



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #204 — AUG. 15, 2012

Welcome to always lively political discussion and whatever else comes up.
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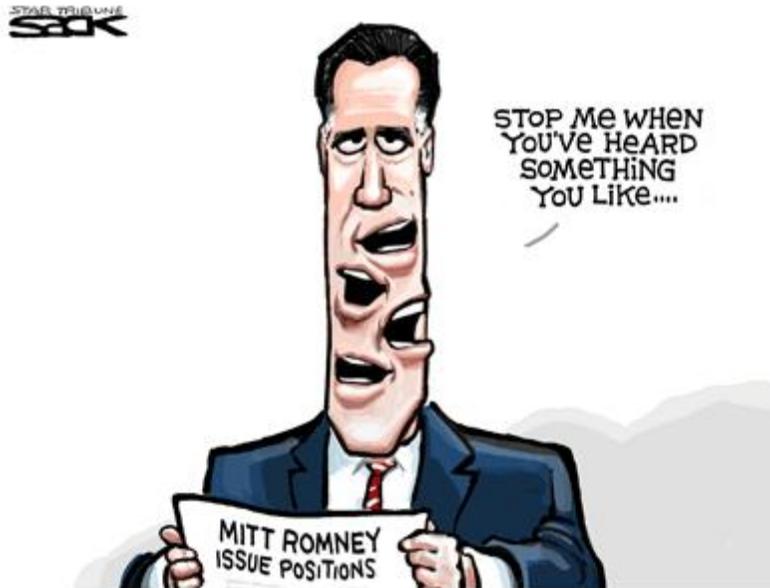
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America Doesn't Like Mitt R0mney

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Aug. 15, 2012)

The problem for the Republicans is that Americans always elect a President that they like more than they dislike. Even a "disliked" VP candidate, like Sarah Palin, can drag a "liked" Presidential candidate to defeat. And the fact is that, ever since Mitt R0mney came upon the national political stage years ago, his approval ratings have never risen above his disapproval ratings in national polls. I wonder what kind of shapeshifting strategy the campaign will employ to try to solve this major catastrophe.

What if likability were to trump lies? What a sweet world that would be!



"Why America Doesn't Like Mitt Romney" by L.Z. Granderson, CNN

Aug. 14, 2012, (http://edition.cnn.com/2012/08/14/opinion/granderson-romney-likeability/index.html?hpt=hp_c2)

It can't be because he's rich, because there are a lot of rich people we like. Hell, President Obama's rich and 56% of the country views him favorably.

It can't be because he's Republican, because Republicans don't like him either. Last month, when a woman reportedly asked House Speaker John Boehner, "Can you make me love Mitt Romney?" he said, "No...the American people probably aren't going to fall in love with Mitt Romney."

The latest CNN/ORC International Poll found that 48% of Americans view him unfavorably, which isn't exactly breaking news because Romney's been unable to get much likeability traction since announcing his first run at the White House five years ago. For a sex scandal-free politician, that's got to be a bit perplexing.

But then last week, the reason for the bad vibes about Romney became clear. You see, he's been zipping across the country using President Obama's "You didn't build that" quote out of context for an analogy about a student who worked hard in school and made the honor roll. He used it again when he introduced his running mate, Paul Ryan last weekend.

What the president said was:

If you were successful, somebody along the line gave you some help. There was a great teacher somewhere in your life. Somebody helped to create this unbelievable American system that we have that allowed you to thrive. Somebody invested in roads and bridges. If you've got a business — you didn't build that." He also said, "The point is, is that when we succeed, we succeed because of our individual initiative, but also because we do things together.

Romney spins it to make it sound as if the president is totally discrediting an individual's hard work, summing it up this way.

"I realize that he got to school on a bus and the bus driver got him there, but I don't give the bus driver credit for the honor roll," he said. "I give the kid credit for the honor roll."

Nothing's wrong with that statement by itself.

The problem is, we don't live by ourselves.

This analogy epitomizes what makes Romney so unlikeable to so many people, regardless of party, race, gender or socioeconomic status.

In his mind, the world is full of bus drivers and honor roll students and the two are independent of each other, which is why he can characterize President Obama's desire to help those less fortunate as creating a "culture of dependence." What rubs so many people the wrong way is Romney's inability to see that society is interdependent.

There are moments in some of Romney's speeches in which he comes across like the guy who doesn't wave when you let him into traffic, because in his mind, he was able to merge on his own.

Few people ever like that guy ... and this is why less than 50% of Americans like Romney.

Growing up, I rode the bus to school.

We only had one car and both my parents had to work. So if it wasn't for the bus I would have had to attend the neighborhood schools that were within walking distance as opposed to the special schools for high academic achievers that were an hour's ride away.

I worked hard to get accepted into the programs. I worked to stay there. But I would not have been able to do any of those things if it weren't for the bus drivers who made sure I got to school safe and on time.

When you genuinely live life through a prism of gratitude, you don't use analogies that minimize the impact others have on your life. When you live life through that prism, you don't see voters and delegates, you don't see the budget as just a bunch of numbers you have to make work.

You see the lives.

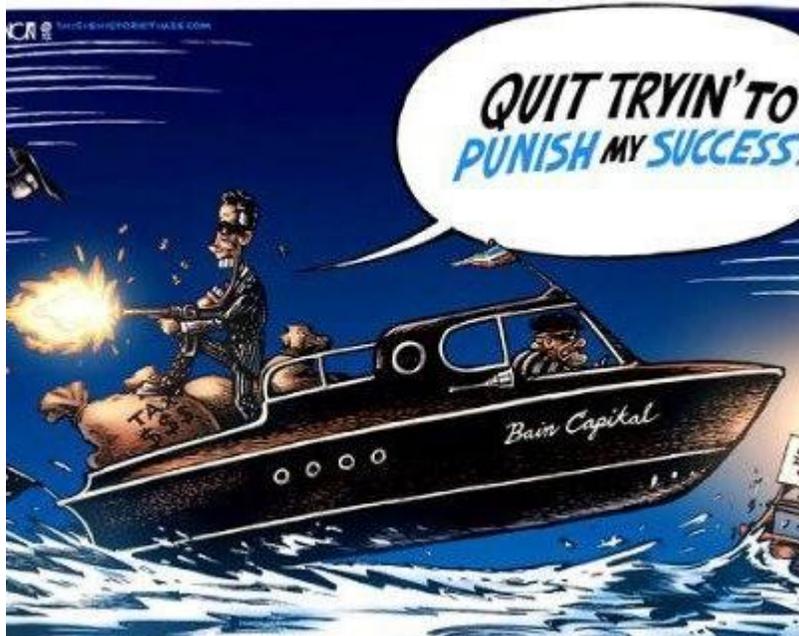
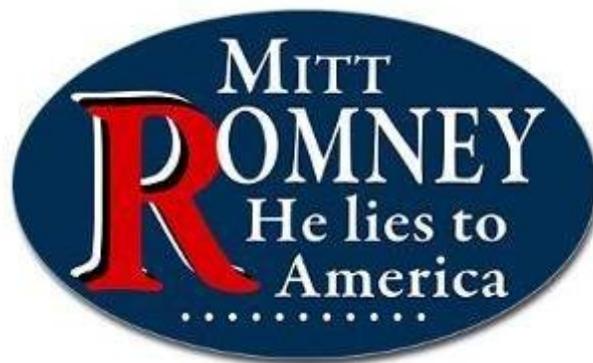
Romney doesn't irk us because he was born into privilege. He irks us because he behaves as if being born into privilege had nothing to do with his success. His wife, Ann, was supposed to make her husband more appealing. It didn't work. Now the question is: Can Paul Ryan make Mitt likeable?

