



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #135 — MAY 10, 2012

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

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North Carolina Bans Gay Marriage

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, May 10, 2012)

Gee, I hope I can be gay too when I grow up! I mean, let's just do whatever it takes to get these people back their anonymity. Personally, I'm tired of being forced to think way too much about what they do after they're married (the guys). Of course, good Christians, especially gay ones, wouldn't do anything before marriage, especially not stuff that nasty! At least black people don't force me to think about picking cotton most of the time. Now, if I were a woman, I'd be completely gay in about two seconds. OK, that's all I got on the gay subject today.

"North Carolina Bans Gay Marriage" by The Onion

May 9, 2012, (<http://www.theonion.com/articles/north-carolina-bans-gay-marriage,28148/>)

By a margin of 58 to 42 percent, North Carolina voters approved an amendment to the state constitution that bans same-sex marriage. What do you think, typical South Carolinians?



"I have a policy of not saying anything negative about the South. Otherwise my Alabama friend will hammer me with his Faulkner-Welty-O'Connor tirade again." —Marla Wint (left), Systems Analyst

"Once again, I strongly suspect the underhanded machinations of one Professor Donald Dawes, a con man who travels the country selling state legislatures on phony constitutional amendments." —Bryan Hewlett (middle), Arrowsmith

"Damn right it's banned. The Wright Brothers didn't put a plane in the air to see two dudes kissing under it." — Peter DeBoer (right), Transfer-Car Operator

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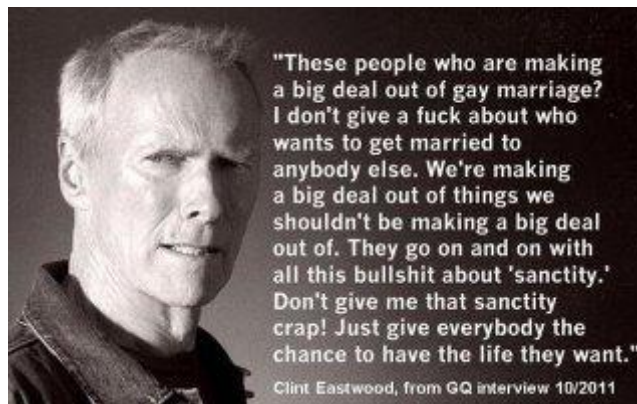
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First, here's the argument against gay marriage:

Ten Reasons Against Gay Marriage

1. Being gay is not natural. Real Americans always reject *unnatural* things like eyeglasses, polyester, and air conditioning.
2. Gay marriage will encourage people to be gay, in the same way that hanging around tall people will make you tall.
3. Legalizing gay marriage will open the door to all kinds of crazy behaviour. People may even wish to marry their pets because *a dog has legal standing and can sign a marriage contract*.
4. Straight marriage has been around a long time and hasn't changed at all; women are still property, blacks still can't marry whites, and divorce is still illegal.
5. Straight marriage will be less meaningful if gay marriage were allowed; the sanctity of Brittany Spears' 55-hour just-for-fun marriage would be *destroyed*.
6. Straight marriages are valid because they produce children. Gay couples, infertile couples, and old people shouldn't be allowed to marry because our orphanages aren't full yet, and the world needs more children.
7. Obviously gay parents will raise gay children, since straight parents only raise straight children.
8. Gay marriage is not supported by religion. In a *theocracy* like ours, the values of one religion are imposed on the entire country. That's why we have only one religion in America.
9. Children can never succeed without a male and a female role model at home. That's why *we as a society expressly forbid single parents to raise children*.
10. Gay marriage will change the foundation of society; we could never adapt to new social norms. Just like we haven't adapted to cars, the service-sector economy, or longer life spans.

Now the argument from this gay guy in favor of it:



What they see is not what they get...

"Conservative Author Jonah Goldberg Drops Claim of Two Pulitzer Nominations" by Bill Dedman, MSNBC

May 9, 2012, (<http://openchannel.msnbc.msn.com/news/2012/05/09/11608553-conservative-author-jonah-goldberg-drops-claim-of-two-pulitzer-nominations?lite>)

On the dust jacket of his new book, *The Tyranny of Clichés: How Liberals Cheat in the War of Ideas*, best-selling conservative author and commentator Jonah Goldberg is described as having "twice been nominated for a Pulitzer Prize."

In fact, as Goldberg acknowledged on Tuesday, he has never been a Pulitzer nominee, but is merely one of thousands of entrants.

When this bit of résumé inflation was pointed out by a reporter for msnbc.com, Goldberg said he hadn't meant to mislead anyone and removed the Pulitzer claim from his bio at National Review Online. And he added, "I never put it in the bio in the first place."

His publisher, Penguin Group (USA), said the error was unintentional and it would remove the Pulitzer word from his book jacket when it's time for the first reprint, "just like any other innocent mistake brought to our attention." (Update: On Wednesday morning, the publisher removed the claim from its own website.)

What's surprising in Goldberg's case is that he has been called out for the same résumé padding before, when his previous book was published.

Goldberg's *The Tyranny of Clichés* was published May 1 and is ranked in the top 100 in sales on Amazon. A fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, Goldberg is the founding editor of National Review Online. He is a Fox News contributor, and has appeared as a guest on MSNBC and NBC. (Msnbc.com is a joint venture of NBCUniversal and Microsoft.)

An entry form and \$50

It's not uncommon for Pulitzer entrants to claim to be nominees. Here's how it works: Though there are only three nominees, known as nominated finalists, in each Pulitzer category each year, there are more than 2,000 entrants. One could say that all of them were "nominated" by someone. If all Pulitzer entrants could be called nominees, any publisher could give all its authors that honorific by submitting an entry form and a check for \$50.

The Pulitzer rules make clear that the only people to be known as nominees are those finalists chosen by the Pulitzer juries. From those nominated finalists, the Pulitzer board chooses the winners. Everyone else is just an entrant. As the Pulitzer board's online list of frequently asked questions explains politely, "Work that has been submitted for Prize consideration but not chosen as either a nominated finalist or a winner is termed an entry or submission. ... We discourage someone saying he or she was 'nominated' for a Pulitzer simply because an entry was sent to us."

Besides violating the official rules, such claims mislead the public. Tell readers that you're an Academy Awards nominee, and they'll understand that you're one of the few finalists, not one of the many entrants submitted by movie studios. It's exactly the same with the Pulitzers.

And in addition to misleading the public, such false claims rob honor from the actual nominees. This year's non-winning nominees include journalists and authors revealing failure to enforce safety standards at aging nuclear power plants, exploring the heartache of dealing with a sick spouse, and capturing in photographs the chaos and exuberance of the Arab Spring.

