



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #184 — JULY 18, 2012

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

INDEX: Click here.

National Debt Mythology

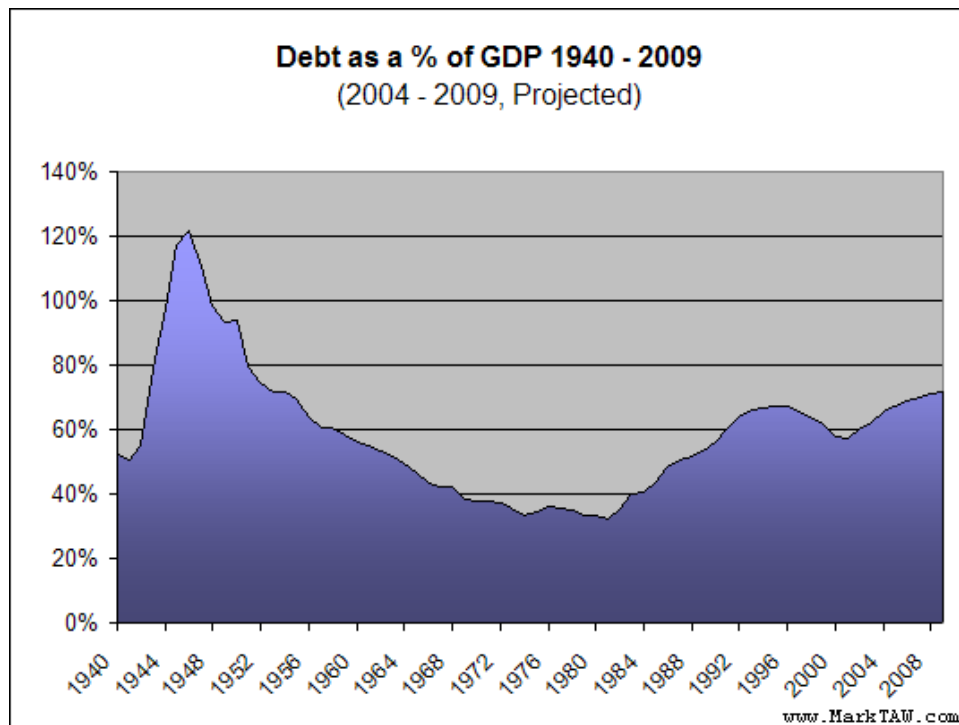
(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, July 18, 2012)

If lies were raindrops, the crops would be as tall as we wish they were.

"Four Dangerous Myths About Government Spending" by Mattea Kramer, TomDispatch/Salon

July 17, 2012, (http://www.salon.com/2012/07/17/four_dangerous_myths_about_government_spending/)

(How not to solve an American crisis.)



"We're at the edge of the cliff of deficit disaster!" "National security spending is being, or will soon be, slashed to the bone!" "Obamacare will sink the ship of state!"

Each of these claims has grabbed national attention in a big way, sucking up years' worth of precious airtime. That's a serious bummer, since each of them is a spending myth of the first order. Let's pop them, one by one, and move on to the truly urgent business of a nation that is indeed on the edge.

Spending Myth 1: Today's deficits have taken us to a historically unprecedented, economically catastrophic place.

This myth has had the effect of binding the hands of elected officials and policymakers at every level of government. It has also emboldened those who claim that we must cut government spending as quickly, as radically, as deeply as possible.

In fact, we've been here before. In 2009, the federal budget deficit was a whopping 10.1% of the American economy, and back in 1943, in the midst of World War II, it was three times that — 30.3%. This fiscal year the deficit will total around 7.6%. Yes, that is big. But in the Congressional Budget Office's grimmest projections, that figure will fall to 6.3% next year, and 5.8% in fiscal 2014. In 1983, under President Reagan, the deficit hit 6% of the economy, and by 1998, that had turned into a surplus. So, while projected deficits remain large, they're neither historically unprecedented nor insurmountable.

More important still, the size of the deficit is no sign that lawmakers should make immediate deep cuts in spending. In fact, history tells us that such reductions are guaranteed to harm, if not cripple, an economy still teetering at the edge of recession.

A number of leading economists are now busy explaining why the deficit this year actually ought to be a lot larger, not smaller; why there should be more government spending, including aid to state and local governments, which would create new jobs and prevent layoffs in areas like education and law enforcement. Such efforts, working in tandem with slow but positive job growth in the private sector, might indeed mean genuine recovery. Government budget cuts, on the other hand, offset private-sector gains with the huge and depressing effect of public-sector layoffs, and have damaging ripple effects on the rest of the economy as well.

