



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #125 — APR. 26, 2012

Welcome to always lively political discussion and whatever else comes up.
<http://www.FriendsOfTheMiddle.org> FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com

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Conservatives and Liberals

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Apr. 26, 2012)

Conservative utterances tend to be like little bombs thrown into our midst. Those of progressives are more like hooks cast upon the waters... (SteveB)

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20120425-01 08:26 SteveB Fw: NationofChange Donation Plea

This is an important organization for us here at Friends of the Middle. Since Dennis discovered them years ago, we've gotten tons of information and great articles from the people at NationofChange. If you read any of this, it's worth the \$5 they're requesting. I know it is for me. Thanks!

from NationofChange:

As you know, we are raising \$50,000 for our Spring fundraiser. So far we're off to a good start, but we're still \$40,000 from our goal. If you can afford to make a \$5 donation, please do so. If you can afford more, whether it's \$50, \$500, or \$5,000 we'll continue to put it to good use. Your contribution is %100 tax decuctible.

<https://secure.nationofchange.org/?ref=email>

The corporatocracy has put our health and our very lives beneath the treads of the machine of profit. The crops they sell to us are mercilessly modified abominations which are harmful to our bodies and catastrophic to our biosphere all the while agencies designated to protect us have been bought and paid for by the Monsantos and Beef Products Inc.s of this world.

These corporations are knowingly putting our lives and our environment at risk, and we're just beginning to scratch the surface of the problem. For example, this weekend we revealed how BP covered up a blow-out two years prior to deadly deepwater horizon spill.

How do they get away with it?

They spend. They buy our science. They purchase our politicians. They acquire competing technologies. They all but own our mass media.

Yet, there's one institution that the plutocrats can not afford.

NationofChange is a 501(c)3 nonprofit for the people. We have no owners. We accept no corporate financing. We don't allow advertisements or paid content from anyone, ever.

In this world, where is seems that everything and everyone is for sale, it's vital that we have organizations that we can trust to expose the truth and fight back on behalf of the 99%.

Unlike most other independent media outlets, we don't just report what's happening in the movement to fight back against power.

We're on the ground, posting flyers, raising funds, and getting arrested with our sisters and brothers. We're disobeying. In just the last few months alone NationofChange has taken on Monsanto, Koch Industries, and has been a vital player in the Occupation movement from coast to coast.

If you think that NationofChange is a cause worth supporting, then please give generously now.

Please click the button below to make a secure tax-deductible donation or call in your donation at 1-800-803-6045. You can also mail a check to: 6319 Dante Ln NW, Albuquerque, NM 87114

<https://secure.nationofchange.org/?ref=email>

20120425-02 09:35 SteveG Re: "Take Action Against 'Agent Orange' GMO Crops" (reply to SteveB, Apr. 24, 2012)

My thoughts exactly – you have to have someone watching the companies and setting the standards, enforcing the rules or companies will take us down another rocky road because there is a quarter down there. This all leads to the discussion of big versus small government. In my mind one cannot trust the companies to be in it for the people and the good crop. Sad that we have gotten to that point, but whether it be pesticides, fertilizers, hip replacements, etc. there has to be someone looking out for the customer. Business will not always do the right thing. Medicines aren't made because the profit ratio is not high enough. I could go on, but I think I am beating the point to death.

20120425-03 10:47 SteveB Fw: USAction/True Majority Action: Don't Let Student Loan Rates Double

from USAction:

We need to make college more affordable, not less. But some in Congress seem to have it backwards. First, under the Ryan Budget, Republicans have proposed eliminating Pell Grants for two million students.

And now, unless Congress acts soon, an important loan program that serves almost 8 million college students will double its interest rates! A vote in the Senate may be just a couple weeks away, so please contact your Senators now.

We all know that making college affordable for all Americans isn't just the right thing to do — it's right for the economy. Right for an America that wants to compete in the world. The U.S. once ranked first in college graduation rates; now we rank 12th.

That's just not right.

Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI) and Rep. Joe Courtney (D-CT) have just introduced the Student Loan Affordability Act, a bill that will prevent the interest rates on nearly 8 million Stafford loans from doubling — an increase that would cost the average student \$5,000.

Will you tell Congress to not let student loan rates double before it's too late?

<http://usaction.org/2012/04/action-dont-let-the-gop-double-student-loan-interest-rates-on-july-1st/>

Americans now owe more in tuition debt than credit card debt, with total outstanding student loan debt in America expected to exceed \$1 trillion this year. Millions of hardworking, taxpaying, educated Americans are being crushed under the weight of their educational debts and it's doing further damage to our economy — students with outstanding debt can't buy homes and can't contribute to the economy as full consumers.

We need a real economic stimulus and jobs plan. Investing in our students is the way to do it.

Tell Congress to not let student loan rates double before it's too late!