Being a "two-time Pulitzer Prize entrant" won't sell many books. Claims to Pulitzer nominations have showed up in the bios of well-known sportswriters Bill Plaschke and Buster Olney, NPR host Michele Norris and others not listed on the Pulitzer site among the nominees, including a good number of university professors.

'I don't recall'

When Goldberg's "Liberal Fascism" came out in January 2008, his employer National Review Online announced that Tribune Media Services, which carries Goldberg's opinion columns, had "nominated" Goldberg for a Pulitzer in commentary.

The liberal blog Daily Kos then pointed out that the Tribune doesn't choose Pulitzer nominees, writing about "Goldberg's faux Pulitzer."

Commenters on Amazon took up the baton, attaching to Goldberg's Amazon profile several lengthy notes pointing out the puffery. The book sold well, reaching No. 1 on the *New York Times* hardcover list in March 2008.

A cartoon circulated mocking Goldberg for the claim. The punch line has Goldberg saying, as he opens a sweepstakes envelope, "I was just informed I might be winning ten million dollars."

After the hubbub, Goldberg's speaker's bureau removed the Pulitzer claim from his online bio, as documented by Daily Kos.

Goldberg told msnbc.com on Tuesday that he didn't recall any of this. "In all honesty, I don't recall ever being 'called' on this."

When contacted on Tuesday by email, Goldberg replied at first, "Nominated by the Tribune syndicate. Never said I was a finalist. There's a distinction."

When told that he's not a nominee either, and isn't listed among the nominees on the Pulitzer website, Goldberg replied, "I'll check it out and have 'em remove it if you're right. Happily. If it's not kosher, I shouldn't have it in there. Period."

Two hours later, after appearing on a radio show about the Tuesday primary voting, Goldberg sent a longer answer in email, but insisted that it be off the record. He was asked to provide a comment on the record, but declined.

'Just like any other innocent mistake'

Then, later Tuesday, his publisher issued a strong defense of Goldberg's integrity. Adrian Zackheim, president and publisher of Sentinel, an imprint of Penguin Group (USA), sent over this statement:

There's no conspiracy here, just an innocent mistake at worst. In casual conversation, whenever a news organization submits one of their writers for a prize, people say that person was nominated. By that standard Jonah Goldberg 'has twice been nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.' You've brought it to our attention that the Pulitzer authorities don't approve of that usage, and that technically Jonah was 'entered' but not 'nominated.'

We appreciate the notice, and we will treat it just like any other innocent mistake brought to our attention, such as a misspelled name or factual error. Specifically, Sentinel will correct the reference on future printings of *The Tyranny of Clichés*, and we will submit the correction to online retailers like Amazon and Barnesandnoble.com, which use our flap copy for their descriptive copy. Jonah is also correcting any other bios that have the error.

However, it would be completely inaccurate for you to conclude that there was any intent to inflate Jonah's credentials or deceive anyone. His credentials are extremely impressive already and don't require any extra hype.

Attached to the publisher's statement was an internal note from the Penguin publicist, cautioning author Goldberg not to say another word.

And there was a note from Goldberg himself to the publisher, an internal email forwarded by mistake: "I think it's great," Goldberg said, apparently referring to Zackheim's statement. "It's a bull@!\$%# story and I think this walks the line between acting in good faith and making that clear."

Goldberg, 43, is a son of literary agent Lucianne Goldberg, who became known after she advised Linda Tripp to secretly tape record Monica Lewinsky's conversations about sex with President Bill Clinton. She now has her own website, Lucianne.com. Jonah Goldberg got his start as an aide to commentator Ben J. Wattenberg at the American Enterprise Institute. Goldberg's columns are syndicated to newspapers nationally. For \$2,000 to \$7,500 per person, one can accompany the "Pulitzer-nominated columnist" and others from the National Review on a cruise to the Bahamas and Grand Cayman. His many liberal targets have included former Vice President Al Gore, whom he derided as a "serial exaggerator."

Find your own non-nominee nominees

Readers, here's a link to people whose Wikipedia biographies contain the word "Pulitzer" and "nominee" or "nominated."

http://www.google.com/search?num=100&hl=en&safe=off&rlz=1T4GGHP_enUS473US473&q=site%3Aen.wikipedia.org+%28%22nominated+OR+%22nominee%22%29+AND+%22pulitzer%22&oq=site%3Aen.wikipedia.org+%28%22nominated+OR+%22nominee%22%29+AND+%22pulitzer%22&aq=f&aql=&aql=&gs_l=serp.3...2225.13456.0.14133.49.45.4.0.0.0.114.2239.42j3.45.0...0.0.htfbPvSNpoA.

Which ones aren't real nominees?

Here's a search form for actual winners and nominated finalists at the Pulitzer Prizes site:

http://www.pulitzer.org/faceted_search.

It can be tricky to tell who's fibbing. A group of newspaper reporters, even an entire staff of a newspaper, could be nominated finalists in a category, without being named individually on the Pulitzer site. And nominees have been announced only since 1980.

The key questions to be put to a claimant are these: In what year were you a Pulitzer Prize nominee, and in what category?

N.B. A couple of readers asked how this story got started, whether I was tipped off by some political opponent of Goldberg's. No, I was looking at the Amazon list of top-selling books, and wasn't sure if I recognized Goldberg's name. I clicked through, and saw his bio. As soon as I saw in the bio that he was a two-time Pulitzer nominee, I doubted it. -- Bill Dedman

20120509-05	09:53 Art	Re: "Conservative Author Jonah Goldberg Drops Claim of Two Pulitzer Nominations" (reply to MarthaH, above)
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There's a pattern here. Seems like many, if not most, of the so called right wing intellectuals have false credentials or none at all.

20120509-09	12:42 Pam	Re: "Conservative Author Jonah Goldberg Drops Claim of Two Pulitzer Nominations" (reply to Art, above)
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Interesting point.

20120509-02	06:27 MarthaH	"Sen. Richard Lugar Loses Primary to Richard Mourdock"
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"Sen. Richard Lugar Loses Primary to Richard Mourdock" by Aaron Blake, *The Washington Post*

May 8, 2012, (http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/post/sen-richard-lugar-loses-primary-to-richard-mourdock/2012/05/08/gIQAOcHXBU_blog.html)

He [Richard Mourdock] earned the backing of several conservative groups, most notably the National Rifle Association and the fiscally conservative Club for Growth, which spent nearly \$2 million to defeat Lugar and helped Mourdock close the gap financially.

"Sen. Richard Lugar Defeated in Indiana's GOP Primary" by Susan Davis, USA TODAY

May 9, 2012, (<http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/story/2012-05-08/lugar-indiana-senate-mourdock/54844834/1>)

Lugar was ousted by state Treasurer Richard Mourdock, whose campaign against the veteran lawmaker was backed by conservative groups including the Tea Party Express, the anti-tax Club for Growth, the National Rifle Association, the Tea Party-aligned Freedom Works, and former Republican Alaska governor Sarah Palin.