When the economy is healthier, a host of promising options are at hand for lawmakers who want to narrow the gap between spending and tax revenue. For example, loopholes and deductions in the tax code that hand enormous subsidies to wealthy Americans and corporations will cost the Treasury around \$1.3 trillion in lost revenue this year alone — more, that is, than the entire budget deficit. Closing some of them would make great strides toward significant deficit reductions.

Alarmingly, the deficit-reduction fever that's resulted from this first spending myth has led many Americans to throw their support behind de-investment in domestic priorities like education, research, and infrastructure — cuts that threaten to undo generations of progress. This is in part the result of myth number two.

Spending Myth 2: Military and other national security spending have already taken their lumps and future budget-cutting efforts will have to take aim at domestic programs instead.

The very idea that military spending has already been deeply cut in service to deficit reduction is not only false, but in the realm of fantasy. The real story: Despite headlines about "slashed" Pentagon spending and "doomsday" plans for more, no actual cuts to the defense budget have yet taken place. In fact, since 2001, to quote former Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, defense spending has grown like a "gusher." The Department of Defense base budget nearly doubled in the space of a decade. Now, the Pentagon is likely to face an exceedingly modest 2.5% budget cut in fiscal 2013, "paring" its budget down to a mere \$525 billion — with possible additional cuts shaving off another \$55 billion next year if Congress allows the Budget Control Act, a.k.a. "sequestration," to take effect.

But don't hold your breath waiting for that to happen. It's likely that lawmakers will, at the last moment, come to an agreement to cancel those extra cuts. In other words, the notion that our military, which has been experiencing financial boom times even in tough times, has felt significant deficit-slashing pain — or has even been cut at all — is the Pentagon equivalent of a unicorn.

What this does mean, however, is that lawmakers heading down the budget-cutting path can find plenty of savings in the enormous defense and national security budgets. Moreover, cuts there would be less harmful to the economy than reductions in domestic spending.

A group of military budget experts, for example, found that cutting many costly and obsolete weapons programs could save billions of dollars each year, and investing that money in domestic priorities like education and health care would spur the economy. That's because those sectors create more jobs per dollar than military programs do. And that leads us to myth three.

Spending Myth 3: Government health-insurance programs are more costly than private insurance.

False claims about the higher cost of government health programs have led many people to demand that health-care solutions come from the private sector. Advocates of this have been much aided by the complexity of sorting out health costs, which has provided the necessary smoke and mirrors to camouflage this whopping lie.

Health spending is indeed growing faster than any other part of the federal budget. It's gone from a measly 7% in 1976 to nearly a quarter today — and that's truly a cause for concern. But health care costs, public and private, have been on the rise across the developed world for decades. And cost growth in government programs like Medicare has actually been slower than in private health insurance. That's because the federal government has important advantages over private insurance companies when it comes to health care. For example, as a huge player in the health-care market, the federal government has been successful at negotiating lower prices than small private insurers can. And that helps us de-bunk myth number four.

Spending Myth 4: The Affordable Care Act — Obamacare — will bankrupt the federal government while levying the biggest tax in U.S. history.

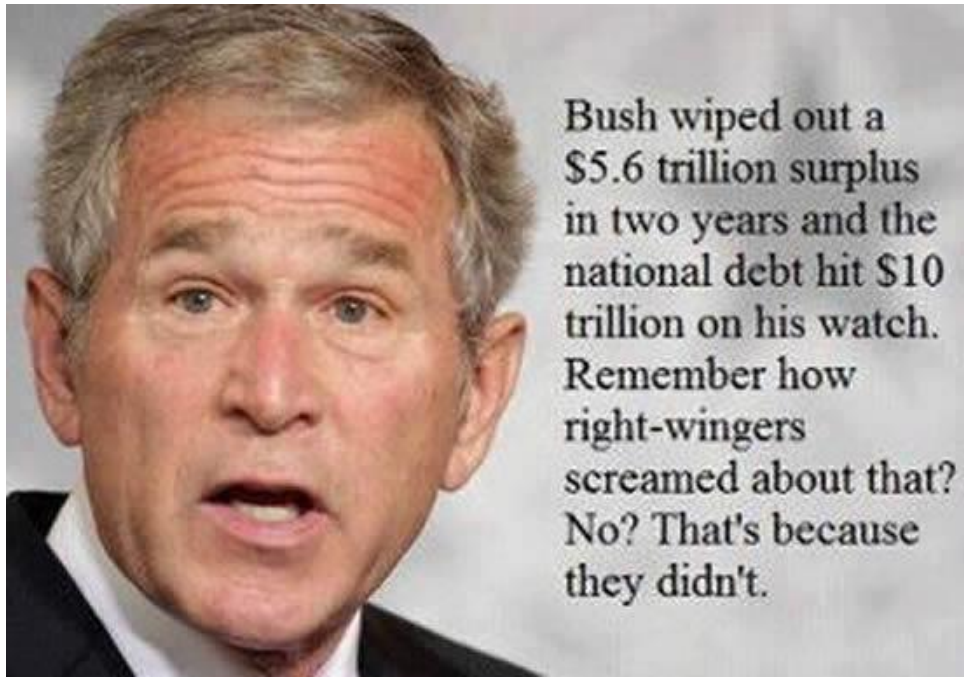
Wrong again. According to the Congressional Budget Office, this health-reform legislation will reduce budget deficits by \$119 billion between now and 2019. And only around 1% of American households will end up paying a penalty for lacking health insurance.

