



## FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #211 — AUG. 24, 2012

*Welcome to always lively political discussion and whatever else comes up.*  
<http://www.FriendsOfTheMiddle.org> [FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com](mailto:FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com)

**[INDEX: Click here.](#)**

### **Bain in the A\*s!**

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Aug. 24, 2012)

(Thanks to Huffington Post for the great headline!)



"Romney Tax Return Provides a Window to His Soul" by Walter Brasch, OpEdNews

Aug. 23, 2012, (<http://www.opednews.com/articles/Romney-Tax-Return-Provides-by-Walter-Brasch-120823-225.html>)

When a craven of buffoons and bigots disguised in the bodies of Birthers figured that anyone with dark skin and a foreign name had to be born outside the U.S., Barack Obama provided a birth certificate. Not just the usual "short form," but a state-certified copy of the "long form" that detailed he was born in Hawaii, which some birthers apparently think is a foreign territory, to a mother who was a natural-born U.S. citizen.

That, of course, was not enough for the whackadoodles who claimed, among other things, that the President's birth certificate was altered or forged. All of their claims have been debunked by scientific evidence. Of course, they produced their own poorly-forged birth certificate that they said "proved" President Obama was born in Kenya.

In February, billionaire Donald (Look-at-How-Wonderful I-Am) Trump, an unabashed Birther, stood next to multi-millionaire Mitt Romney in a Las Vegas casino and endorsed him for the Republican nomination. A few months earlier, Trump had gotten significant face-time in the media while flirting with the idea of running for the presidency while whining about Romney. "He'd buy companies. He'd close companies. He'd get rid of jobs," Trump crowed. But now, with Romney running well ahead in the primary contests, Trump was trying to be relevant and stay in the political spotlight. Romney, for his part, smiled and said nothing to suggest that Trump could be wrong about pursuing the birther argument. Trying to have everyone like him, one of the most unlikable presidential candidates refused to repudiate Trump's birther views.

Unlike Barack Obama, Mitt Romney does have a secret. This one is buried within what he either did or did not report to the IRS.

It's traditional, but not required, that presidential nominees release copies of their tax returns. Most people have no idea how to read a tax return, especially one with dozens of amendments, filings, and schedules. But, the posting of the returns is a form of trust.

Barack Obama has released his returns. Romney's father, George, former governor of Michigan and presidential candidate in 1968, released 12 years, thus setting a standard for future presidential candidates.

At first the flip-flopping Romney said he didn't plan to release the returns. Then he said, "Maybe." Then he declared he'd release only the previous two years' returns. Then he said that because of the complexity of the return, he filed for an extension from the IRS so he could file after the April 15 deadline for the 2011 return. Then this past week before a fundraiser he said he "never paid less than 13 percent... So I paid taxes every single year." He expected us just to believe him. He never defined whether that was just income taxes, or included all taxes paid, including social security, local, and state taxes, thus making the federal income tax even lower.

Let's pretend he meant income taxes. Even at 13 percent, it's one of the lowest tax rates. In 2011, Romney had a gross income of about \$21 million, according to a partial return Romney finally allowed to be posted. The effective tax rate for persons with incomes over \$1 million, according to the Tax Foundation, averages about 25 percent.

But, most of Ann and Mitt Romney's reported income in 2011 was based on capital gains. In 2003, the Bush--Cheney administration had lowered capital gains taxes to only 15 percent, primarily benefitting the wealthy. If the Romneys did not take most of their money from investment capital, their tax bracket would be 35 percent.

There are a number of questions that need to be answered.

The first questions are about that extension for the 2011 taxes. With a fleet of lawyers and accountants, why did the Romneys need at least a five month extension to file a return? Was it to massage the data for public consumption? Equally important, if he needed this extension to file a personal income tax return, what does that say about his ability to govern a nation with a \$2.3 trillion budget?

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints tithe to the church. The Romneys acknowledge donating \$2.5 million in cash to the church in 2011. Were they overly generous? Or, does that contribution reflect that the Romneys' income may have been about \$25 million. If that is the case, where did the rest go? Ann Romney told NBC News , "We also give 10% of our income to charity." According to a partial return in 2011, the Romneys claim they donated about \$4 million to charity. If Ann Romney is accurate, that would be a \$40 million income, twice what is claimed.

Why Romney won't release tax returns prior to 2010 may be because secrets are buried in 2009. According to BuzzFlash's Mark Karlin, citing Lawrence O'Donnell's pointed queries, "Romney may have taken advantage of a 2009 IRS amnesty period to disclose hidden income in offshore accounts but subject to US taxation. The amnesty offer

allowed such persons to escape potential criminal prosecution for tax evasion." It would be nice to know how much income was diverted to off-shore accounts in Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, and Switzerland, and into various tax-shelters the average American has no idea even exist.