(SOME list! –MarthaH)

20120509-04	09:37	SteveB	Dark Lord Defeats Genial Old Codger — Re: "Sen. Richard Lugar Loses Primary to Richard Mourdock"
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It is really the end of an era, heh? And, unless the Democrat can defeat this Dark Lord Mourdock and his army of rich orcs...I'm gonna miss the old era even more.

I guess Lugar lost so badly that any attempt as a third party Independent would be impossible???

80-years-old? He probably should have retired gracefully at the end of this term. To think that he ran unopposed—even by Democrats—six short years ago.

20120509-06	11:03	MarthaH	"Lugar's Goodbye"
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The Rhodes Scholar speaks, WOW!

"Lugar's Goodbye" by Domenico Montanaro, NBC

May 9, 2012, (<http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com/news/2012/05/08/11605668-lugars-goodbye?lite>)

An epic good-bye letter, passed along by NBC's Libby Leist, from Sen. Richard Lugar, dissecting everything he sees that's wrong with Washington and both parties:

Prepared Statement of Senator Richard G. Lugar on the Concluded Indiana Senate Primary (May 8, 2012)

I would like to comment on the Senate race just concluded and the direction of American politics and the Republican Party. I would reiterate from my earlier statement that I have no regrets about choosing to run for office. My health is excellent, I believe that I have been a very effective Senator for Hoosiers and for the country, and I know that the next six years would have been a time of great achievement. Further, I believed that vital national priorities, including job creation, deficit reduction, energy security, agriculture reform, and the Nunn-Lugar program, would benefit from my continued service as a Senator. These goals were worth the risk of an electoral defeat and the costs of a hard campaign.

Analysts will speculate about whether our campaign strategies were wise. Much of this will be based on conjecture by pundits who don't fully appreciate the choices we had to make based on resource limits, polling data, and other factors. They also will speculate whether we were guilty of overconfidence.

The truth is that the headwinds in this race were abundantly apparent long before Richard Mourdock announced his candidacy. One does not highlight such headwinds publically when one is waging a campaign. But I knew that I would face an extremely strong anti-incumbent mood following a recession. I knew that my work with then-Senator Barack Obama would be used against me, even if our relationship were overhyped. I also knew from the races in 2010 that I was a likely target of Club for Growth, FreedomWorks and other Super PACs dedicated to defeating at least one Republican as a purification exercise to enhance their influence over other Republican legislators.

We undertook this campaign soberly and we worked very hard in 2010, 2011, and 2012 to overcome these challenges. There never was a moment when my campaign took anything for granted. This is why we put so much effort into our get out the vote operations.

Ultimately, the re-election of an incumbent to Congress usually comes down to whether voters agree with the positions the incumbent has taken. I knew that I had cast recent votes that would be unpopular with some Republicans and that would be targeted by outside groups.

These included my votes for the TARP program, for government support of the auto industry, for the START Treaty, and for the confirmations of Justices Sotomayor and Kagan. I also advanced several propositions that were considered heretical by some, including the thought that Congressional earmarks saved no money and turned spending power over to unelected bureaucrats and that the country should explore options for immigration reform.

It was apparent that these positions would be attacked in a Republican primary. But I believe that they were the right votes for the country, and I stand by them without regrets, as I have throughout the campaign.

From time to time during the last two years I heard from well-meaning individuals who suggested that I ought to consider running as an independent. My response was always the same: I am a Republican now and always have been. I have no desire to run as anything else. All my life, I have believed in the Republican principles of small government, low taxes, a strong national defense, free enterprise, and trade expansion. According to *Congressional Quarterly* vote studies, I supported President Reagan more often than any other Senator. I want to see a Republican elected President, and I want to see a Republican majority in the Congress. I hope my opponent wins in November to help give my friend Mitch McConnell a majority.

If Mr. Mourdock is elected, I want him to be a good Senator. But that will require him to revise his stated goal of bringing more partisanship to Washington. He and I share many positions, but **his embrace of an unrelenting partisan mindset is irreconcilable with my philosophy of governance and my experience of what brings results for Hoosiers in the Senate. In effect, what he has promised in this campaign is reflexive votes for a rejectionist orthodoxy and rigid opposition to the actions and proposals of the other party.** His answer to the inevitable roadblocks he will encounter in Congress is merely to campaign for more Republicans who embrace the same partisan outlook. He has pledged his support to groups whose prime mission is to cleanse the Republican party of those who stray from orthodoxy as they see it.

This is not conducive to problem solving and governance. And he will find that unless he modifies his approach, he will achieve little as a legislator. Worse, he will help delay solutions that are totally beyond the capacity of partisan majorities to achieve. The most consequential of these is stabilizing and reversing the Federal debt in an era when millions of baby boomers are retiring. There is little likelihood that either party will be able to impose their favored budget solutions on the other without some degree of compromise.

Unfortunately, we have an increasing number of legislators in both parties who have adopted an unrelenting partisan viewpoint. This shows up in countless vote studies that find diminishing intersections between Democrat and Republican positions. Partisans at both ends of the political spectrum are dominating the political debate in our country. And partisan groups, including outside groups that spent millions against me in this race, are determined

to see that this continues. They have worked to make it as difficult as possible for a legislator of either party to hold independent views or engage in constructive compromise. If that attitude prevails in American politics, our government will remain mired in the dysfunction we have witnessed during the last several years. And I believe that if this attitude expands in the Republican Party, we will be relegated to minority status. Parties don't succeed for long if they stop appealing to voters who may disagree with them on some issues.

Legislators should have an ideological grounding and strong beliefs identifiable to their constituents. I believe I have offered that throughout my career. But ideology cannot be a substitute for a determination to think for yourself, for a willingness to study an issue objectively, and for the fortitude to sometimes disagree with your party or even your constituents. Like Edmund Burke, I believe leaders owe the people they represent their best judgment.

Too often bipartisanship is equated with centrism or deal cutting. Bipartisanship is not the opposite of principle. One can be very conservative or very liberal and still have a bipartisan mindset. Such a mindset acknowledges that the other party is also patriotic and may have some good ideas. It acknowledges that national unity is important, and that aggressive partisanship deepens cynicism, sharpens political vendettas, and depletes the national reserve of good will that is critical to our survival in hard times. Certainly this was understood by President Reagan, who worked with Democrats frequently and showed flexibility that would be ridiculed today - from assenting to tax increases in the 1983 Social Security fix, to compromising on landmark tax reform legislation in 1986, to advancing arms control agreements in his second term.