Sincerely, David Elliot, USAction / TrueMajority

20120425-04 13:14 SteveB Republicans, War, and the Deficit

From FotM Newsletter #124: **"At least 95 percent of the national debt is war-related."**

Why don't Republicans care about the deficit?

Instead, they seek to rob Social Security, Medicare, the Post office, and (they hope) Obamacare. They pay the lowest effective tax rates in the industrialized world, but they want to pay lower. They say the public schools are

going to hell, so they want to establish competition for them, where the richest and brightest students can leave the others behind.

Instead, they want to **wage war on the world and the citizens of America** who don't happen to be rich or male (almost entirely) or white (mostly).

Sounds to me like the babies need safer toys! And a timeout in their playpens!

To quote a great general:

War! What is it good for? Absolutely nothin'! I'll say it again. War!

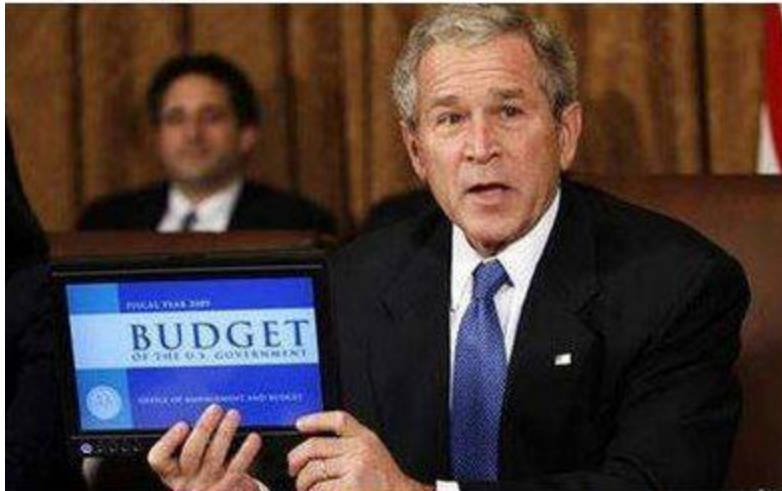
(Actually, I guess it is good for the deficit! You can't ever have both war and surpluses, especially without actually taxing the rich. Republicans don't even bother to choose one or the other. THEY WANT BOTH! War and surpluses. Mmmmm...wonder who they must want to pay for that?

Why don't they care if we know they think we are dumb as rocks? How do you get elected with that as a platform? We saw it in the Republican Primaries extensively. The candidates would essentially say "Hey, I'm actually dumb as a rock, but you citizens must be dumber because you believe this drivel and you're going to actually vote for me, scum bags."

20120425-06	14:30	Dennis	Re: Republicans, War, and the Deficit
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Why don't Republicans care about the deficit?

2001: The Heritage Foundation predicted the Bush tax cuts would pay down the Federal debt by Fiscal Year 2010!!



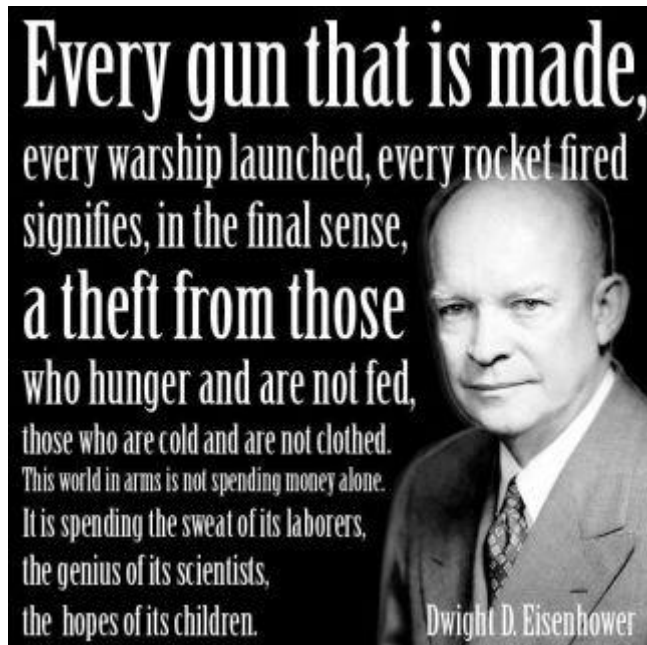
In 2011 Paul Ryan's budget proposal is based on numbers supplied by GUESS WHO!!



How's that trickle down workin for ya so far!

Because they still believe in the Reagan's Voodoo Economics?

Or, because Republicans became chicken hawks who think that wars can be fought at no cost?



This guy would be considered a socialist by today's Republicans!