While the Affordable Care Act is hardly a panacea for the many problems in U.S. health care, it does at least start to address the pressing issue of rising costs — and it incorporates some of the best wisdom on how to do so. Health-policy experts have explored phasing out the fee-for-service payment system — in which doctors are paid for each test and procedure they perform — in favor of something akin to pay-for-performance. This transition would reward medical professionals for delivering more effective, coordinated, and efficient care — and save a lot of money by reducing waste.

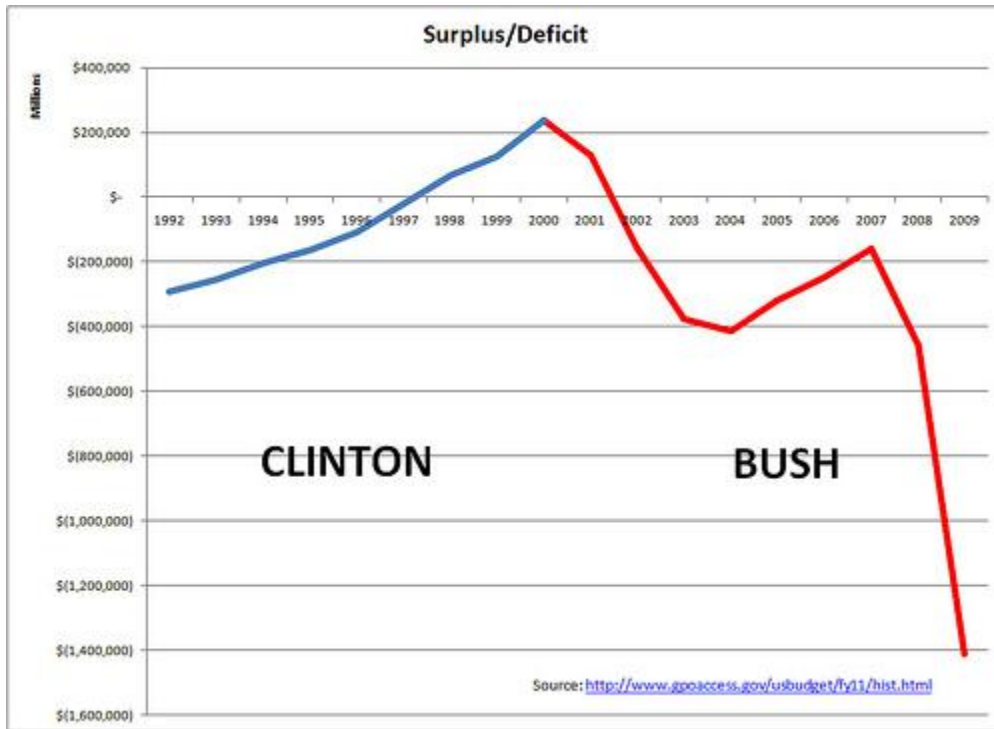
The Affordable Care Act begins implementing such changes in the Medicare program, and it explores other important cost-containment measures. In other words, it lays the groundwork for potentially far deeper budgetary savings down the road.

Having cleared the landscape of four stubborn spending myths, it should be easier to see straight to the stuff that really matters. Financial hardship facing millions of Americans ought to be our top concern. **Between 2007 and 2010, the median family lost nearly 40% of its net worth.** Neither steep deficits, nor disagreement over military spending and health reform should eclipse this as our most pressing challenge.

If lawmakers skipped the myth-making and began putting America's resources into a series of domestic investments that would spur the economy now, their acts would yield dividends for years to come. That means pushing education and job training, plus a host of job-creation measures, to the top of the priority list, and setting aside initiatives based on fear and fantasy.



(Thanks to SteveG!)



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And this is relevant How? You can't defend Obama and the ruinous policies so you try AND CHANGE THE SUBJECT. Could you be any lamer?

20120717-01	06:05	Tom	Fw: Video: "The Whole Truth"
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from AmericanDoctors4Truth.org

TRUTH... most people did not know what was in this bill. As Nancy Pelosi said, "pass it and then find out."