I don't remember a time when so many topics have become politically unmentionable in one party or the other. Republicans cannot admit to any nuance in policy on climate change. Republican members are now expected to take pledges against any tax increases. For two consecutive Presidential nomination cycles, GOP candidates competed with one another to express the most strident anti-immigration view, even at the risk of alienating a huge voting bloc. Similarly, most Democrats are constrained when talking about such issues as entitlement cuts, tort reform, and trade agreements. Our political system is losing its ability to even explore alternatives. If fealty to these pledges continues to expand, legislators may pledge their way into irrelevance. Voters will be electing a slate of inflexible positions rather than a leader.

I hope that as a nation we aspire to more than that. I hope we will demand judgment from our leaders. I continue to believe that Hoosiers value constructive leadership. I would not have run for office if I did not believe that.

As someone who has seen much in the politics of our country and our state, I am able to take the long view. I have not lost my enthusiasm for the role played by the United States Senate. Nor has my belief in conservative principles been diminished. I expect great things from my party and my country. I hope all who participated in this election share in this optimism.

20120509-13	15:16	MarthaH	"Mourdock: Compromise Is About Dems Siding with GOP"
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Soooooo "special" or full of it?

"Mourdock: Compromise Is About Dems Siding with GOP" by Catalina Camia, USA TODAY

May 9, 2012, (<http://content.usatoday.com/communities/onpolitics/post/2012/05/richard-mourdock-richard-lugar-senate-compromise-/1#.T6u-4OtSSRQ>)

Republican Richard Mourdock said today he believes compromise in the U.S. Senate will only happen if Democrats join with the GOP.

The Indiana state treasurer defeated veteran Sen. Richard Lugar in yesterday's GOP primary, ending the 36-year-career of a Republican who crossed the aisle many times to work with Democrats on issues such as foreign policy.

"I don't think there's going to be a lot of successful compromise," Mourdock said this morning on CNN's 'Starting Point' program. "I hope to build a conservative majority in the U.S. Senate so bipartisanship becomes Democrats joining Republicans to roll back the size of government."

Defeating Lugar in the GOP primary is only Mourdock's first step. He faces Democratic Rep. Joe Donnelly in November.

Murdock said he would model himself after Sen. Jim DeMint, a Tea Party Republican, and intends to be "confrontational" on key issues. He said there was "frustration" with Lugar's brand of collegiality, which was praised last night from Democrats such as President Obama and Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry

20120509-16	15:33 Pam	Re: "Murdock: Compromise Is About Dems Siding with GOP" (reply to MarthaH, above)
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Very interesting. I must ponder this.

20120509-21	17:46 Art	Re: "Murdock: Compromise Is About Dems Siding with GOP" (reply to MarthaH, above)
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Told you Indiana had reached the level of South Carolina.

20120509-14	15:19 MarthaH	"Joe Donnelly & Lot of Democrats Have the Same Problem"
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Gloom and doom...

"Joe Donnelly and Lot of Democrats Have the Same Problem" by Jennifer Rubin, *The Washington Post*

May 9, 2012, (http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/post/joe-donnely-and-lot-of-democrats-have-the-same-problem/2012/05/09/gIAh55LDU_blog.html)

Rep. Joe Donnelly is Indiana's Democratic nominee for U.S. Senate. But his problems have just begun. His biggest challenge is not Richard Mourdock but President Obama, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.)

The day after Mourdock's victory, the conservative Club for Growth is out blasting Donnelly for claiming that he never voted for Pelosi as speaker of the House. He voted for her twice.

But that's only the beginning of Club for Growth's complaints. Its spokesman has released this statement: "It's shocking but not surprising that Joe Donnelly's first act as the Democrat Party's candidate for Senate is to pretend he never voted for Nancy Pelosi for Speaker. Next thing you know he'll claim he doesn't recall his vote for ObamaCare or Obama's stimulus. Joe Donnelly is an economic liberal who votes in lock-step with Nancy Pelosi and Barack Obama on nearly every issue, and that's why Hoosiers will elect Richard Mourdock this November."

In Vermont or California, Donnelly's record would not be a handicap. But in Indiana it's hard to argue he is in sync with the electorate.

Moreover, the additional question Donnelly may face, aside from his votes for parts of the Obama agenda, is whether he'll support Reid as leader in the Senate. It's Reid and the Democratic majority that won't pass a budget, or allow a straight up-or-down vote on the Keystone XL Pipeline. Donnelly can swear until the cows come home that he's going to support domestic energy development or a balanced budget, but so long as Reid is in charge those are empty promises.

This is not only a problem for Donnelly. In fact, it's a bigger problem for incumbent Democrats. In an interview with Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) today (I'll have more on that this afternoon), he put it bluntly: "I don't know [Sen.] Claire McCaskill — she's probably a nice lady — or [Sen.] Jon Tester." But, without having passed a budget in three years he asks: "How do you say to the voters, 'Send me back to do more of the same'?"

That record of Democratic senators rubber-stamping the Obama agenda and failing to do the basic parts of their job (e.g. passing a budget) will be a weight around the neck of each and every incumbent up for reelection and for those candidates who have carried Obama's water (e.g. former DNC chief Tim Kaine). As Ryan remarked to me, Senate Democrats "made a calculated decision on that is it better to do nothing and get blamed for that than show the country what you want to do." That may have been a poor bet.

And that's really what the Indiana race and the other Senate contests boil down to: Will voters reward Democrats for supporting Obama and, in many cases, neglecting their fundamental obligations as lawmakers?

20120509-15	15:26 Pam	Re: "Joe Donnelly & Lot of Democrats Have the Same Problem" (reply to MarthaH, above)
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This gives me a hopeless feeling in the pit of my stomach. There are a lot of really awful things going on, and I don't see any of them stopping anytime soon. One of the very worst is Citizens United, which enables all the bad actors to have free reign. It's clear now that Obama's efforts to compromise were doomed from the start. If I were he, I'd go down fighting and telling the truth, even if it meant losing, which it undoubtedly would. He may win the election--I certainly hope so--but I wish he'd throw a little caution to the winds. It couldn't make things any worse.

20120509-22	17:49 Art	Re: "Joe Donnelly & Lot of Democrats Have the Same Problem" (reply to MarthaH, above)
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Perhaps just a wee bit slanted???

20120509-24	20:32 MarthaH	Re: "Joe Donnelly & Lot of Democrats Have the Same Problem" (reply to Art, above)
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Rubin bias...