[20120425-05](#) 13:18 Pam Re: "Obama Is So Much More Dangerous Than We Thought" (Apr. 24, 2012)

I read some of this long article on Obama and his putative connections with the CIA, but I confess I only skimmed it, as it was a bit long. I'm not sure I got the gist of it. Bottom line, is Obama being accused of being a "mole" for the CIA who is simultaneously working to spread Islam worldwide? Who is this person who wrote the essay?

[20120425-07](#) 15:03 SteveB Re: "Obama Is So Much More Dangerous Than We Thought" (reply to Pam, above)

You are a brave soul. I'm hoping Art will be intrigued with all the spy stuff. All I know is what's on the websites. It's sure "from the other side". Way other.

The writer has written seemingly Progressive tomes.

I believe the article preceding offers a sort of summary.

[20120425-09](#) 16:05 Pam Re: "Obama Is So Much More Dangerous Than We Thought" (reply to SteveB, above)

What especially gets me is the going all the way back to grandparents and great-grandparents and the assumption that baby Barack was born to take over the world. It's like science fiction. It's also interesting how we view the CIA as this nefarious enterprise, as if it were the KBG or something. I know the CIA gets up to stuff we wouldn't like, but wouldn't we be in more danger without it? I'm sure that when we were in Afghanistan my dad was working for a front for the CIA, not that he was aware of it. I don't doubt there's a lot that goes on in secret. That's why it's good to keep an open mind. I remember when I was in college, someone told me the FBI kept files on people. I didn't believe it. Silly me.

[20120425-08](#) 15:29 SteveB "Why Anyone Should Care That Bill O'Reilly Calls Me a Communist"

"Why Anyone Should Care That Bill O'Reilly Calls Me a Communist" by Robert Reich, NationofChange

Apr. 25, 2012, (<http://www.nationofchange.org/why-anyone-should-care-bill-o-reilly-calls-me-communist-1335358919>)

Bill O'Reilly, the tumescent personality of Fox News, said on his Friday show "Robert Reich is a communist who secretly adores Karl Marx." (This came after Fox News' Neil Cavoto called me a "sanctimonious twit" for suggesting the rich should pay more in taxes.)

O'Reilly's accusation is odd, to say the least. If we were living in the 1950s, amid Senator Joe McCarthy's communist witch-hunts, the claim might have some bite and cause me injury. But these days it's hard to find a full-throated communist anywhere in the world.

O'Reilly's accusation isn't even logical. How can he know if I secretly adore Karl Marx, if it's a secret?

For the record, I'm not a communist and I don't secretly adore Karl Marx.

Ordinarily I don't bother repeating anything Bill O'Reilly says. But this particular whopper is significant because it represents what O'Reilly and Fox News, among others, are doing to the national dialogue.

They're burying it in doo-doo.

O'Reilly based his claim on an interview I did last week with Jon Stewart on the Daily Show, in which I argued that because America's big corporations were now global we could no longer rely on them to make necessary investments in human capital or to lobby for public investments in education, infrastructure, and basic R&D. So, logically, government has to step in.

Since when does an argument for public investment in education, infrastructure, and basic R&D make someone a communist or a secret adorer of Karl Marx?

Obviously, O'Reilly has no interest in arguing anything. **Ad hominem attacks are always the last refuges of intellectual boors lacking any logic or argument.** (Whoops, I think I just stooped to name-calling. Sorry, Bill.)

Yet this is what's happening to all debate all over America: It's disappearing. All we're left with is a nasty residue.

In Washington, Democrats and Republicans no longer even talk. They just vent charges and counter-charges.

The 2012 election doesn't seem likely to clarify any issue. At this moment the candidates and their surrogates are debating the treatment of dogs.

Across the nation, conservatives right-wingers and liberal or progressive lefties have stopped debating their respective views, or even listening to anyone they disagree with. They just find broadcasters and bloggers who confirm their views.

We're even sorting by belief according to where we live. Today your neighbors are more likely to agree with your politics than disagree. We've settled into like-minded enclaves where we don't need to think because everyone we meet confirms what we assume we already know.

It's not that the nation is more polarized than it's been in the past. America has been through searing conflicts, some within the living memories of most of us. The communist witch-hunts of the 1950s were followed by the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, battles over women's reproductive rights and gay marriage.

What makes America's current polarization remarkable isn't the severity of our disagreements but our utter lack of engagement debating them.

So many Americans are so angry and frustrated these days – vulnerable to loss of job and healthcare and home, without a shred of economic security – they're easy prey for demagogues offering simple answers and ready scapegoats. Take, for example, Bill O'Reilly and his colleagues at Fox News.

But people can only learn from others who disagree with them — or at least from witnessing debates between people who respectfully and civilly disagree. Without respect and civility, it's not a debate – it's just name-calling.

A democracy depends on public deliberation and debate. Without it, the members of a society have no means of understanding what they believe or why. The Lincoln-Douglas debates were notable not because they solved anything but because they helped Americans clarify where they agreed and disagreed on the wrenching issue of slavery.

