet blizzard of federal agencies: the CDC, NIH, HHS, DHS, FDA and DOD, to name a few. All are working in one fashion or another to stem Ebola in the U.S. and in West Africa, but breakdowns in the system that led to two health workers contracting Ebola in Dallas have raised concerns that the government isn't doing enough.

No, his title isn't "czar." He's the government's Ebola response coordinator.

Klain was Obama's first choice for the job, said White House spokesman Josh Earnest. He's expected to stay on the job just five or six months and will report to Obama's homeland security adviser, Lisa Monaco, and his national security adviser, Susan Rice. Those two advisers have been at the forefront of the Ebola operation at the White House, but with other threats competing for their attention, Earnest said Obama saw a need to bring on outside help to focus exclusively on Ebola.

An attorney and longtime Democratic operative, Klain served as Vice President Al Gore's chief of staff and was a key figure during the 2000 Florida presidential election recount, leading to his portrayal by Spacey in the HBO film "Recount." He previously served under Attorney General Janet Reno in the Clinton administration and later as **Biden's** chief of staff.

During Obama's first term, Klain helped spearhead the roughly \$800 billion stimulus package in 2009 in response to the financial crisis — a massive, cross-government project that Klain's supporters say offers parallels to the challenge he is now undertaking with Ebola. Out of government since 2011, Klain is currently president of the holding company of former AOL chairman Steve Case and general counsel for a Washington-based technology venture capital firm.

Yet Republicans criticized Obama's selection, calling Klain's experience insufficient and wondering why the president didn't choose someone with a background in, say, infectious disease control. With the midterm elections closing in, GOP lawmakers argued that picking a Democratic operative was tone-deaf to the public's growing concerns about Ebola and declining confidence in the government's competence.

"Leave it to President Obama to put a liberal political activist in charge of the administration's Ebola response," said Rep. John Fleming, R-La., himself a physician.

Former colleagues describe Klain as a born problem-solver with little patience for disorganization, waste or tardiness. When he oversaw the stimulus, his associates say, he was known for forcing agencies that didn't get along to cooperate.

"These situations can be pretty dark and seem extremely hopeless," said Jared Bernstein, **Biden's** former chief economist. "Ron's ability to see the best path to success keeps him and those around him focused in a pretty positive way."

Associated Press writer Jim Kuhnhenn contributed to this report.

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Obama To Name Ron Klain As Ebola Czar

[New Republic](#), October 17, 2014

It appears the federal government's Ebola response now has a czar. According to multiple media reports, President Obama will name Ron Klain, former chief of staff to Vice President **Biden**, to coordinate the agencies handling Ebola.

Many Americans know Klain, who was a close adviser to former Vice President Al Gore, from Kevin Spacey's portrayal of him in the HBO movie "Recount." Washington insiders know Klain as a smooth, seasoned manager with a feel for both politics and policy. "He is one of the most capable people I've ever worked with in government," Jared Bernstein, who was **Biden's** chief economist, said via e-mail. "[He] brings with him a deep understanding of politics and policy along with a lot of experience working across agencies and departments."

One thing Klain does not have is deep expertise in medicine or emergency preparedness

—and that surprised me. Why not pick somebody whose resume includes a stint at the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Homeland Security, or maybe the Federal Emergency Management Agency? This is not the first time the federal government has confronted a biological menace. An official who'd lived through and worked intensely on responses to SARS, Avian flu, or even HIV might bring critical and beneficial experience to the table.

Still, the Administration doesn't lack for expertise on disease and potential outbreaks. The Centers for Disease Control has made some mistakes, but nobody I know questions the expertise of Tom Frieden, CDC's director, or Anthony Fauci, who is in charge of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Fauci, in particular, has been working on these sorts of issues since the 1980s, when he was a key player in the government response to AIDS. (If there's a need for more medical knowledge, perhaps the Senate could act on Obama's nominee for Surgeon General?)

In addition, the primary tasks of a czar are to coordinate action and advice among the different agencies

—and to serve as a reassuring public spokesman. Klain has done that. A Harvard-trained lawyer, Klain worked on Capitol Hill before becoming Gore's Chief of Staff during the Clinton years

—a role he reprised, from 2009 to 2011, in **Biden's** office. He has a reputation for knowing the ins and outs of government

—and how to make things happen. "He knows exactly where everything is," Democratic strategist Donna Brazile told the Washington Post in 2008, when **Biden** tapped him.

On Friday, Neera Tanden, another veteran of the Clinton and Obama Administrations, had a similar reaction.

Ron Klain's Resume: From Recounts To Stimulus To Ebola

By Gregory Korte

[USA Today](#), October 17, 2014

WASHINGTON — President Obama's new Ebola "czar," Ron Klain, has an extensive résumé at the top levels of politics and government — if not in battling infectious diseases.

He was the chief of staff for two vice presidents, Joe **Biden** and Al Gore, and one attorney general, Janet Reno. He served as a senior White House aide to President Obama.

After leaving the White House for the private sector in 2011, Klain became a partner in the Washington lobbying firm of O'Melveny & Myers. He was not himself a registered lobbyist, which means the White House ban on hiring lobbyists doesn't apply.

He's president of Case Holdings, which manages the assets of AOL founder Steve Case, and general counsel of Case's venture capital firm, Revolution.

Case said Klain would take a leave of absence and planned to return to his company. "Ron is a talented manager and a wise counselor who understands government, business and the non-profit sectors," Case said in a statement. "We look forward to welcoming him back soon."

As **Biden's** chief of staff, Klain had a key role in implementing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and signed off on one of its most controversial projects: a \$535 million loan guarantee to solar panel maker Solyndra.

"Sounds like there are some risk factors here — but that's true of any innovative company that POTUS would visit," Klain wrote to Department of Energy officials May 24, 2010, a day before Obama visited a company factory. "It looks like it is OK to me, but if you feel otherwise, let me know."

Earlier in his career, he served as the staff director of the Senate Democratic Leadership Committee and chief counsel of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"I've known Ron Klain for over 20 years. He is smart, aggressive and levelheaded; exactly the qualities we need in a czar to steer our response to Ebola. He is an excellent choice," said Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., in a statement.

Klain served as the top lawyer on the Gore-Lieberman Recount Committee after the 2000 election and was portrayed by actor Kevin Spacey in the 2008 film *Recount*.

He is a graduate of Georgetown University and Harvard Law School. He served as a law clerk to Supreme Court Justice Byron White.

He is married to Monica Medina, an environmental lawyer at the National Geographic Society who previously headed the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the Obama Administration. They have three children.

Who Is Ron Klain, Who Will Lead The Obama Administration's Response To Ebola?

By Katie Zezima

[Washington Post](#), October 18, 2014

Ron Klain, who was named as the Obama administration's Ebola response coordinator, is no stranger to the White House.

Even in a city populated with seasoned operatives, Klain's experience stands out. Klain, 53, served as a senior aide to President Obama and chief of staff to Vice President **Biden** from 2009 to 2011. Klain had been one of the names floated for Obama's chief of staff after Rahm Emanuel departed. He helped oversee implementation of the 2009 stimulus act. Klain was also involved in the controversial deal with Solyndra, a solar company that went bankrupt after receiving \$535 million in federal guarantees.

Klai, 53, is now a president at Case Holdings, the holding company for business and philanthropic interests of former AOL chairman Steve Case. Klain is also general counsel for Revolution LLC, an investment firm founded by Case and others.

"Ron Klain has been asked by the President to coordinate the U.S. Ebola response, so he will be taking a leave of absence," Steve and Jean Case said in a statement. "We applaud the President's selection, as Ron is a talented manager and a wise counselor who understands government, business, and the non-profit sectors. We wish him the best as he takes on this important task, and we look forward to welcoming him back soon."

Klain worked at Revolution before he was tapped by **Biden**; in 2007, Klain said he spent most of his time working in the firm's health-care arm.

"It's been an exciting chance to try to make some positive changes in health care from the business side rather than the policy side," he told the Wall Street Journal.

The White House is stressing Klain's management acumen and experience working in Congress and the broader federal government, skills and contacts he will need as he coordinates an effort across numerous agencies and with countless stakeholders. Klain served as chief of staff to Vice President Al Gore and Attorney General Janet Reno. Klain was also chief counsel of the Senate Judiciary Committee. He has also worked as a lobbyist.

Klain was general counsel for Gore's recount committee in 2000. He was played by Kevin Spacey in the HBO film "Recount."

Klain graduated from Georgetown University and Harvard Law School, where he won the Sears Prize for highest grade point average in 1985. He was a law clerk to Supreme Court Justice Byron White. Klain is married and has three children.

His appointment came less than 24 hours after Obama acknowledged shortcomings in how the nation handled Ebola and said it might be necessary to have a point person to handle the government's response.

"It may make sense for us to have one person," who will "make sure we're crossing all the t's and dotting all the i's," Obama said. He spoke after a meeting on Ebola on Thursday night that lasted more than two hours.

Klain will report to homeland security adviser Lisa Monaco and national security adviser Susan E. Rice. A White House official reiterated Obama's view that Monaco and Rice have done "outstanding work" in confronting Ebola. But given "their management of other national and homeland security priorities, additional bandwidth will further enhance the government's Ebola response," the official wrote in an e-mail.

Sen. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) said Klain was an excellent choice to deal with the outbreak. A Liberian man died of the virus in Dallas earlier this month, and two nurses who cared for him are now stricken.

"I've known Ron Klain for over twenty years," Schumer said in a statement. "He is smart, aggressive, and levelheaded; exactly the qualities we need in a czar to steer our response to Ebola. He is an excellent choice."

Rep. Andy Harris (R-Md.), an anesthesiologist, isn't so sure.

Worst ebola epidemic in world history and Pres. Obama puts a government bureaucrat with no healthcare experience in charge. Is he serious?

— Rep. Andy Harris, MD (@RepAndyHarrisMD) October 17, 2014

Biden's Son Fails Drug Test, Is Discharged From Navy

By William H. McMichael And Jonathan Starkey

[USA Today](#), October 17, 2014

The younger son of Vice President Joe **Biden** failed a drug test for cocaine, a month after his commissioning last year into the Navy Reserve and was discharged.

Hunter **Biden**, an ensign, had been selected for commission as a reserve officer through the Direct Commission Officer program in 2012, according to Cmdr. Ryan Perry, a Navy spokesman. He was commissioned into the Navy Reserve unit for Navy Public Affairs Support Element East in Norfolk, Va. **Biden**, who had no prior military experience, was one of six officers commissioned nationally into the Navy Reserve public affairs division.

"It was the honor of my life to serve in the U.S. Navy, and I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge," **Biden** said in statement issued through his lawyer. "I respect the Navy's decision. With the love and support of my family, I'm moving forward."

The incident was first reported late Thursday in The Wall Street Journal. Citing "people familiar with the matter," it reported that **Biden** was given a drug test in June 2013 that tested positive for cocaine.

Biden, 44, was discharged from the Navy Reserve in February. He has worked as a lawyer, lobbyist and managing partner at the investment firm Rosemont Seneca Partners in Washington. He was hired in May to join the board of Burisma Holdings, Ukraine's largest private oil and gas producer, and be in charge of its legal department.

A spokeswoman for the vice president declined to comment.

The term "administrative discharge" can cover several types of military discharges from honorable to general to other-than-honorable conditions. Perry would provide no other details.

"Like other junior officers, the details of Ensign **Biden's** discharge are not releasable under the Privacy Act," he said.

Asked whether **Biden's** commissioning had anything to do with his father's high position in the government, Perry said, "No, it didn't.

"All candidates were considered based on the merits of their application, and Mr. **Biden** met the qualifications for commission," Perry said.

Biden also is the brother of Delaware Attorney General Beau **Biden**.

Applicants to the direct commissioning program for the Public Affairs Reserve must hold a baccalaureate degree or higher from an accredited institution, preferably in the fields of communication, English, journalism, broadcasting, public relations, rhetoric/speech, marketing, international studies or public administration. Applicants may not have passed their 42nd birthday at time of commissioning or an age waiver is required. The board meets twice annually and, on average, about 35 people apply, Ryan said.

Hunter **Biden** sought and received a waiver to join the service because of his age.

Hunter **Biden** received a second waiver because of a "drug-related incident when he was a young man," The Wall Street Journal reported. The report added that such waivers are not uncommon.

Hunter **Biden** waits for the start of his father's debate in October 2011 at Centre College in Danville, Ky. (Photo: Pablo Martinez Monsivais, AP)

Vice President Joe **Biden** joked in January 2013 about his younger son's decision to join the military late in life during a speech at the American Legion's Salute to Heroes Inaugural Ball, which honors Medal of Honor recipients.

"We have a lot of bad judgment in my family. "My son, who is over 40, just joined the United States Navy. He's about to be sworn in as an officer," Joe **Biden** said.

But Hunter **Biden** joining the military was a source of pride for the Bidens, and military service runs in the family.

Beau **Biden** is a major in the Delaware Army National Guard and served in Iraq from October 2008 to September 2009.

Jill **Biden** talked about Hunter **Biden** joining the Navy during a November 2012 event with Navy Secretary Ray Mabus.

"I'm looking forward to standing with our son, Hunter, when he is commissioned as an ensign in the United States Navy," Jill **Biden** said at the time, according to a Navy transcript. "He follows in the footsteps of two of his grandfathers, who have also served in the Navy."

William H. McMichael and Jonathan Starkey also report for The (Wilmington, Del.) News Journal.

Commander: Hunter Biden Knew Drug Test Was Coming

By Esteban Parra And William H. McMichael, Usa Today

[USA Today](#), October 17, 2014

WILMINGTON, Del. — There should have been no question in Hunter **Biden**'s mind about the possibility of a random drug test.

So says the commander of the Norfolk, Va.-based unit where Vice President Joe **Biden**'s youngest son was assigned until his February discharge due to a drug test failure a month after his 2013 commissioning.

"All sailors would be advised of the zero-tolerance policies when reporting aboard," said Capt. Jack Hanzlik, who commands the Navy Public Affairs Support Element based in Norfolk. "And they would be advised of the testing practices of the organization, as well."

The importance of adherence to such policies continues after new arrivals, active or reservists, are assigned to their units.

"We have this kind of conversation with our sailors all the time — about expectations for performance," Hanzlik said. "Expectations for standards. Reliability on one another."

At least once a year but perhaps more frequently, members of the military — active and reserve — can expect to be given an unannounced urinalysis test for illegal drug use. Navy laboratories screen about 2.5 million urine specimens yearly, searching for drugs ranging from marijuana to heroin to cocaine — the drug that reportedly led to Hunter **Biden**'s discharge.

"It's a random process," said Hanzlik. "The expectation, always, is that you need to be ready. Because you could have to give a sample today, you might have to give a sample again tomorrow. And two weeks from now, you might have to give a sample."

Hanzlik said he'd had no interaction with **Biden**. He commands the overall 275-member unit, but their reserve times didn't coincide during **Biden**'s tenure with the unit.

Testing would have occurred while **Biden** was present for duty at the Navy Operational Support Center Norfolk, the reserve center where he reported for work.

The Navy says 15 percent of all personnel at a given unit are tested each time a test is administered.

A U.S. Department of Health and Human Services official said the length of time traces of a drug remain in a person's system varies with an individual's size and frequency of use. On average, it takes 48 to 72 hours to leave the system, but it can take up to five days.

Biden, who had no prior military experience, was selected for commission as a reserve officer through the Direct Commission Officer program in 2012, according to the Navy. He was commissioned as an ensign in early May 2013 — one of six officers commissioned nationally into the public affairs division of the Navy Reserve.

In June 2013, **Biden**, then 43, was given a drug test that tested positive for cocaine, according to The Wall Street Journal, which broke the story late Thursday night. The paper cited “people familiar with the matter.” The Navy would not comment, citing the Privacy Act.

He wasn’t discharged until February. “Until an issue like that is adjudicated, the member continues to serve,” Hanzlik said.

Hunter, who could not be reached, is the younger brother of Delaware Attorney General Beau **Biden**, who is a major in the Delaware Army National Guard.

Parra and McMichael also report for The (Wilmington, Del.) News Journal

Biden Son Said Discharged From Navy Reserve On Drug Test

By Tony Capaccio And Angela Greiling Keane

[Bloomberg News](#), October 18, 2014

Hunter **Biden**, the son of Vice President Joe **Biden**, was discharged from the Navy Reserve this year after testing positive for cocaine use, according to a U.S. government official familiar with the matter.

Biden, 44, had been assigned as an ensign to the Reserve’s public affairs unit in Norfolk, Virginia, in May 2013, and was discharged in February, according to Commander Ryan Perry, a spokesman for the Navy. He didn’t give a reason for the discharge.

A drug test given to **Biden** when he reported to his unit in June 2013 was positive, according to the official familiar with the matter. The Wall Street Journal reported the news late yesterday.

“It was the honor of my life to serve in the U.S. Navy, and I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge,” Hunter **Biden** said today in a statement through his lawyer, Thomas Gallagher with Pepper Hamilton LLP in Philadelphia. “I respect the Navy’s decision. With the love and support of my family, I’m moving forward.”

Biden, a founding partner of Oldaker **Biden** & Belair, a Washington-based law firm, was recommended in 2012 for a direct commission to the Reserves, Perry said. In a 2007 profile, Politico called him “the very model of a modern major lobbyist.”

The vice president’s office referred inquiries to Gallagher. Eric Schultz, a White House spokesman, declined to comment.

Biden is chairman of the board of directors of the World Food Program USA, a United Nations program that delivers food aid around the world and responds to natural disasters. He’s also been on the board of Amtrak, the U.S. long-distance passenger railroad.

In 2009, he won dismissal of a fraud lawsuit alleging he backed out of a deal to acquire an interest in Paradigm Global Advisors LLC parent Paradigm Cos. The Paradigm fund was run by members of the **Biden** family. It was marketed by billionaire R. Allen Stanford, who was convicted of defrauding investors and sentenced to 110 years in prison.

Joe **Biden** is in his second term as vice president, having previously been a Democratic U.S. senator from Delaware. Hunter is a son of **Biden**’s late wife, who was killed in a car accident that injured Hunter when he was a child.

Joe Biden's Son Discharged From Navy For Cocaine Use

By Dan McQuade

[Philadelphia Magazine](#), October 17, 2014

Hunter **Biden**, son of Vice President Joe, was discharged from the Navy earlier this year after failing a drug test for cocaine. Hunter **Biden**, a lawyer, was in a part-time position as an ensign in the Naval Reserves.

Biden actually came to the military incredibly late in life; he needed a waiver to be able to join the Navy because of his age (43) when he joined. He received a second waiver for an earlier drug-related incident; the Wall Street Journal reports these are relatively common. He was discharged in February of this year after his drug test came up positive.

To sum it up: Hunter **Biden** is now 44 years old and in June 2013 did enough cocaine to fail a drug screen. Hunter **Biden** parties harder than you did in college.

"I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge," Hunter **Biden** said in a statement. "I respect the Navy's decision. With the love and support of my family, I'm moving forward."

Joe **Biden**, of course, created the drug czar's office.

Biden Son Booted From Navy. What's The Backstory?

By Peter Grier

[Christian Science Monitor](#), October 17, 2014

Washington — Joe **Biden**'s son Hunter has been kicked out of the Navy for drug use, according to a report in The Wall Street Journal. Cocaine was the controlled substance in question: The younger **Biden** tested positive for the drug last year and was subsequently discharged from the Navy Reserve, where he served as an ensign in a public affairs unit based in Norfolk, Va.

Thus ends an unusual, or at least unusually timed, military career. A lawyer by training who has worked as a lobbyist and currently serves as a managing partner at an investment firm, Hunter **Biden** began the process of joining the military in 2012, when he was 42. Most reservists sign up when they're younger and still building families and careers.

In 2013, Mr. **Biden** was commissioned an ensign through the Direct Commission Officer Program, which each year selects a small number of applicants with civilian skills applicable to military needs. He received a waiver for his age and a second waiver for a drug-related incident in his youth, according to multiple news reports.

In June of last year, **Biden** failed a urinalysis after reporting to his Norfolk unit. He was formally discharged this past February, according to The Wall Street Journal.

"It was the honor of my life to serve in the U.S. Navy, and I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge," he said in a statement.

A few **Biden** family biographical notes might be apropos here. The first is that Hunter's older brother, Beau, has had a successful military reservist career. It's entirely possible Hunter was hoping to follow in his bro's footsteps.

Beau **Biden**, also a lawyer, joined the Delaware Army National Guard in 2003 as a member of the Judge Advocate General's Corps. He was subsequently promoted to major and served a tour of duty in Iraq in 2008-2009.

Currently, Beau **Biden** is Delaware's attorney general. He was elected to that post in 2006. In 2008, there was talk in the state that he would run for his dad's old Senate seat, but the **Biden** son declined to pursue the position.

Second, VP Joe **Biden** does not have a soft-on-drugs reputation. If anything, he is seen in the White House as someone arguing against wider legalization of marijuana.

“The former Delaware senator has a harsh record when it comes to the drug war,” wrote Nick Wing of The Huffington Post in 2012.

Third, for those of a certain age in Washington, the **Biden** boys, both of them, are remembered for the tragedy of their early years.

On Dec. 18, 1972, Joe **Biden**’s first wife, Neilia, and his year-old daughter Naomi were killed in an auto accident in exurban Wilmington, Del., after Christmas shopping. Beau and Hunter were in the car but survived with injuries. Joe **Biden** had just won election to the Senate the preceding month.

He considered resigning but did not. Both boys were able to attend his swearing-in. Mr. **Biden** commuted home from Washington each night on the train to be with Beau and Hunter, a practice he continued throughout his Senate career.

Biden Son Out Of Navy After Drug Test

By JOSH LEDERMAN And ROBERT BURNS

[Associated Press](#), October 17, 2014

WASHINGTON Hunter **Biden**, the youngest son of Vice President Joe **Biden**, has been expelled from the military after testing positive for cocaine, two people familiar with the matter say.

The Navy said that **Biden**, a former lobbyist who works at a private equity firm, was discharged in February — barely a year after he was selected for the part-time position as a public affairs officer in the Navy Reserve. Citing privacy laws, the Navy did not give a reason for the discharge, which was not disclosed until it emerged in the media on Thursday.

In a statement released by his attorney, **Biden** said he respected the Navy’s decision and was moving forward with his family’s love and support. He did not give a reason for his discharge.

“It was the honor of my life to serve in the U.S. Navy,” **Biden** said. “I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge.”

The vice president’s office declined to comment. Hunter **Biden**’s attorney didn’t respond to inquiries about whether **Biden** had used cocaine.

Two people familiar with the situation said **Biden**, 44, was discharged because he failed a drug test last year. They weren’t authorized to discuss the incident by name and requested anonymity. The Wall Street Journal first reported **Biden**’s discharge and failed drug test.

An attorney by training, **Biden** applied to join the Navy Reserve as a public affairs officer and was selected in 2012 — one of seven candidates recommended for a direct commission for public affairs. A board of senior Navy officers interviewed **Biden** before making the recommendation.

Because he was 42 at the time, he needed a special waiver to be accepted. Cmdr. Ryan Perry, a spokesman for the Navy, said **Biden** had been assigned to the Navy Public Affairs Support Element East, based in Norfolk, Virginia.

The terms of **Biden**’s separation from the Navy were unclear. Typically, military members discharged for failing drug tests don’t receive an honorable discharge.

The vice president speaks about his children frequently during public appearances. In December, Hunter **Biden** and one of his daughters accompanied the elder **Biden** on a trip to Asia, where the vice president praised his son’s work around the world as the chairman of the World Food Program USA.

“I’m so incredibly proud of him,” Vice President **Biden** said.

Earlier this year, Hunter **Biden** raised eyebrows when he joined the board of a private Ukrainian gas company, just as his father and the Obama administration were working to wean Ukraine off Russian energy. At the time, the vice president's office brushed aside questions about the arrangement by saying that the younger **Biden** was a "private citizen."

Biden, a managing partner at investment firm Rosemont Seneca Partners, has three children. His older brother, Beau **Biden**, is Delaware's attorney general and an Army National Guard member who served a yearlong deployment in Iraq.

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Who Is Hunter Biden?

By Justin Peligri

[CNN](#), October 17, 2014

Washington (CNN) – Hunter **Biden**, Vice President Joe **Biden**'s son, was discharged from the Navy Reserve this year after failing a drug test, The Wall Street Journal reported Thursday night.

Biden, who got the boot after testing positive for cocaine, served part time in the reserves in Norfolk, Va. while also working as a partner at an investment firm.

Who is Hunter **Biden**?

Hunter graduated from Georgetown University and earned a law degree from Yale. After graduation he was a member of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest.

He's lesser known than his older brother, Beau **Biden**, now the Delaware attorney general, who served a year-long deployment in Iraq and has announced plans for a 2016 gubernatorial run in the state.

Biden's son discharged from Navy after testing positive for cocaine

What did he do in the military?

Hunter's membership in the American armed forces was brief: He enlisted in the Navy Reserves less than two years ago.

In January 2013, the Vice President joked about his son's decision to join the military later in life. "We have a lot of bad judgment in my family," **Biden** said.

The Vice President's office has not yet released a comment about Hunter's discharge. But the announcement might not fare well for the Second Family, which touts their status as a military family in speeches and public appearances.

Hunter **Biden** said in a statement that it was "the honor of my life to serve in the U.S. Navy, and I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge. I respect the Navy's decision. With the love and support of my family, I'm moving forward."

Does he have much experience in politics or Washington?

Yes – both in the public and private sectors.

He was appointed by President Bill Clinton to serve as a director in the Department of Commerce handling ecommerce policy issues, a post he held from 1998 to 2001.

From 2001 to 2008, he worked as a lawyer and federal lobbyist at a firm he co-founded. He resigned from this post when his father was asked by then-Senator Barack Obama, who at the time refused donations from lobbyists, to join his presidential ticket.

Along the way, he's enjoyed stints as chairman of PARADIGM, a hedge fund agency. He also held a job as senior vice president at MBNA Corporation, the world's largest independent credit-card issuer at the time.

In 2006, President George Bush nominated Hunter to serve on the Amtrak board of directors. He served a five-year term after a unanimous confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

What has he been up to recently?

In May 2014, Hunter signed on as a lawyer and board member of Burisma Holdings Ltd., a large Ukrainian gas production company.

The appointment caused a stir, given that it occurred around the same time that his father and the White House were engaged in diplomatic missions in the region to wean Ukraine off Russian energy sources. Critics argued that Hunter's work for a country promoting Ukrainian energy independence was a blatant conflict of interest.

But, the Vice President's office brushed off the controversy, insisting that Hunter is a private citizen whose actions don't represent the views of the government

That brings us to the present day. Hunter may no longer be in the Navy, but he still has his hands in public service. He's the board chairman at World Food Program USA, an organization fighting poverty and hunger, and he serves on the President's Advisory board of the Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington

Hunter also has a job at his alma mater as an adjunct professor at Georgetown's School of Foreign Service. He is married and has three daughters.

Report: Hunter Biden Discharged From Navy After Failing Drug Test

[CNN](#), October 17, 2014

(CNN)-- The Vice President's son was discharged from the Navy Reserve this year, after testing positive for cocaine.

Hunter **Biden**'s discharge was first reported by the Wall Street Journal.

The 44-year-old lawyer and investment firm partner confirmed it in a statement.

Biden was commissioned as an Ensign, a part-time position.

Biden says he deeply regrets his actions and that it was the honor of his life to serve in the Navy. The Vice President's office has not commented on the report.

Should Joe Biden's Son Have Been Kicked Out Of The Navy For Drug Use?

By James Carli

[Huffington Post](#), October 18, 2014

News broke this morning that Hunter **Biden**, son of Vice President Joe **Biden**, was expelled from the Navy just a month after receiving his commission in 2013 because he failed a drug test, testing positive for cocaine use. This is only the latest and most high-profile case of a self-imposed brain drain by the U.S. government of highly talented, intelligent, motivated young professionals, because of obsolete, outmoded, and misguided prohibitionist drug war policies.

Indeed, no small number of highly qualified professionals are dissuaded from using their talents to serve their government, something that we desperately need in this time of such global turmoil, because the U.S. government adheres to policies from another era that will reject valuable and important skills and access based solely on haphazard tests about what these people do in their own time.

Surely there are problem drinkers in the government. Just go to a cocktail party at an embassy or bureau Christmas party and you will see that analyst or special agent relax just a little too much.

These individuals will face no repercussions for overindulgence within moderation. Granted, they are professionals who have received extensive training on how to conduct themselves appropriately while

under the influence, or while consuming certain mind-altering substances like alcohol, and if their use ever becomes a problem, there are protocols in place to address it.

But why is there such tolerance in high levels of government for alcohol and such admonition for other substances resoundingly less harmful? After all, just ask any jarhead what his CO is like to deal with when he's going through coffee withdrawal. It's a problem, too.

In my personal experience, I have known foreign service officers and people who work in national security who have had close brushes with their employers because of recreational marijuana consumption. Fortunately, in these cases, reason won out, and their respective organizations saw the value in overlooking these missteps because of the quality work that these people provide in defense of the republic.

But those are definitely exceptions, and as a rule, highly-competent professionals are all too often dismissed solely because of a substance they chose to use during their off-time.

This has a very bad long-term effect of discouraging people who should be in government from working for the government. Earlier this year, in May, in the wake of Colorado and Washington's new responsible regulation of marijuana, rumors spread online that FBI Director James Comey told a young cyber-inclined man that "he should go ahead and apply" to the Bureau, despite the fact he was a marijuana aficionado. After all, the need for skilled tech people is very high in the government these days, with constant threat of state-sponsored cyber warfare and sporadic nonstate hack attacks.

It also happens that many tech-inclined young people are fond of marijuana. Comey's statement raised hopes on college campuses and think tanks around the country that maybe, just maybe, the government was on the verge of updating their policies toward reason. Nevertheless, two days later, the Director clarified his statement before the Senate Judiciary Committee with a resounding "I did not say I am going to change that ban."

This is unfortunate. The U.S. government should immediately change their hiring policies to accept individuals who may use marijuana or other drugs in a responsible manner on their own time, but should screen for people whose use is problematic, and deal with problem use in the same manner that they deal with problem alcohol use or coffee addiction.

James Carli is development communications and research coordinator at the Drug Policy Alliance. This article originally appeared on the Drug Policy Alliance blog.

Hunter Biden's Cocaine Use And Vice President Biden's Evolving Perspective On The Drug War

By Tony Newman

[Huffington Post](#), October 18, 2014

The Vice President's son, Hunter **Biden** is making worldwide news after the Wall Street Journal reported that he was discharged from the Navy in February after testing positive for cocaine use.

I have spent the last 15 years working at the Drug Policy Alliance trying to end our country's insane war on drugs. Here are some of my reflections on the **Biden** family.

Drug use touches most families.

Hunter **Biden**, Noelle Bush, Al Gore III and Chiara de Blasio remind us that both drug use and abuse touch most families, including those running our country. Despite a \$40 billion a year "war on drugs" and political speeches about a "drug-free society," our society is swimming in drugs. Virtually all of us take drugs every single day. Caffeine, sugar, alcohol, marijuana, Prozac, cocaine, Ritalin, opiates and nicotine are just some of the substances that Americans use on a regular basis.

Drug abuse does not discriminate, but our drug policies do.

While drug abuse doesn't discriminate, it is clear that our drug policies do. Despite similar rates of drug use and drug sales across races, African Americans are 13 times more likely to go to prison for drugs. I don't think Vice President **Biden's** son should be in jail for his cocaine use but neither should so many others who are currently behind bars for drug use or possession.

Vice President Joe **Biden's** Role in Expanding Drug War

As a Senator in the late 1980s, Mr. **Biden** was a cheerleader for the drug war. He played a major role in creating the Drug Czar's office and in enacting the draconian mandatory minimum sentences that have filled our prisons with nonviolent drug law offenders. To the Vice President's credit, he has "evolved" a bit on the issue. In recent years, Mr. **Biden** has championed a number of progressive drug policy reforms – like introducing legislation to completely eliminate the 100-to-1 crack/powder cocaine sentencing disparity and rolling back the mandatory minimums he favored in the late 1980s. The crack/powder disparity wasn't completely eliminated, but was reformed under President Obama.

How Will the **Biden** Family Move Forward on This Issue?

Optimistically, I would like to envision Mr. **Biden**, realizing that drug use is so widespread that it even touches his son, would become more sympathetic to other people who use drugs. There are hundreds of thousands of people behind bars serving long prison sentences on drug charges. The realization that other people's kids are living behind bars for doing the same thing that his son did could be a transformative experience. Perhaps Hunter's experience will strengthen his resolve.

Vice President **Biden** and his son's response should be to join the millions of people who are challenging the ignorance and irrationality of locking up hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens because of a nonviolent drug offense. If Hunter and Joe **Biden** can use this experience to become involved in changing our inhumane policies, then the **Biden** family and our country will be better for it.

Tony Newman is the director of media relations at the Drug Policy Alliance (www.drugpolicy.org)

Biden's Son Faces No Bar Review After Discharge

[Charlotte \(NC\) Observer](#), October 17, 2014

Hunter **Biden**, the youngest son of Vice President Joe **Biden**, faces no automatic review of his law license in Connecticut following his discharge from the U.S. Navy Reserve after testing positive for cocaine use, Connecticut legal authorities said Friday.

Posted: Friday, Oct. 17, 2014

WASHINGTON Hunter **Biden**, the youngest son of Vice President Joe **Biden**, faces no automatic review of his law license in Connecticut following his discharge from the U.S. Navy Reserve after testing positive for cocaine use, Connecticut legal authorities said Friday.

Hunter **Biden** works in Washington as a private equity executive and board director of an international energy firm, but he is admitted to practice law in Connecticut, where attorneys' privileges can be examined under a disciplinary review system. Legal clients, state lawyers, judges and any citizen can file grievances, but as of Friday, none had been filed, authorities said.

Lawyers in Connecticut face automatic review of their bar admission only when they have been convicted of a crime, said Michael P. Bowler, Connecticut's Statewide Bar Counselor, who heads a team of lawyers that investigate attorney grievances. Criminal convictions have to be reviewed by a statewide grievance committee, as do other complaints, which can range from drug and alcohol abuse to inadequate legal representation.

"At this point, I'm not aware that Mr. **Biden** has been arrested for anything, and certainly not convicted," Bowler said. The Navy's brief confirmation of **Biden's** discharge did not cite any arrest or

charges. Two people familiar with the matter told The Associated Press he was kicked out after testing positive for cocaine, confirming what was first reported by The Wall Street Journal.

Bowler added that **Biden** had told state authorities in 2007 that he was also admitted to the bar in Washington, D.C. Current District of Columbia bar records do not show **Biden** as member.

The Navy said Thursday that **Biden** was discharged in February from a part-time position as a public affairs officer in the Navy Reserve but did not provide a reason. **Biden** released a statement through his attorney saying, "I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge."

Biden, 44, a former Washington lobbyist, is a managing partner at the Rosemont Seneca Partners investment firm and a director at Burisma Holdings, a Ukraine-based energy company. A Washington lobbyist for Burisma, David Leiter, did not respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press.

Mark Dubois, the president of the Connecticut Bar Association, said that state bar and ethics officials are sensitive to news accounts involving misbehavior of lawyers admitted to practice in the state, but he said, "They have to be judicious about starting the process."

Dubois, who formerly investigated and prosecuted ethical misconduct as Connecticut Disciplinary Counsel, said authorities have initiated cases in the past involving drug and alcohol abuse by attorneys, but "only when it's a fairly extensive record of abuse."

Vice President Joe Biden To Appear At Event On Domestic Violence In Duluth Next Week

[Associated Press](#), October 18, 2014

DULUTH, Minn. — The White House says Vice President Joe **Biden** is coming to Minnesota next week.

Biden will appear at an event on domestic violence in Duluth on Thursday. More details will be released later.

Minnesota also gets a visit from first lady Michelle Obama next week as the campaigns enter the home stretch.

The Minnesota DFL Party says Mrs. Obama will campaign for Democratic Gov. Mark Dayton and Sen. Al Franken at a get-out-the-vote rally Tuesday at Patrick Henry High School in north Minneapolis.