Jennifer Rubin

Opinion Blogger

Jennifer Rubin writes the Right Turn blog for *The Post*, offering reported opinion from a conservative perspective. She covers a range of domestic and foreign policy issues and provides insight into the conservative movement and the Republican Party. Rubin came to The Post after three years with *Commentary* magazine. Her work has appeared in a number of print and online publications, including The Weekly Standard, where she has been a frequent contributor. Prior to her career in journalism, Rubin practiced labor law for two decades. She lives in Northern Virginia with her husband and two sons.

Commentary magazine:

Commentary is America's premier monthly magazine of opinion and a pivotal voice in American intellectual life. Since its inception in 1945, and increasingly after it emerged as the flagship of neoconservatism in the 1970s, the magazine has been consistently engaged with several large, interrelated questions: the fate of democracy and of democratic ideas in a world threatened by totalitarian ideologies; the state of American and Western security; the future of the Jews, Judaism, and Jewish culture in Israel, the United States, and around the world; and the preservation of high culture in an age of political correctness and the collapse of critical standards.

Many of *Commentary's* articles have been controversial, and more than a few have been hugely influential, touchstones for debate and discussion in universities, among policy analysts in and out of government, within the ranks of professionals and community activists of all kinds, and in circles of serious thought worldwide. A large number of articles can be counted as landmarks of American letters and intellectual life. Agree with it or disagree with it, *Commentary* cannot be ignored. To read it is to take part in the great American discussion.

Commentary was founded in 1945 by the American Jewish Committee. To learn more about AJC, which has worked since 1906 to safeguard and strengthen Jews and Jewish life worldwide by promoting democratic and pluralistic societies that respect the dignity of all peoples: <http://www.ajc.org/>.

20120509-23 18:03 Art Fw: Another Take: 'Anti-Gun Republican Loses'

Heck, they don't even try to hide it.

from the NAGR (Subj: Anti-gun Republican loses):



Last night, gun owners nationwide won a major victory for gun rights with the defeat of anti-gun Indiana Senator Dick Lugar by pro-gun champion Richard Mourdock.

For nearly a year, the National Association for Gun Rights has been contacting hundreds of thousands of Indiana Republican voters detailing U.S. Senator Dick Lugar's decades-long anti-gun record.

At the same time, voters were also informed of the pro-gun record of Richard Mourdock.

Using the mail, email and state-wide radio ads, NAGR showed hundreds of thousands of Indiana voters the stark difference between the two candidates on the gun rights issue.

These financially-costly mobilization efforts would not have been possible without the generous support of NAGR members and supporters nationwide.

Richard Mourdock had this to say about NAGR:

I appreciate the support of the National Association for Gun Rights. I absolutely support Hoosiers having the fundamental right to protect themselves and their loved ones from harm.

Now that Dick Lugar has been defeated in his bid to run for re-election in the fall, there is serious business to take care of.

Richard Mourdock still has to win a seat to the U.S. Senate in November.

And you can bet the gun-grabbers like Barack Obama, the anti-gun Brady Campaign and billionaire New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg will be funneling hundreds of thousands of dollars into the pockets of Mourdock's Democrat opponent.

So in the coming weeks and months leading up to the 2012 November Election NAGR is going to have to once again blanket the Indiana wit information showing a clear difference on gun rights between Richard Mourdock and his Democrat opponent.

These efforts certainly won't be cheap.

And with Election Day 2012 fast approaching, my staff and I will have to look at the electoral map and make some tough decisions about which federal races to put resources into.

Last night was a great victory for gun rights supporters like you . . . but there is much hard work ahead of us.

Thank you for your passionate commitment to the defense of our Second Amendment rights.

For Freedom, Dudley Brown, Executive Vice President

P.S. If you want to help NAGR inform and mobilize gun rights voters in federal races across the country, please consider chipping in \$10 or \$20 right now. The National Association for Gun Rights is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, single-purpose citizens' organization dedicated to preserving and protecting the Constitutionally protected right-to-keep-and-bear-arms through an aggressive program designed to mobilize public opposition to anti-gun legislation. The National Association for Gun Rights' mailing address is P.O 7002, Fredericksburg, VA 22404. They can be contacted toll-free at 1-877-405-4570. Its web address is www.NationalGunRights.org/. Not produced or e-mailed at taxpayer expense. To help the National Association for Gun Rights grow, please forward this to a friend.

[20120509-03](#) 06:30 MarthaH "12-Month Stretch Ending in April Is Warmest on Record, NOAA Says"

"12-Month Stretch Ending in April Is Warmest on Record, NOAA Says" by Miguel Llanos, MSNBC

May 8, 2012 (<http://usnews.msnbc.msn.com/news/2012/05/08/11600220-12-month-stretch-ending-in-april-is-warmest-on-record-noaa-says?lite>)

The previous 12 months were the warmest in the U.S. since record keeping began in 1895, government scientists reported Tuesday, with the period averaging 55.7 degrees Fahrenheit — nearly three degrees warmer than the average May-April.

"We were expecting the 12-month period to be warm, but I was somewhat surprised to see it record warm," lead researcher Jake Crouch of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration told msnbc.com. What's more, that 12-month record could be broken soon if this month posts above average warmth. That's because May 2011 was abnormally cool, so it actually weighed down the earlier 12-month average, Crouch said. Advertise | AdChoices

"Depending on how May 2012 turns out, the June 2011-May 2012 period will likely surpass the 12-month record that we just broke," added Crouch, who authored the monthly State of the Climate Report for NOAA.

"The big story moving forward," he said, could be "lack of precipitation and the development of drought going into summer and the agricultural growing season. Some of the regions we are keeping an eye on: the Southeast, the Southern Rockies and Southern Plains, and the Northeast."

Folks took to the beach in Belmar, N.J., on April 17. Area merchants said the warmth had boosted their sales by up to 30 percent more than what they normally would be at this time of year.

Highlights from the report:

- 12-month temps: Between May 2011 and April 2012 temperatures were 2.8 degrees above average, topping the earlier record of 2.7 degrees warmer set in November 1999 to October 2000. All 10 warmest consecutive 12 months have been since 1999.

- Cities with record warmth in January-April include: Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, New York City, Philadelphia, Tampa and Washington.
- April temps: Last month was the third warmest April on record at 55 degrees — 3.6 degrees above average.

The monthly report follows one issued for March that found 15,000 records were broken in what became the warmest March on record.

NOAA does not attribute the warmer temperatures solely to manmade global warming since other, natural factors influence weather as well. Instead, it notes that that the warmth is indicative of what one would expect with climate change.

20120509-07	11:39	SteveB	Fw: Daily Kos Action: Unite to Defeat Scott Walker
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from Daily Kos:

Last night in Wisconsin, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett won the Democratic nomination to take on Governor Scott Walker in the June 5 recall. Now our opportunity to defeat the Walker-Koch agenda is in sight.