Hence the danger today – when deliberation has stopped.

This morning I left a message on Bill O'Reilly's office phone asking him to invite me onto his show to debate whether public investments in education and infrastructure are needed.

What are the odds he'll invite me on?

Get #BeyondOutrage.

20120425-10	16:57	SteveG	Fw: Daily Kos Action: Support Sen. Bernie Sanders Progressive Budget
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from Daily Kos:

Please join with Senator Bernie Sanders, and help change the conversation about deficits in Washington, DC, by co-signing his progressive budget proposal. Click here to add your name:

http://campaigns.dailykos.com/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=127.

Imagine if Democrats in Congress made opening bids that were not already compromises. For example, what if the Democratic leadership had started the health care fight by proposing a single-payer plan instead of a public option?

Bernie Sanders actually did start the health care fight by proposing a single-payer plan. He stuck to it for a long time, and only agreed to support the final bill after \$10 billion in additional funding for non-profit, community health centers was included. Because of his shrewdness, these community health centers now provide affordable primary care to tens of millions more low-income Americans than they did before the Affordable Care Act.

Now, as the fight over the federal budget moves to the Senate, Sanders is once again coming out with a strong opening bid. He is introducing a budget that reduces the deficit by making big corporations and the very wealthy pay their fair share, by reducing defense spending, by strengthening Social Security and Medicare, and by creating good paying jobs. It's a truly progressive alternative to the horrifying Republican budget, and who knows what we can accomplish if we make it our opening bid.

Please join with Senator Bernie Sanders, and help change the conversation about deficits in Washington, DC, by co-signing his progressive budget proposal.

Keep fighting,
Chris Bowers, Daily Kos

20120425-11	20:26	Charis	Bolivia
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1. A video slideshow by featuring 76 photos from Santa Cruz:

<http://tripwow.tripadvisor.com/tripwow/ta-0376-ec3e-2a8d>

2. All about the International Baroque Music Festival of the Jesuit Missions of Chiquitos, Bolivia:

<http://www.boliviabella.com/international-baroque-music-festival-of-the-jesuit-missions-of-chiquitos-bolivia.html>

<http://www.facebook.com/-AQFIQIqmAQGf2sBjT8NZGY4E5jGpcCwDZGfu4QGg-5YHag/tripwow.tripadvisor.com/tripwow/ta-0456-6c92-ad01?ln>

<http://www.facebook.com/l/5AQFfuyjx/festivalesapac.com/festival-de-musica-2012>

20120425-12	22:38	SteveG	The High Cost of U.S. Colleges & Medical Schools
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On the news tonight:

- Young lady is graduating from medical school this spring.
- She is officially \$300,000 in debt from student loans.
- She will have to pay \$2,000 per month for 30 years to repay the loans plus interest.
- There is a national shortage of primary care physicians.
- The state of Washington started a new medical school 4 years ago.
- Indiana is starting a new medical school
- Are other states starting new medical schools?

Sad statements!

20120425-13	23:19	SteveM	Fw: Video: "Real Time with Bill Maher Mar. 16, 2012: Alexandra Pelosi Interviews Welfare Recipients in NYC"
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Please watch our tax dollars at work...

This has to be troubling. It was made by the daughter of Nancy Pelosi for Bill Maher, no conservatives these. It was not edited by Fox Cable News, or the RNC. Extreme examples you may say, but with 43% of the nation on food stamps, highest welfare rates ever, and at least some of the people on our 99 week in no hurry to get back to work, one wonders how many could and should be working and aren't by choice.

[Source of original email unknown, but the video must be genuine. -SteveB]

Subject: "Gim Me Da Stamps, Ma Brother."

Very enlightening - for those few who aren't already aware of this...

I'm going to pass this on, as is. Nancy Pelosi's daughter is an aspiring film producer. She made this short but disturbing video which has caused quite a stir in the "progressive" community. I imagine her mother was furious. Our tax dollars, hard at work!!!!!!!

Video: "Real Time with Bill Maher Mar. 16, 2012: Alexandra Pelosi Interviews Welfare Recipients in NYC"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2kGPdxkofo>

20120425-14	23:22	SteveM	Fw: Great Letter to the AARP
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This is pretty interesting, and certainly expresses why so many have dropped arrp membership . She may go a little oveboard in a couple areas, but in general is pretty much right on as far as why AARP is no longer relevant to seniors it purports to represent and defend.

If you agree with it, fine; if not that's your business, and your right.

[Source of this email unknown, but it is correctly attributed: <http://www.snopes.com/politics/soapbox/aarp.asp>. -- SteveB]

This letter was sent to Mr. Rand who is the Executive Director of AARP.

THIS LADY NOT ONLY HAS A GRASP OF 'THE SITUATION' BUT AN INCREDIBLE COMMAND OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE!