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Joe Biden, Mariska Hargitay Team Up To Help Domestic Abuse Victims

By Robbie Couch

[Huffington Post](#), October 17, 2014

On Sunday, Americans' love for television binge-watching will end up helping fight domestic abuse — at least, that's what Vice President Joe **Biden** and actress Mariska Hargitay are hoping for.

Biden will appear alongside Hargitay in a PSA addressing domestic violence scheduled to air during a "Law and Order: Special Victims Unit" marathon on USA Network, The Washington Post reported. Maile Zambuto, who is the chief executive of Hargitay's foundation for survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse, Joyful Heart, told the outlet that episodes set to air during the marathon will focus on different aspects of the issue, including "teen dating violence, campus sexual assault, male sexual abuse [and] the cycle of violence."

The duo, who are supporting the No More campaign, aim to provide victims and their loved ones with the resources to access help.

In one of three spots that will air on Sunday, **Biden** and Margitay point out the difference between how domestic violence is treated on-screen and off.

"On Law and Order: SVU, witnesses frequently come forward to help detectives track down offenders," Hargitay said in the PSA.

"But in real life, too often, people look the other way," **Biden** continued, noting that "domestic violence is never the victim's fault."

About 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in the U.S., according to a 2010 survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Biden, who spearheaded the Violence Against Women Act as a senator in 1994, teamed up with Hargitay last year at a news conference in Maryland. The event addressed the need to reduce domestic violence deaths in the U.S. Each year, 1,300 people die from intimate partner victimizations, according to the CDC.

Vice President Biden To Visit Minnesota

By Mike Klein

[Rochester \(MN\) Post-Bulletin](#), October 18, 2014

DULUTH — The White House says Vice President Joe **Biden** is coming to Minnesota next week.

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The Minnesota DFL Party says Mrs. Obama will campaign for Democratic Gov. Mark Dayton and Sen. Al Franken at a get-out-the-vote rally Tuesday at Patrick Henry High School in north Minneapolis.

VP Biden Coming To Range

By Bill Hanna

[Virginia \(MN\) Mesabi Daily Tribune](#), October 18, 2014

HIBBING — Vice President Joe **Biden** will make a trip to northeastern Minnesota Thursday that will include a campaign rally in Hibbing.

Democratic U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan said in a telephone interview he will travel with the vice president on Air Force 2 from Duluth to Hibbing in the early afternoon.

Obama Pushes To Save Illinois Gov. Quinn

By Aamer Madhani

[USA Today](#), October 17, 2014

CHICAGO — As most Democrats across the country try to keep their distance, President Obama, whose popularity has cratered, has mostly stayed on the sidelines in this election cycle.

But in his political backyard, the president is throwing himself into saving Democratic Gov. Pat Quinn, who is locked in a tight re-election race with Republican businessman Bruce Rauner.

Weeks after headlining a fundraiser for Quinn in his adopted hometown of Chicago, Obama is scheduled to return to the Windy City on Sunday night for a campaign rally for the governor not far from the neighborhood where he started his career as a community organizer.

The loss of the Governor's Mansion in Illinois would be a political embarrassment for Obama, said Kent Redfield, a political scientist at the University of Illinois-Springfield.

"He's going to have losses in the Senate and may even lose the Senate," Redfield said. "And if he loses Illinois' governor's race, it's just one more point in that narrative that the country is moving to the right."

The White House effort to help Quinn goes beyond the president. First lady Michelle Obama campaigned on behalf of Quinn in Illinois this month, and former president Bill Clinton and Vice President **Biden** are scheduled to travel here next week to stump for Quinn.

Rauner's campaign has seized on the attention Obama is giving the race.

"The national Democrats are going all out to try to save THE WORST GOVERNOR IN AMERICA," Rauner wrote in a fundraising e-mail this week. "You and I know that Illinois can't take another four years of Pat Quinn."

The Illinois gubernatorial race has shaped up into one of the nastiest and most expensive in the country.

The campaigns have turned to a barrage of negative advertising in which both candidates say the other can't be trusted with leading one of the most economically fragile states.

Quinn is being outspent by Rauner, a successful venture capitalist who has poured \$17 million of his own money into the race. The candidates have raised about \$58 million combined since Rauner became the GOP nominee. Polls show Quinn holds a narrow lead as the campaign heads into its final lap.

On the stump and in ads, Quinn has blasted Rauner as anti-union and a "professional outsourcer." Rauner has charged that the governor is corrupt and a failure. More than 72% of the recent ads aired by the two candidates have been negative, according to an analysis released this week by the Wesleyan Media Project.

The governor's campaign strategy has mirrored Obama's successful effort in his 2012 re-election campaign against Mitt Romney in which the president's team hammered at the former Massachusetts governor's years as a venture capitalist and his enormous wealth.

Quinn has tried to paint Rauner, who earned more than \$60 million last year from his investments, as an out-of-touch rich guy who would increase the burden on the poor and middle class.

"All my opponent does is grow his bank account, and that hurts everyone," Quinn said at a debate in Chicago this week.

Rauner has argued that Quinn presided over one of the worst economies in the country. Illinois' unemployment stands at 6.6%, and the state is weighed down by a woefully underfunded state pension system.

"Pat Quinn has been in Springfield for decades, and he's almost been governor for six years," Rauner said. "It's a record of failure — on jobs, on taxes, on schools, on corruption and cronyism and political patronage."

The tight polling suggests the governor's fate may come down to his ability to turn out the Democratic base Nov. 4. The governor hopes Obama, whose appearance in Chicago comes the night before early voting starts in Chicago, can help him do that.

At Flecks Coffee and Cafe, a business where Rauner made a campaign stop this week, co-owner Olga Turner said there is a general malaise in her community about Quinn's stewardship of the Illinois economy that has created an opening for Rauner.

Though Turner is down on Quinn, she remains a big Obama fan. She said he's done the best job he can, considering a difficult economy and "obstruction" from his opponents.

Turner, who has never voted for a Republican and is undecided how she'll vote in the governor's race, isn't quite as charitable about Quinn.

"The way people are feeling, I don't think you can take anyone's vote for granted," she said. "I'll be interested in hearing what Obama has to say."

Uphill Battle Continues For Renteria

By Seth Nidever

[Hanford \(CA\) Sentinel](#), October 18, 2014

Can Joe **Biden** and Hillary Clinton propel Amanda Renteria to victory?

Going up against incumbent Rep. David Valadao, R-Hanford, in a congressional district that has become difficult for Democrats, Renteria is pulling out all the stops with three-and-a-half weeks to go before Election Day.

On Oct. 7, Vice President Joe **Biden** gave a full-throttle stump speech in Bakersfield in support of Renteria and state Sen. Alex Padilla, the Democrat running for California Secretary of State.

Valadao, who had invited **Biden** to tour parts of the 21st Congressional District to see drought impacts, said in a written statement that "as Valley farmers, farmworkers, and families continue to suffer under drought conditions, Vice President **Biden** is traveling to the Central Valley to headline a political fundraiser for our opponent."

This coming weekend, a Democratic star-studded fundraiser in the Bay Area features 2016 Democratic presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton. Renteria is scheduled to make an appearance.

But is Renteria's 11th hour offensive a sign of health or a desperation heave into the end zone? The evidence suggests the latter.

With President Barack Obama unpopular and with Republicans poised to gain seats in the House and Senate, many Washington, D.C., oddsmakers have rated the district as "lean Republican."

In recent weeks, Renteria spokeswoman Maria Machuca emailed a barrage of press releases attacking Valadao for his voting record, both as a California assemblyman from 2010 to 2012 and as a congressman in 2013 and 2014.

They include headlines like "FACT: Valadao voted for Radical Ryan Budget with Wrong Priorities" and "FACT: [Valadao] Voted Against Establishing A Right to Clean Water."

"When you are talking about his voting record, it's not an attack, it's a fact," Machuca said.

Republicans were happy to morph the attention-grabbing headlines into an argument that Renteria is flailing.

"Our opponent's campaign is getting more and more desperate and silly," said Valadao spokesman Tal Eslick. "She is purposely misleading voters to draw attention away from the fact that her campaign is fully funded by Bay Area liberals and environmental groups like the Environmental Defense Fund and the Natural Resources Defense Council."

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee has yanked a nearly \$1 million TV ad buy for Renteria that it was planning to air later this month. It was originally scheduled to run in early October when absentee ballots were still arriving in voters' mailboxes. According to a politico.com story published on Oct. 6, House Democrats are shifting money away from Democratic challengers and toward vulnerable Democratic incumbents in hotly-contested races.

In a poll that came out last month, SurveyUSA had Valadao beating Renteria by 19 percentage points.

Despite Democrats having a 15-percent-point voter registration edge, Valadao clobbered 2012 Democratic challenger John Hernandez 58 percent to 42 percent.

Valadao continues to dominate the fundraising competition. From July 1 to Sept. 30, he raked in \$545,065 in contributions. At the end of the period, Valadao had \$1.1 million cash on hand.

As of June 30 — the date of the last report she filed — Renteria had \$396,898 cash on hand. Renteria's totals for the July 1 to Sept. 30 period were not available Thursday on the Federal Election Commission's website.

Renteria and Valadao did four televised debates earlier this month, but they aired at odd times — one at 8 a.m. on a Sunday — and most weren't open to the general public. That didn't help Renteria, who has faces a name-recognition challenge Valadao doesn't.

Machuca said the Renteria campaign is working "very aggressively" on a get-out-the-vote effort. She noted that the Democratic voter registration edge has increased from 15 percent in 2012 to 17 percent today.

"We won't see the results until Election Day," Machuca said.

Ditto for Eslick, who said the incumbent isn't counting on a favorable climate to coast to victory.

"We believe that campaigns are won on the ground, in the district," Eslick said. "We're taking nothing for granted."

Jill Biden Comes To Atlanta

By Jim Galloway

[Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#), October 17, 2014

The parade of each party's more popular figures continues Friday with Dr. Jill **Biden**, wife of Vice President Joe **Biden**, who will be in Atlanta to raise money for the party and Democratic U.S. Senate hopeful Michelle Nunn.

Jill **Biden** will attend an event for the Democratic National Committee at a private Atlanta residence. (On Saturday morning, the vice president's wife will attend a public Hands On Atlanta event with Michelle Nunn, the Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate, at the Fort Street United Methodist Church).

It's Time To Watch Out For An October Surprise

By John Kass

[Chicago Tribune](#), October 18, 2014

Now that President Barack Obama has installed a Democratic Party apparatchik with no scientific or medical experience as America's Ebola czar, POTUS has plenty of time for what really matters to him:

Partisan politics in Illinois, his political home.

Specifically, Obama will concentrate Sunday on Illinois gubernatorial politics (I just love that word gubernatorial) and the close race between Democratic Gov. Pat Quinn and his challenger, Republican businessman Bruce Rauner.

As some of you may have heard, the gubernatorial election is likely to shape the economic future of Illinois.

And since the president is coming to Illinois to stump for Quinn — but leaving a political guy in charge of Ebola who knows little about fluids but a lot about hanging chads — I guess that means it's OK for the rest of us to think politics too.

What I'd like you to consider are these three things:

The parade of heavy hitters being brought in for Quinn, which suggests, to me at least, that Rauner may have the momentum in the campaign; Monday night's critical debate; and the tradition of the last-minute drop of opposition research to journalists.

Obama is the heaviest of heavy Democratic Party hitters to come in for Quinn, and Sunday's rally at Chicago State University is designed in part to ramp up the African-American base that the Democrats

cannot live without. But former President Bill Clinton may show up in the coming days as well, and Vice President Joe **Biden**.

Quinn also has his elderly mom serving as an attack dog, but she's so sweet about it.

Rauner was asked about Obama, Clinton and **Biden** on my WLS-AM radio program on Friday.

"It shows how desperate they are trying to shore up the weakest governor in America," Rauner said in the interview, adding that he has gained backing from some Democratic leaders who supported Obama because "Illinois has been the worst-run state in America. We've got a bunch of corrupt and incompetent politicians running this state into the ground. We're going to win this race. It's very exciting and I'm pumped up."

I would have been pumped up myself if Quinn took advantage of the airtime that's been offered to him — I'd wanted his input in this space as well — but apparently he was busy shooting hoops and perhaps preparing for the Monday WLS-TV debate.

Rauner crushed him at the end of their last debate before black civic leaders including the Chicago Urban League. That energized his supporters, particularly in the suburbs and collar counties where Rauner must pull big numbers to overcome the expected Democratic surge in Cook County.

But Quinn is an experienced politician. An overconfident Rauner could make a mistake. And Quinn knows when to pounce on a mistake.

So I asked Rauner if overconfidence leading into Monday's debate could be a problem.

"Am I overconfident? No," he said. "This is going to be a close race. And Illinois politics is wild. Nobody can predict anything. This is going to be very close, very tough, and I'm taking absolutely nothing for granted."

And last, we should consider a little-discussed but highly important feature of tight campaigns like the Quinn-Rauner race:

That last-minute drop over the transom.

There are few, if any, transoms in modern newspaper buildings given we now have central air conditioning, but the time-honored tradition of peddling negative news stories on opponents remains.

So you shouldn't be surprised if you see negative media hits in the coming days that give a candidate little if any time to react.

Amazingly, almost as if by coincidence, the other camp (those who did the dropping) often has campaign ads up the minute the negative story hits the news.

There are two tactics used. One is the straight drop to a politically friendly print or TV reporter.

Another method is to first feed partisans on candidate-friendly blogs. Then the campaign's social media warriors pump it up to generate buzz, hoping a broadcast or print news outlet acknowledges a "reported controversy."

Once that's done, once the news outlet mentions the "reported controversy," then others can jump in, surrogates and candidates too.

And the opposition researchers get what they wanted: a bloodied opponent without any of their telltale fingerprints.

Over the past few days I've received such calls, from Democratic and Republican operatives in different campaigns up and down the ballot. And I'm sure other reporters have received them too.

I'm not passing judgment on the operatives, they're advocates doing their jobs. And clearly, reporters are free to do last-minute hits. It is the way of things and the way of all campaigns in free countries.

But I don't like it. I'll admit that years ago, I was as eager for a chunk of red meat as the next hunting dog. What you learn, though, over time is that such chunks of meat have a smell.

It smells of manipulation.

And it lingers.

Reporters love getting information, the public deserves information, and where it comes from isn't all that important. What's important is that we check it out.

But I don't like late negative stories in a tough campaign, especially one with stark philosophical differences like this race for governor.

The last couple of weeks of a campaign isn't the time for a dramatic drop. The oppo researchers had months to drop dimes on the other guy.

Now it's time for voters to concentrate, and time for candidates to sell themselves. And they have a little over two weeks to do it.

Early Voting Starts This Week, With Changes

[Chicago Tribune](#), October 18, 2014

Early voting kicks off Monday in advance of the Nov. 4 statewide election, with a slew of new one-time changes that supporters say are meant to boost voter participation and critics contend have been put in place for political reasons tied to the hotly contested governor race.

With voters casting their first in-person ballots this week, the political spotlight will remain bright in the race between Gov. Pat Quinn and Republican challenger Bruce Rauner. President Barack Obama comes to Chicago on Sunday night to again stump for Quinn at a Chicago State University rally that coincides with the beginning of early voting. And former President Bill Clinton will be in town Tuesday to appear with the governor.

Vice President Joe **Biden** is set to attend an early voting event Wednesday in Vernon Hills with U.S. Rep. Brad Schneider, according to the Schneider campaign.

Meanwhile, voters across the region have already received thousands of ballots through the mail-in voting option that both political parties have increasingly made a focus of their campaign tactics.

In 2010, the first election in which Illinois allowed "no excuse" mail-in ballots where voters could take advantage of the postal option without explaining why they couldn't instead vote on Election Day, 25,004 voters in suburban Cook County availed themselves of the opportunity, according to Cook County Clerk David Orr. By the middle of last week, more than 33,000 applications for mail-in ballots in the Cook County suburbs had already come in, Orr said.

"It remains to be seen whether these are people who wouldn't have voted otherwise, or if they are simply using this option instead of heading to the polls," Orr said. "But certainly we have seen the parties and the candidates increasingly urging people to vote by mail. The goal is to get your people out (to vote) before Election Day, which saves the campaigns from having to use resources on Election Day to try to track down likely supporters and try to get them to go out and vote."

In Chicago, the Board of Election Commissioners had received 29,480 applications for the absentee ballots by Friday, according to board spokesman James Allen. A total of 28,365 of the mail-in ballots were cast in 2010, when governor was last the top race.

Organizations have become much more aggressive in sending out absentee applications to residences across the city, Allen said. Residents fill out the forms and return them to the third party groups, which then deliver them to election officials. "We get two to seven boxes (of applications) every other day from these clearinghouses," Allen said.

While there's nothing improper about the practice, Allen warned that there is a time lag between voters mailing the applications to the clearinghouses and the organizations dropping off the bundles of applications to the Election Board. "If we receive the application two minutes after 5 p.m. on Oct. 30, it's no good," he said.

People who want to vote early in person will have an easier time doing so this year, thanks to a series of one-time election laws signed by Quinn last summer.

The two-week early voting period, which traditionally ends the Saturday before the Tuesday election, will this year continue through Sunday, Nov. 2, at some voting locations.

In the city, five early voting locations will be open later during the second week, until 7 p.m. from Oct. 27 to Oct. 31. The later hours will be in effect at 42 suburban locations, plus the Cook County clerk's Loop location. Early voting locations across the city and suburbs will be open until 5 p.m. on other dates in the run-up to Nov. 4.

And people voting early will for the first time be able to do so without showing a photo ID such as a driver's license.

After lawmakers approved the measures on a Democratic-led vote shortly before the end of the spring session, Quinn welcomed the change.

"Democracy works best when everyone has the opportunity to participate," the governor said. "Instead of turning away eager voters at the ballot box, (the legislation) will make sure more Illinois residents have a chance to have their voices heard."

Rauner has said he supports the concept of increasing voter registration and turnout. But some Republicans have noted the legislation put these changes in place only for this year's election and wondered whether Democrats eased the voting rules to give their candidates a boost this November.

In 2006, 24,811 Chicago voters cast early in-person ballots. That number more than tripled to 85,604 in 2010, Allen said. Chicago election officials anticipate early votes "again in that 80s range" this election, he said.

Early voting numbers will go up if voters decide well before Nov. 4 whether they want to back Quinn or Rauner, Allen said.

"For the presidential election, people made up their minds in September, so the minute we opened the doors for early voting, boom, they were lining up," he said. "If people want to wait, maybe watch one more debate or see what transpires late in the campaign, they're less likely to vote early."

Tribune reporter Monique Garcia contributed.

Honduras Boosts Air Force In Fight Against Drug Smugglers

By Gustavo Palencia

[Reuters](#), October 18, 2014

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

8 Things You Didn't Know About Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor

By Nora Daly

[PBS](#), October 18, 2014

Of all the Supreme Court Justices, Sonia Sotomayor is arguably the most visible outside of the courtroom. Her journey from a Bronx housing project to the United States Supreme Court has been chronicled by many, including Sotomayor herself in her bestselling memoir, "My Beloved World."

In spite of all that is known about Justice Sotomayor, judicial biographer and Reuters legal affairs editor Joan Biskupic believed there was more to discover. She discussed her new book, "Breaking In: The Rise of Sonia Sotomayor and the Politics of Justice," with PBS NewsHour's Gwen Ifill. Here are a few lesser known facts she helped uncover. 1. She helped Ruth Bader Ginsburg cope with her husband's death

In the opening pages of "Breaking In," Biskupic describes how Sotomayor shook up tradition at her first end-of-term party by asking the other justices to salsa dance with her.

In what Biskupic describes as the "most compelling" moment of this episode, Sotomayor approached Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, whose husband had passed away just three days prior, and asked her to dance. When Ginsburg initially refused, Sotomayor leaned in and whispered to her, "Marty would have wanted you to dance," referring to Ginsburg's late husband. After joining her on the dance floor briefly, Ginsburg placed her hands on Sotomayor's cheeks and simply said, "Thank you." 2. She was born the same year as *Brown vs. Board of Education*

Sotomayor has described herself as "the perfect affirmative action baby." In April, when the court upheld an amendment to the Michigan state constitution banning racial affirmative action, she issued a 58-page long dissent (over three times as long as the opinion upholding the law), which made clear that she believes it is the court's role to defend the civil rights of "historically marginalized groups." It is fitting that she was born shortly after this landmark ruling in favor of educational equality. 3. She poked fun at Chief Justice John Roberts

In a 2007 opinion, Chief Justice Roberts famously wrote: "The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race." In her dissent in the Michigan ruling, Sotomayor turned Roberts' words against him, writing: "The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to speak openly and candidly on the subject of race."

"She clearly was playing off of his view in a kind of mocking way," Biskupic says, "and in fact, Chief Justice Roberts criticized Justice Sotomayor for doing that...he said that she was expounding policy preferences, but then he also said that he did not like the airing of personal strains."

Sotomayor's jab at Roberts revealed a personal disagreement, but Biskupic insists the dissent as a whole was rooted in Sotomayor's professional opinion. "Most of it was based on her legal reasoning and what she thought of precedent. So she weaves in sentiment from personal experience, but it is all based in the law." 4. She "leaned in" during the nomination process

In "Breaking In," Biskupic points out that no judicial nomination moves "without some pushing and shoving," and "minorities and women...faced greater resistance." She reports that in 1991, when President George H. W. Bush nominated Sotomayor to the U.S. District Court, minorities accounted for only around 10 percent of federal judges, a mere 12 percent were female and, in the state of New York, there were no Hispanic federal judges.

Biskupic was surprised to learn how active Sotomayor was in pushing for her own nomination. Biskupic was surprised to learn how active Sotomayor was in pushing for her own nomination. "I didn't know how much she had been an agent for herself," Biskupic said, in discussing how Sotomayor worked, first with Democratic New York Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan to secure her nomination to the U.S. District Court, and later with Republican New York Sen. Al D'Amato, to ensure a Senate floor vote on her elevation to the Second Circuit. "She was accustomed to pushing overtly for what she wanted," Biskupic writes in "Breaking In," adding that "her confidence surprised Moynihan" when the two first met to discuss her nomination. 5. She wields influence behind the scenes

There have been many times, Biskupic says, when Sotomayor “has been willing to break off and write some solo dissents or concurring opinions that break from her liberal colleagues ... It’s a variety of cases where she’ll go a little bit further to left.” However, in “Breaking In,” Biskupic tells of at least one instance where the justice agreed to compromise.

Prior to ruling on the Michigan state ban on affirmative action, the court heard another case that challenged the race-sensitive admissions policy of the University of Texas at Austin. This case presented an even greater challenge to affirmative action by calling into question a precedent-setting ruling. In her book, Biskupic reveals that Sotomayor, greatly concerned about the way the Court appeared to be leaning, wrote a fiery dissent that was circulated privately among the justices, and ultimately led some of her more conservative colleagues to agree to a compromise.

“It all went on in secret,” Biskupic told NewsHour’s Gwen Ifill, “it was her work behind the scenes that...in effect, saved affirmative action for another day.”⁶ She shops at Costco

Back in June, Sotomayor appeared to surprise Hillary Clinton at her own book signing at an Arlington, Virginia, Costco. The justice picked up a copy of the former secretary of state’s book and shook hands before departing. While some speculated that the meeting was in fact a planned photo-op, Sotomayor told The Washington Post that it was pure coincidence.

“A nice lady at the pharmacy counter recognized me, and we started chatting, and she says, ‘Are you here with the other lady?’ And I said, ‘What other lady?’ And she mentioned Madam Secretary, and that’s how I found out.”⁷ She rescheduled on the Vice President of the United States

When Vice President **Biden** requested that Justice Sotomayor swear him in at the January 2013 inauguration ceremony, she agreed, but asked that the event be rescheduled from 12 p.m. to 8 a.m. because she had committed to a book signing in New York City later in the day. Some eyebrows were raised when it was revealed that the vice president and the president would not be sworn in at the same time, but **Biden** himself did not seem to mind. At the conclusion of the ceremony, Biskupic writes, **Biden** thanked Justice Sotomayor, saying it was “a wonderful honor” to be sworn in by her. “We are going to walk out,” he continued, “you see her car’s waiting so she can catch a train I hope I haven’t caused her to miss.”

U.S. Vice President Joe **Biden** takes the oath of office from Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor as his wife Jill **Biden** holds the family bible while family members look on at the U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington January 20, 2013. Photo by Kevin Lamarque/Reuters⁸. She is a workaholic

Below is video evidence that the justice couldn’t even step away from the bench long enough to have a cup of coffee with a friend!

NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS

Small Schools Work In New York

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

Mayor Bill de Blasio has been critical of the signature education strategy of his predecessor, Mike Bloomberg, a strategy that involved closing large, failing high schools and replacing them with smaller specialized schools that offer a more rigorous curriculum and a more personal brand of instruction. But over the last few years, the Bloomberg approach has been vindicated by an innovative, multiyear study showing that the poor, minority students who attend small specialized schools do better academically than students in a control group who attend traditional high schools.

The latest installment of the study, released this week by the nonprofit research group MDRC, contains even more impressive news: The disadvantaged students who make up a vast majority of the small-school enrollment are also more likely than those in the control group to enroll in college.

The challenge facing Mr. de Blasio and his advisers is how to build on this impressive foundation.

New York City started talking about small schools in the 1990s, but it did not begin translating this into actual policy until the early 2000s, when Mr. Bloomberg began aggressively closing down large, factory-style high schools. Some of these big schools had enrollments of 3,000 or more students and graduation rates of less than 40 percent.

By contrast, the new smaller high schools, typically in black or Hispanic neighborhoods, serve about 100 students per grade. More than 90 percent of the students attending these schools are black or Hispanic. Nearly 85 percent qualify for free or reduced price lunches. Three-fourths of them began their high school careers performing below grade level in reading or math. These smaller schools have several other things in common. They have a rigorous curriculum. They offer a personalized approach to education, with teachers responsible for keeping close tabs on the performance of their students. They are organized around themes — social justice, law or science. They get valuable support from community partners — colleges, cultural organizations or social service groups — that sometimes assist with funding, the hiring of new staff members or providing ways for students to connect their schoolwork with the world of work.

The multiyear study is tracking more than 21,000 students through their high school careers and into college. Among the startling results are these: Students at small high schools have a graduation rate of 71.6 percent, compared with 62.2 percent for their peers in larger schools. The small-school students are also more likely to graduate in four years and go straight to college. The gains are especially impressive among young black men, 42.3 percent of whom enroll in college as opposed to 31 percent of their peers in the control group. Young black women and young Hispanic men and women also matriculated at higher rates than their large-school peers.

The small high schools managed to achieve these gains at a lower cost per graduate than the traditional schools, partly because more students graduated on time and did not need a costly fifth year of education.

The teachers union supported the school closure strategy at first, even though it requires teachers to reapply for their jobs and, in many cases, move elsewhere. But it withdrew support when it decided that Mr. Bloomberg was unnecessarily ramming through closures. The de Blasio administration has said that it will first pursue an as yet undefined strategy to help improve schools before deciding to shut them down.

The administration is right when it says that every school can't be a small one. But given the clear benefits that have accrued to the city's most vulnerable students, Mr. de Blasio should not shy away from the option of shutting down big schools and remaking them from scratch, particularly in cases where the school has been failing for a long time and its culture is beyond repair.

Vatican Signals On Gays And Remarriage Are A Hopeful Beginning

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

A half-century after the historic changes of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Francis is showing his intent to drive a comparably ambitious agenda for the Roman Catholic Church in the 21st century.

The current synod of bishops in Rome, called by Francis to encourage reform and modernization, set a ringing tone of compassion this week with an opening call for a more welcoming attitude toward gay people, unmarried couples, divorced Catholics who remarry, and children in these unions.

The bishops' report on their first week of private discussions did not immediately change church doctrine. But it signaled the pope's determination to have the church look anew at the realities of the modern world, including what the bishops were moved to call the "positive aspects of civil unions and cohabitation" — a formulation unthinkable in an era when the church denounced such Catholics as "living in sin."

The synod's summary language about gays and lesbians was even more remarkable.

"Homosexuals have gifts and qualities to offer to the Christian community: Are we capable of welcoming these people, guaranteeing to them a fraternal space in our communities?" asked the bishops' opening 12-page report. It maintained opposition to same-sex marriage but avoided the ritual condemnation of "intrinsically disordered" homosexuality.

The final version of the report will serve as the centerpiece for a year's debate by church leaders and laity before a concluding synod next October.

The whole effort is subject to fierce debate among the bishops, but the very fact that Francis ordered church leaders to address these challenges seems a landmark in Vatican history.

Such an overdue and refreshing agenda should also be well received at the parish level, where many of the church's modern laity have shown themselves motivated by individual conscience more than doctrinaire prelates on such issues as birth control. The synod did not call for doctrinal changes on birth control. But it said — perhaps in a euphemistic effort to seem less than absolute on the subject — that what is required is "a realistic language that is able to start from listening to people."

Beyond specific issues, a welcome tone of conciliation and outreach defined the synod report, as in the recognition that gay Catholics yearn for "a welcoming home" in the church. In this and other ways, the synod marks a hopeful beginning of what undoubtedly will be a difficult but fascinating worldwide debate on the future of the modern church.

The White Teeth Monopoly

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

Should dentists alone be allowed to decide who whitens your teeth? That is the question in an antitrust case before the Supreme Court that could clarify whether antitrust laws apply to professional licensing bodies, which are often packed with people in the industry.

The case, *North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners v. Federal Trade Commission*, involves the state board's attempt to squelch competition and keep prices high by telling salons, spas and other businesses to stop offering teeth whitening services because they are not licensed dentists. The board consists mainly of dentists elected by their state-licensed colleagues. But no other body in North Carolina, including the courts or the State Legislature, had previously determined that only dentists could whiten teeth.

The F.T.C. challenged the board and told it to stop sending out cease-and-desist letters to teeth whitening businesses. The board appealed, arguing that as a state agency it had immunity from federal antitrust laws. The United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, in Richmond, Va., ruled in favor of the F.T.C.

Many state governments give doctors, dentists, lawyers and other professionals limited authority to regulate the way their occupation is practiced. But the Supreme Court has ruled on other occasions that state officials must actively supervise those professional regulatory bodies if they are to be immune from antitrust law. In this case, the board's cease-and-desist letters were not reviewed or approved by North Carolina.

The dental board argued, as did other professional groups and associations in their briefs to the court, that subjecting it to antitrust laws would weaken its authority and discourage professionals from serving on regulatory bodies. During this week's arguments, even Justice Stephen Breyer wondered whether a ruling in favor of the F.T.C. could create a situation where bureaucrats, not neurologists, would decide who could conduct brain surgery.

Those concerns are misplaced. Each antitrust case is different, and a ruling for the F.T.C. in this case will not paralyze professional regulatory bodies. The dental board clearly overstepped its authority and the law. If the board was concerned about the safety of consumers, it could have tried to make the case in court that teeth whitening can be performed only by a licensed dentist — perhaps by suing the teeth whitening services and convincing a judge that the services were violating North Carolina law. Alternatively, as the F.T.C. said, it could have issued rules regulating teeth whitening. These rules would become effective if they were approved by a commission appointed by the North Carolina Legislature.

Either way, the board could not unilaterally tell the teeth whiteners to stop their business. States have the right to regulate competition in the public interest. But they cannot blindly outsource that responsibility to professionals who stand to benefit from such restrictions.

Failures Of Competence

By Joe Nocera

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

Et tu, C.D.C.?

For years, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been the most trusted agency in the federal government. In 2003, when Gallup did a survey to determine what the public thought of various federal agencies, the C.D.C. topped the list, with 66 percent of respondents describing it as “excellent” or “good.”

Last year, a similar Gallup poll showed that the C.D.C.'s approval rating had dropped to 60 percent, which was still better than any other agency. The C.D.C. has seen the country through SARS and the swine flu virus. The general perception was not only that it did important, apolitical work, but that it was highly competent. “I used to call the C.D.C. the shining star of federal agencies,” says Lawrence O. Gostin, a global health expert at Georgetown Law.

And then came Ebola.

The Ebola outbreak is not exactly enhancing the C.D.C.'s reputation for competence. At first, the agency reassured the public that American hospitals were ready to handle any Ebola cases that came their way. That has turned out not to be the case. When Thomas Eric Duncan was diagnosed with Ebola in Dallas, the C.D.C. did not immediately fly in an expert team — something that the C.D.C. director, Tom Frieden, now says it should have done. Most recently, the C.D.C. appears to have allowed one of the Dallas nurses who helped Duncan to take a flight from Ohio to Texas even though she had a slightly raised temperature. When it became clear that she had contracted the virus — the second nurse to do so — Frieden was forced to admit that letting her on the plane was a mistake.

Meanwhile, Frieden, a highly respected public health expert, had to walk back some of his remarks. Congress — including Democrats — appears dismayed by the mistakes. Perhaps the biggest one the C.D.C. made was that its voluntary guidelines for treating Ebola patients were too lax. In *The Times* a few days ago, Donald G. McNeil quoted several experts saying the protocols established by the C.D.C. were, in the words of one, “absolutely irresponsible and dead wrong.” One important protocol is having a “site supervisor” watching for errors. The C.D.C. has now included that guideline.

Are there extenuating circumstances? To hear infectious disease specialists tell it, the answer is yes. Like all federal agencies, the C.D.C. saw significant cuts to its funding thanks to sequestration. Another expert, Marc Lipsitch of the Harvard School of Public Health, told me in an email that because the chances of Ebola being imported to the U.S. were considered low, preparing for it was not considered a good use of scarce public money. “The budget cuts,” he wrote, “have directly reduced preparedness.”

In addition, the C.D.C., like many federal agencies, had its mission transformed after 9/11. Julie Gerberding, an appointee of the Bush administration, changed its emphasis to bioterrorism and other potential security threats. “She also brought in efficiency experts who were anathema to scientists,” says Laurie Garrett, a senior fellow for global health at the Council on Foreign Relations and the author of the seminal 1994 book, “The Coming Plague.” Morale plummeted, and many of its best scientists fled.

Fair enough. But it is also true that the C.D.C. was too hubristic in its approach to Ebola, and the consequence is that its staff now looks like bumbler. “They never challenged their own assumptions,” says Dr. Richard Wenzel, an infectious disease specialist at Virginia Commonwealth University. “This is an unforgiving virus,” he added, “about which there is a lot we don’t know.” The C.D.C.’s unfortunate habit of saying things as if they were certainties only to have to acknowledge that its judgment was questionable, says Wenzel, “can cause people to lose faith in the public health system.”

When you think about it, many of the Obama administration’s “scandals” have been failures of competence. The Secret Service let a man leap over the White House fence and get into the White House. The Veterans Health Administration covered up unconscionable delays in treating veterans. The error-ridden rollout of the Obamacare website was a nightmare for people trying to sign up for health insurance. The Republican right takes it as an article of faith that the national government can’t do anything right. Problems like these only help promote that idea.

And now comes the C.D.C. — the most trusted agency in government — thrust in a role for which it was designed: advising us and protecting us from a potential contagion. With every new mistake, it becomes, in the public eye, just another federal agency that can’t get it right.

Start Helping The Helpers

By Arthur C. Brooks

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

WHAT is a “helping industry”?

This question has brought me to a former battery factory in downtown San Francisco. I’m sitting in what must have been some tycoon’s corner office. Four overstuffed chairs are surrounded by a full complement of hipster eclectica, from art books to lava lamps.

My hosts are not squatters. They are Nathan Blecharczyk, a 30-something co-founder of Airbnb, and several of his fellow executives. Airbnb is the start-up Internet marketplace that matches visitors to cities around the world with people who have space to rent in their homes. In just six years, the business has exploded: It is currently valued at roughly \$10 billion and employs more than 800 people.

What made these people start Airbnb? For a sure way to make a boatload of money? Not likely. According to Scott Shane, an entrepreneurship scholar at Case Western Reserve University, about a quarter of new businesses typically fail in their first year, and fewer than half are still standing after five years. A smart guy like Nate could find a career with much better odds of financial success.

Indeed, a few minutes with him dispels any delusion that money is all he cares about. To hear him tell it, he started the business because it was fascinating and fun. And most of all, he says, because it could help ordinary people who needed an affordable place to stay or had some excess capacity in their homes. That’s right — Nate sees Airbnb as a “helping industry.”