Health care does need a reform but not like this bill proposes.

The Democratic Party has produced a television ad purporting to show Rep. Paul Ryan throwing grandma off the cliff, by opposing ObamaCare.

A couple of San Antonio doctors have responded with an effective ad to counter this injustice. See the ad produced by Doctors Jane Hughes and Kris Held:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJ-p29xEM0s>.

We believe that the doctors who actually care for America's patients have valuable insight and wisdom to share. We have waited too long for a national voice to inform the average American citizen about the hazards of the new health care law and to lead the way with reform. The time for waiting is over!

20120717-02	08:36	SteveG	"Report: 2 Million Jobs Lost if Automatic Cuts Kick In"
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"Report: 2 Million Jobs Lost if Automatic Cuts Kick In" by Donna Cassata, AP/Yahoo! News

July 17, 2012, (<http://news.yahoo.com/report-2m-jobs-lost-automatic-cuts-kick-065246317--finance.html>)

(WASHINGTON) Automatic cuts in federal spending will cost the economy more than 2 million jobs, from defense contracting to border security to education, if Congress fails to resolve the looming budget crisis, according to an analysis released Tuesday.

The study, obtained by The Associated Press, was conducted for the Aerospace Industries Association, but it examined the shared pain for defense and domestic programs from the across-the-board reductions slated to kick in Jan. 2. The cuts would reduce the nation's gross domestic product by \$215 billion next year while consumer confidence would plummet, said the report by Dr. Stephen Fuller of George Mason University and Chmura Economics and Analytics.

"If they are allowed to occur as currently scheduled, the long-term consequences will permanently alter the course of the U.S. economy's performance, changing its competitive position in the global economy," said the report.

The analysis is similar to other cautionary reports that have emerged in recent months from independent organizations that analyze federal spending and the process known in Washington as sequestration. All the reports carry a degree of uncertainty as the government hasn't spelled out where it would make the cuts.

The Aerospace Industries Association is a trade group that represents manufacturers of military and business aircraft, space systems and other technology. At stake for these companies are billions of dollars of contracts and they are campaigning hard against the spending cuts.

Its report comes amid a cacophony of election-year demands and partisan backbiting over how to avert the impending cuts that will only grow louder in the coming weeks.

Republicans are certain to seize on the dire numbers as they insist that President Barack Obama is ignoring a critical problem and is willing to make deep cuts in the military. Democrats will use the estimates to demand that the GOP accept tax increases on high wage earners as part of any alternative to implementing the cuts.

The House is scheduled to vote this week on legislation forcing the Obama administration to explain how it will impose the automatic cuts. Top officials from major defense contractors such as Lockheed Martin, EADS, Pratt and Whitney and Williams-Pyro are slated to testify before the House Armed Services Committee on Wednesday as they clamor for Congress to avoid the cuts.

Then, on Aug. 1, Jeffrey Zients, acting head of the Office of Management and Budget, and Deputy Defense Secretary Ashton Carter will be questioned by the panel on how the administration plans to make \$55 billion in defense cuts next year.

Unless Obama and congressional Republicans and Democrats can agree on a plan to stave off the cuts, the military will face a reduction of \$492 billion over a decade, with a \$55 billion cut beginning in January, three months into the fiscal year. Domestic programs also would be reduced by \$492 billion over 10 years.

The automatic cuts, known as sequestration, are the result of the failure last year of a bipartisan congressional panel to come up with a plan to cut the deficit by \$1.2 trillion over 10 years. The panel had been created in the hard-fought budget law passed last summer that reduced government spending while raising the nation's borrowing authority. Decisions on across-the-board reductions, the expiration of Bush-era tax cuts and another effort to increase the country's borrowing authority are part of a packed congressional agenda after the November elections.

Using the issue as leverage, Democrats have signaled they are willing to allow the automatic cuts if Republicans continue to rebuff calls to raise taxes on those Americans making more than \$250,000 a year.

Based on analyses by the Congressional Research Service and other data, the report estimated that the automatic cuts would translate into a 1.5 percentage point increase in unemployment, which now stands at 8.2 percent in a sluggish economic recovery.

The report estimated a loss of 1.09 million jobs from the defense cuts next year, with almost 70 percent from manufacturing and professional and business service jobs. Cuts in domestic spending would result in 1.05 million jobs lost, the report estimated.

"The federal agencies haven't said what they would cut back," Fuller said in an interview of the domestic cuts. "They don't have too many choices because most of their budget is payroll, where the Defense Department has more choices because most of its budget isn't payroll."