Please contribute \$3 to help Tom Barrett defeat Scott Walker:

https://secure.actblue.com/contribute/page/dailykoswisconsin?refcode=5_09_feingold5

Mayor Barrett is a strong standard-bearer for progressives in the recall. While representing Wisconsin in Congress, Mayor Barrett stood with me in voting against the deregulation that led to the Wall Street crash, opposing the PATRIOT Act, and reforming our system of campaign finance. His executive experience makes him qualified to begin rolling back Walker’s devastating program on day one.

Scott Walker relies on corporate bosses from coast to coast who have armed him with tens of millions of dollars. But if grassroots progressives unite around Tom Barrett, we can put an end to Walker’s harmful policies and slam the brakes on the national corporate agenda.

Please contribute \$3 to Tom Barrett and unite to defeat Scott Walker.

Thank you for uniting as a progressive, Russ Feingold

20120509-08	11:55	Art	Re: "Tax Loophole Costs Billions" & Illegal Aliens (reply to SteveB, FotM Newsletter #134)
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from SteveB (20120508-18):

I want all the illegal aliens to have to swim across one of the larger American football stadiums, full of fan up to at least the level of the upper bleachers. The really good looking women and the ones who make the swim can stay, the others...well...it's their fault. They should have learned how to swim in fan better. Outside the stadium would be one hell of a Latino tailgate party with free fan for all!

I think you may have something here!

20120509-10	13:03	SteveM	Fw: CraigsList Ad
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Craig's List Ad

YOU ARE PROBABLY NOT VERY INTERESTED IN ANY USED FARM EQUIPMENT BUT THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO SEE THIS AD TAKEN FROM CRAIGS LIST THIS MORNING. FIFTY YEAR OLD MANURE SPREADER - \$1 (WASHINGTON , D.C.)

Fifty-year old manure spreader. Not sure of brand. Said to have been produced in Kenya.

Used for a few years in Indonesia before being smuggled into the US via Hawaii. Of questionable pedigree.

Does not appear to have ever been worked very hard. Apparently it was pampered by various owners over the years. It doesn't work very often, but when it does it can really spread the manure and sling it for amazing distances. I am hoping to retire this manure spreader next November. But I really don't want it hanging around getting in the way. I would prefer a foreign buyer that is willing to relocate this manure spreader out of the country. I would be willing to trade this manure spreader for a nicely framed copy of the United States Constitution.

Location: Washington, D.C.

[I didn't know DC was such big farming country. Go figure! -SteveB]

20120509-11	14:22	SteveG	"Making Chemical Giants Happy at Our Expense"
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Agent orange Corn? Dow and feds say: "Bon appetit!"

"Making Chemical Giants Happy at Our Expense" by Jim Hightower, NationofChange

May 9, 2012, (<http://www.nationofchange.org/making-chemical-giants-happy-our-expense-1336570016>)

("The corporation and the feds claim that 2,4-D was not the deadliest ingredient of the killer defoliant and has not yet been proven to cause cancer in humans, so they're pressing ahead to let this corporate-constructed seed be planted across America")

Thanks to the blessings of nature and good farmers, you and I can enjoy such scrumptious delights as fresh corn-on-the-cob, popcorn and many other variations of this truly great grain. And now, thanks to Dow Chemical and federal regulators, we can look forward to "Agent Orange Corn." The chemical giant is in line to gain approval for putting a genetically altered corn seed on the market that will produce corn plants that won't die when doused with high levels of 2,4-D.

This potent pesticide was an ingredient in Dow's notorious Agent Orange defoliant, which did such extensive and horrific damage to soldiers and civilians in the Vietnam War. However, the corporation and the feds claim that 2,4-D was not the deadliest ingredient of the killer defoliant and has not yet been proven to cause cancer in humans, so they're pressing ahead to let this corporate-constructed seed be planted across America.

Dow now sells 2,4-D to help kill various weeds, but the herbicide is so strong that it also kills nature's own version of corn plants. Thus, Dow's genetic engineers went into the corporate lab and manufactured a new corn that's immune to the weed-killer. This would let the chemical maker profit from selling the patented seed, plus enjoying a huge increase in sales of its 2,4-D herbicide. How happy for Dow! Not so happy, though, for consumers worried about the untested long-term health consequences of the altered corn and the carcinogenic possibilities of ingesting more 2,4-D. Also, when sprayed, this herbicide can vaporize and spread for miles, killing crops that are not immune, poisoning the surrounding environment, and endangering the health of farmers and townspeople throughout the area.

Dow is hardly alone in pursuing its happiness at the expense of others. Indeed, rather than finding ways to cooperate with the natural world, America's agribusiness giants generally reach for the quick, high-tech fix in a futile effort to overpower nature.

Their attitude is that if brute force isn't working, they're probably not using enough of it.

Monsanto, for example, has banked a fortune by selling a corn seed that it genetically manipulated to produce corn plants that won't die when sprayed with a toxic weed-killer called "Roundup." Not coincidentally, Monsanto also happens to be the maker of Roundup, so it has profited from the seed and from the surge in Roundup sales that the seed generated.

But Mother Nature, damn her, has rebelled. So much of Monsanto's poison was spread across America in the past decade that weeds naturally and rather rapidly developed a resistance to it. As a Dow Chemical agronomist put it, "The real need here is to diversify our weed management systems." Exactly right! We need non-chemical, non-GMO, sustainable systems that work with nature

But, no, the Dow man didn't mean that at all. He was calling for more brute force in the form of his corporation's altered corn seed — the one that can withstand being doused with Dow's super-potent 2,4-D weed killer. Use this, he promises, and this time nature will surely be defeated.

Wrong. Nature doesn't quit. The weeds will keep evolving and will adapt to Dow's high-tech fix, too. By pushing the same old thing relentlessly, says an independent crop scientist, agribusiness interests "ratchet up (America's) dependence on the use of herbicides, which is very much a treadmill." So much unhappiness for so many just to make one corporation happy by getting much richer at our expense.

It's time to start listening to the weeds — and cooperating with Mother Nature. To advance this common sense approach, a national coalition is backing a California "Right to Know" initiative requiring GMO-altered foods to be labeled. To help, go to Organic Consumers Association at www.OrganicConsumers.org, and get involved in the coalition's Money Bomb Monsanto Campaign.

20120509-12	14:25	Pam	Re: Photo: Greencastle "Buzz Bomb" (reply to SteveB, FotM Newsletter #133)
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The buzz bomb is still in place. Did you know it's been painted two shades of green? It also has a tiny orange propeller attached to its nose.

20120509-26	22:35	SteveB	Re: Photo: Greencastle "Buzz Bomb" (reply to Pam, above)
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The new paint job shows in the picture. I think I like it...better than racing stripes. Maybe you can barely see a tiny propeller...