I doubt it.

When men like Ryan or Obama or Vice President Joe Biden roll their sleeves up to talk to blue collar voters, it feels real because it's coming from a real place inside.

When Romney rolls his sleeves up, it's clear he's trying to send a message -- because his sense of entitlement and social disconnect prevents him from being the message.

That doesn't mean people won't vote for him in November. It's just that they won't be doing so because they like him.



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20120814-01	10:02	Art	"An Open Letter to the People Who Hate Obama More Than They Love America"
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I kind of think of myself as pretty much middle road. Over the years I've voted for both parties and nominally called myself a Republican because I am pretty conservative. These past few years, however, as I have more time to look at things, I have not been very impressed with the logic from the right, especially the extreme right which seems to more and more dominate the Republican Party. Frankly I don't like extremes in either direction.

The below is a bit strong, but I think it just may well capture the sentiment today. Someone please tell me this is not true.

"An Open Letter to the People Who Hate Obama More Than They Love America" by MinistryOfTruth, Daily Kos

Jan. 9, 2012, (<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2012/01/09/1053088/-An-open-letter-to-the-people-who-hate-Obama-more-than-they-love-America>)

I meet you all the time. You hate Obama. You hate gay people. You hate black people, immigrants, Muslims, labor unions, women who want the right to make choices concerning their bodies, you hate em all. You hate being called racist. You hate being called a bigot. Maybe if you talked about creating jobs more than you talk about why you hate gay people we wouldn't call you bigots. Maybe if you talked about black people without automatically assuming they are on food stamps while demanding their birth certificates we wouldn't call you racist. You hate socialism and social justice. You hate regulations and taxes and spending and the Government. You hate.

You like war. You like torture. You like Jesus. I don't know how in the hell any of that is compatible, but no one ever accused you haters of being over-committed to ideological consistency. You like people who look like you or at least hate most of the things that you hate. You hate everything else.

Now, I know you profess to love our country and the founding fathers (unless you are reminded that they believed in the separation of church and state), but I need to remind you that America is NOT what Fox News says it is. America is a melting pot, it always has been. We are a multi-cultural amalgamation of all kinds of people, and yet you still demonize everyone who is not a rich, white, heterosexual Christian male or his submissive and obedient wife.

You hate liberals, moderates, hell, anyone who disagrees with Conservative dogma as espoused by Fox News and Rush Limbaugh. You hate em.

Well, here are the facts, Jack. If you hate the Government then you are unqualified to manage it. If you hate gay people more than you love America than you should take your own advice and get the hell out. There are several countries that are openly hostile to gay people, but they are full of brown people and you don't like them much either from what I understand. It looks like you are screwed, but that's not what I am here to tell you.

Now that you have thrown everything and the kitchen sink at President Obama and it still hasn't worked you are panicking. Obama's approval ratings are still near 50% despite your best efforts to undermine the economy and America's recovery at every step you can. You tried to hold the American economy hostage to force America into default on its' debts, debts that YOU rang up under Bush, so you could blame it on Obama and it failed. You've used the filibuster more than any other Congress ever, going so far as to vote against providing health care access to 9/11 first responders. You remember 9/11, don't you, it's that thing you used to lie us into a war in Iraq, and then when Obama killed Bin Laden and ended the war in Iraq you told people that he hates America and wants the troops to fail. You monsters. You hate Obama with a passion, despite the fact that he is a tax cutting, deficit reducing war President who undermines civil rights and delivers corporate friendly watered down reforms that benefit special interests just like a Republican. You call him a Kenyan. You call him a socialist. You dance with your hatred singing it proudly in the rain like it was a 1950s musical.

Frankly, you disgust me. Your hatred nauseates me. Your bigotry offends me. Your racism revolts me.

Dear haters, I am openly questioning your patriotism.

I think you hate gays, Obama, black people, poor people, all of us, women, atheists and agnostics, Latinos, Muslims, Liberals, all of us, I think you hate everyone who isn't exactly like you, and I think you hate us more than you love your country.

I think you hate gay soldiers more than you want America to win its wars.

I don't even think you want America to win wars, you just want America to have wars, never ending wars and the war profiteering it generates. You love that kind of spending, you love spending on faith based initiatives and abstinence based sex education (George Carlin would have loved that one), you love spending on subsidies for profitable oil corporations, you spend like drunken sailors when you are in the White House, but if it is a Democrat then suddenly you cheer when America doesn't get the Olympics because it might make the black President look bad. But ooh you love your country, you say, and you want it back. Well listen here, Skippy, it isn't your country, you don't own it, it is our country, and America is NOT the religiously extremist Foxbots who hate science, elitist professors and having a vibrant and meaningful sex life with someone we love if Rick Santorum doesn't approve of

it. Rick Santorum isn't running for America's f*cking high school dance chaperone, he should probably just shut the hell up about sex, but he can't because he has nothing else to run on.

Republicans can NOT win on the issues. They've got NOTHING. All they have is a divide and conquer class war that pits ignorant racist and bigoted people against the rest of us in a meaningless battle of wedge issues and the already proven to fail George W. Bush agenda again of tax cuts for the rich, deregulation, privatization and war profiteering and nothing else, so all they can do is blame black people, gays, the government, anybody and everyone else for their own failings. The party of personal responsibility, my a*s.

But they love multi-national corporations, just ask a gay hating and racist religious extremist if they think Corporations are people and they will gladly agree, but if you ask them if gay people are people they aren't so sure.

Dear haters, you are the cruel, heartless misinformed assholes who would sell America out to Halliburton in a heartbeat, you would rather pay ZERO taxes than you would see a newly born baby get access to quality health care, you cheer when we discuss denying health care to young people with preventable diseases, and you boo when we discuss the First Lady's plan to cut back on childhood obesity. You are a cross to carry and a flag to wrap yourself in away from being the people who Sinclair Lewis warned us about, but I guarantee that if Fox News told you to dress that way you would, because you are the same blind, ignorant and closed minded dunces who drove this country into a civil war years ago because you are bound to the notion that some men are more equal than others. In short, the reason I proudly wear my union army hat is because of seditious sell outs like you who constantly f*ck over working class Americans so a foreign entrepreneur like Rupert Murdoch can get a bigger tax break. If corporations are people, they are neither American patriots nor capable of love. Just like you.

So stop wearing your hate with pride. Stop celebrating your anti-science, anti-math ignorance. Stop using code words to mask your bigotry like "family values", especially when you hate my family and when you stand on the same stage as a guy who has had three marriages or if you share a seat in the Senate with a guy who cheated on his wife with hookers while wearing diapers. You should be ashamed. I know that you are just doing this to motivate your misinformed hate cult base because if they actually knew that your ideas will make them poorer than they are now, they would never vote for you. You are doing your best to impoverish your countrymen so rich people can get bigger tax breaks and you can keep on delivering corporate welfare to the special interests who have bribed you, and I am disgusted by the way you gleefully parade your hatred with aplomb. I don't think you do love America. At least, not as much as you hate everyone in America who isn't exactly like you.

You should think about that, and maybe get some help.