Some will howl at this, because we tend to define helping industries as things like government, charities and health care.

But are those the only ways — or even the best ways — to help struggling Americans? Government and charities play an important role, especially in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis and our subsequent nonrecovery. But let's use a bit more imagination, and turn our attention back to Airbnb.

Consider Kimberly Kaye, a disabled 30-year-old New Yorker who says she has been able to stay in her home only because of Airbnb. In Ms. Kaye's own words, "for a few days each month, we vacate our one-bedroom apartment, bunk with a friend or family member and rent out our place." She reports that her earnings from the service are "modest," but they help her pay the bills and stay connected to the outside world. "It's the difference between keeping our chins above water and drowning."

Technically, Airbnb — like Uber, Lyft and other innovative companies — is helping people like Kimberly Kaye by tackling the problem of "dead capital." This term, coined by the Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto, refers to potentially productive assets owned by ordinary people who could use them if they could only find a way. As Daniel M. Rothschild of the Mercatus Center points out, there are 1.5 bedrooms for every man, woman and child in the United States. The owners or renters of many of these dormant bedrooms could use extra money in a lousy economy.

Ordinary people, especially vulnerable people without power and privilege, find Airbnb empowering and useful. It lifts Americans up with zero cost to the taxpayer. And people like it. Shouldn't we encourage this?

Instead, state and local governments have met the service with antagonism, seeking to limit Airbnb's operations or shut it down. Just this week, the attorney general of New York issued a new report insisting that a majority of Airbnb's operations in New York City are illegal, and says it is planning a major regulatory crackdown. Uber, Lyft and similar services that enliven dead capital have met with similar treatment from government officials.

Nobody wants zero regulation, and every company should follow the law. But policy should begin with admiration for new ways that citizens can build their lives, not with hostility to profits or the impulse to protect entrenched industries. Governments have their own golden opportunity to exercise creativity in service of the common good, whether that entails rethinking anachronistic zoning laws or adjusting tax policies that treat someone's spare bedroom the same as a Marriott suite.

Any of us can work in a helping industry. That includes teachers, nurses, stay-at-home parents, entrepreneurs who want to empower ordinary people, and government officials who welcome novel industries as opportunities to evolve instead of nuisances to be squashed.

The blessing of our free enterprise system is that any of us can sanctify our work. We just need to ask if what we are doing truly lifts others up.

Arthur C. Brooks, a contributing opinion writer, is president of the American Enterprise Institute.

Free Pigs From The Abusive Crates

By Bill Maher

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

WOULD you cram a dog into a crate for her entire life, never letting her out, until you took her to the pound to kill her?

Of course you wouldn't, and yet that's effectively what happens to most mother pigs in this country. They spend their lives in what are called gestation crates, tiny stalls that house pregnant sows. They cannot even turn around, and are immobilized in these crates until they are taken to the slaughterhouse.

Pigs are smart animals — the brainiacs of the barnyard, basically. They have outperformed dogs on tests of behavioral and cognitive sophistication. In fact, they learn rudimentary video games as quickly as chimpanzees, one of our closest living relatives.

The primatologist Jane Goodall writes that “farm animals feel pleasure and sadness, excitement and resentment, depression, fear and pain. They are far more aware and intelligent than we ever imagined ... they are individuals in their own right.”

But when abnormally enclosed, their muscles and bones waste away, and they go insane from boredom. Just as you would if you couldn't move.

Fortunately, we're seeing changes. Animal protection organizations are putting pressure on corporations to change, and so we're seeing policies to get rid of these crates from the likes of McDonald's, Burger King and Smithfield Foods.

We've also seen bills or initiatives passed in nine states that require that all pigs be given at least enough space to turn around.

It's a modest improvement, but the pork producers are fighting it. A spokesman for the National Pork Producers Council actually said to a reporter for National Journal, “I don't know who asked the sow if she wanted to turn around.” (The council later issued a statement regretting the comment.)

These laws are bipartisan: California passed a ban on crates, not surprisingly, but so did the more conservative states of Florida and Arizona.

New Jersey would be the 10th. A poll conducted last month by Mason-Dixon Polling and Research found that 93 percent of New Jersey voters wanted to see these crates banned — including 94 percent of Democrats and independents, and 92 percent of Republicans. Both chambers of the State Legislature have now passed it. What could go wrong?

Unfortunately, we've seen this movie before. A year ago, Gov. Chris Christie vetoed a similar bill that had passed the Assembly and Senate by huge bipartisan majorities — 60 to 5 in the Assembly and 29 to 4 in the Senate.

Governor Christie claimed to be vetoing the bill based on merits, but I cannot imagine that he thinks it's O.K. to confine pigs in their own waste, immobile, for years at a time.

There must be more to it. Could it be that a possible presidential candidate is aware that Iowa is the No. 1 pig state in the country, and that Republican primary voters there are strongly anti-regulation?

It is no more acceptable to abuse a pig than it would be to abuse a dog, which is illegal. These crates should already be illegal under the New Jersey animal welfare laws, but since they aren't, Mr. Christie should sign the bill this time. It would hardly put pigs into luxurious settings. It doesn't force pig producers to choose a specific kind of housing; it merely says the animals have to be allowed to turn around, lie down, stand up and fully extend their limbs.

When Governor Christie vetoed the bill, he said he was concerned that it bypassed the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, so the bill's sponsors changed it so that it works through that department. So Mr. Christie really has no excuse to veto it again.

I have been involved in the animal rights cause for decades, and nothing makes me angrier than cramming animals into environments where they can't move.

We should not play politics with animals' lives. Banning crates in my native state of New Jersey is the right thing to do.

Bill Maher is the host of “Real Time With Bill Maher” on HBO.

What Is A Catholic Family?

By Peter Manseau

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — GATHERED in Rome last week to discuss marriage, divorce and the widening array of domestic arrangements with which they now must contend, a group of Roman Catholic bishops released a statement that included a theological turn of phrase that proved more telling than intended. “We must not forget that the church that preaches about the family is a sign of contradiction.”

This was not meant as a self-aware nod to the incongruity of a cohort of celibate men discussing the place of birth control, child-rearing and marital relations in the lives of millions of noncelibate Catholics, nor as an acknowledgment that the church has held conflicting views on the family from the beginning. A “sign of contradiction” here alludes to a prophecy given to Mary early in the Gospel of Luke that the infant Jesus would be a “sign that is spoken against” by the people he had come to save.

For Christians, this sign is a call to stand apart from society, enduring scorn for the sake of religious truth. Referring to their synod on the family this way, the bishops were not humbly admitting their inability to speak from experience, but making a lofty claim to a higher authority.

Still, the contradictions most evident in the aftermath of the bishops’ statement were those within their own ranks. A recap of discussions held during the first half of a two-week meeting convened by Pope Francis, the report was greeted with outsize praise and alarm for its willingness to engage in unexpected ways with issues including homosexuality and what the church used to call “living in sin.”

Within hours of the Hungarian Cardinal Peter Erdo’s affirmation in the prepared statement that “cultural and socio-economic factors” may influence the choice to begin, delay or end a marriage, and that same-sex unions could provide “precious support in the life of the partners,” other high-ranking clergymen stepped forward to claim that the media’s focus on such sentiments was “manipulating” the synod’s words.

“The message has gone out that this is what the synod is saying, this is what the Catholic Church is saying,” Cardinal Wilfrid Fox Napier of South Africa, who participated in the meetings, complained. “It’s not what we’re saying at all.”

Such disagreement was perhaps to be expected. The statement read by Cardinal Erdo was a *relatio post disceptationem*, a “report after debate” that attempted to wrangle a week’s worth of competing positions into a seamless account of continuing deliberations. Almost immediately, commentary on the document walked back the very statements that earned it such unanticipated attention.

In another sign of the synod’s internal contradictions, the Vatican released a new translation of the report three days after the uproar that greeted its original release. A section titled “Welcoming homosexual persons” became the entirely less welcoming “Providing for homosexual persons” and “partners” in same-sex unions became “these persons.” This last was a particularly puzzling rendering given that the phrase originally translated as “life of the partners” appears as “la vita dei partners” in the synod’s official Italian text.

Yet even if the effects of the “pastoral earthquake” described by one longtime Vatican correspondent turn out to be as lasting as the wall-shaking rumble of a passing diesel truck, something undeniably significant did happen at the synod last week. More than just a momentary softening of rhetoric, it was an indication that the idea of family is again evolving in Rome.

While Catholic defenders of traditional marriage may act as if family life has always been the highest good in the church’s eyes, for much of its history marriage was plainly seen as a lesser path to holiness. Just as the bishops’ report noted that “unions between people of the same sex cannot be considered on

the same footing as matrimony between man and woman,” much the same was said for centuries regarding the difference between marriage and the consecrated virginal state.

Marriage was messy, full of situations regarded as unpleasant by the saintly, and bound up in cultural conditions that shifted over time. In the fourth century, Saint Jerome wrote that he valued marriage only because it produced potential virgins. Throughout the Middle Ages, manuals for confessors noted the many ways in which relations between husbands and wives could be deemed immoral.

At the 16th-century Council of Trent, when matrimony formally became a sacrament of the church, bishops weighed in on the pressing marital issues of their day by reflecting on the performance of nuptials in the cases of “vagrants” (best to be avoided), kidnapped brides (only after a released abductee gave her consent “in a safe and free place” could the church sanction such a union), and priests (if anyone says they can marry, the council canons warn, “let him be anathema”).

In every instance, the question of who might constitute a family was a matter of how far those involved fell short of an unattainable ideal.

Which is perhaps not so far from the supposedly “wounded” and “irregular” families that are largely the focus of the synod’s report: the divorced, the remarried, the cohabitating; the two-faith marriages, the two-mother households, the two grooms who walked down the aisle. By including those long regarded by the church as beyond the bounds of Catholic propriety within their discussion of family as the “school of humanity” that is a “source of joys and trials,” the synod’s bishops have not opened a big tent welcoming all those mentioned to fully participate in the life of the Catholic Church, and indeed they are unlikely to do so.

Yet even quibbling over words of qualified welcome, they have reminded the faithful that their church has developed over time through conflict and contradiction, and may again.

What family is not wounded? As Cardinal Erdo read the bishops’ relatio in a Vatican conference hall last week, anyone watching carefully could see on the desk before him a small sculpture of the holy family: Mary, Joseph and Jesus. To Catholics it is a depiction of a woman who conceived a child before she was married, a chaste stepfather who nearly divorced her as a result, and that original sign of contradiction, the human son of God. A church that claims to descend from this most untraditional of domestic arrangements might ask itself: Was any family ever more irregular than that?

Peter Manseau is the author of the forthcoming book “One Nation, Under Gods: A New American History.”

New Rules Could Limit Methane Emissions’ Effects On The Atmosphere

[Washington Post](#), October 18, 2014

THE OBAMA administration spent all summer mulling new measures to cut air pollution from the booming natural gas industry . Now federal officials are nearing a decision on whether and how to limit emissions from wells, storage tanks and other places from which gas can leak. Whether you believe that the country’s fracking boom is an economic godsend or an environmental disaster — or both — you should favor measures to limit the industry’s effects on the atmosphere.

Unlocking vast natural gas reserves trapped in U.S. shale rock formations has drastically cut the cost and price volatility of the fuel in the United States. That has kept energy costs down, encouraged domestic and foreign manufacturers to invest here and reduced the burning of coal, a much dirtier fuel. On the other hand, natural gas produces some carbon dioxide emissions when burned — about half those of coal — and is a potent greenhouse gas in its own right when it escapes into the air unburned. That’s because it contains a lot of methane, which, when allowed to escape uncombusted, is dozens of

times more potent a warming agent than carbon dioxide. Methane from various sources now accounts for 9 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, and that number is rising with the expansion of domestic drilling.

Some environmentalists oppose any increase in natural-gas burning because (unlike wind, solar or nuclear power) it releases greenhouse gases. Others put more stock in its relative benefits over coal and believe it can fit into a strategy to contain emissions, if the government adopts a plan to move the nation toward carbon-free energy sources over the coming decades. Both sides should recognize the value of preventing more unburned gas from escaping into the air. Relatively inexpensive measures could diminish gas leaks and allow more fuel to be used instead of wasted.

The Obama administration has already promulgated regulations that will limit methane emissions from some natural gas wells. But some facilities remain uncovered, including so-called wet gas operations, from which companies retrieve trapped oil as well as gas. If the Environmental Protection Agency can find a way short of new regulations that will significantly slash methane leakage, so much the better. But there's a strong case for common rules applying across the varied drilling operations around the country, rather than a piecemeal approach. No one should be surprised or dismayed if the Obama administration concludes that the only effective way to ensure natural gas isn't uselessly and harmfully released is to demand a little more effort from energy companies.

L.A. Schools Superintendent John Deasy A Casualty Of Politics In Schools

[Washington Post](#), October 18, 2014

IN THE 3½ years that John Deasy led the public schools in Los Angeles, student test scores climbed, suspensions dropped and the high school graduation rate rose to an all-time high. So one would think that the school board would do everything in its power to keep Mr. Deasy. Instead, it pretty much showed him the door — a vivid demonstration of how political interests trump results when it comes to America's broken schools.

Mr. Deasy resigned as head of the Los Angeles Unified School District on Thursday after reaching an agreement with a school board that had made no bones about wanting him out. The seven-member board was to meet this month to review his performance, but there had been reports the board had already authorized its attorneys to discuss a departure agreement. Ramon C. Cortines, who preceded Mr. Deasy as superintendent in Los Angeles and also did a stint in New York City, was named interim chief. It's not a prudent trade to cashier a hard-charging superintendent with a proven record of success in favor of someone who, at best, will be a caretaker.

Mr. Deasy always had an edgy relationship with the board (he came close to resigning last year), but things got worse because of stepped-up attacks from a newly radicalized teachers union and changes on the school board that made it less reform-minded.

Mr. Deasy, whose leadership of Prince George's schools we admired, brought refreshing reforms to the sprawling system. That included breakfast in the classroom and tying teacher review to student test scores. Clearly, he made mistakes: He admitted being single-minded to the point of being bull-headed. What one writer called his trademark impatience caused him to so badly bungle a plan to equip every student with an iPad that it has been placed on hold and the bidding process subjected to scrutiny. But that misstep and the complaints about his style were mere pretexts for critics with an agenda that is not served by Mr. Deasy's push for change.

Foremost among the reactionaries is the teachers union, United Teachers Los Angeles, which led the charge for Mr. Deasy to be held "accountable" by the board. The union has new leadership and is in

the midst of contract negotiations in which there are differences on issues like teacher pay and evaluations. Another factor was Mr. Deasy's decision to testify on behalf of plaintiffs who successfully challenged California's archaic tenure laws.

But Mr. Deasy's departure cannot be blamed on the teachers union. Its mission, after all, is to protect teachers' interests. Mr. Deasy is gone because neither the school board nor the city's political leadership were willing to give their support to a superintendent who made student interests his first priority.

A Health-care Plan Worse Than Obamacare

[Washington Post](#), October 18, 2014

REPUBLICANS CALLING for repeal of the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, are a dime a dozen. Fewer offer a plan to replace the law with something they claim would work better. To his credit, Virginia's Ed Gillespie, a GOP Senate candidate, is in the more select group. Meanwhile, his Democratic opponent, Sen. Mark Warner, favors tweaking the law without upsetting its framework.

Mr. Gillespie's proposal was developed by a conservative group called the 2017 Project, which, as the name implies, aims to provide templates for Republican policymaking after the next presidential election. It is a real plan, which is to be commended. But it would be worse than the Affordable Care Act.

The proposal aims to reduce government spending on health care for the young and middle-aged. Much of what it does allow would pay for tax credits to help people buy health insurance. Everyone — lower-, middle- and upper-class — of a certain age group would get the same amount of help, even if some wouldn't need it to pay premiums and others would struggle to make premium payments of any kind without assistance. The 2017 proposal insists that this system is fairer, lacking Obamacare's "obsession with income."

By cutting overall spending and diverting subsidy dollars toward those who need them less, the plan leaves itself with relatively little for the most vulnerable, who would not be able to afford any more than a bare-bones "catastrophic" plan. For a while, they could finance out-of-pocket costs with extra money the government would deposit in health spending accounts, but that would only be a one-time credit.

Those with preexisting conditions would find some protection in Mr. Gillespie's program but with strict limits. If they went without health insurance for even relatively brief amounts of time, for example, insurance companies would be able to hike their rates or refuse them coverage, locking them out of the ordinary insurance market. In addition, the repeal of Obamacare's consumer protections would allow insurance companies to deter high-risk patients by carefully shaping their coverage plans — refusing to cover certain HIV or cancer medications, for example.

The plan would set aside an amount for states to create "high-risk pools" for sick patients outside of the ordinary insurance market. Health-care experts wonder whether that amount would cover the price tag for a large number of high-cost patients without forcing them to somehow pay large bills, through deductibles, co-payments or coverage limitations.

States could try to make the system more generous to the vulnerable within their borders, but the plan would allow people to buy insurance across state lines. Healthy people would flock to the cheapest plans, in-state or out, leaving a larger proportion of sick patients in state systems that seek to guarantee a higher standard without also offering higher subsidies.

And the Gillespie plan would increase the fiscal deficit. The Affordable Care Act raises all the money it spends, and more. By repealing ACA revenue-raising measures, Mr. Gillespie's alternative would leave nearly \$300 billion less in the treasury over 10 years, even after all its spending cuts.

The Government Wants To Study ‘social Pollution’ On Twitter

By Ajit Pai

[Washington Post](#), October 17, 2014

If you take to Twitter to express your views on a hot-button issue, does the government have an interest in deciding whether you are spreading “misinformation”? If you tweet your support for a candidate in the November elections, should taxpayer money be used to monitor your speech and evaluate your “partisanship”?

My guess is that most Americans would answer those questions with a resounding no. But the federal government seems to disagree. The National Science Foundation, a federal agency whose mission is to “promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity and welfare; and to secure the national defense,” is funding a project to collect and analyze your Twitter data.

The project is being developed by researchers at Indiana University, and its purported aim is to detect what they deem “social pollution” and to study what they call “social epidemics,” including how memes — ideas that spread throughout pop culture — propagate. What types of social pollution are they targeting? “Political smears,” so-called “astroturfing” and other forms of “misinformation.”

Named “Truthy,” after a term coined by TV host Stephen Colbert, the project claims to use a “sophisticated combination of text and data mining, social network analysis, and complex network models” to distinguish between memes that arise in an “organic manner” and those that are manipulated into being.

But there’s much more to the story. Focusing in particular on political speech, Truthy keeps track of which Twitter accounts are using hashtags such as #teaparty and #dems. It estimates users’ “partisanship.” It invites feedback on whether specific Twitter users, such as the Drudge Report, are “truthy” or “spamming.” And it evaluates whether accounts are expressing “positive” or “negative” sentiments toward other users or memes.

The Truthy team says this research could be used to “mitigate the diffusion of false and misleading ideas, detect hate speech and subversive propaganda, and assist in the preservation of open debate.”

Hmm. A government-funded initiative is going to “assist in the preservation of open debate” by monitoring social media for “subversive propaganda” and combating what it considers to be “the diffusion of false and misleading ideas”? The concept seems to have come straight out of a George Orwell novel.

The NSF has already poured nearly \$1 million into Truthy. To what end? Why is the federal government spending so much money on the study of your Twitter habits?

Some possible hints as to Truthy’s real motives emerge in a 2012 paper by the project’s leaders, in which they wrote ominously of a “highly-active, densely-interconnected constituency of right-leaning users using [Twitter] to further their political views.”

Truthy reminds me of another agency-funded study, in which the Federal Communications Commission sought to insert itself into newsrooms across the country. That project purported to examine whether news outlets were meeting what researchers determined were the “critical information needs” of the American people. And it involved sending out government-funded researchers to ask editors and reporters questions about their news philosophy and editorial judgment.

Once this study was brought to the attention of the American people, howls of protest from across the political spectrum led the FCC to scrap the project — thankfully. The episode reaffirmed that the American people, not their government, determine what their critical information needs are and that the First Amendment means the government has no place in the newsroom.

That principle applies here. Truthy's entire premise is false. In the United States, the government has no business entering the marketplace of ideas to establish an arbiter of what is false, misleading or a political smear. Nor should the government be involved in any effort to squint for and squelch what is deemed to be "subversive propaganda." Instead, the merits of a viewpoint should be determined by the public through robust debate. I had thought we had learned these lessons long ago.

Now, I do understand the motivation behind this scheme, even though I disagree with it. To those who wish to shape the nation's political dialogue, social media is dangerous. No longer can a cadre of elite gatekeepers pick and choose the ideas to which Americans will be exposed. But today's democratization of political speech is a good thing. It brings into the arena countless Americans whose voices previously might have received inadequate or slanted exposure.

The federal government has no business spending your hard-earned money on a project to monitor political speech on Twitter. How should it instead have reacted when funding for Truthy was proposed? The proper response wouldn't have required anywhere near 140 characters. It could have been, and should have been, #absolutelynot.

Fan Fiction, From Florida's Fangate Through History

By Alexandra Petri

[Washington Post](#), October 17, 2014

There's lots of real, serious news going on in the world. (There always is.)

But this week, the Internet was galvanized — or, if you like, set abuzz — by "Fangate." This saw former Florida governor Charlie Crist alone onstage with an electric fan for several minutes at Wednesday night's gubernatorial debate, while his opponent, Rick Scott, either fumed or waited patiently for further instructions from debate organizers backstage, depending on your source. Crist insisted that the debate rules allowed him a fan. Scott thought they didn't. It turns out that Crist and this fan travel everywhere together and have made something of a life with one another, even going on radio interviews, where a constant whirring noise is generally frowned upon.

The fan is less an electronic accessory to Crist at this point than a friend and confidant. As Molly Ball pointed out, in his years since leaving the governor's mansion, the fan has been his only pet.

Fans make admirable companions. They do everything a politician could possibly want: turn on a dime, generate buzz and blow hot air. And unlike more traditional pets, they never whine and whine until you succumb and take them for walks in the middle of a rainstorm, when they decide to just sit there and stare at a bush and do nothing.

"Thanks for sticking up for me, Charlie," the fan murmured to Crist, during the ride home. "It means a lot."

"Are you kidding?" Crist replied. "Of course I would. You are my number one fan."

How often in your life do you get the chance to write fan fiction about an actual fan? Not all that often, as my eighth-grade livejournal can attest.

Bizarre requests for accessories at debates have a long history.

Back in the Lincoln-Douglas days in 1858, Stephen A. Douglas always requested a footstool so that he could be seen over the podium. He never got the footstool, which explains his performance. Lincoln always requested the opportunity to wear a different face, but he never got this either.

The fact that there were no official presidential debates until 1960 actually stemmed from the demands made by the candidates. Rutherford B. Hayes and Samuel Tilden both requested electric fans at the debate in 1876, then both refused to take part after the organizers denied their request on the grounds that electric fans would not be invented for another six years.

At the debate between Wendell Willkie and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Willkie made an outrageous request: that Roosevelt show up. Instead, Roosevelt refused but said that Willkie could have as many fans onstage as he wanted.

John F. Kennedy refused to debate unless Nixon didn't have a fan.

During the vice presidential debate between Lloyd Bentsen and Dan Quayle, Quayle requested a fan, but this request backfired when his responses could still be heard over the noise it made.

Both Clinton and George H.W. Bush requested a fan onstage, but debate organizers put Ross Perot there instead.

Al Gore asked for a large hand-fan with a poem written on it made in the traditional Japanese style, so as to avoid causing the earth any undue discomfort by plugging something into her, and so he could have a poem to read during commercials. This request was denied. Every time Gore thought of his missing fan, he sighed loudly. George W. Bush, meanwhile, asked for "lots of fans, yeah, let's pack the whole debate with fans and give them big foam fingers that say 'W!'" until someone took him aside and explained what people were talking about.

In 2012, Mitt Romney asked that he be replaced onstage with a fan on the grounds that the fan seemed comparatively warm and human and polled better with female voters, but this request was denied.

It seems like a lot of fanfare over something so small. "Are we," as Charlie Crist asked, "really going to debate a fan?" But especially with debates, you never know what's going to seal the deal. These things always seem trivial right until the moment they aren't. It's not enough to win the debate. You have to appear to win the debate. In the battle of appearances, is it better to be onstage with a fan or not onstage at all?

The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind.

Mayoral Candidates Wave Promises Across D.C.

By Colbert I. King

[Washington Post](#), October 17, 2014

"I'd rather give up than give in to this
So promise me only one thing, would you?
Just don't ever make me promises,
No promises."

— "Promises, Promises," by Incubus

Too late for that. Election Day is around the corner, and the politicians feel compelled to tell us what they think we want to hear, even if it means making promises that can't be kept.

But set cynicism aside. Assume they mean what they say. Nagging questions remain: What will those promises cost? How will they be paid?

Those concerns were reinforced after I read nearly cover to cover the campaign manifesto of Democratic mayoral nominee Muriel Bowser, "Moving Forward Together: Priorities for the District's Future"; independent candidate David Catania's "Vision to Secure Our City's Future"; and independent Carol Schwartz's more modest position papers on affordable housing, education and growth.

The worthiness of the promises in those documents is not at issue. Many have value. Some, however, clearly come with huge costs. And many of the price tags are missing.

Let's start with Schwartz.

Schwartz, a fiscal hawk, makes her share of promises in those position papers. She says she would increase funding for tenant assistance programs, double the funding for the Local Rental Support Program, commit \$50 million to jump-start affordable housing programs and offer a "Welcome Back" tax credit to entice former residents to return to the city. She would expand magnet and vocational schools. She also says she would offer incentives to businesses to set up shop in enterprise zones, propose a system that allows large organizations to claim a tax credit for purchasing a percentage of their services and supplies from small, locally owned businesses and support minority business growth through increased funding.

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But when it comes to really making promises, make way for Catania.

If elected mayor, Catania promises to: invest more capital funds in the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), create a local low-income housing tax credit and increase funding for the Home Purchase Assistance Program.

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He also promises to double down on investments for college access and career training, fund and build a "D.C. Business Portal" to centralize and simplify permitting and licensing processes; expand the D.C. Health Professional Recruitment Program to ensure that every neighborhood has high-quality primary care; and ensure universal access to school nurses for all public school students.

And Catania promises to invest in programs that "help young people grow into productive members of our communities" and provide resources to get former inmates back on their feet. He pledges to invest in emergency preparedness and expand substance-abuse and mental-health treatment, including school-based mental-health services. He promises to "properly resource and empower" the Office on Aging, expand the presence of senior villages throughout the city and provide resources to "sustain this model in low-income communities." He also wants to increase the investigative capacity of Adult Protective Services.

Catania says he will seek to build an east-west and north-south streetcar system and more priority bus lanes and expand bicycle infrastructure to all areas of the city.

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Bowser's priorities, too, are chock-full of promises.

Bowser says she will, if elected: transform all middle schools by 2020, including "renovation and/or construction of new buildings"; expand early childhood education programs; increase science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) options across the city; provide additional resources to chronically underperforming schools; expand career and technical education; increase investment in UDC and the D.C. Community College; work to double the number of "community schools" in the city; and increase investment in professional development for teachers of students with disabilities.

Cha-ching

Bowser also promised to: invest in job creation; target financial support to growing small businesses; invest in new industries through a series of incentives and benefits; and launch a General Services and Public Works Academy.

Cha-ching

On public safety, Bowser promised to: bring the police force up to its authorized strength of 4,000; allocate funding for the purchase of body cameras; upgrade and modernize police headquarters and stations across the city; modernize fleet maintenance operations of the Fire and Emergency Services Department; and give that department money to hire more staff.

Cha-ching

Bowser cuts loose on the housing and environment fronts. She says she will dedicate \$100 million every year to meet the District's affordable housing production goals; increase resources for single-family rehab programs; improve tax subsidies for longtime residents; double the amount of down-payment assistance under the Home Purchase Assistance Program from \$40,000 to \$80,000; focus greater public subsidies on mixed-income development; end family homelessness by 2018 and all homelessness by 2025; and make solar power — now prohibitively expensive — accessible and affordable to all residents.

Cha-ching, cha-ching, cha-ching.

And the money to pay for all this?

Promise everything, give them . . .

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES

Biden Knew Drug Test Was Coming

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), October 17, 2014

There should have been no question in Hunter **Biden's** mind about the possibility of a random drug test.

So says the commander of the Norfolk, Va.-based unit where Vice President Joe **Biden's** youngest son was assigned until his February discharge due to a drug test failure a month after his 2013 commissioning.

"All sailors would be advised of the zero-tolerance policies when reporting aboard," said Capt. Jack Hanzlik, who commands the Navy Public Affairs Support Element in Norfolk. "And they would be advised of the testing practices of the organization, as well."

The importance of adherence to such policies continues after new arrivals, active or reservists, are assigned to their units.

"We have this kind of conversation with our sailors all the time — about expectations for performance," Hanzlik said. "Expectations for standards. Reliability on one another."

At least once a year but perhaps more frequently, members of the military — active and reserve — can expect to be given an unannounced urinalysis test for illegal drug use. Navy laboratories screen about 2.5 million urine specimens yearly, searching for drugs ranging from marijuana to heroin to cocaine — the drug that reportedly led to Hunter **Biden's** discharge.

"It's a random process," said Hanzlik. "The expectation, always, is that you need to be ready. Because you could have to give a sample today, you might have to give a sample again tomorrow. And two weeks from now, you might have to give a sample."

Hanzlik said he'd had no interaction with **Biden**. He commands the overall 275-member unit, but their reserve times didn't coincide during **Biden's** tenure with the unit. "He did drill with our unit on a couple of weekends" after his May indoctrination, Hanzlik said.

Testing would have occurred while **Biden** was present for duty at the Navy Operational Support Center Norfolk, the reserve center where he reported for work.

The Navy says 15 percent of all personnel at a given unit are tested each time a test is administered.

A U.S. Department of Health and Human Services official said the length of time traces of a drug remain in a person's system varies with an individual's size and frequency of use. On average, it takes 48 to 72 hours to leave the system, but it can take up to five days.

Biden, who had no prior military experience, was selected for commission as a reserve officer through the Direct Commission Officer program in 2012, according to the Navy. He was commissioned as an ensign in early May 2013 – one of six officers commissioned nationally into the public affairs division of the Navy Reserve.

In June 2013, **Biden**, then 43, was given a drug test that tested positive for cocaine, according to The Wall Street Journal, which broke the story late Thursday night. The paper cited “people familiar with the matter.” The Navy would not comment, citing the Privacy Act.

He wasn’t discharged until February. “Until an issue like that is adjudicated, the member continues to serve,” Hanzlik said.

Hunter, who could not be reached, is the younger brother of Delaware Attorney General Beau **Biden**, who is a major in the Delaware Army National Guard.

Drug testing

Some of the first drug tests in America were developed by the military during the Vietnam era as a significant number of service members were using marijuana and heroin, according to the Department of Defense.

In June 1971, then-President Richard Nixon directed a military drug urinalysis program to identify service members returning from Vietnam for rehabilitation. In the 1980s, screenings expanded as Ronald Reagan’s War on Drugs pushed for testing programs for employers, including regulations requiring that any company with a contract over \$25,000 with the federal government provide a Drug-Free Workplace.

It’s now estimated that more than 50 million people across the country are tested yearly for drug use in the work place, said Ron Flegel, division of workplace programs for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The agency is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

About 75 percent of those tested are in the private sector, Flegel said. Most of this is done for safety reasons, especially for industries that are regulated by federal agencies such as the Department of Transportation and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The aim is to avoid injury or injuries to others.

“When you look at anyone carrying guns or badges or any safety sensitive issue where you are driving a truck or flying a plane, there is always a safety sensitive issue around the public,” Flegel said.

While there are different forms of testing, the most common is a urine test. In the military, someone watches as the specimen is being provided.

“You physically go into the bathroom with a person observing you going to the bathroom in a cup,” Flegel said.

Results are returned in about three working days. No further testing is needed for negative results, however, “presumptive positive specimens” will be tested using gas chromatography/mass spectrometry. It takes seven working days to get these results.

“That in itself looks specifically at the ions in that drug,” Flegel said. “So it’s very, very accurate as to what drug it’s picking up.”

Plan To Expansion Wilmington Port Called A “Game Changer”

By Maureen Milford

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), October 18, 2014

A proposed expansion of the Port of Wilmington to an undeveloped site on the Delaware River in New Castle could generate significantly more than 4,000 high-paying jobs, maritime consultant Ed Zimny told a standing-room only crowd of 150 longshoremen, elected officials and community activists Friday.

Zimny, of Paul F. Richardson Associates Inc. in Holmdel, N.J., spoke for nearly two hours at a Wilmington forum held by the International Longshoremen's Association Locals 1883 and 1694. He called the maritime sector an "unbelievable economic sector" that beats banking, retail, insurance and other industries.

And he believes the private sector, including pension funds, would be willing to foot the bill for a \$400 million to \$600 million terminal development on 176 acres in the Riveredge Industrial Park located just south of the Delaware Memorial Bridge.

Zimny had the audience at the Sheraton Suites Wilmington Downtown Hotel on his side. In the crowd were several people from the Diamond State Port Corp., state lawmakers, Wilmington officials and New Castle County Council members.

"It's a win-win situation," said Marietta "Peaches" Whalen, a director of the Diamond State Port Corp., a corporate entity that owns and operates the Port of Wilmington.

Nick Ferrara Jr., president of Parkway Gravel, which has owned Riveredge Park for 20 years, called the proposed expansion a "game-changer for the state."

The expansion of the Port of Wilmington to the Delaware River has been a vision of the high-paid port workers who have been concerned for years about the transformation of the shipping industry with the advent of a new global fleet of mega-ships.

The port workers worry that Wilmington could miss out on an opportunity to capture some of these larger ships, which can carry almost double the containers of the previous generation of vessels.

At stake are high-paying jobs, said Ronald "Kimoko" Harris, business agent with International Longshoremen's Association Clerks and Checkers Local 1883, whose members work to load and unload cargo. Longshoremen are among the highest-paid blue-collar workers, with some earning more than \$100,000 a year.

The expansion proposal calls for a public-private partnership, with a public entity owning the land and the private sector operating the port on a long-term basis. Zimny said it would be much different than the recent proposal to have a private operator for the Port of Wilmington.

An attempt to lease the port to Kinder Morgan, the largest independent terminal operator in North America, met with fierce opposition from labor and lawmakers who felt the move would hurt blue-collar employment. Kinder Morgan dropped its bid in March.

Zimny said the Riveredge arrangement differs dramatically from the Kinder Morgan deal. Riveredge would be planned, developed and operated in a cooperative fashion, rather than a takeover of a public asset by a private company, Zimny said.

He envisions a long-term lease of 30 years or more by the public sector to an operator who would assume the financial, technical and operational risk. At the end of the lease, the port would revert to the public sector, he said.

According to Zimny, the Riveredge site is a "clean piece of canvas," that could position Wilmington to capture some of the larger ships. Work is already underway to reach out to potential investors, including pension funds, Zimny said.

For example, the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan is a major investor in container terminals, he said. According to the pension plan's website, it is invested in GCT Global Container Terminals Inc., which operates GCT Bayonne in Jersey City, N.J., and GCT New York in Staten Island.

Zimny said he cannot disclose at this point who the port promoters are talking with because of non-disclosure agreements.

The proposed Delaware project envisions a single large pier at Riveredge with enough berths to accommodate four or more ships. Six or more large container cranes could work on the larger container ships that have enormous capacity.

The site has enough space to accommodate warehouses, but New Castle County Executive Tom Gordon envisions capitalizing on the existing rail line near the properties to tie the Riveredge operation with the Port of Wilmington and the former General Motors assembly plant on Boxwood Road near Newport.

Gordon, a longtime supporter of the project, said an expansion at Riveredge could be a “gold mine” that would go a long way toward curbing crime in the city.

Gov. Jack Markell did not attend, but Gordon said he met with Markell about the project and Markell indicated he would be behind the development “if the numbers are real.”

The governor “is always interested in opportunities to have hundreds of millions of dollars of private investment and more people put to work in Delaware,” said Markell spokesman Jonathon Dworkin.