Republicans and Democrats remain deeply divided over how to stave off the cuts, though various groups of senators have been trying to come up with a resolution.

Sen. John McCain, the top Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, has been talking privately with the panel's chairman, Democrat Carl Levin of Michigan, Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and other lawmakers about various options to avert the cuts, including a \$110 billion, one-year plan that would include closing tax loopholes.

He faces a tough challenge in securing strong bipartisan support, a reality underscored by House Speaker John Boehner's contention that closing tax loopholes should be part of a deal for tax reform rather than a way to avert the defense cuts.

Marion Blakey, president and chief executive officer of the Aerospace Industries Association, said the industry did not want to offer an opinion on what solution would be best.

"We would expect that in this situation, rational behavior will take hold," she said in an interview. She said it was imperative because the cuts only provide a short-term benefit.

"This isn't addressing the fundamentals in any way," she said. "What it's doing is driving our economy back into a recession for an anticipated short-term nick on the debt. That's all it is."

20120717-03	10:43	Ben	Re: "Bikini-Clad, Gun-Toting Israeli Woman Becomes an Internet Sensation" (reply to Tom, FotM Newsletter #183)
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So where's the shadow of the muzzle of that rifle that should be showing alongside the shadow of the girl's right leg? And where does sunlight hit that projecting muzzle? And if she's really carrying that far-from-light weapon on that 2" strap, why isn't there a little pucker in the flesh of her shoulder? If the magazine is removed, well, I guess it's all right to be wearing the weapon, since it's safe, but... senseless, and definitely ill-advised, if she isn't carrying ammunition. Where's that mag? I can think of only two places for one so dressed, and neither seems very likely, does it?

And... what message is the goomba that 'Shopped this trying to convey, anyway?

I get so tired of people with agendas fabricating 'evidence' to support their silly causes.

And the gullible (that is, almost all users) fall right into the trap.

20120717-04	14:20	SteveM	"Obama's Illegal Alien Uncle Given a Stay from [sic] Deportation Despite Criminal Fugitive Status & DUI"
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"Obama's Illegal Alien Uncle Given a Stay from [sic] Deportation Despite Criminal Fugitive Status and DUI" by TheDuke, FreeRepublic.com/A Nation in Peril

July 17, 2012, (<http://anationinperil.com/>)

Framingham Public Information Officer Lieutenant Delaney said when Onyango Obama was asked at the station if he wanted to make a telephone call to arrange for bail following his DUI arrest, he replied: "I think I will call the White House."

Now we see why. Obama's "Uncle Omar" never had anything to worry about. Judicial Watch – which had to sue to obtain the information – has now reported that Obama's uncle the illegal alien fugitive was granted a special stay from deportation from the Obama Administration.

This, despite his overstaying a tourist visa from Kenya nearly 30 years ago. This despite having committed Social Security fraud and evading thousands in back taxes. This, despite being apprehended by the INS in 1992 and receiving a "final order of removal" from a Federal immigration judge – who then subsequently put a Federal warrant out for Uncle Omar's arrest when he skipped his hearing. This, despite after 19 years on the run from that bench warrant – a Federal fugitive – being arrested for a DUI in Framingham, Mass. in August 2011. And despite Presidential spokesperson Jay Carney insisting Uncle Omar would not get "any special treatment".

A criminal alien, fraudster and fugitive from justice for decades, Uncle Omar was released by ICE after only a 2-week detention after his DUI arrest, allowed to return to his job in a liquor store (yep...you can't make this stuff up) against Federal law, unbelievably being permitted by the state of Massachusetts to get his drivers license back after only a 12-day suspension. And now, thanks to his nephew, this criminal is now being allowed to stay in the U.S. and fight his deportation order from 19 years ago!

When Drunken Uncle Omar appeared at his Framingham court hearing last fall that absolved him of any punishment and sent him on his merry way, he was laughing about it. And why not?

He was laughing at all Americans. At our disgraceful legal system that gives illegal aliens more rights than an average citizen would ever receive. At our pathetic immigration system that ordered him deported 20 years ago, yet is now allowing him to once again challenge that deportation, and is permitted to work – against Federal law – while that case progresses.

And he is laughing because he knows that his nephew shares his own contempt for our laws, and will do everything he can to make sure he gets off scot free. It is absolutely despicable.

November cannot come soon enough.

20120717-05	14:27	SteveM	Video: Best Anti-Obama Ad I've Ever Seen!"
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www.ObamaGetOut.com, by Patriot Super PAC

20120717-06	16:10	SteveB	Fw: USAction Action: Freeze Military Spending Now!
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Well, this certainly isn't going to happen, but it might be worth expressing your opinion...

from USAction:

Outrageous. Despite continuous calls from the House Republican leadership to make drastic cuts to Medicare, Social Security, food stamps and other programs middle class families rely on just to get by, they absolutely refuse to budge even an inch on Pentagon spending.