And for the record, I do not hate you. I am embarrassed by you and nauseated by your cruel and thoughtless behavior and your all consuming greed, but I do not hate you. I forgive you and I hope you can change someday, but I don't hate you. You have enough hate in you for the rest of us as it is.

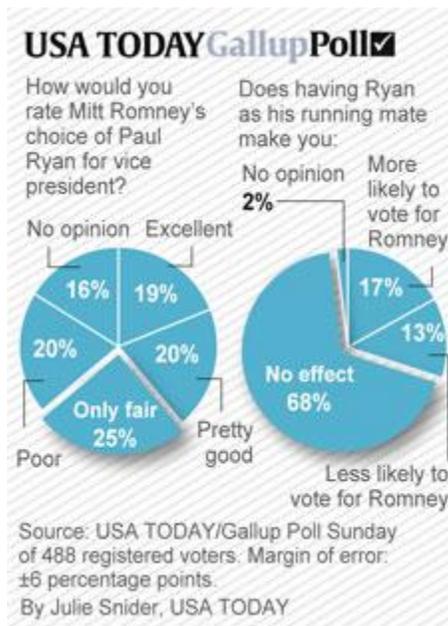
20120814-02 10:17 MarthaH "Ryan Scores Lowest Poll Numbers Since Quayle"
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"Ryan Scores Lowest Poll Numbers Since Quayle" by Susan Page and Catalina Camia, *USA Today*

Aug. 14, 2012, (<http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/story/2012-08-13/ryan-romney-poll/57038326/1>)

(WASHINGTON) Wisconsin Rep. Paul Ryan scores the lowest initial ratings from Americans of any vice presidential pick since the controversial choice of Dan Quayle nearly a quarter-century ago, a weekend *USA Today*/Gallup Poll finds.

In a nationwide survey taken Sunday, 39% of registered voters call Republican contender Mitt Romney's selection of Ryan "excellent" or "pretty good" while 45% rate it as "only fair" or "poor." Sixteen percent have no opinion. That's the most tepid reception for a running mate since 1988, when then-vice president George H.W. Bush picked Quayle, an Indiana senator who immediately ran into questions about his draft history during the Vietnam War and whether he was prepared for the presidency.



In comparison, John McCain's surprise choice of then-Alaska governor Sarah Palin four years ago was rated as excellent or good by 46%, fair or poor by 37%.

Still, Ryan's addition to his ticket has galvanized Romney's support in the GOP: 31% of Republicans say they are more likely to vote for the former Massachusetts governor as a result of his running mate. That's comparable to the 30% in the GOP who said the same of McCain's choice of Palin and more than the 21% of registered Democrats in 2008 who said they were more likely to vote for Barack Obama because he picked Joe Biden.

Overall, 17% of those surveyed say Ryan makes them more likely to vote for the Republican ticket, 13% say he makes them less likely. In the past seven elections, only Dick Cheney in 2000 and Quayle in 1988 had lower proportional advantages when it came to the vice presidential candidate's impact on the vote.

Romney pollster Neil Newhouse says the findings reflect the fact that Ryan, a House member since 1999, isn't widely known. Ryan's impact on the race is similar to that scored by Biden four years ago, Newhouse says. Then, a Gallup survey found 14% more likely to vote for Obama as a result, 7% less likely.

In each recent election, however, an overwhelming majority of those surveyed said the running mate has no effect on their vote. That's true for 68% of Americans this year — underscoring the limited impact vice presidential contenders typically have on the outcome of presidential races.

Ryan isn't well-known. More than half of those surveyed, 53%, say they have never heard of him or don't know enough to have an opinion. Among those who do, 27% give him a favorable rating, 21% an unfavorable one. By 50%-31%, voters say Ryan is qualified to serve as president.

The survey of 488 registered voters has a margin of error of ± 6 percentage points. The results closely paralleled the findings of a USA TODAY/Gallup Poll of 1,006 adults, which has an error margin of ± 4 points.

20120814-03 10:29 SteveM Fw: They Want What???

WOW, if we did not pay our taxes they would come after us in a heartbeat & probably arrest us.

[Source of original email unknown. -SteveB]

Ever wonder if Tim Geithner has ever paid his back taxes? Geithner paid \$42,700+/- in a settlement for delinquent taxes.

As of Feb., 2012, 36 Obama staffers owed \$833,000 in taxes. 21 of these aides receive an annual salary of \$172,000. Salaries paid by the US Citizens and then they don't pay their "share" of taxes. More importantly, according to the IRS, federal employees owe the country more than \$3.4 BILLION in back taxes. These tax offenders include employees of the U S. Senate. These are the people that write the laws making the rest of us pay. Tim Geithner's Treasury Dept. has 1,181 employees with delinquent taxes totaling \$9.3 million. All of this was reported by CNN (I know, big surprise!)

Having said all of this, delinquent taxpayers for the rest of America is 5%, compared to the 3.3% of Federal Government workers. If they work for the government and owe taxes, fire them or garnishee their wages or just forget to pay them until they are paid up!

...and they want 12 years of Romney's tax returns????

20120814-09 13:23 SteveB Re: They Want What??? (reply to SteveM, above)

BUT, let's be fair, shall we?

This is an old story from January, so I assume a lot of these taxes have already been paid. Apparently, President Obama's staff is better than average and better than Bush's! (see below)

So what have you been made to cry about and bemoan? A big NOTHING! The President is actually the good guy in this story. That's the real truth. Can you handle it?

Have a nice day.

from (<http://www.politico.com/politico44/2012/01/white-house-staffers-owe-more-than-in-back-taxes-112412.html>)

Frank Provasek, Top Commenter, University of Texas at Arlington: Yes, about 2% of Obama's staffers owe back taxes. But to omit the fact that 3% of George Bush's 2008 staffers owed back taxes misleads the reader that this is an Obama problem when it is actually an IMPROVEMENT from the situation that existed under the previous president.

From (<http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/12/18/i-pay-your-salary-tax-deadbeat/>)

Over all, the 9.7 million federal workers included in the I.R.S. data had a delinquency rate of about 2.86 percent, but there was great variation across agencies and executive departments. The I.R.S. does not have comparable data for nationwide tax delinquency.

Sometimes, it gets a lot like swatting flies in here.

20120814-04 10:53 SteveB Fw: CREDO Action Petition: Demand Medicare for All!

from CREDO Action:

Paul Ryan vs. Medicare

By selecting Rep. Paul Ryan to be his running mate, Mitt Romney just made this election about Medicare.

Rep. Ryan was the principal architect of a budget proposal that Paul Krugman called both "ludicrous" and "cruel." And the linchpin of the Ryan budget was his plan to end Medicare.

Now that Ryan's plan to privatize Medicare is in the national spotlight, we need to make sure that the debate isn't just a point/counterpoint between the center right and the far right.

We need to ensure that a progressive vision is on the table to counter what right-wing extremists like Paul Ryan and Mitt Romney are proposing.

We shouldn't destroy Medicare, we should expand it so that it covers everybody.

Tell Democrats: Support Medicare for All. Click here to sign the petition:

http://act.credoaction.com/campaign/medicare_for_all/.

The Ryan plan would replace Medicare with a voucher program for seniors, who'd be dumped into the private insurance market.¹

Over time the vouchers would lose value relative to the cost of health care. And the seniors who couldn't afford the cost of insurance even with the vouchers would be out of luck.

In addition, the Ryan proposal does nothing to actually control costs.