Dear Mr. Rand (Sept., 2009),

Recently you sent a letter encouraging us to renew our lapsed membership in AARP by the requested date. We know this is not the letter you were looking for, but this is the most honest response we can give you.

Our gap in coverage is merely a microscopic symptom of the real problem, a deepening lack of faith. While we have proudly maintained our membership for several years and have long-admired AARP's goals and principles, we regret that we cannot endorse its abdication of our values.

Your letter specifically stated that we may depend on AARP to speak up for our rights, yet the voice we hear is not ours—it's yours. Your offer of keeping us up to date on important issues through Divided We Fail presents neither an impartial view nor the one we have come to embrace. We do believe that when two parties agree all the time on everything presented to them, one is probably not necessary. But when the opinions and long-term goals of the two parties are diametrically opposed, divorce is imminent.

This is the philosophy that spawned our 200 years of government. At one time we looked forward to being part of the senior demographic. We looked to AARP to provide certain benefits and give our voice a power we could not possibly hope to achieve on our own. AARP gave us a sense of belonging, one that we no longer enjoy. The socialist politics practiced by the present administration, and empowered by AARP, serve only to raise the blood pressure our medical insurance strives to contain—clearly a conflict of interest!

We do not understand AARP's posture. We feel greatly betrayed by the guiding forces that we expected to map out our senior years, and we leave your ranks with a great sense of regret. We mitigate that disappointment with the relief of knowing that we are not contributing to the problem anymore by renewing our membership. There are numerous other organizations that offer discounts without threatening our way of life or offending our sensibilities.

This administration scares the living daylights out of us, not just for ourselves, but also for our proud and bloodstained heritage, and even more important, for what our children and grandchildren will inherit. Washington has rendered Soylent Green a prophetic cautionary tale rather than a fictional scare tactic.

We have never endorsed any militant or radical groups, yet now we find ourselves listening to them. We don't have to agree with them to appreciate the fear that birthed their existence. Their borderline insanity presents little more than a balance to the voice of the socialist mindset of those in power. We became Americans by a great stroke of luck in some cosmic uterine lottery, but as adults we choose to embrace our heritage, and we embrace and nurture the freedoms it represents and the responsibilities it requires.

Your website generously offers us the opportunity to receive all communications in Spanish. Are you kidding? People are breaking into our houses and invading our homes without our invitation or consent. And now our president insists that we keep the invaders in comfort and learn their language so we can communicate our reluctant welcome to them.

We do not choose to welcome them.

We do not choose to support them.

We do not choose to educate them.

We do not choose to medicate them.

We do not choose to feed, clothe or house them.

American home invaders are arrested. Please explain to us why foreign lawbreakers enjoy privileges on American soil that Americans do not have. Legal immigrants must comply with our immigration laws to be welcomed, yet illegal "immigrants" need only break and enter to be welcomed!

We travel for a living. We transport horses all over this great country, averaging more than 10,000 miles a month. While out there we meet more people than a politician overdosed on caffeine. Of all the many good folks we met on our last 10,000 miles, the trip yielded only one supporter of this administration. Either we, or those that determine policy at AARP, are out of touch with mainstream America. Since our poll is conducted without funding, I have more faith in it than any poll which is power driven.

We have decided to forward this letter to everyone on our mailing list, and will encourage all to do the same. With several hundred people in our address book, we have faith that the eventual exponential factor will make a credible statement to you.

We are disappointed as hell.

We are scared as hell.

We are mad as hell and we're not gonna take it any more!

Walt and Cyndy, Miller Farms Equine Transport

[20120425-15](#) 23:23 SteveM Fw: Here's Your Change

So, tell me again, what is it about Obama that makes him so brilliant and impressive? Can't think of anything? Don't worry. He's done all this in 29 months -- so you'll have about 8 months to come up with an answer. Every statement in this email is factual and directly attributable to Barrack Hussein Obama. Every bumble is a matter of record and completely verifiable.

After three years of Obama, here's your change...

Statistic	Jan., 2009	Feb., 2011	% chg
Avg. retail price/gallon gas in U.S.	\$1.83	\$3.104	69.6% ¹
Crude oil, European Brent (barrel)	\$43.48	\$99.02	127.7% ²
Crude oil, West TX Inter. (barrel)	\$38.74	\$91.38	135.9% ²
Gold: London (per troy oz.)	\$853.25	\$1,369.50	60.5% ²
Corn, No.2 yellow, Central IL	\$3.56	\$6.33	78.1% ²
Soybeans, No. 1 yellow, IL	\$9.66	\$13.75	42.3% ²
Sugar, cane, raw, world, lb. fob	\$13.37	\$35.39	164.7% ²
Unemployment rate, non-farm, overall	7.6%	9.4%	23.7% ³
Unemployment rate, blacks	12.6%	15.8%	25.4% ³
Number of unemployed	11,616,000	14,485,000	24.7% ³
Number of fed. employees, ex. military*	2,779,000	2,840,000	2.2% ³
Median household income (2008 v 2009)	\$50,112	\$49,777	-0.7% ⁴