“If people are interested in making significant investments in this effort, he would definitely want to sit down with them,” Dworkin said.

U.S. Rep. John Carney, D-Del., who attended the forum, said it’s clear that Delaware needs more jobs that pay a livable wage.

Community activist Muhammad Salaam voiced an opinion expressed by many when he said it’s time to put politics aside.

“Joblessness has no color. Crime has no color,” Salaam said. “We don’t want to play politics with this industry.”

Liberians In Delaware Fight Ebola Stigma

By Jon Offredo

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), October 17, 2014

Pastor Moses Ndama constantly prays for his 85-year-old father.

Ndama’s father moved back to his birthplace in Liberia last year, a village a day’s drive from the country’s capital, Monrovia. He wanted to end his career and his life where it began, Ndama, pastor of Dover-based Freedom Christian Fellowship, said.

Now though, the Ebola epidemic threatens everything. Friends, family, and a way of life that has only emerged after a long civil war have all become casualties of the virus that has ravaged the West African country colonized by the United States.

The disease has killed many of the people Ndama knew in the village, including the people helping his father with everyday chores, like cooking and laundry. To date, 2,458 Liberians have died from the disease.

“It has taken a toll on him. We try to talk to him quite often to make him feel like we are still around, and that life goes on,” Ndama said. “We tell him, ‘please don’t die now, we want to get back to give you a good burial.’”

If his father were to pass away now, while Ebola still ravages the country, he would have to be cremated. That’s not the burial Ndama and his brother want for his father, who worked his whole life to give his family the opportunities to succeed.

The Ebola epidemic has taken a toll on those Liberians who have moved to the United States.

For those living stateside, the Ebola epidemic means something else aside from the constant worry for their loved ones. There’s a prejudice they face just because they are Liberian.

Mollyn Jarbo, a Delaware resident who was crowned Miss Liberia USA (and wishes to compete in Liberia for the chance to represent Liberia in the Miss World Competition) last year, said she gets weird looks when she says she's from Liberia, even though she moved here when she was little, and hasn't been back in years. She's now an American citizen.

"Not everyone that is coming from Liberia or traveling from Liberia. ... means they are affected by Ebola," Jarbo said. "At the end of the day, treat others like humans."

"We are Liberian, not the virus," she said.

Like many, Ndama and Jarbo are doing all they can to aid those who are still in Liberia. Since the outbreak, Jarbo said she's been in touch with many people in the area trying to raise awareness about the issue at home and collect goods like bleach, Clorox wash and other vital items in the fight against the virus.

Jarbo, her sister and mother left Liberia when she was young, fleeing the civil war that was tearing the country apart. But she still has family and friends, including her father, in Liberia. They talk often and when he speaks of the situation, Jarbo said she knows he's not sharing every detail so as not to worry her.

"It just breaks my heart to just know that I can't really help them or do anything but pray for them," she said.

Good hygiene saves lives

For Mohammed Nasser, who lives in Monrovia and worked with Liberia's youth for the government, daily life in the capital could at times be terrible.

"It's painful, especially when you drive out of the house. You see a lot of people standing along the street fighting for taxis..." said Nasser, who is currently staying in Delaware. "Sometimes you drive to some places in town, you see bodies lying along the street."

"It's terrible," he said, but added that the influx of aid and assistance is bringing hope to residents and things are getting a little better.

Nasser and his son flew into New York earlier this month. At the airport he was questioned and given a number to call if he had any problems. He said he was scheduled to go to a conference in Florida on youth development, but he and several other attendees from the region decided it was better not to go. No one displayed any symptoms or signs of sickness, but in light of the Ebola scare they wanted to play it safe, limit contact and avoid causing any concern.

Everyone in Liberia is taking the precautions health officials have recommended, he said. Hygiene is especially important to combat the spread of the virus, especially in a country that has a custom of shaking hands. Though he did not know anyone who became sick and neither he or his children ever displayed symptoms, they ardently followed health guidelines.

"We always wash our hands with chlorine and Clorox water wherever we go and whatever we touch," he said. "If I go to the supermarket to shop, I always wash my hands before I enter and before I come out. I don't know who touched what in our supermarket."

Ebola is spread person-to-person through infected body fluids, like blood, urine, feces, sweat, semen and breast milk. Transmission requires direct contact, meaning the virus can be spread through sexual intercourse, cuts or if infected fluids get into a person's eyes, nose or mouth.

The disease is not airborne, but can be passed through mucus membranes if an infected person coughs on someone and saliva touches a person's eyes, nose or mouth. It can be passed on the same way with mucus if an Ebola patient sneezes on someone.

Household cleaners, like bleach, can kill the virus, but it can live outside the body for a couple of hours on a surface such as a counter top and up to six days in fluid, such as blood. The threat of infection depends on many things, including the symptoms of the already infected person.

"It's important to remember that in the United States this is a public health challenge, not a health crisis," said U.S. Sen. Chris Coons, chair of the Senate's Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs.

"The difference between our public health systems is vast," Coons said.

Delaware's junior senator has spent a majority of his life traveling to the countries in Africa for advocacy, business and research. A little over a year ago, he traveled to Liberia.

He's optimistic that state health officials will be able to contain any suspected cases, but his constituents are still concerned about what is taking place overseas.

One constituent, a man of Liberian descent who lives in Delaware, lost his entire extended family living in Liberia to the virus, Coons said. Now the man wants to start a charity to help Liberian children who lost their parents to Ebola.

Coons said the crisis is another blow to a country that has been devastated by a civil war and failed to have their infrastructure and education systems bounce back.

"Now this is happening and it's going to make things difficult," he said.

Jarbo said she's thankful for the help from the United States. Hundreds of U.S. troops have gone to Liberia to combat the spread and Jarbo and other Liberians say they are eternally grateful for the help, especially since they are putting themselves at risk for a country that is not theirs. The troop's presence gives hope to those both in the country and their relatives still stateside.

"This used to be one country's problem, then it became West Africa's problem," Jarbo said. "Now it has become the world's problem. We all need to come together and solve this together."

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL EDITORIALS

Hunter Biden's Special Exceptions Raise Questions

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), October 17, 2014

Conservative talk show hosts and writers appear to be having a good time chatting about Hunter **Biden's** discharge from the U.S. Navy. The commentators, often-vociferous critics of Mr. **Biden's** father, the vice president, see an opportunity to score political points against the White House and prominent Democrats.

Personalities aside, the story raises important questions about politics and influence in Washington. By now, most people know the outline: Vice President **Biden's** youngest son joined the Navy last year. At age 43, it was an unusual decision. He had to win a special exemption from the Navy to do so. He also sought to be made an officer, again an unusual step. He had to win special permission because he did not have previous military experience, did not attend a military academy and did not serve in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps – the usual routes to being commissioned an officer. According to reports, he was discharged when he failed a routine drug test.

That is unfortunate for him and his family. However, several questions remain.

Age limits are waived under special circumstances. Likewise, it supposedly takes the same sort of circumstances to turn a military rookie into an officer without training. According to reports, only a handful of such cases arise each year. The military has a program that allows for such exceptions. An older individual can be admitted to the service and be made an officer if that individual fills a critical need.

That makes sense. Why let a critical need go unmet because of age or a few weeks' officers' prep time? One can imagine someone with rare skills answering his or her country's call at a crucial moment.

Hunter **Biden**, a lawyer by training, was made a public affairs officer and stationed with a Reserve outfit in Norfolk, Virginia. It is hard to imagine there ever being a critical need for a public affairs officer. Their skills involve putting out press releases, writing speeches, answering reporters' questions and giving tours of the base. How did this happen? Did anyone pull strings? Probably, no one had to. An illustration from the late David Halberstam's book, "The Best and the Brightest," offers a good explanation. He tells of the early years after World War II when Gen. George Marshall became secretary of state. The secretary may have dressed in civilian clothes, but when he spoke, everyone heard the voice of the five-star general who won the war.

Hunter **Biden** may have applied for his exceptions as an average American, but all of those Navy careerists filling out the paperwork saw him as the vice president's son, whether he told them or not.

That is an element of soft corruption. No laws were violated, but certainly, allowances were made. Institutions like the Navy have regulations for a purpose. Mr. **Biden**'s dismissal after failing a routine drug test is the result of one of those regulations. Whichever commander made that decision did the right thing. The Navy, indeed the whole system, should be faulted for the actions at the other end.

VICE PRESIDENTIAL *NEWS CLIPS*

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TO: THE VICE PRESIDENT AND STAFF

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TODAY'S EDITION

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BIDEN IN THE NEWS

Before Ebola, New Czar Handled Political Crises

By Julie Hirschfeld Davis

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

WASHINGTON — Ron Klain wanted Senator Joseph R. **Biden** Jr. to prepare for the worst.

So as he coached Mr. **Biden** through weeks of preparations for his vice-presidential debates in 2008, he assembled a notebook filled with questions — and calculated the precise percentage chance that each one would be asked.

"Ron could anticipate the questions to be asked of the candidate within a range of about 95 percent," said Tom Donilon, President Obama's former national security adviser and Mr. Klain's partner during that round of debate preparations.

Now Mr. Klain, named on Friday by the president to be the administration's Ebola response coordinator, will have to put his knack for anticipating worst-case scenarios to work on what has rapidly become not just a public health mess for the White House, but a political one.

A seasoned crisis-response operative and veteran of Democratic administrations and campaigns, Mr. Klain, 53, is charged with managing the federal efforts to monitor and contain the deadly virus that has touched off a wave of anxiety in the United States and raised questions about the competence of Mr. Obama's administration.

After Mr. **Biden** was elected vice president, Mr. Klain became his chief of staff, the same job he had served in under Al Gore. He is known for his ability to handle high-stakes and fast-moving political and policy challenges. Mr. Klain was the lead Democratic lawyer for Mr. Gore during the 2000 election recount, and was later played by Kevin Spacey in "Recount," the HBO drama about the disputed contest.

His appointment came as Mr. Obama and his team stepped up their efforts to monitor Ebola, which has sown mounting fear among the public despite having infected only three people in the United States.

It has also intensified criticism of the Obama administration's management of a major national challenge, fueled in recent days by reports that two health care workers were infected while caring for an Ebola-afflicted patient at a Dallas hospital, and one worker who subsequently flew on an airplane with a fever.

"What we were looking for is not an Ebola expert but rather an implementation expert, and that's exactly what Ron Klain is," said Josh Earnest, the White House press secretary. "He is somebody who has extensive experience in the federal government. He's somebody that has extensive management experience when it comes to the private sector."

Mr. Klain, who left Mr. **Biden**'s office in 2011, is currently the president of Case Holdings and the general counsel at Revolution L.L.C., companies that were founded by Steve Case, the former chief executive of AOL.

Now, Mr. Earnest said, he will be focusing “100 percent of his time on coordinating this whole-of-government response.”

The appointment drew criticism from congressional Republicans who said Mr. Klain — who has no record or expertise in Ebola specifically or public health in general — was the wrong person for the job.

“Ebola is a health crisis, yet the president has appointed as his new Ebola ‘czar’ a partisan loyalist whose expertise is politics — not health,” said Senator Jeff Sessions, Republican of Alabama. “One would think, faced with the prospect of an epidemic, the president would task an expert in epidemiology, not an expert in political spin.”

Yet some former co-workers said Mr. Klain is uniquely positioned to help Mr. Obama get tighter control of a multifaceted government effort to combat Ebola’s spread, and rein in a story that has spiraled out of the White House’s control.

“He can see 10 steps ahead, and he’s got the leadership skills, the management skills and the substantive knowledge to figure out how to get in front of this — get out of a reactive stance and into a proactive stance,” said Stephanie Cutter, a former senior White House adviser. “He’s able to solve problems before they happen.”

He is also known, including by Republicans, as someone who is empowered to make key decisions and cut deals. John Ulyot, a Republican strategist and communications consultant who worked with him in the private sector and on Capitol Hill, said it was Mr. Klain who met privately with Arlen Specter, the former Pennsylvania senator, to persuade him to switch his party affiliation in 2009 from Republican to Democrat.

“Bringing him in is a clear signal to Washington that you have a real decision-maker with the ear of the president to be able to walk in and get a very quick decision on the thorniest issue,” said Mr. Ulyot.

Former colleagues say Mr. Klain has a track record of successfully dispatching with knotty problems, policy or political. They point to his work helping Mr. **Biden** oversee the \$787 billion stimulus package, although the initiative has also earned him criticism, since it gave rise to a deal with the solar-panel company Solyndra, which went bankrupt after receiving \$535 million in federal loan guarantees.

“Ron will hit the ground running,” Mr. Donilon said. “He has deep relationships, he can master huge amounts of information quickly, pull together a staff quite quickly and well, and he will be able to operate at the cabinet level.”

Mr. Klain, a graduate of Harvard Law School who was a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice Byron R. White, will report directly to Lisa O. Monaco, Mr. Obama’s counterterrorism adviser and Susan E. Rice, his national security adviser.

Amid Assurances On Ebola, Obama Is Said To Seethe

By Michael D. Shear And Mark Landler

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

WASHINGTON — Beneath the calming reassurance that President Obama has repeatedly offered during the Ebola crisis, there is a deepening frustration, even anger, with how the government has handled key elements of the response.

Those frustrations spilled over when Mr. Obama convened his top aides in the Cabinet room after canceling his schedule on Wednesday. Medical officials were providing information that later turned out to be wrong. Guidance to local health teams was not adequate. It was not clear which Ebola patients belonged in which threat categories.

"It's not tight," a visibly angry Mr. Obama said of the response, according to people briefed on the meeting. He told aides they needed to get ahead of events and demanded a more hands-on approach, particularly from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "He was not satisfied with the response," a senior official said.

The difference between the public and private messages illustrates the dilemma Mr. Obama faces on Ebola — and a range of other national security issues — as he tries to galvanize the response to a public health scare while not adding to the sense of panic fueled by 24-hour cable TV and the nonstop Twitter chatter.

On Friday, Mr. Obama took a step to both fix that response and reassure the public, naming Ron Klain, a former aide to Vice President Joseph R. **Biden**, to coordinate the government's efforts on Ebola.

The appointment followed the president's statement Thursday that the job was necessary "just to make sure that we are crossing all the t's and dotting all the i's going forward." "Part of the challenge is to be assertive, to be in command, and yet not feed a kind of panic that could easily evolve here," said David Axelrod, a close adviser to the president in his first term. "It's not enough to doggedly and persistently push for answers in meetings. You have to be seen doggedly and persistently pushing for answers."

For two turbulent weeks, White House officials have sought to balance those imperatives: insisting the dangers to the American public were being overstated in the media, while also moving quickly to increase the president's demonstration of action.

The Ebola outbreak in West Africa, and its arrival in the United States, is the latest in a cascade of crises that have stretched Mr. Obama's national security staff thin. As the White House scrambled to stop the spread of Ebola beyond a handful of cases, officials were also grappling with an escalating military campaign against the Islamic State, the specter of a new Cold War with Russia over Ukraine, and the virtual disintegration of Yemen, which has been a seedbed for Al Qaeda.

Senior officials said they pushed Mr. Obama to name an Ebola coordinator as a way of easing pressure on the staff at the National Security Council.

At the meeting on Wednesday, officials said, Mr. Obama placed much of the blame on the C.D.C., which provided shifting information about which threat category patients were in, and did not adequately train doctors and nurses at hospitals with Ebola cases on the proper protective procedures.

On Thursday night, in televised remarks, Mr. Obama sought to reassure the public about the dangers from Ebola. But the sense of crisis that emanated from the White House was in sharp contrast to Sept. 30, when Thomas Eric Duncan, a Liberian who had traveled to Dallas, tested positive for Ebola. Mr. Obama received a telephone briefing from Dr. Thomas R. Frieden, the director of the C.D.C., after which the White House issued a sanguine statement that concluded: "We have the infrastructure in place to respond safely and effectively."

In the days that followed, Mr. Obama carried on as usual while his aides gamely added Ebola to their bulging portfolios. On Oct. 1, Mr. Obama met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, and later had dinner with friends at the RPM Steakhouse in Chicago, where he had traveled for fund-raisers and to deliver an economic speech.

By early October, as questions about the Dallas hospital's treatment of Mr. Duncan mounted, federal officials began reassessing their response, even as they continued to express confidence.

C.D.C. officials publicly dismissed the effectiveness of screening for Ebola at airports in the United States. But Jeh Johnson, the secretary of Homeland Security, found a way to make it work over the weekend of Oct. 4. Mr. Obama announced the screening protocol the following Monday.

Even after Mr. Duncan's death on Oct. 8, officials betrayed little sense of a change in approach. Mr. Obama traveled to California for campaign fund-raising and on his return to Washington, received a briefing from his secretary of health and human services about the announcement that a nurse who treated Mr. Duncan had contracted Ebola.

The business-as-usual sentiment at the White House changed abruptly, officials said, when a second nurse in Dallas contracted the disease early Wednesday morning. The fact that she had traveled on a Frontier Airlines flight despite having a fever added to the concern, officials said.

"This Frontier thing took it out of the abstract thing and to this level where people could identify with and made them scared," a senior official said. Within hours, White House aides canceled a planned trip by Mr. Obama to Connecticut and New Jersey. Hours later, Thursday's trip to Rhode Island and New York City was also scrubbed.

In their place, officials quickly designed two frenetic days of presidential activity: meetings, phone calls, statements to the press. All other subjects were shelved — at least publicly — to allow Mr. Obama and his senior advisers to confront the management of the Ebola crisis directly and to demonstrate the administration's resolve publicly.

Susan E. Rice, the national security adviser, has been leading the effort to prod Britain, Germany, France, and other countries to do more to respond to the outbreak. One of Ms. Rice's deputies, Lisa Monaco, who is responsible for homeland security and counterterrorism issues, has been coordinating the domestic response, which involves working with the C.D.C., state and local health authorities, and the Transportation Security Administration on issues like scanning of incoming passengers.

Administration officials insist the president has been deeply engaged since late August, when he played host to African leaders, in prodding them to ramp up the fight against Ebola in West Africa. Last month, he warned world leaders at the United Nations General Assembly to do more.

"It's not that people aren't doing anything," a senior official said. "It's that they're not yet doing enough."

Complicating the administration's international push, it is also pressing European allies to contribute military resources to the campaign against the Islamic State. Officials said they were satisfied with Britain and Germany, but that France had been dragging its heels.

Administration officials also said Mr. Obama felt that the United States needed to intensify its efforts because the World Health Organization was "slow to react to this," an official said.

On Friday afternoon, even before Mr. Klain started, the White House showed signs of returning to normal.

Mr. Obama chaired a meeting of the National Security Council to discuss the state of the fight against the Islamic State, which has become a grinding campaign in recent days, with American officials urging Iraq's new government to deploy its troops more aggressively. The president is scheduled to campaign for candidates running for governor in Maryland and Illinois on Sunday.

Ron Klain, Chief Of Staff To 2 Vice Presidents, Is Named Ebola Czar

By Julie Hirschfeld Davis And Michael D. Shear

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

WASHINGTON — President Obama on Friday named Ron Klain, a seasoned Democratic crisis-response operative and White House veteran, to manage the government's response to the deadly virus as public anxiety grows over its possible spread.

Mr. Klain, a former chief of staff for Vice Presidents Al Gore and Joseph R. **Biden Jr.**, is known for his ability to handle high-stakes and fast-moving political challenges. He was the lead Democratic lawyer for Mr. Gore during the 2000 election recount, and was later played by Kevin Spacey in the HBO drama "Recount" about the disputed contest.

"Obviously right now, the news is dominated by Ebola, and we've got an all-hands-on-deck approach across government to make sure that we're keeping the American people safe," Mr. Obama said on Friday at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, where he was announcing new antifraud measures for government-issued debit cards.

Mr. Klain's appointment, announced by a White House official, came as Mr. Obama and his team increased their efforts to monitor and contain Ebola, which has sown mounting fear among the public despite the fact that only two people have been confirmed to have contracted Ebola in the United States.

The virus has also threatened to raise questions about the Obama administration's competence, fueled in recent days by reports that two health care workers were infected while caring for an Ebola-afflicted patient at a Dallas hospital, and one subsequently flew on an airplane with a fever.

Mr. Klain is uniquely positioned to help Mr. Obama counter such questions and rein in a story that has sometimes seemed to spiral out of the White House's control, said one Democratic operative.

"He'll control the message better than most people would, which is really important from an economic standpoint, from a health standpoint, but it's also important from a political perspective," the operative said, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

"If anybody can get the way this is being reported and discussed under control in a short period of time, he's the one," the operative added.

The White House official said that Mr. Klain "comes to the job with strong management credentials, extensive federal government experience overseeing complex operations and good working relationships with leading members of Congress, as well as senior Obama administration officials, including the president."

After learning this week that an infected nurse had traveled by air, Mr. Obama scrapped most of his schedule in favor of meetings with top national security and public health officials. While praising their work to date on Ebola, the president said they had full plates — including the fight against the Islamic State and the onset of flu season — and another person might be needed "just to make sure that we are crossing all the t's and dotting all the i's going forward."

Mr. Klain will report directly to Lisa Monaco, Mr. Obama's homeland security adviser, and Susan E. Rice, his national security adviser, the official said. His appointment was first reported by CNN.

He is currently the president of Case Holdings and the general counsel at Revolution LLC, companies that were founded by Steve Case, the former chief executive of AOL. A graduate of Harvard Law School, Mr. Klain served as a law clerk for Justice Byron R. White and worked as an aide in the Senate, as well as in several Democratic campaigns.

Mr. Klain was chief of staff to Mr. **Biden** from 2009 to 2011, and held the same post from 1995 to 1999 for Mr. Gore. He was director of rapid response for Mr. Gore's 2000 presidential campaign.

The Ebola Panic Panic

Can they quarantine Jeanne Shaheen?

By James Taranto

[Wall Street Journal](#), October 18, 2014

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

Obama Appoints Lawyer To Handle Ebola Response

By Juliet Eilperin

[Washington Post](#), October 18, 2014

President Obama Friday tapped longtime Democratic operative Ron Klain to coordinate the federal government's response to the threat of widespread infection from the Ebola virus. The move came as the president and his administration faced mounting criticism about its handling of the disease.

The appointment of Klain, an experienced Washington lawyer who served as chief of staff to both Vice President **Biden** and former vice president Al Gore, signaled the administration's recognition that an Ebola outbreak in the United States could overwhelm its management capacity.

In Klain, 53, Obama has enlisted a legal expert and Democratic strategist with a reputation for handling complex projects such as the administration's economic stimulus package during Obama's first term and the Democratic effort to challenge the 2000 presidential election results.

Despite repeated reassurances from the White House and federal public health officials that the chances of widespread infection remain small, the public anxiety about the disease continued to build, and it is increasingly becoming a political issue as Election Day draws near.

A growing chorus of Democrats — several of whom are embroiled in tight reelection contests — are calling for increased travel restrictions on passengers from West Africa, even though the administration and public health experts warn such a move would be counterproductive.

White House press secretary Josh Earnest said Obama, who spoke to Klain by phone Friday morning, had chosen him because he "recognized that the response would benefit from having someone who could devote a hundred percent of their time to this specific task — that is, coordinating the response — and somebody like Mr. Klain, who has a strong management track record both inside government and in the private sector, is the right person for the job."

While the president's homeland security and counterterrorism adviser, Lisa Monaco, has been coordinating the domestic side of the inter-agency response to the outbreak since March, a White House official who spoke on the condition of anonymity said the administration began reassessing that approach after the issue "exploded on her agenda." This week, the official added, the White House started seriously contemplating the idea of bringing in outside help.

Earnest noted that Monaco, who also helps direct the administration's strategy to confront the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, "has significant responsibilities when it comes to other national security priorities as well."

Klain will report to Monaco and Susan E. Rice, the president's national security adviser.

In another move to ramp up the White House response Friday, Obama decided to designate senior personnel on the ground in Dallas, including an experienced Federal Emergency Management Agency coordinator and a White House liaison.

Klain is tasked with coordinating domestic preparedness efforts and the U.S. military operation to help control the virus's spread in West Africa. His appointment drew plaudits from Democrats but little praise from Republicans. Most GOP lawmakers questioned why the president was drawing on someone with a political and management pedigree rather than someone with public health or infectious disease credentials. And some faulted Obama for not taking more aggressive action to halt the flow of people from Ebola-affected countries into the United States.

"We don't need another so-called 'czar'; we need presidential leadership. This is a public health crisis, and the answer isn't another White House political operative," said Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) in a

statement. “The answer is a commander in chief who stands up and leads, banning flights from Ebola-afflicted nations and acting decisively to secure our southern border.”

Even Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), who had endorsed the idea of empowering a single person to oversee the federal response, tweeted that Klain was “not what I had in mind” and he preferred a Cabinet member “accountable to Congress.”

House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Edward R. Royce (R-Calif.) questioned Klain’s lack of medical credentials, asking in a statement, “Why didn’t the president pick an individual with a noteworthy infectious disease or public health background?”

“The fact of the matter is this is much broader than just a medical response,” Earnest said Friday. “What we were looking for is not an Ebola expert but rather an implementation expert, and that’s exactly what Ron Klain is.”

Klain emerged from the Al Gore 2000 and John F. Kerry 2004 presidential campaigns with a reputation as one of the Democrats’ most able strategists.

“I wouldn’t call him a policy wonk by any means, but he was someone who got [that] you couldn’t formulate good strategy without understanding the policy,” said Chris Jennings, who served as a top White House health policy adviser under former president Bill Clinton and Obama.

A Harvard Law School graduate, Klain clerked for Supreme Court Justice Byron White before rising through the staff ranks in the Senate to secure the job of Gore’s chief of staff at just 31. Klain became close with **Biden** while serving as a staffer for the Senate Judiciary Committee when **Biden** served as chairman and helped advise **Biden** during the 2008 campaign.

During Obama’s pre-inaugural transition, the newly-elected president wanted to find a role for Klain in the West Wing, and his name was mentioned as a potential White House communications director, according to a person familiar with the internal deliberations. But **Biden** also wanted him and convinced Klain to join the vice president’s office as chief of staff. More recently, Klain was a serious contender for the post of White House counsel — though W. Neil Eggleston ultimately took the job.

Mark Gitenstein, a former Obama administration ambassador to Romania, said Klain developed a strong relationship with Obama while helping prepare the then-senator from Illinois for the presidential debates against Republican nominee John McCain (R-Ariz.) in 2008. Klain had served in a similar role for Kerry’s 2004 campaign.

Klain is an enthusiastic Facebook user who frequently posts about his family. He is married to Monica Medina, who served as a top National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration official during Obama’s first term and is the National Geographic Society’s senior director for international ocean policy.

Gitenstein said he believed that Klain’s management of the economic stimulus push in the first year of the Obama administration helped him prepare for the challenges that he’ll face managing the Ebola response. “It was a very difficult job — a management problem and a problem of getting the money to the right places, which required coordination with other Cabinet secretaries. . . . Ron really got his arms around the problem as fast as anyone I’ve seen.

Klain is taking a leave of absence as president of Case Holdings, the holding company for the business and philanthropic interests of former AOL chairman Steve Case, and general counsel of Case’s venture capital firm Revolution LLC. No start date has been set for his new White House job, but Earnest said he would start “soon” and is expected to work for roughly five to six months on the Ebola initiative.

The Klain announcement came as Ebola fears continued to reverberate across the country. Friday brought news that a health-care worker from the Dallas hospital that has been the epicenter of Ebola in the United States had been isolated on a cruise ship that left Texas on Sunday.

This health-care worker had no direct contact with Thomas Duncan, the Liberian man who was diagnosed with Ebola and later died after flying to Texas last month. But, according to Jen Psaki, spokeswoman for the State Department, the person “may have had contact with” fluid samples from Duncan during his treatment. Mexican authorities did not allow the cruise ship to make a scheduled visit to Cozumel on Friday, according to Carnival Cruise Lines. It is scheduled to return to Galveston, Tex., on Sunday morning.

In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced late Thursday that another large group of people had to be contacted and screened. The CDC had said it was reaching out to anyone who was on the Frontier Airlines flight taken by Amber Vinson, the second Dallas nurse to contract Ebola, when she traveled from Cleveland to Texas on Monday. However, the CDC says it is reaching out to passengers on the Frontier flight she had taken to Ohio on Oct. 10 to see whether they are deemed to be at potential risk.

Obama Naming Ebola Czar Follows Long White House Practice

By Jim Snyder And Kathleen Hunter

[Bloomberg News](#), October 18, 2014

They’ve been used for everything from retooling for World War I to cleaning up the nation’s largest offshore oil spill.

But history shows the appointment of special presidential coordinators, as President Barack Obama did today to combat Ebola, doesn’t always work.

“We’ve had dozens of them over the decades and I’d say they have a 50-50 success record at best,” said Paul Light, a public service professor at New York University. “I’m having a hard time thinking of any who really made very much of a difference.”

Obama plans to appoint Ron Klain, 53, a former chief of staff to both Vice President Joe **Biden** and former Vice President Al Gore, as an Ebola coordinator who’ll direct various agency activities to stop the spread of the deadly disease.

In doing so, he’s following in footsteps that go back at least to President Woodrow Wilson, who chose Bernard Baruch, a businessman, to prepare the country for World War I, said Mitchel Sollenberger, an associate provost at the University of Michigan in Dearborn, who co-wrote a book about the history of policy coordinators, often referred to as “czars.”

“The problem with creating czars is they add that other layer of bureaucracy,” he said in an interview. “It’s much more about optics and politics than in resolving issues.”

Appointing an adviser doesn’t always help achieve White House goals. Production of military equipment actually declined during Baruch’s service, Sollenberger said.

Obama has faced pressure from Republicans in Congress to take additional steps to ease public fears about Ebola, including from Senator John McCain of Arizona, who called for the naming of “some kind of czar” in a talk show interview.

Today lawmakers welcomed the creation of the post though questioned whether Klain’s experience – he has no background in health care – is the right fit.

“What has been missing from this administration’s response to Ebola is not a new figurehead,” said Fred Upton, a Michigan Republican and chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. “What we need is a strategy to get ahead of this, and restore the public’s faith that they are safe.”

Thomas Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was questioned yesterday by a congressional panel for what at times has seemed like an uncertain response to the

outbreak following the diagnosis of Thomas Eric Duncan, who contracted Ebola in Liberia, in a Dallas hospital. Since Duncan died Oct. 8, two of his nurses have also been diagnosed with the disease.

Klain's appointment could put pressure on government agencies to better respond to the crisis because he "knows how the government works," said Gilbert Burnham, co-director of the Center for Refugee and Disaster Response at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

Burnham said a week ago he thought it wasn't necessary to create such a position but recent missteps in the response have led him to change his mind.

One of Duncan's nurses at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital, Amber Vinson, flew on a commercial flight from Cleveland back to Dallas with a slight fever earlier this week. Frieden has said that the nurse shouldn't have flown though he acknowledged that the CDC had given her approval to travel.

In the days since, schools in Ohio and Texas have closed as a precaution and Frontier Airlines has notified passengers and crews on the plane's subsequent flights of the possible exposure.

Klain's experience appeared to be a good fit because the response to Ebola requires coordination of various federal agencies, Burnham said.

Pedro Greer, a Miami doctor who won the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009 for treating the poor, agreed.

"You have all the scientists and experts at the CDC but what you need is a manager," Greer, who also teaches at Florida International University's medical school in Miami, said. "With all due respect, we scientists are not the best managers."

White House policy coordinators have a mixed record of success though at managing crises.

Presidents usually make such appointments when pressure mounts for action, Sollenberger said. Dozens of people have been appointed in recent decades to direct action on issues including drug abuse, education reform, faith-based initiatives, climate change, and executive pay.

Sollenberger said he and co-author Mark Rozell, a public policy professor at George Mason University in Arlington, Virginia, tallied 11 appointed czars under President George W. Bush and 21 under Obama.

One of the go-to advisers for presidents recently has been former U.S. Coast Guard Admiral Thad Allen, who directed the Bush administration's response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and went on to serve the Obama White House as commander of the response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010.

Special advisers often have no legal authority to direct actions. Their power instead rests however with their political ties to the president, said John Harrison, a law professor at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

"They're like the chief of staff of the White House, who legally speaking can't order anyone to do anything, but whose suggestions to officials, including cabinet officials, are generally complied with because they are in effect from the president," Harrison said in an e-mail.

Maintaining a high profile can help Klain bring publicity to official pronouncements, which could provide additional motivation for government agencies to act, Harrison said.

Tom Ridge, who was special assistant on Homeland Security to Bush, said Klain's success may depend on his level of access to Obama.

"It wasn't lost on anyone that I was in the White House every day, with a report to the president," said Ridge, who was later confirmed as the first secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

Klain will report directly to Lisa Monaco, Obama's national security adviser. One of Klain's first steps should be to identify one or two people who can talk effectively about the Ebola response, and it shouldn't be him, Ridge said.

“He should take a cue from his title – Ebola crisis coordinator,” Ridge said. “He cannot and should not be the messenger. He’s apparently a brilliant lawyer with excellent credentials, but he’s not a health care professional.”

Obama’s Pick For Ebola Coordinator Draws Criticism

By Angela Greiling Keane, Kathleen Hunter And Toluse Olorunnipa

[Bloomberg News](#), October 18, 2014

President Barack Obama’s choice of a long-time Democratic political operative as the nation’s Ebola response coordinator drew scorn from administration critics who said someone with a medical background is needed.

Ron Klain, 53, a lawyer and former chief of staff to Vice President Joe **Biden** and to former Vice President Al Gore, was appointed amid rising alarm from lawmakers and the public about the government’s handling of the first three cases of the Ebola to emerge in the U.S.

Representative Tim Murphy, a Pennsylvania Republican who led a hearing this week where lawmakers grilled federal officials about the Ebola response, called Klain’s selection “shocking and frankly tone deaf to what the American people are concerned about.”

White House press secretary Josh Earnest defended the choice, saying Klain’s management expertise is necessary to coordinate the multiple departments and agencies involved, and he has established relationships with members of Congress.

“This is much broader than just a medical response,” Earnest said at a White House briefing yesterday. “He is the right person to make sure that we are integrating the inter-agency response to this significant challenge.”

Representative Fred Upton, the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, said Obama should have appointed someone with a background in health care or infectious disease.

“What has been missing from this administration’s response to Ebola is not a new figurehead,” the Michigan Republican, said in an e-mailed statement. “What we need is a strategy to get ahead of this, and restore the public’s faith that they are safe.”

Until he opened the door to appointing a single coordinator on Oct. 16, Obama had said his existing staff of advisers could handle Ebola, which is the subject of growing fear in the U.S., with some schools closing in Texas and Ohio and quarantines of health-care workers.

“It’s not that they haven’t been doing an outstanding job really working hard on this issue, but they also are responsible for a whole bunch of other stuff,” Obama said at the White House after meeting with members of his team.

As part of the administration effort, Obama plans to assign senior personnel to serve on the ground in Dallas, including an experienced FEMA coordinator and a White House liaison to make sure all of the region’s needs are met, according to a White House statement.

Republican lawmakers have faulted the response by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in trying to keep Ebola infections contained and the public informed. After a Liberian man visiting Dallas died of Ebola last week, two nurses who treated him became the first people infected with the virus in the U.S.

Klain will report to National Security Adviser Susan Rice and the president’s homeland security adviser, Lisa Monaco. Klain has a long background in politics, including representing Gore in the Florida recount in 2000. His official biography lists no experience in public health.

Picking someone with a medical background would have been prudent from both health and political perspectives, said John Thomas, a law professor at Quinnipiac University who previously taught public health.

"We have a public who's very, very fearful, lots of exaggeration about how the virus might be transmitted," he said in an interview. "If we had a czar with a background, it might lead to a little more confidence in the speaker."

Klain has the ability to bridge partisan divides, given his time as a staff member on the Senate Judiciary Committee, said Jon Leibowitz, a friend of Klain since they worked together on the panel in the late 1980s.

"Ron has very good relations with Republicans, particularly in the Senate," Leibowitz, who was chairman of the Federal Trade Commission until last year, said in an interview.

Klain is "one of the most gifted people I know" and has the energy and ability to learn new topics quickly to do the job well, said Leibowitz, now a partner at the Davis Polk law firm in Washington.