All it does is shift the cost of health care onto the backs of seniors. And, in fact, by forcing seniors into the inefficient private insurance market, it would actually drive up the cost of providing health care to them.

President Obama will surely (and rightly) criticize the Ryan plan to end Medicare.

But in terms of providing a positive vision for how our nation provides health care, President Obama will be stuck defending his signature health care law, which made some positive reforms without truly fixing our broken health care system.

The debate requires a forceful push for the policy that will actually end our nation's health care crisis. And that push must come from us.

Every other industrialized country in the world provides quality, universal health care at a fraction of the cost of the U.S. system.

Private insurance companies are a big part of our problem. And while President Obama's health care law will expand health care coverage to millions of Americans, it guarantees customers and profits for insurance companies that put profits before people.

These companies didn't want to compete with a "public option" for a reason — they want to maximize profits and minimize care.

Medicare, on the other hand, already covers 40 million Americans over the age of 65, providing quality care at prices that are much lower than the private market. It's also quite popular and unquestionably constitutional.

By staking out a progressive flank and generating a groundswell of public support for expanding Medicare so that it covers everybody, we can help prevent the debate from shifting further to the right.

Let's remember, when health care reform went through Congress, a single-payer system like Medicare for All wasn't even on the table.

In another example of Democrats preemptively caving to Republican obstructionists and their insurance company lobbyist friends, the starting position for the Democrats was a compromise in the form of a public health care option that might compete side-by-side with private insurance plans.

And then that compromise was compromised even further when the Democrats jettisoned the public option.

With Medicare sure to be one of the top issues in this election, we can't let the strongest voices be the Republicans who are working to defeat President Obama and the insurance companies that are looking to wring as much profit as they can from the rest of us.

If we do, we know how that will turn out.

America's health care system is in crisis, there's no more time for half-measures and unworkable compromises when we know Medicare already works.

Thank you for speaking out. —Matt Lockshin, Campaign Manager, CREDO Action from Working Assets

Footnote:

¹"Paul Ryan's Original Medicare Plan Ends Medicare, Period," Think Progress, 08-11-12.

Further reading:

A. "Michael Moore: Supreme Court Healthcare Ruling a Victory on the Path to Single Payer," Democracy Now!, 06-29-12.

B. "Bernie Sanders, Nurses: We Still Need 'Medicare for All'," *The Nation*, 06-28-12.

C. "Medicare for All: A Single Solution to the Health Care Fracas," *Yes! Magazine*, 06-29-12.

20120814-05	12:39	SteveB	"Whose Plan Destroys Medicare — Obama's or Romney-Ryan's?"
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"Whose Plan Destroys Medicare — Obama's or Romney-Ryan's?" by Robert Reich, NationofChange

Aug. 14, 2012, (<http://www.nationofchange.org/whose-plan-destroys-medicare-obama-s-or-romney-ryan-s-1344957549>)

Stumping in Florida today, Mitt Romney charged President Obama's Affordable Care Act will "cut more than \$700 billion" out of Medicare.

What Romney didn't say was that his running-mate's budget — approved by House Republicans and by Romney himself — would cut Medicare by the same amount. The big difference, though, is the Affordable Care Act achieves these savings by reducing Medicare payments to drug companies, hospitals, and other providers rather than cutting payments to Medicare beneficiaries.

The Romney-Ryan plan, by contrast, achieves its savings by turning Medicare into a voucher whose value doesn't keep up with expected increases in healthcare costs — thereby shifting the burden onto Medicare beneficiaries, who will have to pay an average of \$6,500 a year more for their Medicare insurance, according an analysis of the Republican plan by the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office.

Moreover, the Affordable Care Act uses its Medicare savings to help children and lower-income Americans afford health care, and to help seniors pay for prescription drugs by filling the so-called "donut hole" in Medicare Part D coverage.

The Romney-Ryan plan uses the savings to finance even bigger tax cuts for the very wealthy.

Spread the word. Don't allow the GOP to get away with this demagoguery.

20120814-06

12:49

SteveB

Fw: UltraViolet Action: Share the Facts About Paul Ryan's Record on Women's Issues!

from UltraViolet:

Everyone is talking about Paul Ryan, Mitt Romney's pick for Vice President. And most people are talking about his extreme plans to end Medicare and gut Social Security. **But what people don't realize is that his record on women is equally appalling--shocking even.**

We compiled a list--a horrifying list--of Paul Ryan's record on women's rights. These are five facts every single voter needs to know, right away. **Can you share this with your friends right now?**

Share it on Facebook:

<http://act.weareultraviolet.org/go/211?t=1&akid=155.359331.pzA5sJ>.

Not on Facebook? Share this with your friends from our website:

<http://act.weareultraviolet.org/go/205?t=2&akid=155.359331.pzA5sJ>.

Thanks for speaking out! —Nita, Shaunna and Kat, the UltraViolet Team

P.S. Victory Alert: Candy Crowley to Moderate a Presidential Debate. After more than 85,000 UltraViolet members signed a petition--that we delivered to the Presidential Debates Commission--they announced that for the first time in 20 years, a woman, CNN's Candy Crowley, will moderate an official presidential debate. Thanks so much for being a part of this important victory!

Sources:

1. "Paul Ryan Social Security Plan Calls for Private Accounts," Huffington Post, August 11, 2012, <http://act.weareultraviolet.org/go/206?t=4&akid=155.359331.pzA5sJ>.
2. "Paul Ryan: Just Plain Bad for Women," *Daily News*, August 13, 2012, <http://act.weareultraviolet.org/go/207?t=5&akid=155.359331.pzA5sJ>.
3. Statement on Mitt Romney's Selection As Rep. Paul Ryan for His Vice-Presidential Running Mate, NARAL Pro-Choice America, August 11, 2012, <http://act.weareultraviolet.org/go/208?t=6&akid=155.359331.pzA5sJ>.
4. "Paul Ryan's Extreme Abortion Views," The Daily Beast, August 11, 2012, <http://act.weareultraviolet.org/go/209?t=7&akid=155.359331.pzA5sJ>.
5. "The Ryan Reaction: This Election Is Now about 'Choice'," RH Reality Check, August 13, 2012, <http://act.weareultraviolet.org/go/210?t=9&akid=155.359331.pzA5sJ>.

PAUL RYAN & WOMEN

THE TOP FIVE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW & PROBABLY DON'T



1 HE VOTED AGAINST THE LILY LEDBETTER FAIR PAY ACT.

Think women deserve to earn the same pay as men for the same work? Paul Ryan doesn't. And the pay gap costs women and their families close to \$431,000 over their lifetimes.

2 HE OPPOSES ABORTION EVEN IN CASES OF RAPE & INCEST.

It's not just that Paul Ryan has voted 59 times against a woman's right to choose — which he has. He would even rather let a woman die than allow her to have an abortion. He's supported a bill to allow hospitals to refuse to provide abortion care to a woman, even if she could die without it.

3 HE *REALLY* WANTS TO GET RID OF PLANNED PARENTHOOD.

Rep. Ryan has repeatedly voted to defund Planned Parenthood, which would leave millions of women without access to comprehensive reproductive health care and preventative services.

4 HE WOULD CRIMINALIZE SOME FORMS OF BIRTH CONTROL.

Happy about free birth control? Rep. Ryan sure isn't. Not only is he adamantly opposed to the health care law's requirement that insurance companies cover birth control, he actually supports legislation that would outlaw some forms of birth control.