I notice that you made sure you made the pilgrimage to visit the famous buzz bomb. It's still the only one I've ever seen.

Hope you had a good time in Greendingle.

20120509-17	15:39	Charis	"University Students Armed with Rocks Defend University in Cochabamba, Bolivia" & "Bolivian Students Damage Potosí State Government Building with Dynamite"
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[I swear I had absolutely nothing to do with either of these stories...only passing them along to give you a view from down here where "human rights" have "progressed" a little further. The first story was a little more hopeful, and the second shows how far things can quickly go. Hopefully, things can equalize in the U.S. before it comes to this kind of street fighting. These stories and their translations, thanks to our friend, Charis. -SteveB]

"University Students Armed with Rocks Defend University in Cochabamba, Bolivia" opinion.com.bo

May 9, 2012, (<http://www.boliviabella.com/university-students-armed-with-rocks-defend-university-in-cochabamba-bolivia.html>)



(COCHABAMBA) Leaders of the FUL (Local University Federation) and various faculties, have surrounded the UMSS (Universidad Mayor de San Simón) in Cochabamba and have armed themselves with rocks and sticks to repel possible provocation by coca growers and sectors that support the Bolivian government.

FUL leader Alejandro Mostajo stated that the university assembly had approved a vigil around UMSS facilities, especially the Faculty of Medicine, after government supporters had warned they would take revenge for damage done yesterday to the parliament and a building belonging to coca producers.

Hundreds of university students have blocked Oquendo Avenue, at the corner of Jordán Street since early Wednesday morning, and the main access gates to the university have been closed to avoid possible confrontations with thousands of coca producers who marched into the city of Cochabamba from surrounding tropical areas.

"All of the leaders of the FUL, faculties and schools of the university are present at this vigil to safeguard our university and tell the Government we aren't afraid because they no longer represent the Bolivian people. Today we are holding this vigil, but on Thursday we will return to the street in defense of the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB labor unions), doctors, healthcare workers, and the indigenous protest," he added.

Mostajo admitted that in order to safeguard the university campus and defend themselves, the university students are armed with sticks, rocks, and other hard objects to respond to any offense by the coca producers.

"Despite all of this, we exhort our fellow university students to not give in to any provocation by the government supporters while we continue to prepare mass mobilizations along with healthcare workers, medical students and doctors who are demanding Decree 1126 be annulled," he said.

(Source: opinion.com.bo. Date: 09 May 2012. This is a translation.)

"Bolivian Students Damage Potosí State Government Building with Dynamite" eju.tv

May 9, 2012, (<http://www.boliviabella.com/bolivian-students-damage-potos-state-government-building-with-dynamite.html>)

(POTOSI) With university authorities patiently watching, a group of students threw rocks and dynamite at the Potosí State Government building. This morning students and authorities of the Tomás Frías University in Potosí set out on a march, but a group of medical students caused serious damage to the building. They set off sticks of dynamite at the main door and building balconies, seriously damaging the infrastructure and windows.

Hugo Cazón, university vice-rector, stated that "these are public resources and our own resources. We will not allow this to happen. I just found out about this and we will investigate who is responsible."

The protest was headed by several of the university's top authorities.

The Police Command was present at the government building, but did nothing. The police sub-commander, Eduardo Veramendi, watched the university students but did nothing other than prevent young children from approaching.

A portion of the population does not agree with these actions; however, others state that the Government is now "being given its own medicine".

The State Government building was also painted and stained with red and black paint.

(Source: eju.tv. Date: 09 May 2012. This is a translation.)

20120509-18	16:35	SteveB	Fw: USAction Action: Tell the GOP to Stop the War on Women!
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from USAction:

Recently the Senate voted to renew the Violence Against Women Act, a previously bipartisan law that gives law enforcement agencies the tools they need to stop domestic violence.

This is great news but the fight is far from over as the House is debating H.R. 4970, a Republican version of VAWA today that strips the additional provisions to include immigrant, Native American and LGBT domestic violence victims from its full protections. We need to tell them to protect ALL women and pass the real VAWA, H.R. 4271.

Republicans' efforts to exclude certain types of victims from protections are absolutely appalling.

Will you send a message to your Representative in Congress and tell them to support the real VAWA bill that was passed by the Senate — not the homophobic, racist, anti-victim Republican version in the House?

http://act.truemajorityaction.org/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=385&track=email_2960&Email=friends_ofthemiddle@hotmail.com

Every woman in America deserves protection from domestic abuse, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. We can't put some women in danger just because they aren't the right type of victim.

The Violence Against Women Act has been enormously successful. Since its passage in 1994, the number of women killed by an intimate partner has fallen 34%. And victims are now reporting incidents instead of hiding in fear, with reports of abuse up 51%.¹

But the Republican version would have real consequences, endangering much of the population it was designed to protect. Because not only would their version exclude Native Americans and LGBT domestic violence victims, but it would roll back decades of protections for undocumented victim's confidentiality by alerting the abuser that their victims sought help.² This provision is unnecessary and incredibly unsafe — putting real women's lives in danger just to score political points.

A vote in the House is imminent. Tell your Representative in Congress to vote for the real VAWA bill that seeks to protect all women — not the homophobic, racist, anti-victim Republican version in the House.

Sincerely, Brittany Larson, USAction / TrueMajority

¹<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/fvv.pdf>

²<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0512/75959.html>

20120509-19	16:39	SteveG	Video: Human to Hero: Gao Fangxie
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What do you think?

http://www.cnn.com/video/?hpt=hp_c3#/video/us/2012/05/09/ac-mattingly-sean-harris-church.cnn

[See...I told you there was hope. :-) –SteveB]

20120509-25	22:23	SteveBA	“Dead Cat Bounce for Socialism”
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An economist’s view of European socialism beloved by many here.

“Dead Cat Bounce for Socialism” by Brian S. Wesbury and Bob Stein, First Trust

May 7, 2012, (<http://www.ftportfolios.com/Commentary/EconomicResearch/2012/5/7/dead-cat-bounce-for-socialism>)

The Social Welfare State is dying. Like the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain, the cradle-to-grave social welfare experiment must eventually collapse. A system of taxing work and profits, while subsidizing leisure, sloth, and retirement, must eventually fail.

The end of the Social Welfare State is painful for many, and it will not end quickly or quietly as the elections of this past weekend prove. Francois Hollande, a Socialist, was elected president of France, while Greece saw a surge in votes for “anti-bailout” political parties in parliament.

These elections are described as blows against “austerity.” They are also seen as anti-German. Germany resisted bailouts and pushed spending cuts.