Number food stamp recipients (10/10)	31,983,716	43,200,878	35.1% ⁵
Number unemployed (12/10)	7,526,598	9,193,838	22.2% ⁶
Number of long-term unemployed	2,600,000	6,400,000	146.2% ³
Poverty rate, individuals (2008 v 2009)	13.2%	14.3%	8.3% ⁴
People in poverty in U.S. (2008 v 2009)	39,800,000	43,600,000	9.5% ⁴
U.S. Economic Freedom World Rankings	5	9	n/a ¹⁰
Present Situation Index (curr = 12/10)	29.9	23.5	-1.4% ¹¹
Failed banks (curr = 2010 + 2011 to date)	140	164	17.1% ¹²
U.S. dollar vs. Japanese yen exchange rate	89.76	82.03	-8.6% ²
U.S. money supply, M1, in billions*	1,575.1	1,865.7	18.4% ¹³
U.S. money supply, M2, in billions*	8,310.9	8,852.3	6.5% ¹³
National debt, in trillions	\$10.627	\$14.052	32.2% ¹⁴

*Dec., 2010 prelim.

Just take this last item: In the last two years we have accumulated national debt at a rate more than 27 times as fast as during the rest of our entire nation's history. Over 27 times as fast! Metaphorically, speaking, if you are driving in the right lane doing 65 MPH and a car rockets past you in the left lane 27 times faster, it would be doing 7,555 MPH! This is a disaster!

Sources: (1) U.S. Energy Information Administration; (2) *Wall Street Journal*; (3) Bureau of Labor Statistics; (4) Census Bureau; (5) U.S.D.A.; (6) U.S. Dept. of Labor; (7) FHFA; (8) Standard & Poor's/Case-Shiller; (9) RealtyTrac; (10) Heritage Foundation and WSJ; (11) The Conference Board; (12) FDIC; (13) Federal Reserve; (14) U.S. Treasury

20120425-16 23:58 SteveB Re: Here's Your Change (reply to SteveM, above)

This is an email we have had forwarded to Friends of the Middle previously. The first time was in Feb., 2011, purportedly written to mark the second anniversary of President Obama's term in office.

I believe it is fairly easily debunked, as Jim and others pointed out before. Here's another refutation:

posted by Jazmin, May 29, 2011, (<http://www.thoughts.com/jimw/after-2-years-of-obama-heres-your-change>)

This screed is junk. It is clearly another Anti-Obama, Anti-Democratic negative politics document. As usual, who the document came from was not available.

Here's who generated a somewhat thoughtful answer: <http://www.corbintreehouse.com/blog/2011/04/political-email-scams-against-obama/> (see below).

And here's the link to the original version online, the American Jingoist: <http://theamericanjingoist.net/index.php/2011/04/25/after-two-years-of-obama-heres-your-change/>.