5 ALSO, HE'D OUTLAW IN VITRO FERTILIZATION—SERIOUSLY.

That same bill that outlaws some forms of birth control could also make in vitro fertilization illegal. Can't have kids naturally? Too bad.

CONCERNED? Share this now.



For sources and citations see <http://act.weareultraviolet.org/signup/paulryan/>

20120814-11

13:53

SteveB

Fw: USAction Petition: Tell R0mney-Ryan to Say No to Privatizing Social Security!

from USAction:

[The Romney Ryan plan will stop the heart of Social Security](#)

Today is Social Security's 77th birthday. But with Mitt Romney's announcement of Paul Ryan as his Vice Presidential pick, the promise of Social Security is under threat now more than ever.

Romney/Ryan would gut Social Security and Medicare to pay for trillions in tax giveaways to the top 2%. Under Ryan's budget, Mitt Romney would have paid a .82% tax rate.

In Congress, Ryan pushed an even more radical version of President Bush's Social Security privatization plan that even the Bush administration called "irresponsible." Why? Because he wants to turn Social Security's guaranteed benefit into private retirement accounts — putting our seniors' futures at risk, while handing Wall Street a massive payday.

The heart of Social Security is the guarantee that no senior will be left alone and poor after a lifetime of work. But Paul Ryan is the leading architect of a Republican budget that would strip away that guarantee — leaving millions of seniors on their own and at the mercy of Wall Street.

It's a shot at the very heart of what Social Security is all about. But to Paul Ryan? He thinks Social Security is nothing but a "Ponzi scheme." This, despite the fact that by his own account, he used Social Security survivor benefits to pay his way through college.

Will you sign our petition demanding Mitt Romney protect the promise we made to our seniors by saying no to Paul Ryan's plan to privatize Social Security? We'll deliver your signatures to the Republican National Convention in Florida at the end of the month.

http://act.truemajorityaction.org/p/salsa/web/common/public/content?content_item_KEY=8788

Paul Ryan may claim he's a "deficit hawk," but his famed Ryan budget would do nothing to decrease the deficit. In fact, if implemented, Ryan's plan would increase the deficit to more than \$22 trillion by 2022!

What Ryan's plan would really do is gut vital programs millions of Americans rely on to get by. It's so devastating to the poor and middle class, he received a rebuke from the nation's Catholic Bishops. He wants to privatize Medicare, Medicaid and food stamps, and wants to effectively eliminate all other programs that help the middle class.

Meanwhile, Ryan's plan would support unrestricted military spending and \$5 trillion in new tax cuts for the ultra-rich. And that's not including his plans to renew the Bush tax cuts for the top 2% as well as eliminating capital gains taxes all together. By Mitt Romney's own admission, under Ryan's plan, he and the rest of the top 1% would pay practically zero in taxes. That's right, ZERO. As if the ultra-rich aren't already getting away with not paying their fair share.

This issue is too big to ignore. Social Security provides vital retirement, disability, survivorship and death benefits. It's America's most effective poverty reduction program. But not if Paul Ryan gets his hands on it.

Paul Ryan is an extremist with an even more extreme agenda. And Mitt Romney's decision to pick him as his running mate speaks volumes. So sign our petition demanding Mitt Romney protect the promise we made to our seniors by saying no to Paul Ryan's plan to privatize Social Security, and we'll deliver it to the Republican National Convention in Florida later this month.

Sincerely, David Elliot, USAction / TrueMajority

20120814-07	12:56	Tom	"Hexagon Spy Satellite Rescue Declassified: CIA Releases Details Of Deep-Sea Rescue"
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["Hexagon Spy Satellite Rescue Declassified: CIA Releases Details Of Deep-Sea Rescue" by Denise Chow, Huffington Post](#)

Aug. 13, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/13/hexagon-spy-satellite-declassified_n_1772408.html)

It's a plot worthy of a Hollywood action movie: 40 years ago, the U.S. Navy carried out a daring mission to retrieve a top-secret film capsule that had settled more than 16,000 feet (4,876 meters) underwater on the ocean floor. At the time, the expedition was the deepest undersea salvage operation ever attempted.

Documents released publicly by the Central Intelligence Agency on Aug. 8 detail the capsule's incredible recovery, using what was at the time the Navy's most sophisticated deep-sea submersible.

[Continue reading at Huffington Post...](#)

[20120814-08](#) 13:07 Tom Video: "Reality Check: Fast and Furious Operation Was Really About U.S. Supporting a Drug Cartel?"

Video: "Reality Check: Fast and Furious Operation Was Really About U.S. Supporting a Drug Cartel?" by Ben Swann, FOX

Aug. 9, 2012, (http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=KKzy6vdO3Ok)

Ben Swann "Reality Check" takes a look at some stunning new accusations by a high ranking member of the Sinaloa Drug Cartel that Fast and Furious was about the U.S. supporting one cartel while attempting to shut down others.

[20120814-10](#) 13:42 Tom "Silent Running"

"Silent Running" by Bill Gertz, *The Washington Free Beacon*

Aug. 14, 2012, (<http://freebeacon.com/silent-running/>)



Russian Akula Submarine (AP)

A Russian nuclear-powered attack submarine armed with long-range cruise missiles operated undetected in the Gulf of Mexico for several weeks and its travel in strategic U.S. waters was only confirmed after it left the region, the Washington Free Beacon has learned.

It is only the second time since 2009 that a Russian attack submarine has patrolled so close to U.S. shores.

[Continue reading at *The Washington Free Beacon*...](#)

[20120814-22](#) 23:22 Tom "How Did This Border Patrol Agent's Gun Snap in Half?"

"How Did This Border Patrol Agent's Gun Snap in Half?" by Liz Klimas, *The Blaze*

Aug. 13, 2012, (<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/how-did-this-border-patrol-agents-gun-snap-in-half/>)

There is a case to be made for traditional metal weapons over newer, polymer technology.

Example A is provided by The Loadout Room, a subset of SOFREP.com (the special operations forces report). It reports the following photos come from a border patrol agent who fell off his ATV while training. The short visit to the hospital by the agent wasn't the only collateral damage of the fall, though. His P2000 handgun snapped at the handle.

[Continue reading at The Blaze...](#)

20120814-12 14:40 Ben Photos: Lunch at Apple



Tasty Salad with Chicken Vegetable Soup



Faith's Gauntlet

[20120814-13](#) 15:49 SteveM Fw: Graphic: It Is Up to the Voters

Should be a billboard...



**The Navy
Seals
removed
one threat
to
America...**

*It is up to the Voters to
remove the other*

[Is Paul Ryan the "other"? -SteveB]

20120814-14

15:32

SteveB

Graphic: "10 Things The Romney Campaign Doesn't Want You To Know About Paul Ryan"

"10 Things The Romney Campaign Doesn't Want You To Know About Paul Ryan" by Marika, MoveOn.org

Aug. 13, 2012, (<http://front.moveon.org/10-things-the-romney-campaign-doesnt-want-you-to-know-about-paul-ryan/?rc=pr10thingemail>)

**PAUL RYAN
REVEALED**

1. His economic plan would cost America 1 million jobs in the first year.
2. He'd kill Medicare and replace it with a voucher program that doesn't guarantee coverage.
3. He'd pickpocket the middle class to line the pockets of the rich. His tax plan is Robin Hood in reverse.
4. He's an anti-choice extremist.
5. He'd dismantle Social Security.
6. He'd eliminate Pell grants for more than 1 million low-income students.
7. He'd give \$40 billion in subsidies to Big Oil.
8. He's another Koch-head politician. The billionaire Koch brothers are some of Ryan's biggest political contributors.
9. He opposes gay rights.
10. He thinks an "I got mine, who cares if you're okay" philosophy is admirable and devotes himself to Ayn Rand's philosophy of selfishness as a virtue.