In theory, a rejection of austerity could be a good thing. Some people include tax hikes in the concept of austerity and avoiding tax hikes would be a good thing for Europe. France has a top income tax rate of 45%, a wealth tax of 0.5% and a Value Added Tax (VAT) of 21.2%. Greece has a top income tax rate of 45% and a VAT of 23%. These burdensome tax rates hinder growth, investment and work effort and still don’t cover all the spending.

To solve the deficit problem, Francois Hollande wants to raise France’s top income tax rate to 75%. Greece’s “anti-bailout” parties, mostly on the left, also want higher taxes on the upscale, plus defense cuts. The Greek military helps break up domestic riots, so this is a self-serving demand.

So, in reality, French and Greek rejection of austerity does not mean policies that would enhance long term economic growth. Instead, it means they want to temporarily pull the wool over their own eyes, resist the obvious need to reduce government spending, and just hope for the best.

This chapter of the French story will not end well. The country has already gone much further along the road to socialism than the US, with general government spending equal to about 56% of GDP, very near the highest of any advanced or emerging market in the world. Greece, at 49%, is not far behind. Yet, voters are doubling down.

Markets already sense the problems this will cause. The Euro is weaker and stock prices are down around the globe. Many fear that pressure on the European Central Bank to buy more Euro debt and help avoid austerity will

create inflation. This is happening despite the fact that Hollande was a huge favorite to win and this should have been built into the market already. It was the ease of victory, combined with the vote in Greece that made the day feel even more anti-market.

But even easy money would ultimately be a dead end, leading to higher interest rates and less capital investment. Anyway, the Germans would never go along with a euro as weak and inflationary as many in Greece and France want. And Germany has huge leverage: if the ECB gets too loose, only Germany could leave the euro, go back to its old currency, and not get hammered by financial markets.

In the end, this is a battle the socialists are simply not going to win. Greece is too small to be convincing; France is about to show the world what doesn't work.

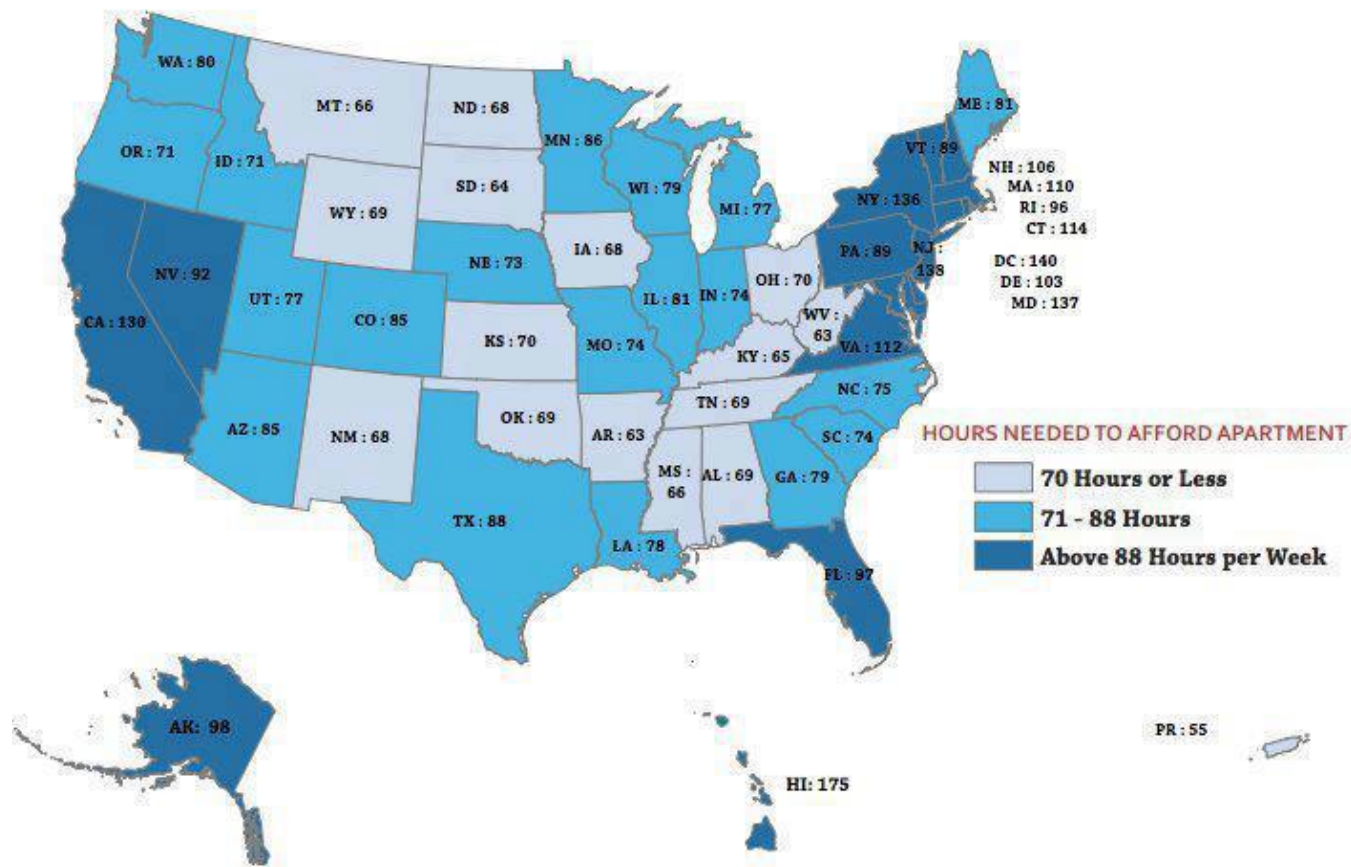
With any luck, after dabbling in folly, France will reverse course quickly. Maybe Hollande himself, not an unintelligent man, will realize the mistake of fighting the end of the social welfare state. The citizens of Europe who think austerity is unnecessary are about to get a lesson in reality. In the end the only way out is more capitalism.

And this brings us to our most important point. Financial markets in the US moved abruptly to a "risk off" trade as these election results were finalized. Stocks sold off and bonds rallied. But those who think these elections will hurt the US are wrong. The end of the social welfare state in Europe is a precursor for the US. It's a Dead Cat Bounce for Socialism.

[Yes, but voting for the Left is clearing a rejection of the Right. Maybe they'll find a path we can follow. I wish our French brothers well, and good luck. -SteveB]

HOURS AT MINIMUM WAGE NEEDED TO AFFORD RENT

In no state can a minimum wage worker afford a two-bedroom unit at Fair Market Rent, working a standard 40-hour work week.



<http://www.boliviafacts.net/potosi.html>

Potosi, Bolivia @ 13,343 ft. with the silver-rich *Cerro Rico* towering above.



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

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