Pedro Greer, a Miami doctor who won the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009 for treating the poor and teaches at Florida International University's medical school, said Klain's lack of background in public health isn't necessarily a deficit for the job of a coordinator.

"You have all the scientists and experts at the CDC but what you need is a manager," Greer said. "With all due respect, we scientists are not the best managers."

One of the key parts of the job will be better informing the public about the virus and containment efforts, he said.

"There's a hysteria going on about it," Greer said. "What you need to have is a very well-educated public and that requires a lot of work."

Klain is currently general counsel at Revolution LLC and president of Case Holdings, two companies founded and run by former AOL chief executive Steve Case.

Case said in a statement on the company's website the Klain will be taking a leave of absence. He called him "a talented manager" who understands government and business.

John Ulyot, a former Senate Republican aide, called Klain "a real roll-up-your sleeves kind of guy" who "knows all the angles on a problem."

Klain's appointment is "a signal they are bringing in someone very senior who can cut through any red tape as needed and get a decision from the Oval Office any time it's necessary," Ulyot said.

White House Touts Ebola Czar Ron Klain's Ties To Congress

By Steven Dennis

[Roll Call](#), October 18, 2014

President Barack Obama has picked Ron Klain to be the Ebola czar, according to the White House, a move that appears aimed at quelling a firestorm from Congress and the public over the handling of the crisis.

Klain is a longtime Washingtonian and Harvard-educated lawyer who previously served as Vice President Joseph R. **Biden** Jr.'s chief of staff. He isn't known for his work in health care, but the White House emphasized his management background and relationships with Congress.

But congressional criticism of the pick came almost immediately via Twitter.

"Worst ebola epidemic in world history and Pres. Obama puts a government bureaucrat with no healthcare experience in charge. Is he serious?" tweeted Rep. Andy Harris, R-Md., an anesthesiologist.

Sen. Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y., was the first out of the gate to laud the pick.

“I’ve known Ron Klain for over twenty years,” he said in a statement. “He is smart, aggressive, and levelheaded; exactly the qualities we need in a czar to steer our response to Ebola. He is an excellent choice.”

Klain also has a sense of public relations — something the White House could use given the harsh criticism of officials who have been the face of the Ebola response, including Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Thomas Frieden.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., who has been calling for an Ebola coordinator since early September, said Klain “understands the importance of clear communications to the containment of a crisis like this.”

Klain’s congressional experience includes stints as staff director of the Senate Democratic Leadership Committee, and the chief counsel of the Senate Judiciary Committee, but it’s not clear how strong his ties are to the House.

An aide to Speaker John A. Boehner, R-Ohio, was unaware of any Klain ties to the House, but said the White House did give Boehner’s office notice about the pick.

It’s also not entirely clear yet what the Obama administration will be seeking from Congress — although Press Secretary Josh Earnest noted yesterday that Congress controls the purse strings.

Democrats have been pushing for more funding for public health and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has said the CDC should get the money it needs to battle the Ebola virus.

Unlike, say, a new surgeon general, Klain’s newly created position does not need Senate confirmation — a bonus given that the Senate is in the middle of a lengthy pre-election recess.

The news was first reported by CNN.

A White House official confirmed the pick in a memo:

EBOLA RESPONSE COORDINATOR

The President has asked Ron Klain to take on the task of coordinating his administration’s whole of government Ebola response. He will report directly to the President’s Homeland Security Advisor Lisa Monaco and the President National Security Advisor Susan Rice as he ensures that efforts to protect the American people by detecting, isolating and treating Ebola patients in this country are properly integrated but don’t distract from the aggressive commitment to stopping Ebola at the source in West Africa. Klain’s role is consistent with the view the President articulated in the Oval Office last night that Monaco, Rice and others have done outstanding work in confronting this challenge so far – but given their management of other national and homeland security priorities, additional bandwidth will further enhance the government’s Ebola response.

Klain, an attorney, comes to the job with strong management credentials, extensive federal government experience overseeing complex operations and good working relationships with leading members of Congress, as well as senior Obama administration officials, including the President.

KLAIN BIO

Ron Klain is President of Case Holdings and General Counsel at Revolution LLC, a technology-oriented venture capital firm based in Washington, DC. Prior to joining Revolution, Ron was a Partner and National Practice Group Chair at O’Melveny & Myers LLP.

In addition to his career in law and business, Ron has extensive public service experience, most recently as a senior White House aide to President Obama and Chief of Staff to Vice President **Biden**. In that position, on behalf of Vice President **Biden**, he helped oversee implementation of the Recovery Act, a major interagency and intergovernmental project. Earlier, he served as Chief of Staff for Vice President Al Gore, and before that, as Chief of Staff for Attorney General Janet Reno. He has also served as the

Staff Director of the Senate Democratic Leadership Committee, and the Chief Counsel of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Ron is a summa cum laude graduate of Georgetown University and holds a JD, magna cum laude, from Harvard Law School, where he was an Editor of the Harvard Law Review and won the Sears Prize for the highest grade average in 1985. He served as a law clerk to Supreme Court Justice Byron White.

Ebola Czar Ron Klain Was A Fannie Mae And Cigna Lobbyist

By Timothy P. Carney

[Washington Examiner](#), October 17, 2014

K Street Democratic operative Ron Klain is now Obama's Ebola czar. Klain served as chief of staff to Janet Reno and then Al Gore in the 1990s, and as Joe **Biden's** chief of staff recently. In between, of course, he was a corporate lobbyist. Klai

"They won't work in my White House!" candidate Obama proclaimed about lobbyists. This was never true. Obama has hired about 100 lobbyists, and now he's just promoted one of them: revolving-door K Street Democratic operative Ron Klain is now Obama's Ebola czar.

Klain served as chief of staff to Janet Reno and then Al Gore in the 1990s, and as Joe **Biden's** chief of staff recently. In between, of course, he was a corporate lobbyist.

Klain worked at O'Melveny & Myers, lobbying on behalf of Fannie Mae, U.S. Airways, Time Warner, Cigna, ImClone, and other companies and industry groups.

Lobbying on "regulatory issues concerning Fannie Mae" in 2004, as disclosure forms indicate Klain did, involved convincing Congress and Fannie Mae's regulators that Fannie Mae wasn't doing anything dangerous, and wasn't exposing taxpayers to risk. In other words, Ron Klain got paid to help fuel the housing bubble up until a couple of years before it popped.

'Ebola Czar' Brings Decades Of Washington Experience

By Matt Hansen

[Los Angeles Times](#), October 18, 2014

The man tapped to be the country's "Ebola czar" is a veteran Washington advisor and Democratic strategist who will oversee a multi-agency response to the outbreak in West Africa and the U.S. cases, the White House announced Friday.

In a change from a career spent mainly behind the scenes, Ron Klain becomes the Obama administration's point person leading a complicated and highly-visible government Ebola strategy.

Klain, a longtime confidant to Democratic presidents and presidential candidates, brings to the job an in-depth knowledge of federal agencies and processes, former colleagues said.

Republicans, however, challenged the appointment, calling him a political appointee with little relevant medical background.

"What we were looking for is not an Ebola expert but rather an implementation expert, and that's exactly what Ron Klain is," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said Friday. "He is somebody who has extensive experience in the federal government. He's somebody that has extensive management experience when it comes to the private sector."

Klain previously served as chief of staff for Vice President Joe **Biden**, and currently is president of Case Holdings and general counsel for Revolution LLC, a venture firm founded by Steve Case, the former chief executive of AOL. He will take a leave of absence from the firm to accept the new position, the company said.

The goal of the new position is to coordinate response to the cases in the United States while maintaining efforts in West Africa, the White House said. Klain will report to Homeland Security advisor Lisa Monaco and national security advisor Susan Rice.

The government's Ebola response now encompasses a wide array of federal agencies, from medical research facilities like the National Institutes of Health to the U.S. military, which is helping with relief efforts in West Africa.

President Obama created the job Friday after a Senate hearing Thursday in which lawmakers criticized Ebola efforts, including those led by U.S. Centers for Disease Control head Thomas Frieden, as inadequate. The government's response has come under fire since two Dallas nurses were infected with the deadly virus while treating a Liberian man who presented the first case of Ebola diagnosed on American soil.

After the hearing, Obama said he would consider appointing a director to ensure government efforts were well-coordinated.

"It may make sense for us to have one person to have a more regular process just to make sure that we're crossing all the T's and dotting all the I's," he told reporters Thursday.

But the president's choice Friday has not gone without criticism. Klain's lack of specific medical experience and his ties to the Democratic Party made him an easy target for Republicans.

"This appointment is both shocking and frankly tone deaf to what the American people are concerned about," Rep. Tim Murphy (R- Penn.) said in a statement. "Installing yet another political appointee who has no medical background or infectious disease control experience will do little to reassure Americans who are increasingly losing confidence with the administration's Ebola strategy."

Colleagues who worked with Klain said they expected him to handle the logistical, not the medical, response to the epidemic.

"I do expect that the medical experts will still deal with the medical issues," said Neera Tanden, a former advisor to the president on healthcare reform. "But it's important to have someone who understands what the public could be worried about tomorrow or the next day."

Though Tanden said she was unsure whether the White House would make Klain the public face of the Ebola response, she said he had experience communicating with the public and would understand how important outreach would be.

Most important, she said, he had the experience necessary to manage a complicated federal process.

"I think at this point in the public health challenge we're facing with Ebola, it's a multi-agency issue," she said. "It's a significant management issue, and Ron Klain is a fantastic manager."

Others cited Klain's close working relationship with both the president and the vice-president as an asset.

"He has a very good personal relationship with [Vice President Joe] **Biden** and with the president, and that close personal relationship will give him the influence he needs and the credibility he needs," said Brian Boyle, a former legal colleague of Klain who attended law school with him.

An attorney, Klain has had a long career as a trusted aide to Democratic presidents. In the Clinton administration, he worked as chief of staff for Vice President Al Gore and Atty. Gen. Janet Reno. Under **Biden**, he coordinated the launch of the 2009 Recovery Act, the Obama administration's national stimulus package intended to spur job growth nationwide.

Apart from policy decisions, Klain has been equally active behind the scenes in Democratic politics, helping candidates Obama, Clinton, Gore and John Kerry in debate preparations. He also helped lead

the recount effort for Gore in the 2000 election, which led to a moment of celebrity when Kevin Spacey portrayed him in an HBO television movie.

People familiar with Klain's background say that his experience in Washington will serve him well yet his status outside the administration will enable him to get things done.

"He's not a part of the bureaucracy, so he can come in and stomp on bureaucratic toes if that's what it takes to get action here," said Evan Bayh, a former Indiana senator who knows Klain well. "He's a short timer, so he can make tough decisions and cross bureaucratic barriers to get people to collaborate and get the job done."

Obama Naming Former Biden Staffer Ebola 'czar'

[New York Post](#), October 17, 2014

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama is naming Ron Klain, a former chief of staff to Vice President Joe **Biden** and a trusted adviser at the Obama White House, as the point man on the U.S. government's response to the Ebola crisis.

Obama has been under pressure to name an Ebola "czar" to oversee health security in the U.S. and actions to help stem the outbreak in West Africa.

Klain has been out of government since leaving **Biden's** office during the Obama's first term. The White House said that Klain would report to national security adviser Susan Rice and to homeland security and counterterrorism adviser Lisa Monaco.

Klain, a lawyer, also served as chief of staff for Vice President Al Gore. He previously served under Attorney General Janet Reno in the Clinton administration.

White House: We Didn't Want 'an Ebola Expert' To Be The Ebola Czar

By Ben Wolfgang

[Washington Times](#), October 18, 2014

To manage the government's response to the Ebola outbreak, the Obama administration says it wasn't looking for someone who is an expert on Ebola.

The White House on Friday named Ron Klain as its "Ebola response coordinator," though he's quickly become known as the "Ebola czar." Mr. Klain is an attorney who worked for vice presidents Joseph R. **Biden** and Al Gore and is general counsel at Revolution LLC, a tech-focused venture capital firm.

He also is president of Case Holdings, which handles business interests for former AOL CEO Steve Case.

What Mr. Klain is not is a medical expert, nor is he someone who has any particular knowledge about Ebola.

Despite that, the administration says he is the right man for the job.

"It is not solely a medical response. That's why someone with Mr. Klain's credentials, somebody that has strong management experience both inside government but also in the private sector ... all of that means he is the right person for the job," White House press secretary Josh Earnest told reporters Friday. "The president wanted somebody who could serve in a coordinating function to manage our implementation of a whole-of-government approach to this Ebola situation ... What we were looking for is not an Ebola expert but rather an implementation expert. That's exactly what Ron Klain is."

How A Term For Russian Royalty Worked Its Way Into American Government

By Ben Zimmer

[Slate Magazine](#), October 18, 2014

On Friday, President Obama chose Ron Klain, a former chief of staff to Vice President Joe **Biden**, be the nation's "Ebola czar." But what does an American "czar" do? And why do we even call them czars? In a 2008 piece for Slate, Ben Zimmer explains the term's history. The original article is printed below.

Ron Klain, above in New York City in 2008, was named the Ebola czar by President Obama on Oct. 17, 2014.

Photo by Andrew H. Walker/Getty Images

When Benjamin Franklin wanted to describe our national indifference to royal pomp and circumstance, he would compare Americans to a London porter whose heavy load once jostled Czar Peter the Great. When told he had just bumped into the czar, the porter responded: "Poh! We are all czars here!"

Franklin's porter could have been describing the incoming Obama administration. Already Tom Daschle has been tapped for "health czar" and Carol Browner for "climate czar." Adolfo Carrión is expected to be the "urban affairs czar." There's also been talk of a "technology czar" and a "copyright czar." Plans for a "car czar" recently fell apart on Capitol Hill, but Obama and the incoming Congress will try, try again in the new year.

This efflorescence of czars—those interagency point people charged with cutting through red tape to coordinate policy—has people wondering: Why do we use a term from imperial Russia to describe bureaucratic troubleshooters?

Czar first entered English back in the mid-16th century, soon after Baron Sigismund von Herberstein used the word in a Latin book published in 1549. The more correct romanization, tsar, became the standard spelling in the late 19th century, but by that time czar had caught on in popular usage, emerging as a handy label for anyone with tyrannical tendencies.

On the American scene, czar was first bestowed on one of Andrew Jackson's foes: Nicholas Biddle, president of the Bank of the United States. Jackson vehemently opposed the centralized power of the bank, which he called a "hydra of corruption," and his clash with Biddle exploded into the "Bank War" of 1832-36. One of Jackson's staunchest allies in this fight, Washington Globe Publisher Frank Blair, dubbed Biddle "Czar Nicholas"—a potent image at a time when Russia's Nicholas I was at the height of his repressive nationalist regime. (Jackson's opponents fought fire with fire, calling him King Andrew I.)

After the Civil War, journalist David Ross Locke (writing under the moniker "Petroleum V. Nasby") lampooned Andrew Johnson's mishandling of Reconstruction, anointing him "the Czar uv all the Amerikas." But it wasn't until 1890 that the "czar" label became an American political staple. Republican House Speaker Thomas Reed incensed Democrats by disallowing a favored stalling tactic of the minority party: not responding to a quorum call. When Reed pushed through a rule that allowed the speaker to count members as present for the quorum even if they didn't respond, Democratic congressmen erupted with cries of "Czar! Despot! Tyrant!"

The "Czar Reed" image stuck; the speaker would be known as "czar" for the rest of his career, after which time an even more potent House speaker, Joe Cannon, would inherit the title. As Reed's biographer William A. Robinson observed, the nickname "had no pleasant connotations" at the time. "In 1890, it brought to the mind the Russian autocrat himself," along with images of "the Cossacks, Siberia, and the knout" (a whip used for flogging).

That would all change after the Russian Revolution deposed the last real-life czar in 1917; painful images of imperial repression quickly faded to the background and Communist leaders became the new dictatorial icons. Accordingly, kinder, gentler “czars” made their way into American public life. When Kenesaw Mountain Landis became the first commissioner of baseball in 1920, “czar of baseball” worked just fine for the headline writers. New York had its “boxing czar” (Athletic Commission Chairman William Muldoon) and its “beer czar” (Alcoholic Beverage Control Board Chairman Edward Mulrooney). And when Nicholas Longworth served as House speaker in the late ‘20s, he distinguished himself from his predecessors Reed and Cannon as the “genial czar.”

The newly benign term evolved again during World War II, when Roosevelt expanded the government rapidly and appointed a host of brand-new federal overseers. The Washington Post reported in 1942 on the sudden rush of “executive orders creating new czars to control various aspects of our wartime economy,” and a cartoon from that year shows “czar of prices” Leon Henderson, “czar of production” Donald Nelson, and “czar of ships” Emory S. Land all cramming onto one throne.

In the postwar era, the rise of the “czar” has accompanied the expanding role of the executive office in promoting policy initiatives; the term tends to be used when presidents create special new posts for the individuals charged with pushing those initiatives through. Nixon succumbed to czarmania, appointing the first “drug czar,” Jerome Jaffe, in 1971 (long before William Bennett took the mantle in 1988). But it was the title of “energy czar” that got the most attention during those days of OPEC embargoes and gas rationing. Though John A. Love first held the title in 1973, his more powerful successor William E. Simon really got the “czar” ball rolling. Doonesbury cartoonist Garry Trudeau found the “czar” title fitting, depicting Simon imperiously asking for his “signet ring and hot wax.” Simon, for his part, enjoyed the sendup and took pleasure in colleagues calling him “your czarship.”

When Nixon offered him the job, Simon would later recall, the president himself used the term energy czar and discomfitingly likened the role to that of Hitler’s minister of armaments, Albert Speer. Subsequent presidents, however, have shied away from the C-word and its domineering, anti-democratic connotations. Most recently, President Bush has been careful not to call Lt. Gen. Douglas Lute his “war czar,” even though he’s universally labeled that in the press. It’s sure a lot easier than saying his official title: assistant to the president and deputy national security adviser for Iraq and Afghanistan.

Now we hear that the Obama team doesn’t like czar either. No wonder: Even now, the word evokes either old-fashioned despotism or latter-day caricatures of tin-pot tyrants. But it’s safe to say it’s not going anywhere, as long as that compact word keeps doing its job, glibly condensing bureaucratic mouthfuls.

Surprise: Americans Are Confident In Government’s Ability To Handle Ebola

By Paul Waldman

[Washington Post](#), October 18, 2014

This morning the White House announced that Ron Klain, who was formerly the chief of staff to Vice President **Biden**, will coordinate the government’s response to Ebola. Klain will be the “czar” Republicans were asking for, I suppose because they had to demand the administration do something it wasn’t yet doing (thus is the nature of opposition). Which seems like a perfectly reasonable idea — you can never have too much coordination, and Klain is generally respected for his organizational skills.

But as much as Republicans have been arguing that everything is spinning out of control and the government isn’t protecting us from a deadly disease that might just bring about a zombie apocalypse, it turns out that the public isn’t going quite as crazy as you might think.

Don't get me wrong — there are plenty of people who are reacting irrationally to a disease that has so far infected a grand total of two people in this nation of 316 million, both of whom were health care workers treating a man dying of Ebola (if that doesn't describe you, you're safe). But the growing number of Ebola polls shows that the public actually has a pretty good amount of confidence that the government can handle this.

That's not what you might think if you tuned into the panic-a-thon that is cable news, or even much other news. Every evening news show is leading with Ebola every night, and every newspaper has multiple stories every day about the disease. There's a danger that we could create a self-fulfilling prophecy, one in which the public is portrayed as losing their collective minds, which makes it more likely that they will end up doing so.

But let's look at what they're actually saying. It turns out that on some questions, partisanship has a big impact, which is actually encouraging in a way. It tells us that Ebola is much like other issues, where politics provides the filter through which things are being viewed. Whether it's the economy or health reform or national security, Republicans are always going to be less likely to express confidence in the ability of a government run by Democrats to do anything right (and vice-versa).

So, via Eric Boehlert, in the latest Washington Post poll, 62 percent of respondents said they were very confident or somewhat confident in the government's ability to respond to an Ebola outbreak. Among Democrats, the number was 76 percent, while among Republicans it was a still-healthy 54 percent. A Pew Research Center poll taken two weeks ago found something similar: 69 percent of Democrats said they had a great deal or fair amount of confidence in the government's ability to handle Ebola, while 48 percent of Republicans agreed. Pew pointed out that in 2005, when George W. Bush was president, the same question was asked about bird flu and the numbers were reversed (with Democrats then expressing even less confidence than Republicans do now).

That tells a story not of widespread public hysteria but of rather ordinary partisanship. And a new Kaiser Family Foundation poll also shows a more reasonable public than you might expect if you were just watching the panic-a-thon on cable news. Among the questions Kaiser asked was this:

Which do you think is more likely: Ebola will spread and there will be a widespread outbreak in the U.S.; or Ebola will be contained to a small number of cases in the U.S.?

Ebola will be contained: 73

There will be a widespread outbreak: 22

And people in both parties expressed confidence in the Centers for Disease Control, with 79 percent of Democrats and 70 percent of Republicans saying they'd have confidence in the CDC to contain the disease and prevent it from spreading if there were a case of Ebola in their area.

As a news story, Ebola lends itself perfectly to sensationalistic, ratings-grabbing news. It's mysterious, threatening, dramatic, and carries the theoretical potential for global disaster. But so far, despite the non-stop coverage and Republicans' insistence that chaos reigns, most of the public seems to think that our government is capable of handling it.

Former Biden Chief Of Staff To Lead Ebola Response

By Jim Kuhnhen

[Associated Press](#), October 17, 2014

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama is naming Ron Klain, a former chief of staff to Vice President Joe **Biden** and a trusted adviser at the Obama White House, as the point man on the U.S. government's response to the Ebola crisis, the White House said Friday.

Obama has been under pressure to name an Ebola “czar” to oversee health security in the U.S. and actions to help stem the outbreak in West Africa, where nearly 4,500 people have died from the virus.

Klain has been out of government since leaving **Biden’s** office during the Obama’s first term. The White House said that Klain would report to national security adviser Susan Rice and to homeland security and counterterrorism adviser Lisa Monaco.

Klain, a lawyer, also served as chief of staff for Vice President Al Gore and was a key figure during the 2000 Florida presidential election recount. He previously served under Attorney General Janet Reno in the Clinton administration.

The White House is calling the new post an “Ebola response coordinator.”

White House officials had initially resisted congressional calls to name a lead figure on Ebola, arguing that various agencies had distinct responsibilities, including the Centers for Disease Control, The Department of Defense, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

But on Thursday, Obama conceded that such a point person might in fact be necessary even as he praised his adviser for doing “an outstanding job.”

But he said that several of his advisers, including Monaco and CDC director Dr. Thomas Frieden, are also confronting other priorities. He noted that Frieden is also dealing with flu season and Monaco and Rice are having to spend time on the Islamic State extremists in the Middle East.

“It may make sense for us to have one person ... so that after this initial surge of activity we can have a more regular process just to make sure we are crossing all the Ts and dotting all the Is,” he said.

Klain comes to the job with strong management credentials, extensive federal government experience overseeing complex operations and good working relationships with leading members of Congress, as well as senior Obama administration officials, including the president.

In a statement, the White House noted that as **Biden’s** chief of staff, Klain helped with the implementation of the White House stimulus package of 2009 created as a response to the recession and the financial crisis.

Klain is President of Case Holdings and General Counsel at Revolution LLC, a technology venture capital firm based in Washington, DC.

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Ragland: After Early Blows In Ebola Fight, Dallas Is Getting Back On Its Feet

By James Ragland

[Dallas Morning News](#), October 18, 2014

Zachary Thompson came up with an apt metaphor for our nation’s battle with Ebola.

The Dallas County Health and Human Services director likened it to a boxing match.

“In some people’s mind, you might have thought this was one punch and done,” Thompson said Friday. “But we found out we’ve got to go 12 rounds.”

We also found out that we need all hands on deck: mayors, county health officials, governors — all the way up to the president.

Not everyone is on board with President Barack Obama’s pick to be the “Ebola czar,” Ron Klain, a former chief of staff to Vice Presidents Joe **Biden** and Al Gore

That’s politics for you.

But just about everyone realizes we need someone to coordinate the efforts of local, state and federal health officials who admittedly have been staggered by Ebola’s first few blows.

“We’re all working together,” said Thompson. “My take is all public health is local. But all of this is uncharted territory. That’s clearly been shown.”

Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings applauded the concerted effort being made to keep the virus in check. He and Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins got more animated after seeing critical systemic breakdowns.

“We did not want to be a Chicken Little and say, ‘The sky is falling,’ but you must take this seriously,” Rawlings said.

When the second nurse who’d treated Thomas Eric Duncan was diagnosed with Ebola, that really got everyone’s attention, Rawlings said.

The fact that the nurse, Amber Joy Vinson, was allowed to take a commercial flight from Dallas to Ohio and back demonstrated a need to clarify and tighten controls.

Vinson was given the green light to fly from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta even after she reported she had a slight temperature.

Now, virtually everyone who flew on the plane from Cleveland back to Dallas with Vinson is worried. They’re all being monitored. And that single flight caused a ripple effect in Ohio and beyond.

That shouldn’t have happened, said Rawlings, who joined Jenkins in pushing for travel restrictions for all the workers who treated Duncan at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital.

“Having that second health care worker become positive demonstrated to me the significant repercussion of what was happening in the health care world,” Rawlings said. “It also allowed Judge Jenkins and me to draw a line in the sand on the city’s and county’s role in being advocates for the citizens of our community.”

Their concerns “were heard” in Austin, Atlanta and Washington, Rawlings said, adding “and you see the response we’re getting.”

Aside from the political machinations in Austin and Washington, Dallas also got another shot in the arm Friday.

One of the 48 people who first came in contact with Ebola virus victim Duncan last month was released from quarantine.

What that means is that the unidentified man developed no symptoms of Ebola in the 21 days since he last had contact with Duncan at the Ivy Apartments in northeast Dallas.

Duncan’s fiancée, Louise Troh, and other immediate family members remain under quarantine through Sunday. But they’ve shown no symptoms, Thompson said.

And once those 48 original contacts all are cleared, Thompson said, that “gives us some breathing room.”

The city also got some breathing room from having both of the infected nurses — Vinson and Nina Pham — flown to specialized hospitals in Atlanta and Bethesda, Md.

“I do not believe we’re at a turning point because these wonderful heroes are being treated outside of Dallas,” Rawlings said. “But that was the right tactical decision. We needed to let that hospital breathe in case any new patients came in.”

Thompson put it this way. “The fact that we’ve got two patients removed, that’s good,” he said. “But now we have to brace ourselves mentally in case there are additional confirmed cases.”

Rawlings nailed it earlier this week when he said “the only way we’re going to beat” the Ebola virus and keep it from spreading is “moment by moment, detail by detail.”

“It may get worse before it gets better,” he said, “but it will get better.”

Finally, we’re beginning to see promising signs of that. The big challenge now is keeping everyone in the same corner.

Ebola 'Czar' Knows Washington, But Not Medicine

By Josh Lederman

[Associated Press](#), October 18, 2014

WASHINGTON —

If there's one thing the "Ebola czar" knows, it's government.

Ron Klain, President Barack Obama's new point man on Ebola, has no medical or public health background. But he does have a wealth of experience managing unruly federal bureaucracies in times of crisis. The White House says that makes him the perfect candidate to shepherd the government's response to a deadly, growing outbreak.

Yet after demanding that Obama appoint a "czar," some Republicans are balking at the president's choice of a Washington insider and political operative to handle a public health emergency that has many Americans in fear.

And though Klain has tackled the national financial crisis and served as chief of staff to two vice presidents — he's even been portrayed by Kevin Spacey in an HBO film — his latest gig may prove his toughest challenge.

"He's there to get the job done, not win the Nobel Prize in medicine," said Bruce Reed, another former chief of staff to Vice President Joe **Biden**. Reed worked with Klain in both the Obama and Clinton administrations.

Under immense pressure to step up his response, Obama turned to Klain on Friday. He's being asked to synchronize an alphabet blizzard of federal agencies: the CDC, NIH, HHS, DHS, FDA and DOD, to name a few. All are working in one fashion or another to stem Ebola in the U.S. and in West Africa, but breakdowns in the system that led to two health workers contracting Ebola in Dallas have raised concerns that the government isn't doing enough.

No, his title isn't "czar." He's the government's Ebola response coordinator.

Klain was Obama's first choice for the job, said White House spokesman Josh Earnest. He's expected to stay on the job just five or six months and will report to Obama's homeland security adviser, Lisa Monaco, and his national security adviser, Susan Rice. Those two advisers have been at the forefront of the Ebola operation at the White House, but with other threats competing for their attention, Earnest said Obama saw a need to bring on outside help to focus exclusively on Ebola.

An attorney and longtime Democratic operative, Klain served as Vice President Al Gore's chief of staff and was a key figure during the 2000 Florida presidential election recount, leading to his portrayal by Spacey in the HBO film "Recount." He previously served under Attorney General Janet Reno in the Clinton administration and later as **Biden's** chief of staff.

During Obama's first term, Klain helped spearhead the roughly \$800 billion stimulus package in 2009 in response to the financial crisis — a massive, cross-government project that Klain's supporters say offers parallels to the challenge he is now undertaking with Ebola. Out of government since 2011, Klain is currently president of the holding company of former AOL chairman Steve Case and general counsel for a Washington-based technology venture capital firm.

Yet Republicans criticized Obama's selection, calling Klain's experience insufficient and wondering why the president didn't choose someone with a background in, say, infectious disease control. With the midterm elections closing in, GOP lawmakers argued that picking a Democratic operative was tone-deaf to the public's growing concerns about Ebola and declining confidence in the government's competence.

"Leave it to President Obama to put a liberal political activist in charge of the administration's Ebola response," said Rep. John Fleming, R-La., himself a physician.

Former colleagues describe Klain as a born problem-solver with little patience for disorganization, waste or tardiness. When he oversaw the stimulus, his associates say, he was known for forcing agencies that didn't get along to cooperate.

"These situations can be pretty dark and seem extremely hopeless," said Jared Bernstein, **Biden's** former chief economist. "Ron's ability to see the best path to success keeps him and those around him focused in a pretty positive way."

Associated Press writer Jim Kuhnhenn contributed to this report.

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Obama To Name Ron Klain As Ebola Czar

[New Republic](#), October 17, 2014

It appears the federal government's Ebola response now has a czar. According to multiple media reports, President Obama will name Ron Klain, former chief of staff to Vice President **Biden**, to coordinate the agencies handling Ebola.

Many Americans know Klain, who was a close adviser to former Vice President Al Gore, from Kevin Spacey's portrayal of him in the HBO movie "Recount." Washington insiders know Klain as a smooth, seasoned manager with a feel for both politics and policy. "He is one of the most capable people I've ever worked with in government," Jared Bernstein, who was **Biden's** chief economist, said via e-mail. "[He] brings with him a deep understanding of politics and policy along with a lot of experience working across agencies and departments."

One thing Klain does not have is deep expertise in medicine or emergency preparedness

—and that surprised me. Why not pick somebody whose resume includes a stint at the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Homeland Security, or maybe the Federal Emergency Management Agency? This is not the first time the federal government has confronted a biological menace. An official who'd lived through and worked intensely on responses to SARS, Avian flu, or even HIV might bring critical and beneficial experience to the table.

Still, the Administration doesn't lack for expertise on disease and potential outbreaks. The Centers for Disease Control has made some mistakes, but nobody I know questions the expertise of Tom Frieden, CDC's director, or Anthony Fauci, who is in charge of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Fauci, in particular, has been working on these sorts of issues since the 1980s, when he was a key player in the government response to AIDS. (If there's a need for more medical knowledge, perhaps the Senate could act on Obama's nominee for Surgeon General?)

In addition, the primary tasks of a czar are to coordinate action and advice among the different agencies

—and to serve as a reassuring public spokesman. Klain has done that. A Harvard-trained lawyer, Klain worked on Capitol Hill before becoming Gore's Chief of Staff during the Clinton years

—a role he reprised, from 2009 to 2011, in **Biden's** office. He has a reputation for knowing the ins and outs of government

—and how to make things happen. "He knows exactly where everything is," Democratic strategist Donna Brazile told the Washington Post in 2008, when **Biden** tapped him.

On Friday, Neera Tanden, another veteran of the Clinton and Obama Administrations, had a similar reaction.

Ron Klain's Resume: From Recounts To Stimulus To Ebola

By Gregory Korte

[USA Today](#), October 17, 2014

WASHINGTON — President Obama's new Ebola "czar," Ron Klain, has an extensive résumé at the top levels of politics and government — if not in battling infectious diseases.

He was the chief of staff for two vice presidents, Joe **Biden** and Al Gore, and one attorney general, Janet Reno. He served as a senior White House aide to President Obama.

After leaving the White House for the private sector in 2011, Klain became a partner in the Washington lobbying firm of O'Melveny & Myers. He was not himself a registered lobbyist, which means the White House ban on hiring lobbyists doesn't apply.

He's president of Case Holdings, which manages the assets of AOL founder Steve Case, and general counsel of Case's venture capital firm, Revolution.

Case said Klain would take a leave of absence and planned to return to his company. "Ron is a talented manager and a wise counselor who understands government, business and the non-profit sectors," Case said in a statement. "We look forward to welcoming him back soon."

As **Biden's** chief of staff, Klain had a key role in implementing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and signed off on one of its most controversial projects: a \$535 million loan guarantee to solar panel maker Solyndra.

"Sounds like there are some risk factors here — but that's true of any innovative company that POTUS would visit," Klain wrote to Department of Energy officials May 24, 2010, a day before Obama visited a company factory. "It looks like it is OK to me, but if you feel otherwise, let me know."

Earlier in his career, he served as the staff director of the Senate Democratic Leadership Committee and chief counsel of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"I've known Ron Klain for over 20 years. He is smart, aggressive and levelheaded; exactly the qualities we need in a czar to steer our response to Ebola. He is an excellent choice," said Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., in a statement.

Klain served as the top lawyer on the Gore-Lieberman Recount Committee after the 2000 election and was portrayed by actor Kevin Spacey in the 2008 film *Recount*.

He is a graduate of Georgetown University and Harvard Law School. He served as a law clerk to Supreme Court Justice Byron White.

He is married to Monica Medina, an environmental lawyer at the National Geographic Society who previously headed the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the Obama Administration. They have three children.

Who Is Ron Klain, Who Will Lead The Obama Administration's Response To Ebola?

By Katie Zezima

[Washington Post](#), October 18, 2014

Ron Klain, who was named as the Obama administration's Ebola response coordinator, is no stranger to the White House.

Even in a city populated with seasoned operatives, Klain's experience stands out. Klain, 53, served as a senior aide to President Obama and chief of staff to Vice President **Biden** from 2009 to 2011. Klain had been one of the names floated for Obama's chief of staff after Rahm Emanuel departed. He helped oversee implementation of the 2009 stimulus act. Klain was also involved in the controversial deal with Solyndra, a solar company that went bankrupt after receiving \$535 million in federal guarantees.

Klain, 53, is now a president at Case Holdings, the holding company for business and philanthropic interests of former AOL chairman Steve Case. Klain is also general counsel for Revolution LLC, an investment firm founded by Case and others.

“Ron Klain has been asked by the President to coordinate the U.S. Ebola response, so he will be taking a leave of absence,” Steve and Jean Case said in a statement. “We applaud the President’s selection, as Ron is a talented manager and a wise counselor who understands government, business, and the non-profit sectors. We wish him the best as he takes on this important task, and we look forward to welcoming him back soon.”

Klain worked at Revolution before he was tapped by **Biden**; in 2007, Klain said he spent most of his time working in the firm’s health-care arm.

“It’s been an exciting chance to try to make some positive changes in health care from the business side rather than the policy side,” he told the Wall Street Journal.

The White House is stressing Klain’s management acumen and experience working in Congress and the broader federal government, skills and contacts he will need as he coordinates an effort across numerous agencies and with countless stakeholders. Klain served as chief of staff to Vice President Al Gore and Attorney General Janet Reno. Klain was also chief counsel of the Senate Judiciary Committee. He has also worked as a lobbyist.

Klain was general counsel for Gore’s recount committee in 2000. He was played by Kevin Spacey in the HBO film “Recount.”