MoveOn.ORG
DEMOCRACY IN ACTION
#PaulRyanRevealed

20120814-15

16:21

SteveB

"Mitt Romney Campaign Launches First Medicare TV Ad Salvo"

The height of hypocrisy!

"Mitt Romney Campaign Launches First Medicare TV Ad Salvo" by Sam Stein, Huffington Post

Aug. 14, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/14/mitt-romney-medicare-ad_n_1776522.html)

The Mitt Romney campaign has released its first Medicare-related ad since it announced Paul Ryan as its vice presidential nominee, attacking the president for gutting the program to pay for Obamacare.

"You paid in to Medicare for years. Every paycheck. Now, when you need it, Obama has cut \$716 billion dollars from Medicare," the ad says. "The Romney-Ryan plan protects Medicare benefits for today's seniors and strengthens the plan for the next generation."

Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=l4gPvToKTWU.

There is no word yet on just how much money is being devoted to this ad buy. But, if it's a big investment, this could be a seminal moment of the campaign.

The conventional wisdom is that the Romney-Ryan ticket is the one that's most vulnerable on the Medicare front. Both men have advocated turning the program into a quasi-voucher system, in which recipients would get a certain amount of money to purchase private insurance. This would effectively end Medicare as it's known, though both Romney and Ryan have since accepted a twist to the plan, allowing voucher recipients to purchase traditional Medicare coverage. Either way, their approach is more drastic than what has been adopted by Obama.

Now it appears that the Romney ticket has calculated that it must launch the first salvo. And by accusing Obama of cutting more than \$700 billion from Medicare, it is hoping to duplicate the success that GOP congressional candidates had in 2010 when they ran against that provision.

There are only a few problems with this. The first is that Obama didn't necessarily "cut" Medicare; he limited the expected rate of growth in the program on the supplier side by eliminating waste, fraud and abuse, mostly in Medicare Advantage. And the savings that Obama achieved are adopted by Ryan in his own budget.

For Republicans, meanwhile, the ad creates its own political discomfort. The party has long bemoaned Democrats for using scare tactics when it comes to any substantive discussion on Medicare reform. (Among other things, they point to the ads Obama ran against Sen. John McCain in 2008). With Romney now engaged in this very act, the question is: Will any of those "Mediscare" complaints be directed his way?

In response to the ad, Obama campaign spokeswoman Lis Smith emailed the following statement:

Mitt Romney's ad is dishonest and hypocritical. The savings his ad attacks do not cut a single guaranteed Medicare benefit, and Mitt Romney embraced the very same savings when he promised he'd sign Paul Ryan's budget. Because the President is eliminating subsidies to insurance companies and cutting waste and fraud, we've extended the life of Medicare by eight years. The truth is that the Romney-Ryan budget would end Medicare as we know it: people with Medicare would be left with nothing but a voucher in place of the guaranteed benefits they rely on today. And they do it all to pay for massive tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires – the very same top-down economic scheme that crashed our economy and devastated the middle class in the first place.

20120814-16	16:58	SteveB	"Florida Newspapers: Romney Is in Big, Big Trouble"
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"Florida Newspapers: Romney Is in Big, Big Trouble" by Billionaires for Wealthcare, Daily Kos

Aug. 12, 2012, (<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2012/08/12/1119510/-PANIC-MSM-Romney-is-in-Big-Big-Trouble?detail=hide>)

TODAY'S WEATHER  SHOWS BUILT, BUNDED HIGH 91 LOW 78	U.S. WOMEN ARE GOLDEN AGAIN 4X400 RELAY TEAM EXTENDS WIN STREAK TO FIVE IN THE EVENT. 10	 CHAD JOHNSON JAILED IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DOLPHIN'S WIFE SAYS HE HEADBUTTED HER IN CAR. 14D	SAVE \$257 COUPONS INSIDE <small>COUPONS VARY BY AREA</small>
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The Miami Herald

\$2.00 109TH YEAR, NO. 333 ©2012 MiamiHerald.com  SUNDAY, AUGUST 12, 2012 FINAL EDITION

NEWS ANALYSIS | MORE COVERAGE: 14-15A

Ryan could hurt Romney in Florida

■ Paul Ryan's plans to retool Medicare pose challenges in Florida, as does his one-time opposition to the Cuban embargo, a stance anathema to many Cuban Americans.

BY MARC CAPUTO
MIAMI HERALD STAFF WRITER

Republicans are rejoicing at Mitt Romney's selection of Paul Ryan as his vice-presidential running mate.

But so are Democrats. Ryan, a Wisconsin congress-

man, is the architect of the Ryan budget plan that makes big changes to Medicare and Medicaid and could allow for some privatization of Social Security. And that's widely seen as a politically risky stance in Florida, a must-win state for Republicans.

Ryan might have another Florida problem: He once opposed the U.S. embargo on Cuba, a now-reversed stance that concerns some in Miami-Dade's exile community, which is overwhelmingly Republican and had hoped that one of its own, Sen. Marco Rubio, would have been picked as Romney's running mate. The county's chief-

• TURN TO FLORIDA, 15A



SPECULATION ENDS: After a week-long guessing game by the media, Mitt Romney introduced Paul Ryan as his No. 2.

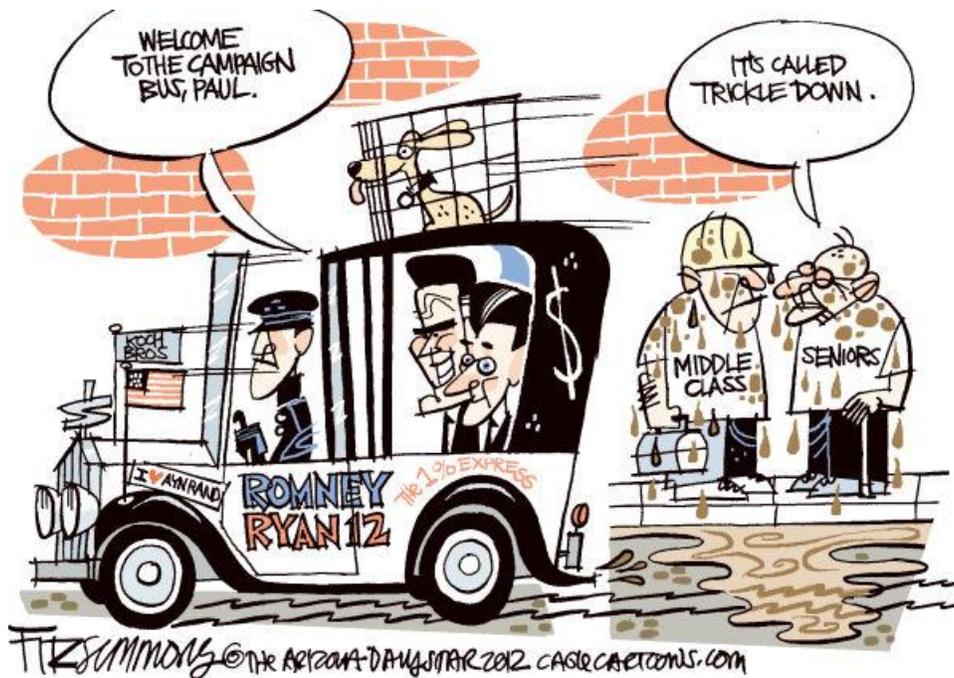
STEVE HILBERMAN

The Florida papers are destroying Paul Ryan. So much so that a distraught and panicked Village believes "Mitt Romney is in big, big trouble" for selecting the man who wants to pull the plug on Grandma.