Not only do they refuse to cut the military budget, but they want to increase it — above and beyond what even our highest commanding officers have asked for.¹ How's that for fiscal responsibility?

But as Congress takes up the 2013 Defense Appropriations bill, there's one amendment where progressives and tea party members can agree. Introduced by two representatives from polar opposite sides of the fence, the Mulvaney-Frank amendment will freeze military spending to last year's levels.

With a vote expected as early as Thursday, it will come down to the wire as many members are still on the fence. Tell your Representative to vote for the Mulvaney-Frank Amendment now:

http://act.truemajorityaction.org/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=417.

According to the CBO, Pentagon spending accounts for over 50% of all discretionary spending in the budget.² If Republicans are going to ram drastic cuts to our social safety net through Congress, then it's only fair to cut from the bloated Pentagon budget as well.

And the American public overwhelmingly agrees. According to a survey by the Stimson Center, on average, Americans want to cut military spending by 18 percent. This was true amongst Democratic and Republican voters alike — and even amongst voters living in districts with the most defense spending in the country.³

The American people overwhelmingly support cutting military spending but Washington isn't listening.

So we need to make sure Congress hears our voice loud and clear: the American people want to cut Pentagon spending, so do it now! Click above to tell your Representative to vote 'yes' on the Mulvaney-Frank Amendment.

Sincerely, David Elliot, USAction / TrueMajority

¹<http://bit.ly/NDpI3K>

²<http://1.usa.gov/NDpSYK>

³<http://wapo.st/NDpWYH>

20120717-07

16:15

SteveG

Fw: MoveOn Petition: Eliminate the Ceiling on Social Security Payroll Taxes!

from MoveOn:

Currently, there is a \$110,100 cap on Social Security payroll taxes. Most of us don't come close to paying this much and pay tax on 100% of our payroll income.

However, because of the \$110,100 cap, the superrich pay much less than their fair share. For instance, in 2011, Henry Kravis, the CEO of the private equity firm KKR & Co., paid off his Social Security taxes for the year on January 10, 2011, six working days into the new year.

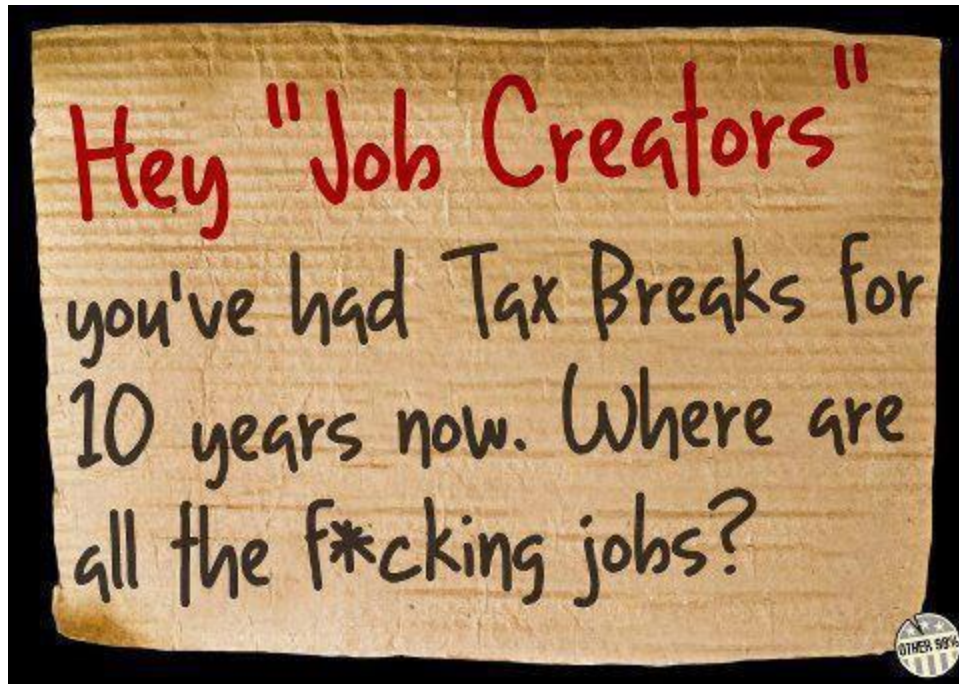
That's just one example. If the cap on payroll taxes were removed, Social Security would be safe—probably forever. That's why I created a petition on SignOn.org to Congress and President Barack Obama, which says:

Remove the cap on Social Security payroll taxes.