Klain graduated from Georgetown University and Harvard Law School, where he won the Sears Prize for highest grade point average in 1985. He was a law clerk to Supreme Court Justice Byron White. Klain is married and has three children.

His appointment came less than 24 hours after Obama acknowledged shortcomings in how the nation handled Ebola and said it might be necessary to have a point person to handle the government’s response.

“It may make sense for us to have one person,” who will “make sure we’re crossing all the t’s and dotting all the i’s,” Obama said. He spoke after a meeting on Ebola on Thursday night that lasted more than two hours.

Klain will report to homeland security adviser Lisa Monaco and national security adviser Susan E. Rice. A White House official reiterated Obama’s view that Monaco and Rice have done “outstanding work” in confronting Ebola. But given “their management of other national and homeland security priorities, additional bandwidth will further enhance the government’s Ebola response,” the official wrote in an e-mail.

Sen. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) said Klain was an excellent choice to deal with the outbreak. A Liberian man died of the virus in Dallas earlier this month, and two nurses who cared for him are now stricken.

“I’ve known Ron Klain for over twenty years,” Schumer said in a statement. “He is smart, aggressive, and levelheaded; exactly the qualities we need in a czar to steer our response to Ebola. He is an excellent choice.”

Rep. Andy Harris (R-Md.), an anesthesiologist, isn’t so sure.

Worst ebola epidemic in world history and Pres. Obama puts a government bureaucrat with no healthcare experience in charge. Is he serious?

— Rep. Andy Harris, MD (@RepAndyHarrisMD) October 17, 2014

Biden's Son Fails Drug Test, Is Discharged From Navy

By William H. McMichael And Jonathan Starkey

[USA Today](#), October 17, 2014

The younger son of Vice President Joe **Biden** failed a drug test for cocaine, a month after his commissioning last year into the Navy Reserve and was discharged.

Hunter **Biden**, an ensign, had been selected for commission as a reserve officer through the Direct Commission Officer program in 2012, according to Cmdr. Ryan Perry, a Navy spokesman. He was commissioned into the Navy Reserve unit for Navy Public Affairs Support Element East in Norfolk, Va. **Biden**, who had no prior military experience, was one of six officers commissioned nationally into the Navy Reserve public affairs division.

"It was the honor of my life to serve in the U.S. Navy, and I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge," **Biden** said in statement issued through his lawyer. "I respect the Navy's decision. With the love and support of my family, I'm moving forward."

The incident was first reported late Thursday in The Wall Street Journal. Citing "people familiar with the matter," it reported that **Biden** was given a drug test in June 2013 that tested positive for cocaine.

Biden, 44, was discharged from the Navy Reserve in February. He has worked as a lawyer, lobbyist and managing partner at the investment firm Rosemont Seneca Partners in Washington. He was hired in May to join the board of Burisma Holdings, Ukraine's largest private oil and gas producer, and be in charge of its legal department.

A spokeswoman for the vice president declined to comment.

The term "administrative discharge" can cover several types of military discharges from honorable to general to other-than-honorable conditions. Perry would provide no other details.

"Like other junior officers, the details of Ensign **Biden's** discharge are not releasable under the Privacy Act," he said.

Asked whether **Biden's** commissioning had anything to do with his father's high position in the government, Perry said, "No, it didn't.

"All candidates were considered based on the merits of their application, and Mr. **Biden** met the qualifications for commission," Perry said.

Biden also is the brother of Delaware Attorney General Beau **Biden**.

Applicants to the direct commissioning program for the Public Affairs Reserve must hold a baccalaureate degree or higher from an accredited institution, preferably in the fields of communication, English, journalism, broadcasting, public relations, rhetoric/speech, marketing, international studies or public administration. Applicants may not have passed their 42nd birthday at time of commissioning or an age waiver is required. The board meets twice annually and, on average, about 35 people apply, Ryan said.

Hunter **Biden** sought and received a waiver to join the service because of his age.

Hunter **Biden** received a second waiver because of a "drug-related incident when he was a young man," The Wall Street Journal reported. The report added that such waivers are not uncommon.

Hunter **Biden** waits for the start of his father's debate in October 2011 at Centre College in Danville, Ky. (Photo: Pablo Martinez Monsivais, AP)

Vice President Joe **Biden** joked in January 2013 about his younger son's decision to join the military late in life during a speech at the American Legion's Salute to Heroes Inaugural Ball, which honors Medal of Honor recipients.

"We have a lot of bad judgment in my family. "My son, who is over 40, just joined the United States Navy. He's about to be sworn in as an officer," Joe **Biden** said.

But Hunter **Biden** joining the military was a source of pride for the Bidens, and military service runs in the family.

Beau **Biden** is a major in the Delaware Army National Guard and served in Iraq from October 2008 to September 2009.

Jill **Biden** talked about Hunter **Biden** joining the Navy during a November 2012 event with Navy Secretary Ray Mabus.

"I'm looking forward to standing with our son, Hunter, when he is commissioned as an ensign in the United States Navy," Jill **Biden** said at the time, according to a Navy transcript. "He follows in the footsteps of two of his grandfathers, who have also served in the Navy."

William H. McMichael and Jonathan Starkey also report for The (Wilmington, Del.) News Journal.

Commander: Hunter Biden Knew Drug Test Was Coming

By Esteban Parra And William H. McMichael, Usa Today

[USA Today](#), October 17, 2014

WILMINGTON, Del. — There should have been no question in Hunter **Biden's** mind about the possibility of a random drug test.

So says the commander of the Norfolk, Va.-based unit where Vice President Joe **Biden's** youngest son was assigned until his February discharge due to a drug test failure a month after his 2013 commissioning.

"All sailors would be advised of the zero-tolerance policies when reporting aboard," said Capt. Jack Hanzlik, who commands the Navy Public Affairs Support Element based in Norfolk. "And they would be advised of the testing practices of the organization, as well."

The importance of adherence to such policies continues after new arrivals, active or reservists, are assigned to their units.

"We have this kind of conversation with our sailors all the time — about expectations for performance," Hanzlik said. "Expectations for standards. Reliability on one another."

At least once a year but perhaps more frequently, members of the military — active and reserve — can expect to be given an unannounced urinalysis test for illegal drug use. Navy laboratories screen about 2.5 million urine specimens yearly, searching for drugs ranging from marijuana to heroin to cocaine — the drug that reportedly led to Hunter **Biden's** discharge.

"It's a random process," said Hanzlik. "The expectation, always, is that you need to be ready. Because you could have to give a sample today, you might have to give a sample again tomorrow. And two weeks from now, you might have to give a sample."

Hanzlik said he'd had no interaction with **Biden**. He commands the overall 275-member unit, but their reserve times didn't coincide during **Biden's** tenure with the unit.

Testing would have occurred while **Biden** was present for duty at the Navy Operational Support Center Norfolk, the reserve center where he reported for work.

The Navy says 15 percent of all personnel at a given unit are tested each time a test is administered.

A U.S. Department of Health and Human Services official said the length of time traces of a drug remain in a person's system varies with an individual's size and frequency of use. On average, it takes 48 to 72 hours to leave the system, but it can take up to five days.

Biden, who had no prior military experience, was selected for commission as a reserve officer through the Direct Commission Officer program in 2012, according to the Navy. He was commissioned as an ensign in early May 2013 — one of six officers commissioned nationally into the public affairs division of the Navy Reserve.

In June 2013, **Biden**, then 43, was given a drug test that tested positive for cocaine, according to The Wall Street Journal, which broke the story late Thursday night. The paper cited “people familiar with the matter.” The Navy would not comment, citing the Privacy Act.

He wasn’t discharged until February. “Until an issue like that is adjudicated, the member continues to serve,” Hanzlik said.

Hunter, who could not be reached, is the younger brother of Delaware Attorney General Beau **Biden**, who is a major in the Delaware Army National Guard.

Parra and McMichael also report for The (Wilmington, Del.) News Journal

Biden Son Said Discharged From Navy Reserve On Drug Test

By Tony Capaccio And Angela Greiling Keane

[Bloomberg News](#), October 18, 2014

Hunter **Biden**, the son of Vice President Joe **Biden**, was discharged from the Navy Reserve this year after testing positive for cocaine use, according to a U.S. government official familiar with the matter.

Biden, 44, had been assigned as an ensign to the Reserve’s public affairs unit in Norfolk, Virginia, in May 2013, and was discharged in February, according to Commander Ryan Perry, a spokesman for the Navy. He didn’t give a reason for the discharge.

A drug test given to **Biden** when he reported to his unit in June 2013 was positive, according to the official familiar with the matter. The Wall Street Journal reported the news late yesterday.

“It was the honor of my life to serve in the U.S. Navy, and I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge,” Hunter **Biden** said today in a statement through his lawyer, Thomas Gallagher with Pepper Hamilton LLP in Philadelphia. “I respect the Navy’s decision. With the love and support of my family, I’m moving forward.”

Biden, a founding partner of Oldaker **Biden** & Belair, a Washington-based law firm, was recommended in 2012 for a direct commission to the Reserves, Perry said. In a 2007 profile, Politico called him “the very model of a modern major lobbyist.”

The vice president’s office referred inquiries to Gallagher. Eric Schultz, a White House spokesman, declined to comment.

Biden is chairman of the board of directors of the World Food Program USA, a United Nations program that delivers food aid around the world and responds to natural disasters. He’s also been on the board of Amtrak, the U.S. long-distance passenger railroad.

In 2009, he won dismissal of a fraud lawsuit alleging he backed out of a deal to acquire an interest in Paradigm Global Advisors LLC parent Paradigm Cos. The Paradigm fund was run by members of the **Biden** family. It was marketed by billionaire R. Allen Stanford, who was convicted of defrauding investors and sentenced to 110 years in prison.

Joe **Biden** is in his second term as vice president, having previously been a Democratic U.S. senator from Delaware. Hunter is a son of **Biden**’s late wife, who was killed in a car accident that injured Hunter when he was a child.

Joe Biden's Son Discharged From Navy For Cocaine Use

By Dan McQuade

[Philadelphia Magazine](#), October 17, 2014

Hunter **Biden**, son of Vice President Joe, was discharged from the Navy earlier this year after failing a drug test for cocaine. Hunter **Biden**, a lawyer, was in a part-time position as an ensign in the Naval Reserves.

Biden actually came to the military incredibly late in life; he needed a waiver to be able to join the Navy because of his age (43) when he joined. He received a second waiver for an earlier drug-related incident; the Wall Street Journal reports these are relatively common. He was discharged in February of this year after his drug test came up positive.

To sum it up: Hunter **Biden** is now 44 years old and in June 2013 did enough cocaine to fail a drug screen. Hunter **Biden** parties harder than you did in college.

"I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge," Hunter **Biden** said in a statement. "I respect the Navy's decision. With the love and support of my family, I'm moving forward."

Joe **Biden**, of course, created the drug czar's office.

Biden Son Booted From Navy. What's The Backstory?

By Peter Grier

[Christian Science Monitor](#), October 17, 2014

Washington — Joe **Biden**'s son Hunter has been kicked out of the Navy for drug use, according to a report in The Wall Street Journal. Cocaine was the controlled substance in question: The younger **Biden** tested positive for the drug last year and was subsequently discharged from the Navy Reserve, where he served as an ensign in a public affairs unit based in Norfolk, Va.

Thus ends an unusual, or at least unusually timed, military career. A lawyer by training who has worked as a lobbyist and currently serves as a managing partner at an investment firm, Hunter **Biden** began the process of joining the military in 2012, when he was 42. Most reservists sign up when they're younger and still building families and careers.

In 2013, Mr. **Biden** was commissioned an ensign through the Direct Commission Officer Program, which each year selects a small number of applicants with civilian skills applicable to military needs. He received a waiver for his age and a second waiver for a drug-related incident in his youth, according to multiple news reports.

In June of last year, **Biden** failed a urinalysis after reporting to his Norfolk unit. He was formally discharged this past February, according to The Wall Street Journal.

"It was the honor of my life to serve in the U.S. Navy, and I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge," he said in a statement.

A few **Biden** family biographical notes might be apropos here. The first is that Hunter's older brother, Beau, has had a successful military reservist career. It's entirely possible Hunter was hoping to follow in his bro's footsteps.

Beau **Biden**, also a lawyer, joined the Delaware Army National Guard in 2003 as a member of the Judge Advocate General's Corps. He was subsequently promoted to major and served a tour of duty in Iraq in 2008-2009.

Currently, Beau **Biden** is Delaware's attorney general. He was elected to that post in 2006. In 2008, there was talk in the state that he would run for his dad's old Senate seat, but the **Biden** son declined to pursue the position.

Second, VP Joe **Biden** does not have a soft-on-drugs reputation. If anything, he is seen in the White House as someone arguing against wider legalization of marijuana.

"The former Delaware senator has a harsh record when it comes to the drug war," wrote Nick Wing of The Huffington Post in 2012.

Third, for those of a certain age in Washington, the **Biden** boys, both of them, are remembered for the tragedy of their early years.

On Dec. 18, 1972, Joe **Biden**'s first wife, Neilia, and his year-old daughter Naomi were killed in an auto accident in exurban Wilmington, Del., after Christmas shopping. Beau and Hunter were in the car but survived with injuries. Joe **Biden** had just won election to the Senate the preceding month.

He considered resigning but did not. Both boys were able to attend his swearing-in. Mr. **Biden** commuted home from Washington each night on the train to be with Beau and Hunter, a practice he continued throughout his Senate career.

Biden Son Out Of Navy After Drug Test

By JOSH LEDERMAN And ROBERT BURNS

[Associated Press](#), October 17, 2014

WASHINGTON Hunter **Biden**, the youngest son of Vice President Joe **Biden**, has been expelled from the military after testing positive for cocaine, two people familiar with the matter say.

The Navy said that **Biden**, a former lobbyist who works at a private equity firm, was discharged in February — barely a year after he was selected for the part-time position as a public affairs officer in the Navy Reserve. Citing privacy laws, the Navy did not give a reason for the discharge, which was not disclosed until it emerged in the media on Thursday.

In a statement released by his attorney, **Biden** said he respected the Navy's decision and was moving forward with his family's love and support. He did not give a reason for his discharge.

"It was the honor of my life to serve in the U.S. Navy," **Biden** said. "I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge."

The vice president's office declined to comment. Hunter **Biden**'s attorney didn't respond to inquiries about whether **Biden** had used cocaine.

Two people familiar with the situation said **Biden**, 44, was discharged because he failed a drug test last year. They weren't authorized to discuss the incident by name and requested anonymity. The Wall Street Journal first reported **Biden**'s discharge and failed drug test.

An attorney by training, **Biden** applied to join the Navy Reserve as a public affairs officer and was selected in 2012 — one of seven candidates recommended for a direct commission for public affairs. A board of senior Navy officers interviewed **Biden** before making the recommendation.

Because he was 42 at the time, he needed a special waiver to be accepted. Cmdr. Ryan Perry, a spokesman for the Navy, said **Biden** had been assigned to the Navy Public Affairs Support Element East, based in Norfolk, Virginia.

The terms of **Biden**'s separation from the Navy were unclear. Typically, military members discharged for failing drug tests don't receive an honorable discharge.

The vice president speaks about his children frequently during public appearances. In December, Hunter **Biden** and one of his daughters accompanied the elder **Biden** on a trip to Asia, where the vice president praised his son's work around the world as the chairman of the World Food Program USA.

"I'm so incredibly proud of him," Vice President **Biden** said.

Earlier this year, Hunter **Biden** raised eyebrows when he joined the board of a private Ukrainian gas company, just as his father and the Obama administration were working to wean Ukraine off Russian energy. At the time, the vice president's office brushed aside questions about the arrangement by saying that the younger **Biden** was a "private citizen."

Biden, a managing partner at investment firm Rosemont Seneca Partners, has three children. His older brother, Beau **Biden**, is Delaware's attorney general and an Army National Guard member who served a yearlong deployment in Iraq.

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Who Is Hunter Biden?

By Justin Peligri

[CNN](#), October 17, 2014

Washington (CNN) – Hunter **Biden**, Vice President Joe **Biden**'s son, was discharged from the Navy Reserve this year after failing a drug test, The Wall Street Journal reported Thursday night.

Biden, who got the boot after testing positive for cocaine, served part time in the reserves in Norfolk, Va. while also working as a partner at an investment firm.

Who is Hunter **Biden**?

Hunter graduated from Georgetown University and earned a law degree from Yale. After graduation he was a member of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest.

He's lesser known than his older brother, Beau **Biden**, now the Delaware attorney general, who served a year-long deployment in Iraq and has announced plans for a 2016 gubernatorial run in the state.

Biden's son discharged from Navy after testing positive for cocaine

What did he do in the military?

Hunter's membership in the American armed forces was brief: He enlisted in the Navy Reserves less than two years ago.

In January 2013, the Vice President joked about his son's decision to join the military later in life. "We have a lot of bad judgment in my family," **Biden** said.

The Vice President's office has not yet released a comment about Hunter's discharge. But the announcement might not fare well for the Second Family, which touts their status as a military family in speeches and public appearances.

Hunter **Biden** said in a statement that it was "the honor of my life to serve in the U.S. Navy, and I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge. I respect the Navy's decision. With the love and support of my family, I'm moving forward."

Does he have much experience in politics or Washington?

Yes – both in the public and private sectors.

He was appointed by President Bill Clinton to serve as a director in the Department of Commerce handling ecommerce policy issues, a post he held from 1998 to 2001.

From 2001 to 2008, he worked as a lawyer and federal lobbyist at a firm he co-founded. He resigned from this post when his father was asked by then-Senator Barack Obama, who at the time refused donations from lobbyists, to join his presidential ticket.

Along the way, he's enjoyed stints as chairman of PARADIGM, a hedge fund agency. He also held a job as senior vice president at MBNA Corporation, the world's largest independent credit-card issuer at the time.

In 2006, President George Bush nominated Hunter to serve on the Amtrak board of directors. He served a five-year term after a unanimous confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

What has he been up to recently?

In May 2014, Hunter signed on as a lawyer and board member of Burisma Holdings Ltd., a large Ukrainian gas production company.

The appointment caused a stir, given that it occurred around the same time that his father and the White House were engaged in diplomatic missions in the region to wean Ukraine off Russian energy sources. Critics argued that Hunter's work for a country promoting Ukrainian energy independence was a blatant conflict of interest.

But, the Vice President's office brushed off the controversy, insisting that Hunter is a private citizen whose actions don't represent the views of the government

That brings us to the present day. Hunter may no longer be in the Navy, but he still has his hands in public service. He's the board chairman at World Food Program USA, an organization fighting poverty and hunger, and he serves on the President's Advisory board of the Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington

Hunter also has a job at his alma mater as an adjunct professor at Georgetown's School of Foreign Service. He is married and has three daughters.

Report: Hunter Biden Discharged From Navy After Failing Drug Test

[CNN](#), October 17, 2014

(CNN)-- The Vice President's son was discharged from the Navy Reserve this year, after testing positive for cocaine.

Hunter **Biden**'s discharge was first reported by the Wall Street Journal.

The 44-year-old lawyer and investment firm partner confirmed it in a statement.

Biden was commissioned as an Ensign, a part-time position.

Biden says he deeply regrets his actions and that it was the honor of his life to serve in the Navy. The Vice President's office has not commented on the report.

Should Joe Biden's Son Have Been Kicked Out Of The Navy For Drug Use?

By James Carli

[Huffington Post](#), October 18, 2014

News broke this morning that Hunter **Biden**, son of Vice President Joe **Biden**, was expelled from the Navy just a month after receiving his commission in 2013 because he failed a drug test, testing positive for cocaine use. This is only the latest and most high-profile case of a self-imposed brain drain by the U.S. government of highly talented, intelligent, motivated young professionals, because of obsolete, outmoded, and misguided prohibitionist drug war policies.

Indeed, no small number of highly qualified professionals are dissuaded from using their talents to serve their government, something that we desperately need in this time of such global turmoil, because

the U.S. government adheres to policies from another era that will reject valuable and important skills and access based solely on haphazard tests about what these people do in their own time.

Surely there are problem drinkers in the government. Just go to a cocktail party at an embassy or bureau Christmas party and you will see that analyst or special agent relax just a little too much.

These individuals will face no repercussions for overindulgence within moderation. Granted, they are professionals who have received extensive training on how to conduct themselves appropriately while under the influence, or while consuming certain mind-altering substances like alcohol, and if their use ever becomes a problem, there are protocols in place to address it.

But why is there such tolerance in high levels of government for alcohol and such admonition for other substances resoundingly less harmful? After all, just ask any jarhead what his CO is like to deal with when he's going through coffee withdrawal. It's a problem, too.

In my personal experience, I have known foreign service officers and people who work in national security who have had close brushes with their employers because of recreational marijuana consumption. Fortunately, in these cases, reason won out, and their respective organizations saw the value in overlooking these missteps because of the quality work that these people provide in defense of the republic.

But those are definitely exceptions, and as a rule, highly-competent professionals are all too often dismissed solely because of a substance they chose to use during their off-time.

This has a very bad long-term effect of discouraging people who should be in government from working for the government. Earlier this year, in May, in the wake of Colorado and Washington's new responsible regulation of marijuana, rumors spread online that FBI Director James Comey told a young cyber-inclined man that "he should go ahead and apply" to the Bureau, despite the fact he was a marijuana aficionado. After all, the need for skilled tech people is very high in the government these days, with constant threat of state-sponsored cyber warfare and sporadic nonstate hack attacks.

It also happens that many tech-inclined young people are fond of marijuana. Comey's statement raised hopes on college campuses and think tanks around the country that maybe, just maybe, the government was on the verge of updating their policies toward reason. Nevertheless, two days later, the Director clarified his statement before the Senate Judiciary Committee with a resounding "I did not say I am going to change that ban."

This is unfortunate. The U.S. government should immediately change their hiring policies to accept individuals who may use marijuana or other drugs in a responsible manner on their own time, but should screen for people whose use is problematic, and deal with problem use in the same manner that they deal with problem alcohol use or coffee addiction.

James Carli is development communications and research coordinator at the Drug Policy Alliance. This article originally appeared on the Drug Policy Alliance blog.

Hunter Biden's Cocaine Use And Vice President Biden's Evolving Perspective On The Drug War

By Tony Newman

[Huffington Post](#), October 18, 2014

The Vice President's son, Hunter **Biden** is making worldwide news after the Wall Street Journal reported that he was discharged from the Navy in February after testing positive for cocaine use.

I have spent the last 15 years working at the Drug Policy Alliance trying to end our country's insane war on drugs. Here are some of my reflections on the **Biden** family.

Drug use touches most families.

Hunter **Biden**, Noelle Bush, Al Gore III and Chiara de Blasio remind us that both drug use and abuse touch most families, including those running our country. Despite a \$40 billion a year “war on drugs” and political speeches about a “drug-free society,” our society is swimming in drugs. Virtually all of us take drugs every single day. Caffeine, sugar, alcohol, marijuana, Prozac, cocaine, Ritalin, opiates and nicotine are just some of the substances that Americans use on a regular basis.

Drug abuse does not discriminate, but our drug policies do.

While drug abuse doesn’t discriminate, it is clear that our drug policies do. Despite similar rates of drug use and drug sales across races, African Americans are 13 times more likely to go to prison for drugs. I don’t think Vice President **Biden**’s son should be in jail for his cocaine use but neither should so many others who are currently behind bars for drug use or possession.

Vice President Joe **Biden**’s Role in Expanding Drug War

As a Senator in the late 1980s, Mr. **Biden** was a cheerleader for the drug war. He played a major role in creating the Drug Czar’s office and in enacting the draconian mandatory minimum sentences that have filled our prisons with nonviolent drug law offenders. To the Vice President’s credit, he has “evolved” a bit on the issue. In recent years, Mr. **Biden** has championed a number of progressive drug policy reforms – like introducing legislation to completely eliminate the 100-to-1 crack/powder cocaine sentencing disparity and rolling back the mandatory minimums he favored in the late 1980s. The crack/powder disparity wasn’t completely eliminated, but was reformed under President Obama.

How Will the **Biden** Family Move Forward on This Issue?

Optimistically, I would like to envision Mr. **Biden**, realizing that drug use is so widespread that it even touches his son, would become more sympathetic to other people who use drugs. There are hundreds of thousands of people behind bars serving long prison sentences on drug charges. The realization that other people’s kids are living behind bars for doing the same thing that his son did could be a transformative experience. Perhaps Hunter’s experience will strengthen his resolve.

Vice President **Biden** and his son’s response should be to join the millions of people who are challenging the ignorance and irrationality of locking up hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens because of a nonviolent drug offense. If Hunter and Joe **Biden** can use this experience to become involved in changing our inhumane policies, then the **Biden** family and our country will be better for it.

Tony Newman is the director of media relations at the Drug Policy Alliance (www.drugpolicy.org)

Biden’s Son Faces No Bar Review After Discharge

[Charlotte \(NC\) Observer](#), October 17, 2014

Hunter **Biden**, the youngest son of Vice President Joe **Biden**, faces no automatic review of his law license in Connecticut following his discharge from the U.S. Navy Reserve after testing positive for cocaine use, Connecticut legal authorities said Friday.

Posted: Friday, Oct. 17, 2014

WASHINGTON Hunter **Biden**, the youngest son of Vice President Joe **Biden**, faces no automatic review of his law license in Connecticut following his discharge from the U.S. Navy Reserve after testing positive for cocaine use, Connecticut legal authorities said Friday.

Hunter **Biden** works in Washington as a private equity executive and board director of an international energy firm, but he is admitted to practice law in Connecticut, where attorneys’ privileges can be examined under a disciplinary review system. Legal clients, state lawyers, judges and any citizen can file grievances, but as of Friday, none had been filed, authorities said.

Lawyers in Connecticut face automatic review of their bar admission only when they have been convicted of a crime, said Michael P. Bowler, Connecticut's Statewide Bar Counselor, who heads a team of lawyers that investigate attorney grievances. Criminal convictions have to be reviewed by a statewide grievance committee, as do other complaints, which can range from drug and alcohol abuse to inadequate legal representation.

"At this point, I'm not aware that Mr. **Biden** has been arrested for anything, and certainly not convicted," Bowler said. The Navy's brief confirmation of **Biden**'s discharge did not cite any arrest or charges. Two people familiar with the matter told The Associated Press he was kicked out after testing positive for cocaine, confirming what was first reported by The Wall Street Journal.

Bowler added that **Biden** had told state authorities in 2007 that he was also admitted to the bar in Washington, D.C. Current District of Columbia bar records do not show **Biden** as member.

The Navy said Thursday that **Biden** was discharged in February from a part-time position as a public affairs officer in the Navy Reserve but did not provide a reason. **Biden** released a statement through his attorney saying, "I deeply regret and am embarrassed that my actions led to my administrative discharge."

Biden, 44, a former Washington lobbyist, is a managing partner at the Rosemont Seneca Partners investment firm and a director at Burisma Holdings, a Ukraine-based energy company. A Washington lobbyist for Burisma, David Leiter, did not respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press.

Mark Dubois, the president of the Connecticut Bar Association, said that state bar and ethics officials are sensitive to news accounts involving misbehavior of lawyers admitted to practice in the state, but he said, "They have to be judicious about starting the process."

Dubois, who formerly investigated and prosecuted ethical misconduct as Connecticut Disciplinary Counsel, said authorities have initiated cases in the past involving drug and alcohol abuse by attorneys, but "only when it's a fairly extensive record of abuse."

Vice President Joe Biden To Appear At Event On Domestic Violence In Duluth Next Week

[Associated Press](#), October 18, 2014

DULUTH, Minn. — The White House says Vice President Joe **Biden** is coming to Minnesota next week.

Biden will appear at an event on domestic violence in Duluth on Thursday. More details will be released later.

Minnesota also gets a visit from first lady Michelle Obama next week as the campaigns enter the home stretch.

The Minnesota DFL Party says Mrs. Obama will campaign for Democratic Gov. Mark Dayton and Sen. Al Franken at a get-out-the-vote rally Tuesday at Patrick Henry High School in north Minneapolis.

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Joe Biden, Mariska Hargitay Team Up To Help Domestic Abuse Victims

By Robbie Couch

[Huffington Post](#), October 17, 2014

On Sunday, Americans' love for television binge-watching will end up helping fight domestic abuse — at least, that's what Vice President Joe **Biden** and actress Mariska Hargitay are hoping for.

Biden will appear alongside Hargitay in a PSA addressing domestic violence scheduled to air during a "Law and Order: Special Victims Unit" marathon on USA Network, The Washington Post reported.

Maile Zambuto, who is the chief executive of Hargitay's foundation for survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse, Joyful Heart, told the outlet that episodes set to air during the marathon will focus on different aspects of the issue, including "teen dating violence, campus sexual assault, male sexual abuse [and] the cycle of violence."

The duo, who are supporting the No More campaign, aim to provide victims and their loved ones with the resources to access help.

In one of three spots that will air on Sunday, **Biden** and Margitay point out the difference between how domestic violence is treated on-screen and off.

"On Law and Order: SVU, witnesses frequently come forward to help detectives track down offenders," Hargitay said in the PSA.

"But in real life, too often, people look the other way," **Biden** continued, noting that "domestic violence is never the victim's fault."

About 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in the U.S., according to a 2010 survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Biden, who spearheaded the Violence Against Women Act as a senator in 1994, teamed up with Hargitay last year at a news conference in Maryland. The event addressed the need to reduce domestic violence deaths in the U.S. Each year, 1,300 people die from intimate partner victimizations, according to the CDC.

Vice President Biden To Visit Minnesota

By Mike Klein

[Rochester \(MN\) Post-Bulletin](#), October 18, 2014

DULUTH — The White House says Vice President Joe **Biden** is coming to Minnesota next week.

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The Minnesota DFL Party says Mrs. Obama will campaign for Democratic Gov. Mark Dayton and Sen. Al Franken at a get-out-the-vote rally Tuesday at Patrick Henry High School in north Minneapolis.

VP Biden Coming To Range

By Bill Hanna

[Virginia \(MN\) Mesabi Daily Tribune](#), October 18, 2014

HIBBING — Vice President Joe **Biden** will make a trip to northeastern Minnesota Thursday that will include a campaign rally in Hibbing.

Democratic U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan said in a telephone interview he will travel with the vice president on Air Force 2 from Duluth to Hibbing in the early afternoon.

Obama Pushes To Save Illinois Gov. Quinn

By Aamer Madhani

[USA Today](#), October 17, 2014

CHICAGO — As most Democrats across the country try to keep their distance, President Obama, whose popularity has cratered, has mostly stayed on the sidelines in this election cycle.

But in his political backyard, the president is throwing himself into saving Democratic Gov. Pat Quinn, who is locked in a tight re-election race with Republican businessman Bruce Rauner.

Weeks after headlining a fundraiser for Quinn in his adopted hometown of Chicago, Obama is scheduled to return to the Windy City on Sunday night for a campaign rally for the governor not far from the neighborhood where he started his career as a community organizer.

The loss of the Governor's Mansion in Illinois would be a political embarrassment for Obama, said Kent Redfield, a political scientist at the University of Illinois-Springfield.

"He's going to have losses in the Senate and may even lose the Senate," Redfield said. "And if he loses Illinois' governor's race, it's just one more point in that narrative that the country is moving to the right."

The White House effort to help Quinn goes beyond the president. First lady Michelle Obama campaigned on behalf of Quinn in Illinois this month, and former president Bill Clinton and Vice President **Biden** are scheduled to travel here next week to stump for Quinn.

Rauner's campaign has seized on the attention Obama is giving the race.

"The national Democrats are going all out to try to save THE WORST GOVERNOR IN AMERICA," Rauner wrote in a fundraising e-mail this week. "You and I know that Illinois can't take another four years of Pat Quinn."

The Illinois gubernatorial race has shaped up into one of the nastiest and most expensive in the country.

The campaigns have turned to a barrage of negative advertising in which both candidates say the other can't be trusted with leading one of the most economically fragile states.

Quinn is being outspent by Rauner, a successful venture capitalist who has poured \$17 million of his own money into the race. The candidates have raised about \$58 million combined since Rauner became the GOP nominee. Polls show Quinn holds a narrow lead as the campaign heads into its final lap.

On the stump and in ads, Quinn has blasted Rauner as anti-union and a "professional outsourcer." Rauner has charged that the governor is corrupt and a failure. More than 72% of the recent ads aired by the two candidates have been negative, according to an analysis released this week by the Wesleyan Media Project.

The governor's campaign strategy has mirrored Obama's successful effort in his 2012 re-election campaign against Mitt Romney in which the president's team hammered at the former Massachusetts governor's years as a venture capitalist and his enormous wealth.

Quinn has tried to paint Rauner, who earned more than \$60 million last year from his investments, as an out-of-touch rich guy who would increase the burden on the poor and middle class.

"All my opponent does is grow his bank account, and that hurts everyone," Quinn said at a debate in Chicago this week.

Rauner has argued that Quinn presided over one of the worst economies in the country. Illinois' unemployment stands at 6.6%, and the state is weighed down by a woefully underfunded state pension system.

"Pat Quinn has been in Springfield for decades, and he's almost been governor for six years," Rauner said. "It's a record of failure — on jobs, on taxes, on schools, on corruption and cronyism and political patronage."

The tight polling suggests the governor's fate may come down to his ability to turn out the Democratic base Nov. 4. The governor hopes Obama, whose appearance in Chicago comes the night before early voting starts in Chicago, can help him do that.

At Flecks Coffee and Cafe, a business where Rauner made a campaign stop this week, co-owner Olga Turner said there is a general malaise in her community about Quinn's stewardship of the Illinois economy that has created an opening for Rauner.

Though Turner is down on Quinn, she remains a big Obama fan. She said he's done the best job he can, considering a difficult economy and "obstruction" from his opponents.

Turner, who has never voted for a Republican and is undecided how she'll vote in the governor's race, isn't quite as charitable about Quinn.

"The way people are feeling, I don't think you can take anyone's vote for granted," she said. "I'll be interested in hearing what Obama has to say."

Uphill Battle Continues For Renteria

By Seth Nidever

[Hanford \(CA\) Sentinel](#), October 18, 2014

Can Joe **Biden** and Hillary Clinton propel Amanda Renteria to victory?

Going up against incumbent Rep. David Valadao, R-Hanford, in a congressional district that has become difficult for Democrats, Renteria is pulling out all the stops with three-and-a-half weeks to go before Election Day.

On Oct. 7, Vice President Joe **Biden** gave a full-throttle stump speech in Bakersfield in support of Renteria and state Sen. Alex Padilla, the Democrat running for California Secretary of State.

Valadao, who had invited **Biden** to tour parts of the 21st Congressional District to see drought impacts, said in a written statement that "as Valley farmers, farmworkers, and families continue to suffer under drought conditions, Vice President **Biden** is traveling to the Central Valley to headline a political fundraiser for our opponent."

This coming weekend, a Democratic star-studded fundraiser in the Bay Area features 2016 Democratic presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton. Renteria is scheduled to make an appearance.

But is Renteria's 11th hour offensive a sign of health or a desperation heave into the end zone? The evidence suggests the latter.

With President Barack Obama unpopular and with Republicans poised to gain seats in the House and Senate, many Washington, D.C., oddsmakers have rated the district as "lean Republican."

In recent weeks, Renteria spokeswoman Maria Machuca emailed a barrage of press releases attacking Valadao for his voting record, both as a California assemblyman from 2010 to 2012 and as a congressman in 2013 and 2014.

They include headlines like "FACT: Valadao voted for Radical Ryan Budget with Wrong Priorities" and "FACT: [Valadao] Voted Against Establishing A Right to Clean Water."

"When you are talking about his voting record, it's not an attack, it's a fact," Machuca said.

Republicans were happy to morph the attention-grabbing headlines into an argument that Renteria is flailing.

"Our opponent's campaign is getting more and more desperate and silly," said Valadao spokesman Tal Eslick. "She is purposely misleading voters to draw attention away from the fact that her campaign is fully funded by Bay Area liberals and environmental groups like the Environmental Defense Fund and the Natural Resources Defense Council."