The very first available headlines from the all important swing state of Florida are devastating.

[Continue reading at Daily Kos...](#)

Are you sprayed on?



The United Way realized that it had never received a donation from the city's most successful lawyer. So a United Way volunteer paid the lawyer a visit in his lavish office. The volunteer opened the meeting by saying, "Our research shows that even though your annual income is over two million dollars, you don't give a penny to charity. Wouldn't you like to give something back to your community through the United Way?"

The lawyer thinks for a minute and says, "First, did your research also show you that my mother is dying after a long, painful illness and she has huge medical bills that are far beyond her ability to pay? Embarrassed, the United Way Rep mumbles, "Uh... no, I didn't know that."

"Secondly," says the lawyer, "my brother, a disabled veteran, is blind and confined to a wheelchair and is unable to support his wife and six children." The stricken United Way Rep begins to stammer an apology."

"Thirdly, did your research also show you that my sister's husband died in a dreadful car accident, leaving her penniless with a mortgage and three children, one of whom is disabled and another that has learning disabilities requiring a huge array of private tutors?" The humiliated United Way Rep, completely beaten, says, "I'm so sorry, I had no idea."

And the lawyer says, "So . . . if I didn't give any money to them, what makes you think I'd give any to you?"

(This joke below is based on SteveG/Bill's email, above)

BECAUSE THE BILLIONAIRE (and Ayn Rand fan) **DID IT ALL ON HIS OWN!** HE DOESN'T OWE ANYBODY! NOT EVEN HIS OWN MOTHER, RIGHT?

Not his schools, not his teachers, not his friends, not his preachers, not all the millions of workers and scientists and administrators and geniuses who created the culture, the government, and the economy which allow the money of billionaires to grow (at the expense, often, of someone poorer).

It takes more than an individual (as Elizabeth Warren said well and the President rephrased so poorly). It takes more than a family. **It takes a planet.** And that planet of culture, of people, of living things is owed a price. Anything less is slavery and rape.

That's pretty much all there is to it, in my book. What do you guys think?

The Billionaire (And Ayn Rand Fan)

The United Way realized that it had never received a donation from the city's most successful billionaire. So a United Way Volunteer Representative paid the billionaire a visit in his lavish office.

The United Way Rep opened the meeting by saying, "Our research shows that even though your annual income is over \$200 million, you don't give a penny to charity. Wouldn't you like to give something back to your community through the United Way?"

The billionaire (and Ayn Rand fan) thought for a minute and said, "First, did your research also show you that my mother is dying after a long, painful illness, and she has huge medical bills that are far beyond her ability to pay?"

Embarrassed, the United Way Rep mumbled, "Uh... no, I didn't know that."

"Secondly," said the billionaire, "My brother, a disabled veteran, is blind and confined to a wheelchair and is unable to support his wife and six children."

The stricken United Way Rep began to stammer an apology.

"Thirdly, did your research also show you that my sister's husband died in a dreadful car accident, leaving her penniless, with a mortgage and three children, one of whom is disabled and another who has learning disabilities requiring a huge array of private tutors?"

The humiliated United Way Rep, completely beaten, said, "I'm so sorry, I had no idea."

The billionaire leaned toward the poor United Way Rep menacingly, "So...if I didn't give any money to them, what makes you think I'd give any to you?"

20120814-20	21:12	SteveM	Joke: The Billionaire & Ayn Rand Fan (reply to SteveB, above)
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...sounds like Joe Biden.

20120814-21	22:52	SteveG	"Who Is the Smallest Government Spender Since Eisenhower? Would You Believe It's Barack Obama?"
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On the article below, I suggest reading the comments at the end of the article.

"Who Is the Smallest Government Spender Since Eisenhower? Would You Believe It's Barack Obama?" by Rick Ungar, *Forbes*

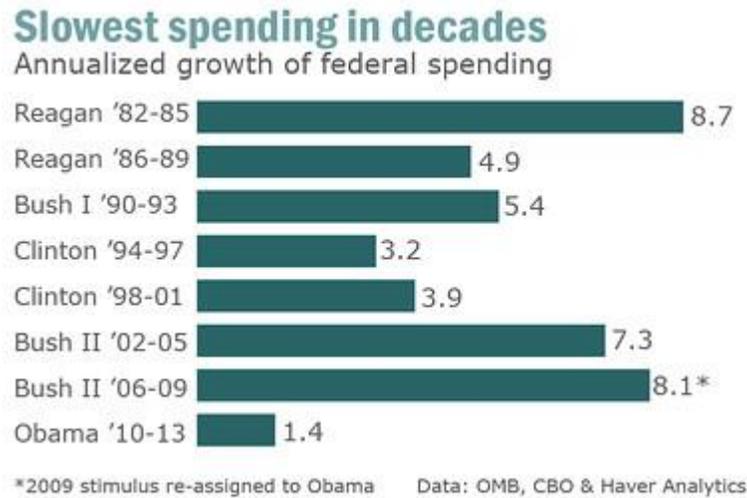
May 24, 2012, (<http://www.forbes.com/sites/rickungar/2012/05/24/who-is-the-smallest-government-spender-since-eisenhower-would-you-believe-its-barack-obama/>)

It's enough to make even the most ardent Obama cynic scratch his head in confusion.

Amidst all the cries of Barack Obama being the most prolific big government spender the nation has ever suffered, Marketwatch is reporting that our president has actually been tighter with a buck than any United States president since Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Who knew?

Check out the chart:



So, how have the Republicans managed to persuade Americans to buy into the whole "Obama as big spender" narrative?

It might have something to do with the first year of the Obama presidency where the federal budget increased a whopping 17.9%—going from \$2.98 trillion to \$3.52 trillion. I'll bet you think that this is the result of the Obama sponsored stimulus plan that is so frequently vilified by the conservatives...but you would be wrong.

The first year of any incoming president term is saddled—for better or for worse—with the budget set by the president whom immediately precedes the new occupant of the White House. Indeed, not only was the 2009 budget the property of George W. Bush—and passed by the 2008 Congress—it was in effect four months before Barack Obama took the oath of office.

Accordingly, the first budget that can be blamed on our current president began in 2010 with the budgets running through and including including fiscal year 2013 standing as charges on the Obama account, even if a President Willard M. Romney takes over the office on January 20, 2013.

So, how do the actual Obama annual budgets look?

Courtesy of Marketwatch (http://articles.marketwatch.com/2012-05-22/commentary/31802270_1_spending-federal-budget-drunken-sailor):

- In fiscal 2010 (the first Obama budget) spending fell 1.8% to \$3.46 trillion.
- In fiscal 2011, spending rose 4.3% to \$3.60 trillion.
- In fiscal 2012, spending is set to rise 0.7% to \$3.63 trillion, according to the Congressional Budget Office's estimate of the budget that was agreed to last August.
- Finally in fiscal 2013 — the final budget of Obama's term — spending is scheduled to fall 1.3% to \$3.58 trillion. Read the CBO's latest budget outlook: (<http://www.cbo.gov/publication/42905>)

No doubt, many will wish to give the credit to the efforts of the GOP controlled House of Representatives. That's fine if that's what works for you.