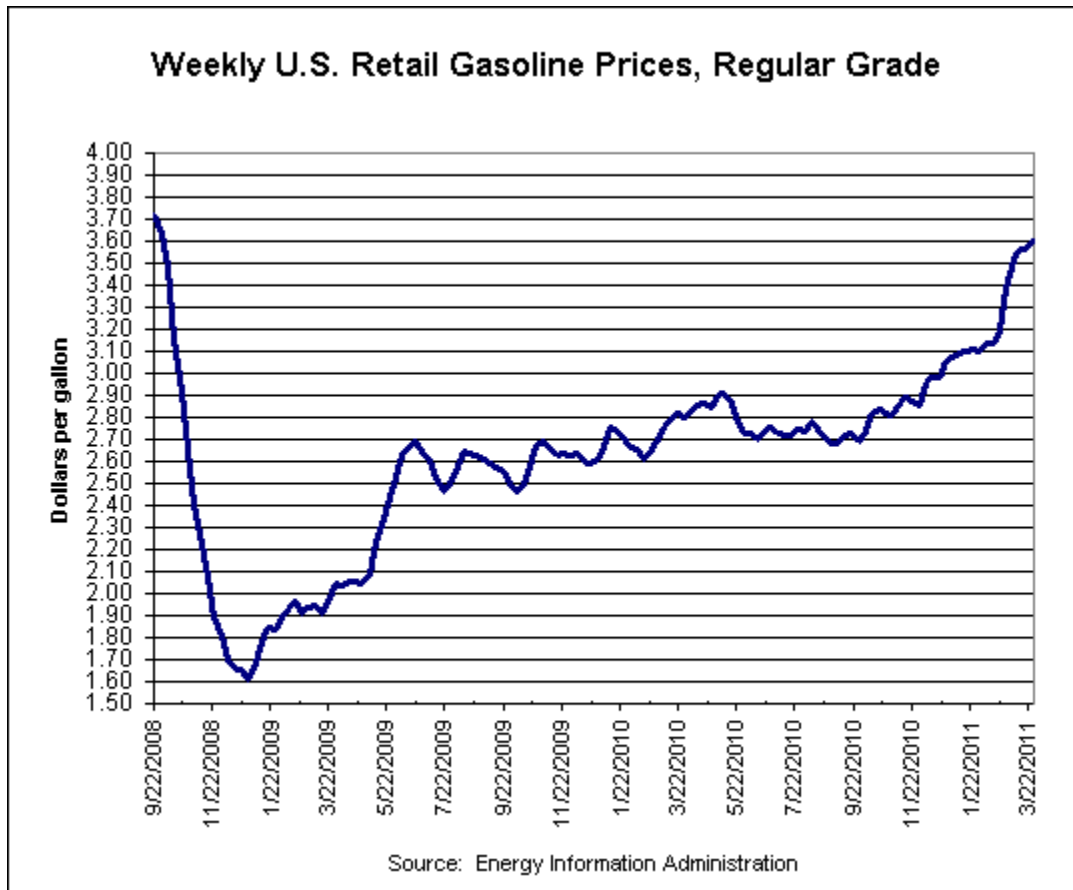
Almost none of the sourcing included leads to an actual source story, except for the links to the Census. Even those links are misleading as the data from the census was improperly used. If you want to see some commentary that is valid on this screed, google the headline on it and check with urbanlegends.com and snopes.com which sometimes take the time and energy to debunk this junk. More and more though, loads of websites bring a critical approach to these assertions which are typically OPINION presented from NOWHERE!

posted by corbin, Apr. 2, 2011, on Corbin's Treehouse (<http://www.corbintreehouse.com/blog/2011/04/political-email-scams-against-obama/>)

The first and easiest thing to fact check is to see if this person can do math. The answer is no. Why? Well, look at the last line: If you are driving in the right lane doing 65MPH and a car goes past you at 27 times faster, then how

fast is it going? The claim is 7,555 MPH. Man that is fast! But hold on, let's make sure they are doing their math right. $65 \text{ MPH} * 27 = 1755 \text{ MPH}$. People with common mathematical sense will quickly spot that claim as being *way* off, and it sure was! If they can't multiply $27*65$, then what the heck makes me want to believe any of the other numbers they gave?

Now, this chart is praying on people who are ignorant and easily forget things. Let's see, when was the first time crude oil was over \$100/gallon? And gas prices fluctuate heavily. If I was to generate a chart like the above, I would want to scam people into believing things are worse than they were before by taking the absolute maximum and minimum values. Let's consider the first item, gas at \$1.83 a gallon. Let's fact check that. I visit: http://www.eia.doe.gov/oil_gas/petroleum/data_publications/wrgp/mogas_home_page.html and see the chart below:

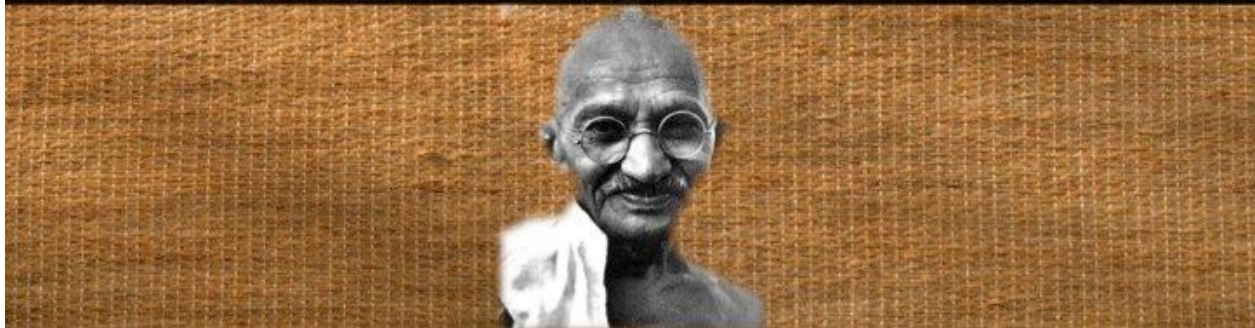


Yup, it was about \$1.83/gallon in January 2009, but they conveniently picked the lowest part in the graph. Heck, 4 months prior it was > \$3.70/gallon! Wait a minute, that means it is currently 19% lower than it was before!

Please don't blindly believe anything circulating on the internet.