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee has yanked a nearly \$1 million TV ad buy for Renteria that it was planning to air later this month. It was originally scheduled to run in early October when absentee ballots were still arriving in voters' mailboxes. According to a politico.com story published

on Oct. 6, House Democrats are shifting money away from Democratic challengers and toward vulnerable Democratic incumbents in hotly-contested races.

In a poll that came out last month, SurveyUSA had Valadao beating Renteria by 19 percentage points.

Despite Democrats having a 15-percent-point voter registration edge, Valadao clobbered 2012 Democratic challenger John Hernandez 58 percent to 42 percent.

Valadao continues to dominate the fundraising competition. From July 1 to Sept. 30, he raked in \$545,065 in contributions. At the end of the period, Valadao had \$1.1 million cash on hand.

As of June 30 — the date of the last report she filed — Renteria had \$396,898 cash on hand. Renteria's totals for the July 1 to Sept. 30 period were not available Thursday on the Federal Election Commission's website.

Renteria and Valadao did four televised debates earlier this month, but they aired at odd times — one at 8 a.m. on a Sunday — and most weren't open to the general public. That didn't help Renteria, who has faces a name-recognition challenge Valadao doesn't.

Machuca said the Renteria campaign is working "very aggressively" on a get-out-the-vote effort. She noted that the Democratic voter registration edge has increased from 15 percent in 2012 to 17 percent today.

"We won't see the results until Election Day," Machuca said.

Ditto for Eslick, who said the incumbent isn't counting on a favorable climate to coast to victory.

"We believe that campaigns are won on the ground, in the district," Eslick said. "We're taking nothing for granted."

Jill Biden Comes To Atlanta

By Jim Galloway

[Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#), October 17, 2014

The parade of each party's more popular figures continues Friday with Dr. Jill **Biden**, wife of Vice President Joe **Biden**, who will be in Atlanta to raise money for the party and Democratic U.S. Senate hopeful Michelle Nunn.

Jill **Biden** will attend an event for the Democratic National Committee at a private Atlanta residence. (On Saturday morning, the vice president's wife will attend a public Hands On Atlanta event with Michelle Nunn, the Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate, at the Fort Street United Methodist Church).

It's Time To Watch Out For An October Surprise

By John Kass

[Chicago Tribune](#), October 18, 2014

Now that President Barack Obama has installed a Democratic Party apparatchik with no scientific or medical experience as America's Ebola czar, POTUS has plenty of time for what really matters to him:

Partisan politics in Illinois, his political home.

Specifically, Obama will concentrate Sunday on Illinois gubernatorial politics (I just love that word gubernatorial) and the close race between Democratic Gov. Pat Quinn and his challenger, Republican businessman Bruce Rauner.

As some of you may have heard, the gubernatorial election is likely to shape the economic future of Illinois.

And since the president is coming to Illinois to stump for Quinn — but leaving a political guy in charge of Ebola who knows little about fluids but a lot about hanging chads — I guess that means it's OK for the rest of us to think politics too.

What I'd like you to consider are these three things:

The parade of heavy hitters being brought in for Quinn, which suggests, to me at least, that Rauner may have the momentum in the campaign; Monday night's critical debate; and the tradition of the last-minute drop of opposition research to journalists.

Obama is the heaviest of heavy Democratic Party hitters to come in for Quinn, and Sunday's rally at Chicago State University is designed in part to ramp up the African-American base that the Democrats cannot live without. But former President Bill Clinton may show up in the coming days as well, and Vice President Joe **Biden**.

Quinn also has his elderly mom serving as an attack dog, but she's so sweet about it.

Rauner was asked about Obama, Clinton and **Biden** on my WLS-AM radio program on Friday.

"It shows how desperate they are trying to shore up the weakest governor in America," Rauner said in the interview, adding that he has gained backing from some Democratic leaders who supported Obama because "Illinois has been the worst-run state in America. We've got a bunch of corrupt and incompetent politicians running this state into the ground. We're going to win this race. It's very exciting and I'm pumped up."

I would have been pumped up myself if Quinn took advantage of the airtime that's been offered to him — I'd wanted his input in this space as well — but apparently he was busy shooting hoops and perhaps preparing for the Monday WLS-TV debate.

Rauner crushed him at the end of their last debate before black civic leaders including the Chicago Urban League. That energized his supporters, particularly in the suburbs and collar counties where Rauner must pull big numbers to overcome the expected Democratic surge in Cook County.

But Quinn is an experienced politician. An overconfident Rauner could make a mistake. And Quinn knows when to pounce on a mistake.

So I asked Rauner if overconfidence leading into Monday's debate could be a problem.

"Am I overconfident? No," he said. "This is going to be a close race. And Illinois politics is wild. Nobody can predict anything. This is going to be very close, very tough, and I'm taking absolutely nothing for granted."

And last, we should consider a little-discussed but highly important feature of tight campaigns like the Quinn-Rauner race:

That last-minute drop over the transom.

There are few, if any, transoms in modern newspaper buildings given we now have central air conditioning, but the time-honored tradition of peddling negative news stories on opponents remains.

So you shouldn't be surprised if you see negative media hits in the coming days that give a candidate little if any time to react.

Amazingly, almost as if by coincidence, the other camp (those who did the dropping) often has campaign ads up the minute the negative story hits the news.

There are two tactics used. One is the straight drop to a politically friendly print or TV reporter.

Another method is to first feed partisans on candidate-friendly blogs. Then the campaign's social media warriors pump it up to generate buzz, hoping a broadcast or print news outlet acknowledges a "reported controversy."

Once that's done, once the news outlet mentions the "reported controversy," then others can jump in, surrogates and candidates too.

And the opposition researchers get what they wanted: a bloodied opponent without any of their telltale fingerprints.

Over the past few days I've received such calls, from Democratic and Republican operatives in different campaigns up and down the ballot. And I'm sure other reporters have received them too.

I'm not passing judgment on the operatives, they're advocates doing their jobs. And clearly, reporters are free to do last-minute hits. It is the way of things and the way of all campaigns in free countries.

But I don't like it. I'll admit that years ago, I was as eager for a chunk of red meat as the next hunting dog. What you learn, though, over time is that such chunks of meat have a smell.

It smells of manipulation.

And it lingers.

Reporters love getting information, the public deserves information, and where it comes from isn't all that important. What's important is that we check it out.

But I don't like late negative stories in a tough campaign, especially one with stark philosophical differences like this race for governor.

The last couple of weeks of a campaign isn't the time for a dramatic drop. The oppo researchers had months to drop dimes on the other guy.

Now it's time for voters to concentrate, and time for candidates to sell themselves. And they have a little over two weeks to do it.

Early Voting Starts This Week, With Changes

[Chicago Tribune](#), October 18, 2014

Early voting kicks off Monday in advance of the Nov. 4 statewide election, with a slew of new one-time changes that supporters say are meant to boost voter participation and critics contend have been put in place for political reasons tied to the hotly contested governor race.

With voters casting their first in-person ballots this week, the political spotlight will remain bright in the race between Gov. Pat Quinn and Republican challenger Bruce Rauner. President Barack Obama comes to Chicago on Sunday night to again stump for Quinn at a Chicago State University rally that coincides with the beginning of early voting. And former President Bill Clinton will be in town Tuesday to appear with the governor.

Vice President Joe **Biden** is set to attend an early voting event Wednesday in Vernon Hills with U.S. Rep. Brad Schneider, according to the Schneider campaign.

Meanwhile, voters across the region have already received thousands of ballots through the mail-in voting option that both political parties have increasingly made a focus of their campaign tactics.

In 2010, the first election in which Illinois allowed "no excuse" mail-in ballots where voters could take advantage of the postal option without explaining why they couldn't instead vote on Election Day, 25,004 voters in suburban Cook County availed themselves of the opportunity, according to Cook County Clerk David Orr. By the middle of last week, more than 33,000 applications for mail-in ballots in the Cook County suburbs had already come in, Orr said.

"It remains to be seen whether these are people who wouldn't have voted otherwise, or if they are simply using this option instead of heading to the polls," Orr said. "But certainly we have seen the parties and the candidates increasingly urging people to vote by mail. The goal is to get your people out (to vote)

before Election Day, which saves the campaigns from having to use resources on Election Day to try to track down likely supporters and try to get them to go out and vote.”

In Chicago, the Board of Election Commissioners had received 29,480 applications for the absentee ballots by Friday, according to board spokesman James Allen. A total of 28,365 of the mail-in ballots were cast in 2010, when governor was last the top race.

Organizations have become much more aggressive in sending out absentee applications to residences across the city, Allen said. Residents fill out the forms and return them to the third party groups, which then deliver them to election officials. “We get two to seven boxes (of applications) every other day from these clearinghouses,” Allen said.

While there’s nothing improper about the practice, Allen warned that there is a time lag between voters mailing the applications to the clearinghouses and the organizations dropping off the bundles of applications to the Election Board. “If we receive the application two minutes after 5 p.m. on Oct. 30, it’s no good,” he said.

People who want to vote early in person will have an easier time doing so this year, thanks to a series of one-time election laws signed by Quinn last summer.

The two-week early voting period, which traditionally ends the Saturday before the Tuesday election, will this year continue through Sunday, Nov. 2, at some voting locations.

In the city, five early voting locations will be open later during the second week, until 7 p.m. from Oct. 27 to Oct. 31. The later hours will be in effect at 42 suburban locations, plus the Cook County clerk’s Loop location. Early voting locations across the city and suburbs will be open until 5 p.m. on other dates in the run-up to Nov. 4.

And people voting early will for the first time be able to do so without showing a photo ID such as a driver’s license.

After lawmakers approved the measures on a Democratic-led vote shortly before the end of the spring session, Quinn welcomed the change.

“Democracy works best when everyone has the opportunity to participate,” the governor said. “Instead of turning away eager voters at the ballot box, (the legislation) will make sure more Illinois residents have a chance to have their voices heard.”

Rauner has said he supports the concept of increasing voter registration and turnout. But some Republicans have noted the legislation put these changes in place only for this year’s election and wondered whether Democrats eased the voting rules to give their candidates a boost this November.

In 2006, 24,811 Chicago voters cast early in-person ballots. That number more than tripled to 85,604 in 2010, Allen said. Chicago election officials anticipate early votes “again in that 80s range” this election, he said.

Early voting numbers will go up if voters decide well before Nov. 4 whether they want to back Quinn or Rauner, Allen said.

“For the presidential election, people made up their minds in September, so the minute we opened the doors for early voting, boom, they were lining up,” he said. “If people want to wait, maybe watch one more debate or see what transpires late in the campaign, they’re less likely to vote early.”

Tribune reporter Monique Garcia contributed.

Honduras Boosts Air Force In Fight Against Drug Smugglers

By Gustavo Palencia

[Reuters](#), October 18, 2014

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

8 Things You Didn't Know About Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor

By Nora Daly

[PBS](#), October 18, 2014

Of all the Supreme Court Justices, Sonia Sotomayor is arguably the most visible outside of the courtroom. Her journey from a Bronx housing project to the United States Supreme Court has been chronicled by many, including Sotomayor herself in her bestselling memoir, "My Beloved World."

In spite of all that is known about Justice Sotomayor, judicial biographer and Reuters legal affairs editor Joan Biskupic believed there was more to discover. She discussed her new book, "Breaking In: The Rise of Sonia Sotomayor and the Politics of Justice," with PBS NewsHour's Gwen Ifill. Here are a few lesser known facts she helped uncover.¹ She helped Ruth Bader Ginsburg cope with her husband's death

In the opening pages of "Breaking In," Biskupic describes how Sotomayor shook up tradition at her first end-of-term party by asking the other justices to salsa dance with her.

In what Biskupic describes as the "most compelling" moment of this episode, Sotomayor approached Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, whose husband had passed away just three days prior, and asked her to dance. When Ginsburg initially refused, Sotomayor leaned in and whispered to her, "Marty would have wanted you to dance," referring to Ginsburg's late husband. After joining her on the dance floor briefly, Ginsburg placed her hands on Sotomayor's cheeks and simply said, "Thank you."² She was born the same year as Brown vs. Board of Education

Sotomayor has described herself as "the perfect affirmative action baby." In April, when the court upheld an amendment to the Michigan state constitution banning racial affirmative action, she issued a 58-page long dissent (over three times as long as the opinion upholding the law), which made clear that she believes it is the court's role to defend the civil rights of "historically marginalized groups." It is fitting that she was born shortly after this landmark ruling in favor of educational equality.³ She poked fun at Chief Justice John Roberts

In a 2007 opinion, Chief Justice Roberts famously wrote: "The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race." In her dissent in the Michigan ruling, Sotomayor turned Roberts' words against him, writing: "The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to speak openly and candidly on the subject of race."

"She clearly was playing off of his view in a kind of mocking way," Biskupic says, "and in fact, Chief Justice Roberts criticized Justice Sotomayor for doing that...he said that she was expounding policy preferences, but then he also said that he did not like the airing of personal strains."

Sotomayor's jab at Roberts revealed a personal disagreement, but Biskupic insists the dissent as a whole was rooted in Sotomayor's professional opinion. "Most of it was based on her legal reasoning and what she thought of precedent. So she weaves in sentiment from personal experience, but it is all based in the law."⁴ She "leaned in" during the nomination process

In "Breaking In," Biskupic points out that no judicial nomination moves "without some pushing and shoving," and "minorities and women...faced greater resistance." She reports that in 1991, when

President George H. W. Bush nominated Sotomayor to the U.S. District Court, minorities accounted for only around 10 percent of federal judges, a mere 12 percent were female and, in the state of New York, there were no Hispanic federal judges.

Biskupic was surprised to learn how active Sotomayor was in pushing for her own nomination. Biskupic was surprised to learn how active Sotomayor was in pushing for her own nomination. "I didn't know how much she had been an agent for herself," Biskupic said, in discussing how Sotomayor worked, first with Democratic New York Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan to secure her nomination to the U.S. District Court, and later with Republican New York Sen. Al D'Amato, to ensure a Senate floor vote on her elevation to the Second Circuit. "She was accustomed to pushing overtly for what she wanted," Biskupic writes in "Breaking In," adding that "her confidence surprised Moynihan" when the two first met to discuss her nomination.⁵ She wields influence behind the scenes

There have been many times, Biskupic says, when Sotomayor "has been willing to break off and write some solo dissents or concurring opinions that break from her liberal colleagues ... It's a variety of cases where she'll go a little bit further to left." However, in "Breaking In," Biskupic tells of at least one instance where the justice agreed to compromise.

Prior to ruling on the Michigan state ban on affirmative action, the court heard another case that challenged the race-sensitive admissions policy of the University of Texas at Austin. This case presented an even greater challenge to affirmative action by calling into question a precedent-setting ruling. In her book, Biskupic reveals that Sotomayor, greatly concerned about the way the Court appeared to be leaning, wrote a fiery dissent that was circulated privately among the justices, and ultimately led some of her more conservative colleagues to agree to a compromise.

"It all went on in secret," Biskupic told NewsHour's Gwen Ifill, "it was her work behind the scenes that...in effect, saved affirmative action for another day."⁶ She shops at Costco

Back in June, Sotomayor appeared to surprise Hillary Clinton at her own book signing at an Arlington, Virginia, Costco. The justice picked up a copy of the former secretary of state's book and shook hands before departing. While some speculated that the meeting was in fact a planned photo-op, Sotomayor told The Washington Post that it was pure coincidence.

"A nice lady at the pharmacy counter recognized me, and we started chatting, and she says, 'Are you here with the other lady?' And I said, 'What other lady?' And she mentioned Madam Secretary, and that's how I found out."⁷ She rescheduled on the Vice President of the United States

When Vice President **Biden** requested that Justice Sotomayor swear him in at the January 2013 inauguration ceremony, she agreed, but asked that the event be rescheduled from 12 p.m. to 8 a.m. because she had committed to a book signing in New York City later in the day. Some eyebrows were raised when it was revealed that the vice president and the president would not be sworn in at the same time, but **Biden** himself did not seem to mind. At the conclusion of the ceremony, Biskupic writes, **Biden** thanked Justice Sotomayor, saying it was "a wonderful honor" to be sworn in by her. "We are going to walk out," he continued, "you see her car's waiting so she can catch a train I hope I haven't caused her to miss."

U.S. Vice President Joe **Biden** takes the oath of office from Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor as his wife Jill **Biden** holds the family bible while family members look on at the U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington January 20, 2013. Photo by Kevin Lamarque/Reuters⁸. She is a workaholic

Below is video evidence that the justice couldn't even step away from the bench long enough to have a cup of coffee with a friend!

NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST OP-EDS

Small Schools Work In New York

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

Mayor Bill de Blasio has been critical of the signature education strategy of his predecessor, Mike Bloomberg, a strategy that involved closing large, failing high schools and replacing them with smaller specialized schools that offer a more rigorous curriculum and a more personal brand of instruction. But over the last few years, the Bloomberg approach has been vindicated by an innovative, multiyear study showing that the poor, minority students who attend small specialized schools do better academically than students in a control group who attend traditional high schools.

The latest installment of the study, released this week by the nonprofit research group MDRC, contains even more impressive news: The disadvantaged students who make up a vast majority of the small-school enrollment are also more likely than those in the control group to enroll in college.

The challenge facing Mr. de Blasio and his advisers is how to build on this impressive foundation.

New York City started talking about small schools in the 1990s, but it did not begin translating this into actual policy until the early 2000s, when Mr. Bloomberg began aggressively closing down large, factory-style high schools. Some of these big schools had enrollments of 3,000 or more students and graduation rates of less than 40 percent.

By contrast, the new smaller high schools, typically in black or Hispanic neighborhoods, serve about 100 students per grade. More than 90 percent of the students attending these schools are black or Hispanic. Nearly 85 percent qualify for free or reduced price lunches. Three-fourths of them began their high school careers performing below grade level in reading or math. These smaller schools have several other things in common. They have a rigorous curriculum. They offer a personalized approach to education, with teachers responsible for keeping close tabs on the performance of their students. They are organized around themes — social justice, law or science. They get valuable support from community partners — colleges, cultural organizations or social service groups — that sometimes assist with funding, the hiring of new staff members or providing ways for students to connect their schoolwork with the world of work.

The multiyear study is tracking more than 21,000 students through their high school careers and into college. Among the startling results are these: Students at small high schools have a graduation rate of 71.6 percent, compared with 62.2 percent for their peers in larger schools. The small-school students are also more likely to graduate in four years and go straight to college. The gains are especially impressive among young black men, 42.3 percent of whom enroll in college as opposed to 31 percent of their peers in the control group. Young black women and young Hispanic men and women also matriculated at higher rates than their large-school peers.

The small high schools managed to achieve these gains at a lower cost per graduate than the traditional schools, partly because more students graduated on time and did not need a costly fifth year of education.

The teachers union supported the school closure strategy at first, even though it requires teachers to reapply for their jobs and, in many cases, move elsewhere. But it withdrew support when it decided that Mr. Bloomberg was unnecessarily ramming through closures. The de Blasio administration has said that it will first pursue an as yet undefined strategy to help improve schools before deciding to shut them down.

The administration is right when it says that every school can't be a small one. But given the clear benefits that have accrued to the city's most vulnerable students, Mr. de Blasio should not shy away from the option of shutting down big schools and remaking them from scratch, particularly in cases where the school has been failing for a long time and its culture is beyond repair.

Vatican Signals On Gays And Remarriage Are A Hopeful Beginning

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

A half-century after the historic changes of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Francis is showing his intent to drive a comparably ambitious agenda for the Roman Catholic Church in the 21st century.

The current synod of bishops in Rome, called by Francis to encourage reform and modernization, set a ringing tone of compassion this week with an opening call for a more welcoming attitude toward gay people, unmarried couples, divorced Catholics who remarry, and children in these unions.

The bishops' report on their first week of private discussions did not immediately change church doctrine. But it signaled the pope's determination to have the church look anew at the realities of the modern world, including what the bishops were moved to call the "positive aspects of civil unions and cohabitation" — a formulation unthinkable in an era when the church denounced such Catholics as "living in sin."

The synod's summary language about gays and lesbians was even more remarkable.

"Homosexuals have gifts and qualities to offer to the Christian community: Are we capable of welcoming these people, guaranteeing to them a fraternal space in our communities?" asked the bishops' opening 12-page report. It maintained opposition to same-sex marriage but avoided the ritual condemnation of "intrinsically disordered" homosexuality.

The final version of the report will serve as the centerpiece for a year's debate by church leaders and laity before a concluding synod next October.

The whole effort is subject to fierce debate among the bishops, but the very fact that Francis ordered church leaders to address these challenges seems a landmark in Vatican history.

Such an overdue and refreshing agenda should also be well received at the parish level, where many of the church's modern laity have shown themselves motivated by individual conscience more than doctrinaire prelates on such issues as birth control. The synod did not call for doctrinal changes on birth control. But it said — perhaps in a euphemistic effort to seem less than absolute on the subject — that what is required is "a realistic language that is able to start from listening to people."

Beyond specific issues, a welcome tone of conciliation and outreach defined the synod report, as in the recognition that gay Catholics yearn for "a welcoming home" in the church. In this and other ways, the synod marks a hopeful beginning of what undoubtedly will be a difficult but fascinating worldwide debate on the future of the modern church.

The White Teeth Monopoly

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

Should dentists alone be allowed to decide who whitens your teeth? That is the question in an antitrust case before the Supreme Court that could clarify whether antitrust laws apply to professional licensing bodies, which are often packed with people in the industry.

The case, North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners v. Federal Trade Commission, involves the state board's attempt to squelch competition and keep prices high by telling salons, spas and other businesses to stop offering teeth whitening services because they are not licensed dentists. The board consists mainly of dentists elected by their state-licensed colleagues. But no other body in North Carolina,

including the courts or the State Legislature, had previously determined that only dentists could whiten teeth.

The F.T.C. challenged the board and told it to stop sending out cease-and-desist letters to teeth whitening businesses. The board appealed, arguing that as a state agency it had immunity from federal antitrust laws. The United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, in Richmond, Va., ruled in favor of the F.T.C.

Many state governments give doctors, dentists, lawyers and other professionals limited authority to regulate the way their occupation is practiced. But the Supreme Court has ruled on other occasions that state officials must actively supervise those professional regulatory bodies if they are to be immune from antitrust law. In this case, the board's cease-and-desist letters were not reviewed or approved by North Carolina.

The dental board argued, as did other professional groups and associations in their briefs to the court, that subjecting it to antitrust laws would weaken its authority and discourage professionals from serving on regulatory bodies. During this week's arguments, even Justice Stephen Breyer wondered whether a ruling in favor of the F.T.C. could create a situation where bureaucrats, not neurologists, would decide who could conduct brain surgery.

Those concerns are misplaced. Each antitrust case is different, and a ruling for the F.T.C. in this case will not paralyze professional regulatory bodies. The dental board clearly overstepped its authority and the law. If the board was concerned about the safety of consumers, it could have tried to make the case in court that teeth whitening can be performed only by a licensed dentist — perhaps by suing the teeth whitening services and convincing a judge that the services were violating North Carolina law. Alternatively, as the F.T.C. said, it could have issued rules regulating teeth whitening. These rules would become effective if they were approved by a commission appointed by the North Carolina Legislature.

Either way, the board could not unilaterally tell the teeth whiteners to stop their business. States have the right to regulate competition in the public interest. But they cannot blindly outsource that responsibility to professionals who stand to benefit from such restrictions.

Failures Of Competence

By Joe Nocera

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

Et tu, C.D.C.?

For years, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been the most trusted agency in the federal government. In 2003, when Gallup did a survey to determine what the public thought of various federal agencies, the C.D.C. topped the list, with 66 percent of respondents describing it as "excellent" or "good."

Last year, a similar Gallup poll showed that the C.D.C.'s approval rating had dropped to 60 percent, which was still better than any other agency. The C.D.C. has seen the country through SARS and the swine flu virus. The general perception was not only that it did important, apolitical work, but that it was highly competent. "I used to call the C.D.C. the shining star of federal agencies," says Lawrence O. Gostin, a global health expert at Georgetown Law.

And then came Ebola.

The Ebola outbreak is not exactly enhancing the C.D.C.'s reputation for competence. At first, the agency reassured the public that American hospitals were ready to handle any Ebola cases that came their way. That has turned out not to be the case. When Thomas Eric Duncan was diagnosed with Ebola

in Dallas, the C.D.C. did not immediately fly in an expert team — something that the C.D.C. director, Tom Frieden, now says it should have done. Most recently, the C.D.C. appears to have allowed one of the Dallas nurses who helped Duncan to take a flight from Ohio to Texas even though she had a slightly raised temperature. When it became clear that she had contracted the virus — the second nurse to do so — Frieden was forced to admit that letting her on the plane was a mistake.

Meanwhile, Frieden, a highly respected public health expert, had to walk back some of his remarks. Congress — including Democrats — appears dismayed by the mistakes. Perhaps the biggest one the C.D.C. made was that its voluntary guidelines for treating Ebola patients were too lax. In *The Times* a few days ago, Donald G. McNeil quoted several experts saying the protocols established by the C.D.C. were, in the words of one, “absolutely irresponsible and dead wrong.” One important protocol is having a “site supervisor” watching for errors. The C.D.C. has now included that guideline.

Are there extenuating circumstances? To hear infectious disease specialists tell it, the answer is yes. Like all federal agencies, the C.D.C. saw significant cuts to its funding thanks to sequestration. Another expert, Marc Lipsitch of the Harvard School of Public Health, told me in an email that because the chances of Ebola being imported to the U.S. were considered low, preparing for it was not considered a good use of scarce public money. “The budget cuts,” he wrote, “have directly reduced preparedness.”

In addition, the C.D.C., like many federal agencies, had its mission transformed after 9/11. Julie Gerberding, an appointee of the Bush administration, changed its emphasis to bioterrorism and other potential security threats. “She also brought in efficiency experts who were anathema to scientists,” says Laurie Garrett, a senior fellow for global health at the Council on Foreign Relations and the author of the seminal 1994 book, “*The Coming Plague*.” Morale plummeted, and many of its best scientists fled.

Fair enough. But it is also true that the C.D.C. was too hubristic in its approach to Ebola, and the consequence is that its staff now looks like bumbler. “They never challenged their own assumptions,” says Dr. Richard Wenzel, an infectious disease specialist at Virginia Commonwealth University. “This is an unforgiving virus,” he added, “about which there is a lot we don’t know.” The C.D.C.’s unfortunate habit of saying things as if they were certainties only to have to acknowledge that its judgment was questionable, says Wenzel, “can cause people to lose faith in the public health system.”

When you think about it, many of the Obama administration’s “scandals” have been failures of competence. The Secret Service let a man leap over the White House fence and get into the White House. The Veterans Health Administration covered up unconscionable delays in treating veterans. The error-ridden rollout of the Obamacare website was a nightmare for people trying to sign up for health insurance. The Republican right takes it as an article of faith that the national government can’t do anything right. Problems like these only help promote that idea.

And now comes the C.D.C. — the most trusted agency in government — thrust in a role for which it was designed: advising us and protecting us from a potential contagion. With every new mistake, it becomes, in the public eye, just another federal agency that can’t get it right.

Start Helping The Helpers

By Arthur C. Brooks

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

WHAT is a “helping industry”?

This question has brought me to a former battery factory in downtown San Francisco. I’m sitting in what must have been some tycoon’s corner office. Four overstuffed chairs are surrounded by a full complement of hipster eclectica, from art books to lava lamps.

My hosts are not squatters. They are Nathan Blecharczyk, a 30-something co-founder of Airbnb, and several of his fellow executives. Airbnb is the start-up Internet marketplace that matches visitors to cities around the world with people who have space to rent in their homes. In just six years, the business has exploded: It is currently valued at roughly \$10 billion and employs more than 800 people.

What made these people start Airbnb? For a sure way to make a boatload of money? Not likely. According to Scott Shane, an entrepreneurship scholar at Case Western Reserve University, about a quarter of new businesses typically fail in their first year, and fewer than half are still standing after five years. A smart guy like Nate could find a career with much better odds of financial success.

Indeed, a few minutes with him dispels any delusion that money is all he cares about. To hear him tell it, he started the business because it was fascinating and fun. And most of all, he says, because it could help ordinary people who needed an affordable place to stay or had some excess capacity in their homes. That's right — Nate sees Airbnb as a "helping industry."

Some will howl at this, because we tend to define helping industries as things like government, charities and health care.

But are those the only ways — or even the best ways — to help struggling Americans? Government and charities play an important role, especially in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis and our subsequent nonrecovery. But let's use a bit more imagination, and turn our attention back to Airbnb.

Consider Kimberly Kaye, a disabled 30-year-old New Yorker who says she has been able to stay in her home only because of Airbnb. In Ms. Kaye's own words, "for a few days each month, we vacate our one-bedroom apartment, bunk with a friend or family member and rent out our place." She reports that her earnings from the service are "modest," but they help her pay the bills and stay connected to the outside world. "It's the difference between keeping our chins above water and drowning."

Technically, Airbnb — like Uber, Lyft and other innovative companies — is helping people like Kimberly Kaye by tackling the problem of "dead capital." This term, coined by the Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto, refers to potentially productive assets owned by ordinary people who could use them if they could only find a way. As Daniel M. Rothschild of the Mercatus Center points out, there are 1.5 bedrooms for every man, woman and child in the United States. The owners or renters of many of these dormant bedrooms could use extra money in a lousy economy.

Ordinary people, especially vulnerable people without power and privilege, find Airbnb empowering and useful. It lifts Americans up with zero cost to the taxpayer. And people like it. Shouldn't we encourage this?

Instead, state and local governments have met the service with antagonism, seeking to limit Airbnb's operations or shut it down. Just this week, the attorney general of New York issued a new report insisting that a majority of Airbnb's operations in New York City are illegal, and says it is planning a major regulatory crackdown. Uber, Lyft and similar services that enliven dead capital have met with similar treatment from government officials.

Nobody wants zero regulation, and every company should follow the law. But policy should begin with admiration for new ways that citizens can build their lives, not with hostility to profits or the impulse to protect entrenched industries. Governments have their own golden opportunity to exercise creativity in service of the common good, whether that entails rethinking anachronistic zoning laws or adjusting tax policies that treat someone's spare bedroom the same as a Marriott suite.

Any of us can work in a helping industry. That includes teachers, nurses, stay-at-home parents, entrepreneurs who want to empower ordinary people, and government officials who welcome novel industries as opportunities to evolve instead of nuisances to be squashed.

The blessing of our free enterprise system is that any of us can sanctify our work. We just need to ask if what we are doing truly lifts others up.

Arthur C. Brooks, a contributing opinion writer, is president of the American Enterprise Institute.

Free Pigs From The Abusive Crates

By Bill Maher

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

WOULD you cram a dog into a crate for her entire life, never letting her out, until you took her to the pound to kill her?

Of course you wouldn't, and yet that's effectively what happens to most mother pigs in this country. They spend their lives in what are called gestation crates, tiny stalls that house pregnant sows. They cannot even turn around, and are immobilized in these crates until they are taken to the slaughterhouse.

Pigs are smart animals — the brainiacs of the barnyard, basically. They have outperformed dogs on tests of behavioral and cognitive sophistication. In fact, they learn rudimentary video games as quickly as chimpanzees, one of our closest living relatives.

The primatologist Jane Goodall writes that “farm animals feel pleasure and sadness, excitement and resentment, depression, fear and pain. They are far more aware and intelligent than we ever imagined ... they are individuals in their own right.”

But when abnormally enclosed, their muscles and bones waste away, and they go insane from boredom. Just as you would if you couldn't move.

Fortunately, we're seeing changes. Animal protection organizations are putting pressure on corporations to change, and so we're seeing policies to get rid of these crates from the likes of McDonald's, Burger King and Smithfield Foods.

We've also seen bills or initiatives passed in nine states that require that all pigs be given at least enough space to turn around.

It's a modest improvement, but the pork producers are fighting it. A spokesman for the National Pork Producers Council actually said to a reporter for National Journal, “I don't know who asked the sow if she wanted to turn around.” (The council later issued a statement regretting the comment.)

These laws are bipartisan: California passed a ban on crates, not surprisingly, but so did the more conservative states of Florida and Arizona.

New Jersey would be the 10th. A poll conducted last month by Mason-Dixon Polling and Research found that 93 percent of New Jersey voters wanted to see these crates banned — including 94 percent of Democrats and independents, and 92 percent of Republicans. Both chambers of the State Legislature have now passed it. What could go wrong?

Unfortunately, we've seen this movie before. A year ago, Gov. Chris Christie vetoed a similar bill that had passed the Assembly and Senate by huge bipartisan majorities — 60 to 5 in the Assembly and 29 to 4 in the Senate.

Governor Christie claimed to be vetoing the bill based on merits, but I cannot imagine that he thinks it's O.K. to confine pigs in their own waste, immobile, for years at a time.

There must be more to it. Could it be that a possible presidential candidate is aware that Iowa is the No. 1 pig state in the country, and that Republican primary voters there are strongly anti-regulation?

It is no more acceptable to abuse a pig than it would be to abuse a dog, which is illegal. These crates should already be illegal under the New Jersey animal welfare laws, but since they aren't, Mr. Christie should sign the bill this time. It would hardly put pigs into luxurious settings. It doesn't force pig

producers to choose a specific kind of housing; it merely says the animals have to be allowed to turn around, lie down, stand up and fully extend their limbs.

When Governor Christie vetoed the bill, he said he was concerned that it bypassed the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, so the bill's sponsors changed it so that it works through that department. So Mr. Christie really has no excuse to veto it again.

I have been involved in the animal rights cause for decades, and nothing makes me angrier than cramming animals into environments where they can't move.

We should not play politics with animals' lives. Banning crates in my native state of New Jersey is the right thing to do.

Bill Maher is the host of "Real Time With Bill Maher" on HBO.

What Is A Catholic Family?

By Peter Manseau

[New York Times](#), October 18, 2014

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — GATHERED in Rome last week to discuss marriage, divorce and the widening array of domestic arrangements with which they now must contend, a group of Roman Catholic bishops released a statement that included a theological turn of phrase that proved more telling than intended. "We must not forget that the church that preaches about the family is a sign of contradiction."

This was not meant as a self-aware nod to the incongruity of a cohort of celibate men discussing the place of birth control, child-rearing and marital relations in the lives of millions of noncelibate Catholics, nor as an acknowledgment that the church has held conflicting views on the family from the beginning. A "sign of contradiction" here alludes to a prophecy given to Mary early in the Gospel of Luke that the infant Jesus would be a "sign that is spoken against" by the people he had come to save.

For Christians, this sign is a call to stand apart from society, enduring scorn for the sake of religious truth. Referring to their synod on the family this way, the bishops were not humbly admitting their inability to speak from experience, but making a lofty claim to a higher authority.

Still, the contradictions most evident in the aftermath of the bishops' statement were those within their own ranks. A recap of discussions held during the first half of a two-week meeting convened by Pope Francis, the report was greeted with outsize praise and alarm for its willingness to engage in unexpected ways with issues including homosexuality and what the church used to call "living in sin."

Within hours of the Hungarian Cardinal Peter Erdo's affirmation in the prepared statement that "cultural and socio-economic factors" may influence the choice to begin, delay or end a marriage, and that same-sex unions could provide "precious support in the life of the partners," other high-ranking clergymen stepped forward to claim that the media's focus on such sentiments was "manipulating" the synod's words.

"The message has gone out that this is what the synod is saying, this is what the Catholic Church is saying," Cardinal Wilfrid Fox Napier of South Africa, who participated in the meetings, complained. "It's not what we're saying at all."

Such disagreement was perhaps to be expected. The statement read by Cardinal Erdo was a *relatio post disceptationem*, a "report after debate" that attempted to wrangle a week's worth of competing positions into a seamless account of continuing deliberations. Almost immediately, commentary on the document walked back the very statements that earned it such unanticipated attention.

In another sign of the synod's internal contradictions, the Vatican released a new translation of the report three days after the uproar that greeted its original release. A section titled "Welcoming

homosexual persons” became the entirely less welcoming “Providing for homosexual persons” and “partners” in same-sex unions became “these persons.” This last was a particularly puzzling rendering given that the phrase originally translated as “life of the partners” appears as “la vita dei partners” in the synod’s official Italian text.