However, you don't get to have it both ways. Credit whom you will, but if you are truly interested in a fair analysis of the Obama years to date—at least when it comes to spending—you're going to have to acknowledge that under the Obama watch, even President Reagan would have to give our current president a thumbs up when it comes to his record for stretching a dollar.

Of course, the Heritage Foundation is having none of it, attempting to counter the actual numbers by pretending that the spending initiated by the Bush Administration is the fault of Obama. As I understand the argument Heritage is putting forth—and I have provided the link to the Heritage rebuttal so you can decide for yourself if Marketwatch, in using the baseline that Obama inherited, is making it too easy on the President:

<http://blog.heritage.org/2012/05/24/setting-obamas-great-fiscal-restraint-record-straight/>.

But then, with the Heritage Foundation being the creator of the individual mandate concept in health care only to rebut the same when it was no longer politically convenient, I'm not quite sure why anyone believes much of anything they have to say any longer. With their history of reversing course for convenience, I can't help but wonder, should they find themselves reviewing the spending record of a President Romney four years from today, whether they might be tempted to use the Obama numbers as the baseline for such a new Administration.

NOTE: Some of the comments to this piece have gotten well out of control, involving threats and obscenity to other commenters and myself. While I welcome and encourage comments from all points of view, obscene remarks are removed and not tolerated. I'll be happy to jump back into the conversation and reply to some comments when those who are misusing the forum settle down.

Comments [just a sampling of really good stuff]:

Doug McManus: I don't think your article holds water. To my knowledge Congress has not passed a budget in the last two or three years? You as Obama are blaming everything on Bush. What about Obama's \$800 billion stimulus, and the bail out and the theft of GM and Chrysler? What about the explosion of entitlement programs. And last but not least, the attempted take-over of our health care system, Obamacare? What about the 2008 and 2009 democratic congress? Pretty tough to come up with facts when you don't have a budget from 2010-2013. May you should take a look at your research and re-write the article?

Rick Ungar: Doug- I appreciate you may not like the article, but I'm afraid that it is you who is a bit confused on the facts. For starters, there is a budget passed every year. The 2012 budget was passed on Dec. 11, 2011: <http://www.districtdispatch.org/2011/12/congress-passes-fy-2012-budget/>. The 2011 budget was passed on Apr. 14, 2010: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/15/us/politics/15congress.html>. The 2010 budget was passed on Apr. 3, 2009: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123870974208284245.html>.

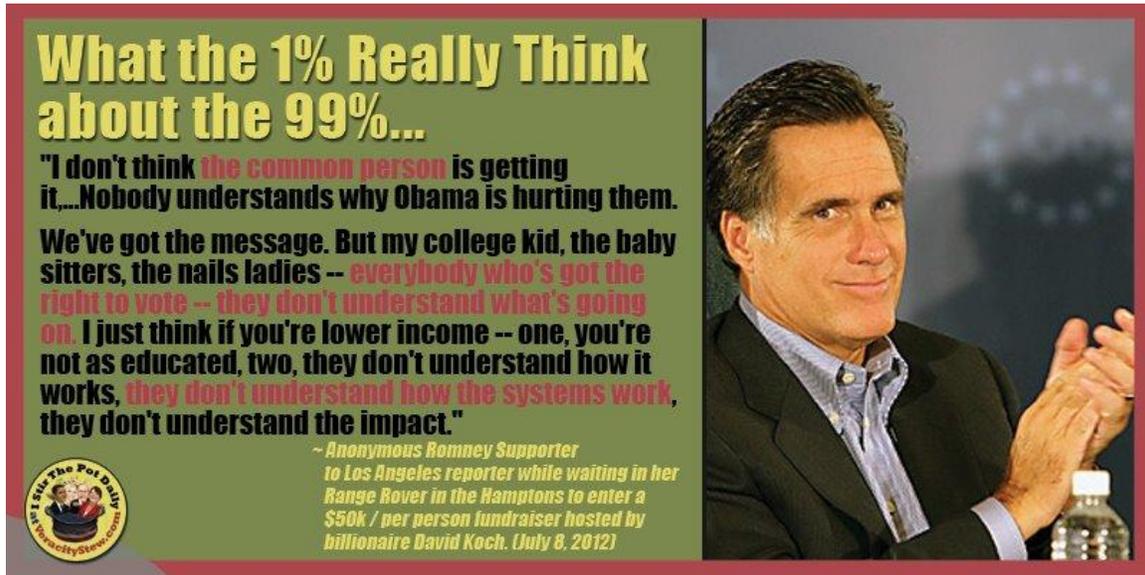
I'm not blaming anything on Bush. I'm afraid you can't change the reality that every president comes into office with a first year budget that was passed the year preceding. That is not an opinion- this is a very simple reality. The Obama stimulus was built into the numbers used to arrive at the Obama increases in the budget (please look at the cites on the graph I provided based on CBO numbers.) I suspect that you, like many others, chose to forget that the initial bailouts to save the banks was proposed by President Bush and passed by Congress (remember Henry Paulson- Bush's Sec. of the treasury)

I appreciate that you don't like Obamacare, entitlement programs and the bailouts of the auto industry (although you really do yourself in by calling it a 'theft' as serious conservatives do not characterize the bail outs in this manner) – but that does not change the federal budget numbers. They are what they are. And what about the 2008-2009 Congress? Again, I get that you don't like that Congress but how exactly is that relevant to this article beyond the fact that the 2008 Congress did pass the Bush 2009 budget?

All due respect, maybe you should take look at your research and re-write your comment as you are kind of embarrassing yourself. And if you are going to be wildly off on the facts, you might just be a bit nicer in your criticism as I could have been far more harsh in my response given how completely off you are.

Rick Ungar: By the way, Doug, I suspect you are forgetting-or never knew- that a full 1/3 of the stimulus was a tax cut, thus not a federal budget expenditure.

20120814-23 23:58 SteveG Quote: R0mney Supporter: What the 1% Really Think



What the 1% Really Think about the 99%...

"I don't think the common person is getting it...Nobody understands why Obama is hurting them. We've got the message. But my college kid, the baby sitters, the nails ladies -- everybody who's got the right to vote -- they don't understand what's going on. I just think if you're lower income -- one, you're not as educated, two, they don't understand how it works, they don't understand how the systems work, they don't understand the impact."

~ Anonymous Romney Supporter to Los Angeles reporter while waiting in her Range Rover in the Hamptons to enter a \$50k / per person fundraiser hosted by billionaire David Koch. (July 8, 2012)



<http://www.forums.caves.org/viewtopic.php?f=1&t=8126>

(Caver Tim)



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

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Welcome to all our new members who may be here for the first time. We want to hear from YOU! To submit your comment, you can use the form on our website or blog, or reply to this email with your two cents worth. Be sure to sign with your desired user name.

Your email address will always be kept strictly confidential.

Feel free to forward this Newsletter to anyone you know on the Right or the Left, though your motives might be different in each case. Regardless, PASS IT ON! Help keep your friends and acquaintances informed and thinking.

<http://www.FriendsOfTheMiddle.org>
FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com

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