Will you sign the petition? Click here to add your name, and then pass it along to your friends:

<http://www.moveon.org/r?r=276842&id=46437-4073648-9%3D57WAX&t=2>.

Thanks! -Laraine Harrison



**CORPORATE PROFITS
ARE AT A 50-YEAR HIGH**
while unemployment is also at
a 50-year high. If it was
true that the rich and
business were the job
creators, we'd be
drowning in jobs today.



Nick Hanauer
American entrepreneur,
venture capitalist,
co-author of *The True Patriot*

SOURCE: Korn, Morgan, "Millionaire Investor Calls for Higher Taxes on the Rich," 9 Feb 2012, Yahoo! Finance, <http://y.ahoo.it/WwU/w>.

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I have never, ever seen signs like this about any other President or candidate in my entire life.

[Maybe because there weren't any previous black Presidents or (nearly) candidates! -SteveB]

This says something very important about these times and about our President.



20120717-11 23:45 SteveM Fw: Grassroots Action: Tell Comcast to Clean House at NBC!

from MRC/Grassroots Action:

After years of being embarrassed by the hatemongers who rule MSNBC's airwaves, Microsoft has had enough.

As widely reported yesterday, the software giant has officially severed all ties with MSNBC ... But what does this so-called divorce mean to you?

Comcast—NBC's parent company—is feeling the heat.

Stephen, because of the relentless efforts of the MRC Action team, Comcast knows how bad things are at MSNBC and are worried that the American people have lost faith in NBC News because of it.

That's why they decided to rebrand MSNBC.com as NBCNews.com to give the false impression that MSNBC is a separate entity. But we know better. NBC News and MSNBC are inextricably linked, with hosts and staff simultaneously working on both stations...

Even worse, both are working around the clock spreading liberal propaganda.

Remember that it was NBC News that committed the most despicable journalistic fraud in recent history by editing the George Zimmerman 9-11 tape to make it look like Zimmerman thought Trayvon Martin was suspicious because he was black.

It's a good thing MRC's NewsBusters.org was there to nail them on it. Make no mistake about it: MSNBC is NBC News.

But rather than clean up their mess at NBC, Comcast is playing a shell game by changing website names and pretending that their cable news channel isn't part of their news division.

We have extensively documented the outrageous behavior exhibited daily by unhinged MSNBC hosts and Comcast must be held directly responsible for refusing to restore journalistic standards and basic decency.

We need you to keep up the pressure on Comcast, insisting that they do the right thing with NBC by sweeping the house free of the hatemongers and liberal propagandists that are ruling the MSNBC airwaves!

Go here now to directly contact Comcast Board members and tell them to do the right thing by cleaning up their station:

http://www.grassrootsaction.com/489/petition.asp?Ref_ID=16918&CID=489&RID=35237119.

Even if you have already contacted a board member, please do so again as a reminder that you aren't going away, and won't let it rest until they clean house.

After taking action, forward this email to your patriotic friends and urge them to hold Comcast and MSNBC accountable as well by going here.

Thank you as always for your support and your commitment to pressuring the liberal media to "Tell the Truth"!

20120717-12	23:50	SteveM	"Who's the Real Felon, Mr. Obama?"
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"Who's the Real Felon, Mr. Obama?" by Derrick Hollenbeck, ImpeachObamaCampaign.com

July 17, 2012, (<http://www.impeachobamacampaign.com/whos-the-real-felon-mr-obama/>)



By his own admission, Barack Obama used drugs and almost certainly passed drugs to his friends. This makes it likely he has committed drug-related felonies. Even just passing drugs around in a circle of friends is a "sale of drugs" felony. Nevertheless, it's not really important whether we have enough definitive evidence to convict Barack Obama in a court room. It is, after all, only the seriousness of the charges and not the nature of the evidence that counts.

During Sheriff Joe Arpaio's March 1, 2012 press conference, his lead investigator presented a copy of Barack Obama's draft registration card and explained how it was forged. It was clear that if the draft card Obama possessed was genuine, he, Barack Hussein Obama, received THE ONLY draft card issued since 1980 that was stamped with a single digit year. Every other draft card issued before and after Barack Obama's special one includes four digits. Obama's draft card is stamped with "80" for the year it was issued. Any legitimate stamp would say "1980."

Obama's draft card looks like it was made by a high school kid learning how to photo-shop a document. All of this strongly suggests Obama may very well be a felon under several statutes of both Hawaiian and federal law.