Yet even if the effects of the “pastoral earthquake” described by one longtime Vatican correspondent turn out to be as lasting as the wall-shaking rumble of a passing diesel truck, something undeniably significant did happen at the synod last week. More than just a momentary softening of rhetoric, it was an indication that the idea of family is again evolving in Rome.

While Catholic defenders of traditional marriage may act as if family life has always been the highest good in the church’s eyes, for much of its history marriage was plainly seen as a lesser path to holiness. Just as the bishops’ report noted that “unions between people of the same sex cannot be considered on the same footing as matrimony between man and woman,” much the same was said for centuries regarding the difference between marriage and the consecrated virginal state.

Marriage was messy, full of situations regarded as unpleasant by the saintly, and bound up in cultural conditions that shifted over time. In the fourth century, Saint Jerome wrote that he valued marriage only because it produced potential virgins. Throughout the Middle Ages, manuals for confessors noted the many ways in which relations between husbands and wives could be deemed immoral.

At the 16th-century Council of Trent, when matrimony formally became a sacrament of the church, bishops weighed in on the pressing marital issues of their day by reflecting on the performance of nuptials in the cases of “vagrants” (best to be avoided), kidnapped brides (only after a released abductee gave her consent “in a safe and free place” could the church sanction such a union), and priests (if anyone says they can marry, the council canons warn, “let him be anathema”).

In every instance, the question of who might constitute a family was a matter of how far those involved fell short of an unattainable ideal.

Which is perhaps not so far from the supposedly “wounded” and “irregular” families that are largely the focus of the synod’s report: the divorced, the remarried, the cohabitating; the two-faith marriages, the two-mother households, the two grooms who walked down the aisle. By including those long regarded by the church as beyond the bounds of Catholic propriety within their discussion of family as the “school of humanity” that is a “source of joys and trials,” the synod’s bishops have not opened a big tent welcoming all those mentioned to fully participate in the life of the Catholic Church, and indeed they are unlikely to do so.

Yet even quibbling over words of qualified welcome, they have reminded the faithful that their church has developed over time through conflict and contradiction, and may again.

What family is not wounded? As Cardinal Erdo read the bishops’ relatio in a Vatican conference hall last week, anyone watching carefully could see on the desk before him a small sculpture of the holy family: Mary, Joseph and Jesus. To Catholics it is a depiction of a woman who conceived a child before she was married, a chaste stepfather who nearly divorced her as a result, and that original sign of contradiction, the human son of God. A church that claims to descend from this most untraditional of domestic arrangements might ask itself: Was any family ever more irregular than that?

Peter Manseau is the author of the forthcoming book “One Nation, Under Gods: A New American History.”

New Rules Could Limit Methane Emissions' Effects On The Atmosphere

[Washington Post](#), October 18, 2014

THE OBAMA administration spent all summer mulling new measures to cut air pollution from the booming natural gas industry . Now federal officials are nearing a decision on whether and how to limit emissions from wells, storage tanks and other places from which gas can leak. Whether you believe that the country's fracking boom is an economic godsend or an environmental disaster — or both — you should favor measures to limit the industry's effects on the atmosphere.

Unlocking vast natural gas reserves trapped in U.S. shale rock formations has drastically cut the cost and price volatility of the fuel in the United States. That has kept energy costs down, encouraged domestic and foreign manufacturers to invest here and reduced the burning of coal, a much dirtier fuel. On the other hand, natural gas produces some carbon dioxide emissions when burned — about half those of coal — and is a potent greenhouse gas in its own right when it escapes into the air unburned. That's because it contains a lot of methane, which, when allowed to escape uncombusted, is dozens of times more potent a warming agent than carbon dioxide. Methane from various sources now accounts for 9 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, and that number is rising with the expansion of domestic drilling.

Some environmentalists oppose any increase in natural-gas burning because (unlike wind, solar or nuclear power) it releases greenhouse gases. Others put more stock in its relative benefits over coal and believe it can fit into a strategy to contain emissions, if the government adopts a plan to move the nation toward carbon-free energy sources over the coming decades. Both sides should recognize the value of preventing more unburned gas from escaping into the air. Relatively inexpensive measures could diminish gas leaks and allow more fuel to be used instead of wasted.

The Obama administration has already promulgated regulations that will limit methane emissions from some natural gas wells. But some facilities remain uncovered, including so-called wet gas operations, from which companies retrieve trapped oil as well as gas. If the Environmental Protection Agency can find a way short of new regulations that will significantly slash methane leakage, so much the better. But there's a strong case for common rules applying across the varied drilling operations around the country, rather than a piecemeal approach. No one should be surprised or dismayed if the Obama administration concludes that the only effective way to ensure natural gas isn't uselessly and harmfully released is to demand a little more effort from energy companies.

L.A. Schools Superintendent John Deasy A Casualty Of Politics In Schools

[Washington Post](#), October 18, 2014

IN THE 3½ years that John Deasy led the public schools in Los Angeles, student test scores climbed, suspensions dropped and the high school graduation rate rose to an all-time high. So one would think that the school board would do everything in its power to keep Mr. Deasy. Instead, it pretty much showed him the door — a vivid demonstration of how political interests trump results when it comes to America's broken schools.

Mr. Deasy resigned as head of the Los Angeles Unified School District on Thursday after reaching an agreement with a school board that had made no bones about wanting him out. The seven-member board was to meet this month to review his performance, but there had been reports the board had already authorized its attorneys to discuss a departure agreement. Ramon C. Cortines, who preceded Mr. Deasy as superintendent in Los Angeles and also did a stint in New York City, was named interim

chief. It's not a prudent trade to cashier a hard-charging superintendent with a proven record of success in favor of someone who, at best, will be a caretaker.

Mr. Deasy always had an edgy relationship with the board (he came close to resigning last year), but things got worse because of stepped-up attacks from a newly radicalized teachers union and changes on the school board that made it less reform-minded.

Mr. Deasy, whose leadership of Prince George's schools we admired, brought refreshing reforms to the sprawling system. That included breakfast in the classroom and tying teacher review to student test scores. Clearly, he made mistakes: He admitted being single-minded to the point of being bull-headed. What one writer called his trademark impatience caused him to so badly bungle a plan to equip every student with an iPad that it has been placed on hold and the bidding process subjected to scrutiny. But that misstep and the complaints about his style were mere pretexts for critics with an agenda that is not served by Mr. Deasy's push for change.

Foremost among the reactionaries is the teachers union, United Teachers Los Angeles, which led the charge for Mr. Deasy to be held "accountable" by the board. The union has new leadership and is in the midst of contract negotiations in which there are differences on issues like teacher pay and evaluations. Another factor was Mr. Deasy's decision to testify on behalf of plaintiffs who successfully challenged California's archaic tenure laws.

But Mr. Deasy's departure cannot be blamed on the teachers union. Its mission, after all, is to protect teachers' interests. Mr. Deasy is gone because neither the school board nor the city's political leadership were willing to give their support to a superintendent who made student interests his first priority.

A Health-care Plan Worse Than Obamacare

[Washington Post](#), October 18, 2014

REPUBLICANS CALLING for repeal of the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, are a dime a dozen. Fewer offer a plan to replace the law with something they claim would work better. To his credit, Virginia's Ed Gillespie, a GOP Senate candidate, is in the more select group. Meanwhile, his Democratic opponent, Sen. Mark Warner, favors tweaking the law without upsetting its framework.

Mr. Gillespie's proposal was developed by a conservative group called the 2017 Project, which, as the name implies, aims to provide templates for Republican policymaking after the next presidential election. It is a real plan, which is to be commended. But it would be worse than the Affordable Care Act.

The proposal aims to reduce government spending on health care for the young and middle-aged. Much of what it does allow would pay for tax credits to help people buy health insurance. Everyone — lower-, middle- and upper-class — of a certain age group would get the same amount of help, even if some wouldn't need it to pay premiums and others would struggle to make premium payments of any kind without assistance. The 2017 proposal insists that this system is fairer, lacking Obamacare's "obsession with income."

By cutting overall spending and diverting subsidy dollars toward those who need them less, the plan leaves itself with relatively little for the most vulnerable, who would not be able to afford any more than a bare-bones "catastrophic" plan. For a while, they could finance out-of-pocket costs with extra money the government would deposit in health spending accounts, but that would only be a one-time credit.

Those with preexisting conditions would find some protection in Mr. Gillespie's program but with strict limits. If they went without health insurance for even relatively brief amounts of time, for example, insurance companies would be able to hike their rates or refuse them coverage, locking them out of the ordinary insurance market. In addition, the repeal of Obamacare's consumer protections would allow

insurance companies to deter high-risk patients by carefully shaping their coverage plans — refusing to cover certain HIV or cancer medications, for example.

The plan would set aside an amount for states to create “high-risk pools” for sick patients outside of the ordinary insurance market. Health-care experts wonder whether that amount would cover the price tag for a large number of high-cost patients without forcing them to somehow pay large bills, through deductibles, co-payments or coverage limitations.

States could try to make the system more generous to the vulnerable within their borders, but the plan would allow people to buy insurance across state lines. Healthy people would flock to the cheapest plans, in-state or out, leaving a larger proportion of sick patients in state systems that seek to guarantee a higher standard without also offering higher subsidies.

And the Gillespie plan would increase the fiscal deficit. The Affordable Care Act raises all the money it spends, and more. By repealing ACA revenue-raising measures, Mr. Gillespie’s alternative would leave nearly \$300 billion less in the treasury over 10 years, even after all its spending cuts.

The Government Wants To Study ‘social Pollution’ On Twitter

By Ajit Pai

[Washington Post](#), October 17, 2014

If you take to Twitter to express your views on a hot-button issue, does the government have an interest in deciding whether you are spreading “misinformation”? If you tweet your support for a candidate in the November elections, should taxpayer money be used to monitor your speech and evaluate your “partisanship”?

My guess is that most Americans would answer those questions with a resounding no. But the federal government seems to disagree. The National Science Foundation, a federal agency whose mission is to “promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity and welfare; and to secure the national defense,” is funding a project to collect and analyze your Twitter data.

The project is being developed by researchers at Indiana University, and its purported aim is to detect what they deem “social pollution” and to study what they call “social epidemics,” including how memes — ideas that spread throughout pop culture — propagate. What types of social pollution are they targeting? “Political smears,” so-called “astroturfing” and other forms of “misinformation.”

Named “Truthy,” after a term coined by TV host Stephen Colbert, the project claims to use a “sophisticated combination of text and data mining, social network analysis, and complex network models” to distinguish between memes that arise in an “organic manner” and those that are manipulated into being.

But there’s much more to the story. Focusing in particular on political speech, Truthy keeps track of which Twitter accounts are using hashtags such as #teaparty and #dems. It estimates users’ “partisanship.” It invites feedback on whether specific Twitter users, such as the Drudge Report, are “truthy” or “spamming.” And it evaluates whether accounts are expressing “positive” or “negative” sentiments toward other users or memes.

The Truthy team says this research could be used to “mitigate the diffusion of false and misleading ideas, detect hate speech and subversive propaganda, and assist in the preservation of open debate.”

Hmm. A government-funded initiative is going to “assist in the preservation of open debate” by monitoring social media for “subversive propaganda” and combating what it considers to be “the diffusion of false and misleading ideas”? The concept seems to have come straight out of a George Orwell novel.

The NSF has already poured nearly \$1 million into Truthy. To what end? Why is the federal government spending so much money on the study of your Twitter habits?

Some possible hints as to Truthy's real motives emerge in a 2012 paper by the project's leaders, in which they wrote ominously of a "highly-active, densely-interconnected constituency of right-leaning users using [Twitter] to further their political views."

Truthy reminds me of another agency-funded study, in which the Federal Communications Commission sought to insert itself into newsrooms across the country. That project purported to examine whether news outlets were meeting what researchers determined were the "critical information needs" of the American people. And it involved sending out government-funded researchers to ask editors and reporters questions about their news philosophy and editorial judgment.

Once this study was brought to the attention of the American people, howls of protest from across the political spectrum led the FCC to scrap the project — thankfully. The episode reaffirmed that the American people, not their government, determine what their critical information needs are and that the First Amendment means the government has no place in the newsroom.

That principle applies here. Truthy's entire premise is false. In the United States, the government has no business entering the marketplace of ideas to establish an arbiter of what is false, misleading or a political smear. Nor should the government be involved in any effort to squint for and squelch what is deemed to be "subversive propaganda." Instead, the merits of a viewpoint should be determined by the public through robust debate. I had thought we had learned these lessons long ago.

Now, I do understand the motivation behind this scheme, even though I disagree with it. To those who wish to shape the nation's political dialogue, social media is dangerous. No longer can a cadre of elite gatekeepers pick and choose the ideas to which Americans will be exposed. But today's democratization of political speech is a good thing. It brings into the arena countless Americans whose voices previously might have received inadequate or slanted exposure.

The federal government has no business spending your hard-earned money on a project to monitor political speech on Twitter. How should it instead have reacted when funding for Truthy was proposed? The proper response wouldn't have required anywhere near 140 characters. It could have been, and should have been, #absolutelynot.

Fan Fiction, From Florida's Fangate Through History

By Alexandra Petri

[Washington Post](#), October 17, 2014

There's lots of real, serious news going on in the world. (There always is.)

But this week, the Internet was galvanized — or, if you like, set abuzz — by "Fangate." This saw former Florida governor Charlie Crist alone onstage with an electric fan for several minutes at Wednesday night's gubernatorial debate, while his opponent, Rick Scott, either fumed or waited patiently for further instructions from debate organizers backstage, depending on your source. Crist insisted that the debate rules allowed him a fan. Scott thought they didn't. It turns out that Crist and this fan travel everywhere together and have made something of a life with one another, even going on radio interviews, where a constant whirring noise is generally frowned upon.

The fan is less an electronic accessory to Crist at this point than a friend and confidant. As Molly Ball pointed out, in his years since leaving the governor's mansion, the fan has been his only pet.

Fans make admirable companions. They do everything a politician could possibly want: turn on a dime, generate buzz and blow hot air. And unlike more traditional pets, they never whine and whine until

you succumb and take them for walks in the middle of a rainstorm, when they decide to just sit there and stare at a bush and do nothing.

"Thanks for sticking up for me, Charlie," the fan murmured to Crist, during the ride home. "It means a lot."

"Are you kidding?" Crist replied. "Of course I would. You are my number one fan."

How often in your life do you get the chance to write fan fiction about an actual fan? Not all that often, as my eighth-grade livejournal can attest.

Bizarre requests for accessories at debates have a long history.

Back in the Lincoln-Douglas days in 1858, Stephen A. Douglas always requested a footstool so that he could be seen over the podium. He never got the footstool, which explains his performance. Lincoln always requested the opportunity to wear a different face, but he never got this either.

The fact that there were no official presidential debates until 1960 actually stemmed from the demands made by the candidates. Rutherford B. Hayes and Samuel Tilden both requested electric fans at the debate in 1876, then both refused to take part after the organizers denied their request on the grounds that electric fans would not be invented for another six years.

At the debate between Wendell Willkie and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Willkie made an outrageous request: that Roosevelt show up. Instead, Roosevelt refused but said that Willkie could have as many fans onstage as he wanted.

John F. Kennedy refused to debate unless Nixon didn't have a fan.

During the vice presidential debate between Lloyd Bentsen and Dan Quayle, Quayle requested a fan, but this request backfired when his responses could still be heard over the noise it made.

Both Clinton and George H.W. Bush requested a fan onstage, but debate organizers put Ross Perot there instead.

Al Gore asked for a large hand-fan with a poem written on it made in the traditional Japanese style, so as to avoid causing the earth any undue discomfort by plugging something into her, and so he could have a poem to read during commercials. This request was denied. Every time Gore thought of his missing fan, he sighed loudly. George W. Bush, meanwhile, asked for "lots of fans, yeah, let's pack the whole debate with fans and give them big foam fingers that say 'W!'" until someone took him aside and explained what people were talking about.

In 2012, Mitt Romney asked that he be replaced onstage with a fan on the grounds that the fan seemed comparatively warm and human and polled better with female voters, but this request was denied.

It seems like a lot of fanfare over something so small. "Are we," as Charlie Crist asked, "really going to debate a fan?" But especially with debates, you never know what's going to seal the deal. These things always seem trivial right until the moment they aren't. It's not enough to win the debate. You have to appear to win the debate. In the battle of appearances, is it better to be onstage with a fan or not onstage at all?

The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind.

Mayoral Candidates Wave Promises Across D.C.

By Colbert I. King

[Washington Post](#), October 17, 2014

"I'd rather give up than give in to this

So promise me only one thing, would you?

Just don't ever make me promises,
No promises."

— "Promises, Promises," by Incubus

Too late for that. Election Day is around the corner, and the politicians feel compelled to tell us what they think we want to hear, even if it means making promises that can't be kept.

But set cynicism aside. Assume they mean what they say. Nagging questions remain: What will those promises cost? How will they be paid?

Those concerns were reinforced after I read nearly cover to cover the campaign manifesto of Democratic mayoral nominee Muriel Bowser, "Moving Forward Together: Priorities for the District's Future"; independent candidate David Catania's "Vision to Secure Our City's Future"; and independent Carol Schwartz's more modest position papers on affordable housing, education and growth.

The worthiness of the promises in those documents is not at issue. Many have value. Some, however, clearly come with huge costs. And many of the price tags are missing.

Let's start with Schwartz.

Schwartz, a fiscal hawk, makes her share of promises in those position papers. She says she would increase funding for tenant assistance programs, double the funding for the Local Rental Support Program, commit \$50 million to jump-start affordable housing programs and offer a "Welcome Back" tax credit to entice former residents to return to the city. She would expand magnet and vocational schools. She also says she would offer incentives to businesses to set up shop in enterprise zones, propose a system that allows large organizations to claim a tax credit for purchasing a percentage of their services and supplies from small, locally owned businesses and support minority business growth through increased funding.

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But when it comes to really making promises, make way for Catania.

If elected mayor, Catania promises to: invest more capital funds in the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), create a local low-income housing tax credit and increase funding for the Home Purchase Assistance Program.

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He also promises to double down on investments for college access and career training, fund and build a "D.C. Business Portal" to centralize and simplify permitting and licensing processes; expand the D.C. Health Professional Recruitment Program to ensure that every neighborhood has high-quality primary care; and ensure universal access to school nurses for all public school students.

And Catania promises to invest in programs that "help young people grow into productive members of our communities" and provide resources to get former inmates back on their feet. He pledges to invest in emergency preparedness and expand substance-abuse and mental-health treatment, including school-based mental-health services. He promises to "properly resource and empower" the Office on Aging, expand the presence of senior villages throughout the city and provide resources to "sustain this model in low-income communities." He also wants to increase the investigative capacity of Adult Protective Services.

Catania says he will seek to build an east-west and north-south streetcar system and more priority bus lanes and expand bicycle infrastructure to all areas of the city.

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Bowser's priorities, too, are chock-full of promises.

Bowser says she will, if elected: transform all middle schools by 2020, including “renovation and/or construction of new buildings”; expand early childhood education programs; increase science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) options across the city; provide additional resources to chronically underperforming schools; expand career and technical education; increase investment in UDC and the D.C. Community College; work to double the number of “community schools” in the city; and increase investment in professional development for teachers of students with disabilities.

Cha-ching

Bowser also promised to: invest in job creation; target financial support to growing small businesses; invest in new industries through a series of incentives and benefits; and launch a General Services and Public Works Academy.

Cha-ching

On public safety, Bowser promised to: bring the police force up to its authorized strength of 4,000; allocate funding for the purchase of body cameras; upgrade and modernize police headquarters and stations across the city; modernize fleet maintenance operations of the Fire and Emergency Services Department; and give that department money to hire more staff.

Cha-ching

Bowser cuts loose on the housing and environment fronts. She says she will dedicate \$100 million every year to meet the District’s affordable housing production goals; increase resources for single-family rehab programs; improve tax subsidies for longtime residents; double the amount of down-payment assistance under the Home Purchase Assistance Program from \$40,000 to \$80,000; focus greater public subsidies on mixed-income development; end family homelessness by 2018 and all homelessness by 2025; and make solar power — now prohibitively expensive — accessible and affordable to all residents.

Cha-ching, cha-ching, cha-ching.

And the money to pay for all this?

Promise everything, give them . . .

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL STORIES

Biden Knew Drug Test Was Coming

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), October 17, 2014

There should have been no question in Hunter **Biden**’s mind about the possibility of a random drug test.

So says the commander of the Norfolk, Va.-based unit where Vice President Joe **Biden**’s youngest son was assigned until his February discharge due to a drug test failure a month after his 2013 commissioning.

“All sailors would be advised of the zero-tolerance policies when reporting aboard,” said Capt. Jack Hanzlik, who commands the Navy Public Affairs Support Element in Norfolk. “And they would be advised of the testing practices of the organization, as well.”

The importance of adherence to such policies continues after new arrivals, active or reservists, are assigned to their units.

“We have this kind of conversation with our sailors all the time – about expectations for performance,” Hanzlik said. “Expectations for standards. Reliability on one another.”

At least once a year but perhaps more frequently, members of the military – active and reserve – can expect to be given an unannounced urinalysis test for illegal drug use. Navy laboratories screen about 2.5

million urine specimens yearly, searching for drugs ranging from marijuana to heroin to cocaine – the drug that reportedly led to Hunter **Biden's** discharge.

"It's a random process," said Hanzlik. "The expectation, always, is that you need to be ready. Because you could have to give a sample today, you might have to give a sample again tomorrow. And two weeks from now, you might have to give a sample."

Hanzlik said he'd had no interaction with **Biden**. He commands the overall 275-member unit, but their reserve times didn't coincide during **Biden's** tenure with the unit. "He did drill with our unit on a couple of weekends" after his May indoctrination, Hanzlik said.

Testing would have occurred while **Biden** was present for duty at the Navy Operational Support Center Norfolk, the reserve center where he reported for work.

The Navy says 15 percent of all personnel at a given unit are tested each time a test is administered.

A U.S. Department of Health and Human Services official said the length of time traces of a drug remain in a person's system varies with an individual's size and frequency of use. On average, it takes 48 to 72 hours to leave the system, but it can take up to five days.

Biden, who had no prior military experience, was selected for commission as a reserve officer through the Direct Commission Officer program in 2012, according to the Navy. He was commissioned as an ensign in early May 2013 – one of six officers commissioned nationally into the public affairs division of the Navy Reserve.

In June 2013, **Biden**, then 43, was given a drug test that tested positive for cocaine, according to The Wall Street Journal, which broke the story late Thursday night. The paper cited "people familiar with the matter." The Navy would not comment, citing the Privacy Act.

He wasn't discharged until February. "Until an issue like that is adjudicated, the member continues to serve," Hanzlik said.

Hunter, who could not be reached, is the younger brother of Delaware Attorney General Beau **Biden**, who is a major in the Delaware Army National Guard.

Drug testing

Some of the first drug tests in America were developed by the military during the Vietnam era as a significant number of service members were using marijuana and heroin, according to the Department of Defense.

In June 1971, then-President Richard Nixon directed a military drug urinalysis program to identify service members returning from Vietnam for rehabilitation. In the 1980s, screenings expanded as Ronald Reagan's War on Drugs pushed for testing programs for employers, including regulations requiring that any company with a contract over \$25,000 with the federal government provide a Drug-Free Workplace.

It's now estimated that more than 50 million people across the country are tested yearly for drug use in the work place, said Ron Flegel, division of workplace programs for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The agency is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

About 75 percent of those tested are in the private sector, Flegel said. Most of this is done for safety reasons, especially for industries that are regulated by federal agencies such as the Department of Transportation and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The aim is to avoid injury or injuries to others.

"When you look at anyone carrying guns or badges or any safety sensitive issue where you are driving a truck or flying a plane, there is always a safety sensitive issue around the public," Flegel said.

While there are different forms of testing, the most common is a urine test. In the military, someone watches as the specimen is being provided.

"You physically go into the bathroom with a person observing you going to the bathroom in a cup," Flegel said.

Results are returned in about three working days. No further testing is needed for negative results, however, "presumptive positive specimens" will be tested using gas chromatography/mass spectrometry. It takes seven working days to get these results.

"That in itself looks specifically at the ions in that drug," Flegel said. "So it's very, very accurate as to what drug it's picking up."

Plan To Expansion Wilmington Port Called A "Game Changer"

By Maureen Milford

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), October 18, 2014

A proposed expansion of the Port of Wilmington to an undeveloped site on the Delaware River in New Castle could generate significantly more than 4,000 high-paying jobs, maritime consultant Ed Zimny told a standing-room only crowd of 150 longshoremen, elected officials and community activists Friday.

Zimny, of Paul F. Richardson Associates Inc. in Holmdel, N.J., spoke for nearly two hours at a Wilmington forum held by the International Longshoremen's Association Locals 1883 and 1694. He called the maritime sector an "unbelievable economic sector" that beats banking, retail, insurance and other industries.

And he believes the private sector, including pension funds, would be willing to foot the bill for a \$400 million to \$600 million terminal development on 176 acres in the Riveredge Industrial Park located just south of the Delaware Memorial Bridge.

Zimny had the audience at the Sheraton Suites Wilmington Downtown Hotel on his side. In the crowd were several people from the Diamond State Port Corp., state lawmakers, Wilmington officials and New Castle County Council members.

"It's a win-win situation," said Marietta "Peaches" Whalen, a director of the Diamond State Port Corp., a corporate entity that owns and operates the Port of Wilmington.

Nick Ferrara Jr., president of Parkway Gravel, which has owned Riveredge Park for 20 years, called the proposed expansion a "game-changer for the state."

The expansion of the Port of Wilmington to the Delaware River has been a vision of the high-paid port workers who have been concerned for years about the transformation of the shipping industry with the advent of a new global fleet of mega-ships.

The port workers worry that Wilmington could miss out on an opportunity to capture some of these larger ships, which can carry almost double the containers of the previous generation of vessels.

At stake are high-paying jobs, said Ronald "Kimoko" Harris, business agent with International Longshoremen's Association Clerks and Checkers Local 1883, whose members work to load and unload cargo. Longshoremen are among the highest-paid blue-collar workers, with some earning more than \$100,000 a year.

The expansion proposal calls for a public-private partnership, with a public entity owning the land and the private sector operating the port on a long-term basis. Zimny said it would be much different than the recent proposal to have a private operator for the Port of Wilmington.

An attempt to lease the port to Kinder Morgan, the largest independent terminal operator in North America, met with fierce opposition from labor and lawmakers who felt the move would hurt blue-collar employment. Kinder Morgan dropped its bid in March.

Zimny said the Riveredge arrangement differs dramatically from the Kinder Morgan deal. Riveredge would be planned, developed and operated in a cooperative fashion, rather than a takeover of a public asset by a private company, Zimny said.

He envisions a long-term lease of 30 years or more by the public sector to an operator who would assume the financial, technical and operational risk. At the end of the lease, the port would revert to the public sector, he said.

According to Zimny, the Riveredge site is a “clean piece of canvas,” that could position Wilmington to capture some of the larger ships. Work is already underway to reach out to potential investors, including pension funds, Zimny said.

For example, the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan is a major investor in container terminals, he said. According to the pension plan’s website, it is invested in GCT Global Container Terminals Inc., which operates GCT Bayonne in Jersey City, N.J., and GCT New York in Staten Island.

Zimny said he cannot disclose at this point who the port promoters are talking with because of non-disclosure agreements.

The proposed Delaware project envisions a single large pier at Riveredge with enough berths to accommodate four or more ships. Six or more large container cranes could work on the larger container ships that have enormous capacity.

The site has enough space to accommodate warehouses, but New Castle County Executive Tom Gordon envisions capitalizing on the existing rail line near the properties to tie the Riveredge operation with the Port of Wilmington and the former General Motors assembly plant on Boxwood Road near Newport.

Gordon, a longtime supporter of the project, said an expansion at Riveredge could be a “gold mine” that would go a long way toward curbing crime in the city.

Gov. Jack Markell did not attend, but Gordon said he met with Markell about the project and Markell indicated he would be behind the development “if the numbers are real.”

The governor “is always interested in opportunities to have hundreds of millions of dollars of private investment and more people put to work in Delaware,” said Markell spokesman Jonathon Dworkin.

“If people are interested in making significant investments in this effort, he would definitely want to sit down with them,” Dworkin said.

U.S. Rep. John Carney, D-Del., who attended the forum, said it’s clear that Delaware needs more jobs that pay a livable wage.

Community activist Muhammad Salaam voiced an opinion expressed by many when he said it’s time to put politics aside.

“Joblessness has no color. Crime has no color,” Salaam said. “We don’t want to play politics with this industry.”

Liberians In Delaware Fight Ebola Stigma

By Jon Offredo

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), October 17, 2014

Pastor Moses Ndama constantly prays for his 85-year-old father.

Ndama’s father moved back to his birthplace in Liberia last year, a village a day’s drive from the country’s capital, Monrovia. He wanted to end his career and his life where it began, Ndama, pastor of Dover-based Freedom Christian Fellowship, said.

Now though, the Ebola epidemic threatens everything. Friends, family, and a way of life that has only emerged after a long civil war have all become casualties of the virus that has ravaged the West African country colonized by the United States.

The disease has killed many of the people Ndama knew in the village, including the people helping his father with everyday chores, like cooking and laundry. To date, 2,458 Liberians have died from the disease.

"It has taken a toll on him. We try to talk to him quite often to make him feel like we are still around, and that life goes on," Ndama said. "We tell him, 'please don't die now, we want to get back to give you a good burial.' "

If his father were to pass away now, while Ebola still ravages the country, he would have to be cremated. That's not the burial Ndama and his brother want for his father, who worked his whole life to give his family the opportunities to succeed.

The Ebola epidemic has taken a toll on those Liberians who have moved to the United States.

For those living stateside, the Ebola epidemic means something else aside from the constant worry for their loved ones. There's a prejudice they face just because they are Liberian.

Mollyn Jarbo, a Delaware resident who was crowned Miss Liberia USA (and wishes to compete in Liberia for the chance to represent Liberia in the Miss World Competition) last year, said she gets weird looks when she says she's from Liberia, even though she moved here when she was little, and hasn't been back in years. She's now an American citizen.

"Not everyone that is coming from Liberia or traveling from Liberia. ... means they are affected by Ebola," Jarbo said. "At the end of the day, treat others like humans."

"We are Liberian, not the virus," she said.

Like many, Ndama and Jarbo are doing all they can to aid those who are still in Liberia. Since the outbreak, Jarbo said she's been in touch with many people in the area trying to raise awareness about the issue at home and collect goods like bleach, Clorox wash and other vital items in the fight against the virus.

Jarbo, her sister and mother left Liberia when she was young, fleeing the civil war that was tearing the country apart. But she still has family and friends, including her father, in Liberia. They talk often and when he speaks of the situation, Jarbo said she knows he's not sharing every detail so as not to worry her.

"It just breaks my heart to just know that I can't really help them or do anything but pray for them," she said.

Good hygiene saves lives

For Mohammed Nasser, who lives in Monrovia and worked with Liberia's youth for the government, daily life in the capital could at times be terrible.

"It's painful, especially when you drive out of the house. You see a lot of people standing along the street fighting for taxis..." said Nasser, who is currently staying in Delaware. "Sometimes you drive to some places in town, you see bodies lying along the street."

"It's terrible," he said, but added that the influx of aid and assistance is bringing hope to residents and things are getting a little better.

Nasser and his son flew into New York earlier this month. At the airport he was questioned and given a number to call if he had any problems. He said he was scheduled to go to a conference in Florida on youth development, but he and several other attendees from the region decided it was better not to go.

No one displayed any symptoms or signs of sickness, but in light of the Ebola scare they wanted to play it safe, limit contact and avoid causing any concern.

Everyone in Liberia is taking the precautions health officials have recommended, he said. Hygiene is especially important to combat the spread of the virus, especially in a country that has a custom of shaking hands. Though he did not know anyone who became sick and neither he or his children ever displayed symptoms, they ardently followed health guidelines.

"We always wash our hands with chlorine and Clorox water wherever we go and whatever we touch," he said. "If I go to the supermarket to shop, I always wash my hands before I enter and before I come out. I don't know who touched what in our supermarket."

Ebola is spread person-to-person through infected body fluids, like blood, urine, feces, sweat, semen and breast milk. Transmission requires direct contact, meaning the virus can be spread through sexual intercourse, cuts or if infected fluids get into a person's eyes, nose or mouth.

The disease is not airborne, but can be passed through mucus membranes if an infected person coughs on someone and saliva touches a person's eyes, nose or mouth. It can be passed on the same way with mucus if an Ebola patient sneezes on someone.

Household cleaners, like bleach, can kill the virus, but it can live outside the body for a couple of hours on a surface such as a counter top and up to six days in fluid, such as blood. The threat of infection depends on many things, including the symptoms of the already infected person.

"It's important to remember that in the United States this is a public health challenge, not a health crisis," said U.S. Sen. Chris Coons, chair of the Senate's Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs.

"The difference between our public health systems is vast," Coons said.

Delaware's junior senator has spent a majority of his life traveling to the countries in Africa for advocacy, business and research. A little over a year ago, he traveled to Liberia.

He's optimistic that state health officials will be able to contain any suspected cases, but his constituents are still concerned about what is taking place overseas.

One constituent, a man of Liberian descent who lives in Delaware, lost his entire extended family living in Liberia to the virus, Coons said. Now the man wants to start a charity to help Liberian children who lost their parents to Ebola.

Coons said the crisis is another blow to a country that has been devastated by a civil war and failed to have their infrastructure and education systems bounce back.

"Now this is happening and it's going to make things difficult," he said.

Jarbo said she's thankful for the help from the United States. Hundreds of U.S. troops have gone to Liberia to combat the spread and Jarbo and other Liberians say they are eternally grateful for the help, especially since they are putting themselves at risk for a country that is not theirs. The troop's presence gives hope to those both in the country and their relatives still stateside.

"This used to be one country's problem, then it became West Africa's problem," Jarbo said. "Now it has become the world's problem. We all need to come together and solve this together."

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL EDITORIALS

Hunter Biden's Special Exceptions Raise Questions

[Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#), October 17, 2014

Conservative talk show hosts and writers appear to be having a good time chatting about Hunter **Biden's** discharge from the U.S. Navy. The commentators, often-vociferous critics of Mr. **Biden's** father, the vice president, see an opportunity to score political points against the White House and prominent Democrats.

Personalities aside, the story raises important questions about politics and influence in Washington. By now, most people know the outline: Vice President **Biden's** youngest son joined the Navy last year. At age 43, it was an unusual decision. He had to win a special exemption from the Navy to do so. He also sought to be made an officer, again an unusual step. He had to win special permission because he did not have previous military experience, did not attend a military academy and did not serve in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps – the usual routes to being commissioned an officer. According to reports, he was discharged when he failed a routine drug test.

That is unfortunate for him and his family. However, several questions remain.

Age limits are waived under special circumstances. Likewise, it supposedly takes the same sort of circumstances to turn a military rookie into an officer without training. According to reports, only a handful of such cases arise each year. The military has a program that allows for such exceptions. An older individual can be admitted to the service and be made an officer if that individual fills a critical need.

That makes sense. Why let a critical need go unmet because of age or a few weeks' officers' prep time? One can imagine someone with rare skills answering his or her country's call at a crucial moment.

Hunter **Biden**, a lawyer by training, was made a public affairs officer and stationed with a Reserve outfit in Norfolk, Virginia. It is hard to imagine there ever being a critical need for a public affairs officer. Their skills involve putting out press releases, writing speeches, answering reporters' questions and giving tours of the base. How did this happen? Did anyone pull strings? Probably, no one had to. An illustration from the late David Halberstam's book, "The Best and the Brightest," offers a good explanation. He tells of the early years after World War II when Gen. George Marshall became secretary of state. The secretary may have dressed in civilian clothes, but when he spoke, everyone heard the voice of the five-star general who won the war.

Hunter **Biden** may have applied for his exceptions as an average American, but all of those Navy careerists filling out the paperwork saw him as the vice president's son, whether he told them or not.

That is an element of soft corruption. No laws were violated, but certainly, allowances were made. Institutions like the Navy have regulations for a purpose. Mr. **Biden's** dismissal after failing a routine drug test is the result of one of those regulations. Whichever commander made that decision did the right thing. The Navy, indeed the whole system, should be faulted for the actions at the other end.