I observe in the limited field in which I find myself, that unless I can reach the hearts of men and women, I am able to do nothing. I observe further that so long as the spirit of hate persists in some shape or other, it is impossible to establish peace or to gain our freedom by peaceful effort. We cannot love one another, if we hate Englishmen. We cannot love the Japanese and hate Englishmen. We must either let the law of love rule us through and through or not at all. Love among ourselves based on hatred of others breaks down under the slightest pressure. The fact is such love is never real love. It is an armed peace. War will only be stopped when the conscience of mankind has become sufficiently elevated to recognize the undisputed supremacy of the Law of Love in all the walks of life. Some say this will never come to pass. I shall retain the faith till the end of my earthly existence that it shall come to pass.

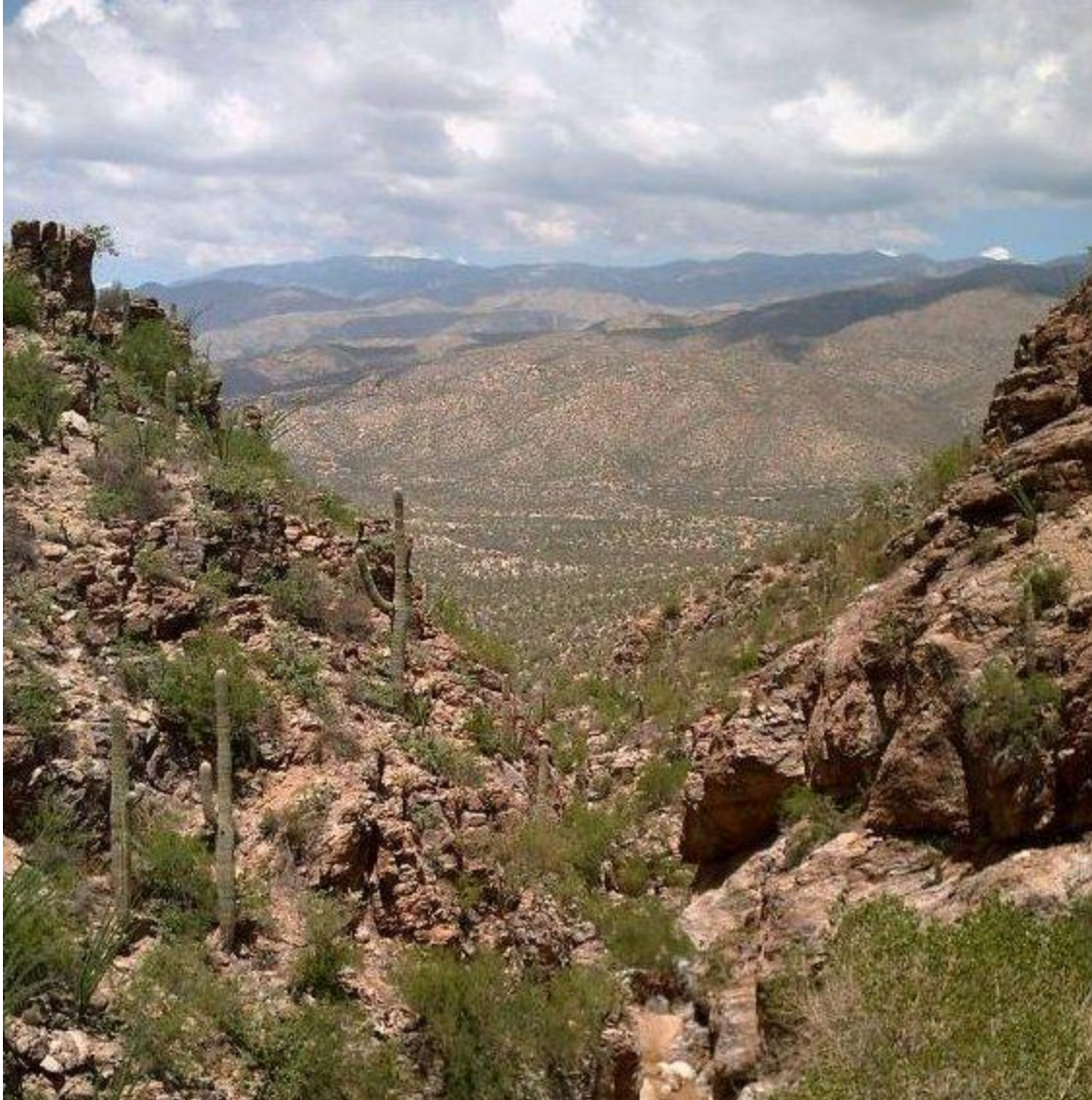
~ Mohandas K. Gandhi



<http://www.cactuslovers.com/tucson-arizona.htm>

<http://www.visittucson.org/>

Desert Mountains near Tucson (Joel Smith)



—Friends of the Middle,
Steven W. Baker (SteveB), Editor/Moderator

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