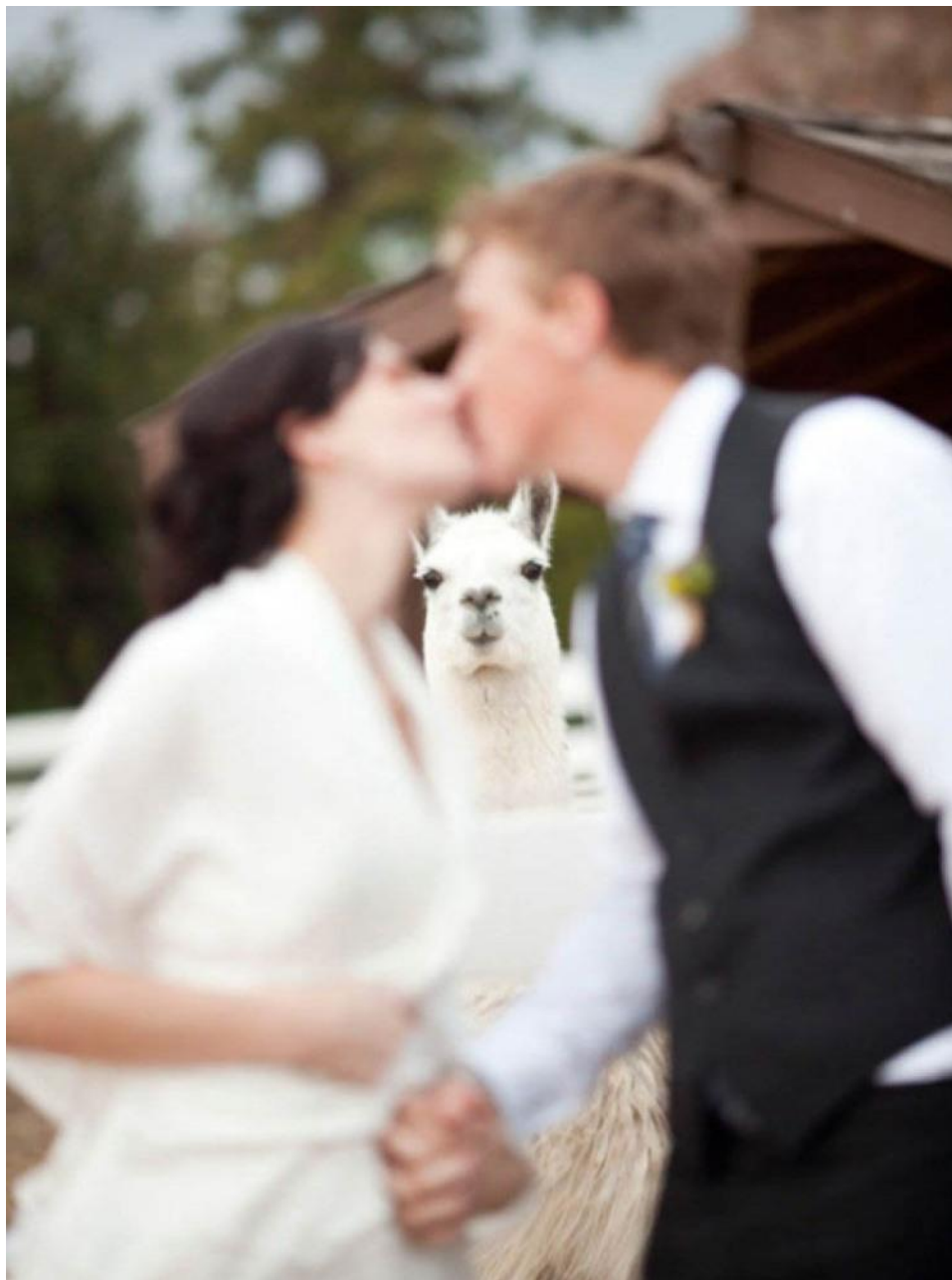
When Obama either made or received his obviously fake draft card, that could be a felony violation of Jimmy Carter's Proclamation 4771, Registration Under the Military Selective Service Act, which retroactively re-established the Selective Service registration requirement for all 18-26 year old male citizens born on or after January 1, 1960.

Failure to register for the draft – certainly indicated by possession of a forged draft card – makes a man born after December 31, 1959 liable for a maximum fine of \$250,000 and a prison term of up to five years.

The law also stipulates that an unregistered male is not eligible for a job in the Executive Branch. This means a forged draft card cannot be used to satisfy the requirements to be the president. It means Barack Obama may be guilty of federal felonies because he possessed and presented an identification document that is a fake. It means he may have committed more federal felonies involving fraud when he presented a forged draft card to satisfy the requirements for any federal student aid he used to attend college in America.

My goodness, there may be a felon in the White House!

[20120717-13](#) 23:58 Marci Another Animal Photobomb



http://zh.trekLens.com/gallery/South_America/Peru/South/Arequipa/photo359682.htm



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

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