That leads to an obvious question. How much of the Romneys' income over the past decade, not just the two years when he was planning to run for president, had deductions that might be questionable to the average person who doesn't have lawyers and accountants on retainer? Certainly, taking a \$77,000 write-off in 2010 for a show horse isn't something the average American can do. Working with an onerous tax code, loaded with myriad special interest loopholes, the Romneys know how to take everything wealthy Americans are entitled to receive. It may be legal, but is it ethical?

Frankly, it doesn't make much difference how much Romney earned, how he earned it, what he did with it, or how he and some extremely bright tax advisors took advantage of the system created by lobbyists and Congress. What does matter is that by stonewalling, obfuscating, and refusing to give full disclosure, he appears to have something to hide. And upon that--and that alone--the people and the media need to pursue why Romney is reluctant to release financial data. It's a matter not of how rich he is, but a matter of trust and a window into his soul.

"Romney's Albatross" by Michael Collins, OpEdNews

Aug. 23, 2012, (<http://www.opednews.com/articles/Romney-s-Albatross-by-Michael-Collins-120823-242.html>)

The public is just beginning to pay attention to the key issues of the 2012 presidential campaign. Even at this early stage, there is a clear trend in opinion against vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan's Medicare voucher program. On this and other key issues, Ryan's very explicit positions and legislative proposals spell doom for the Romney campaign. Ryan's record and a Republican platform endorsing those extreme views are Romney's albatross.

A Pew Research poll, August 23, exposes the impact of one key campaign. *Medicare Voucher Plan Remains Unpopular* (<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/2331/medicare-voucher-paul-ryan-joseph-biden-vice-president-social-security-deficit-entitlements>) captures the impact of timing for Ryan's exposure as a hard core, right wing extremist.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER 8/16-19		
Medicare Vouchers (e.g. Ryan's proposal)		
Have you heard of this program		
	JUNE '11	AUG '12
Heard a lot	20%	30%
Heard a little	50%	42%
Heard nothing	29%	29%
Among those who have heard...		
Favor	35%	34%
Oppose	45%	49%
Don't know	20%	17%

Basically, Ryan destroys Medicare by turning it into a voucher system. Seniors would receive a grant from the Federal government to purchase their own coverage (on those useless exchanges Obama created, perhaps). The additional costs represent 35% of median senior income in 2022 and go up from there to 50% of median income by 2050. A Republican death panel, this approach will deny a major portion of seniors of part of all of their medical services.

The Pew poll referenced in the graph was conducted just days after Romney's August 11 announcement of his vice presidential choice. It is a good starting point for the impact of increasing awareness by the public and the direction that may take.

The awareness numbers on vouchers (see graph above), have you heard, show a 50% increase in members of the public who have heard a lot about the program, 20% to 30%. Collapse the heard a lot and heard a little into a general awareness number. That figure is up by only two points from 70% in June 2011 to 72% today.

Among the 30% who "have heard" about the plan, there is a strong shift against vouchers. Today, 49% oppose vouchers compared to 45% in June 2011. That four point increase in opposition came with a two point increase in general awareness. As the campaign continues, using that two to four point awareness-opposition ratio, public disapproval of Ryan's voucher program would be above 60%.

Ryan said he's not Romney when asked about his position opposing abortion even in cases of rape. Romney's the boss. But Romney picked Ryan knowing full well his radical record. Candidate John McCain found out just how influential a vice presidential pick can be.

How many times will Ryan need to repudiate his record and defer to the boss? How will that make Ryan look?

There is plenty of time to draw more attention is drawn to Ryan's extremist agenda. Bringing his position into focus on Medicare, abortion, and tax breaks for the very rich will keep Romney on the defensive and drain his campaign resources.

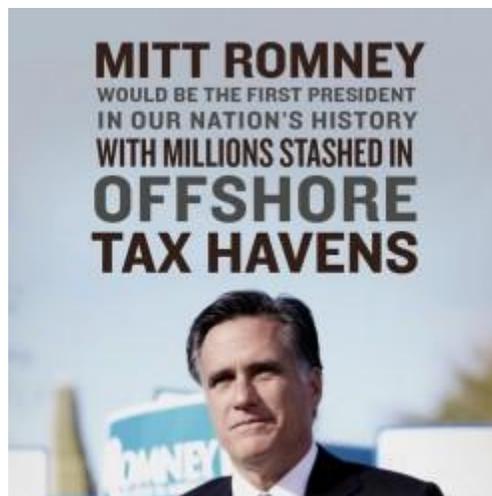
The real shame is that Ryan's radical agenda and the general inanity of presidential campaigns leaves the major issues of our time out of the dialog.

What will happen with the increasing pace of climate change and how can we mitigate the impact?

Why is President Obama carrying out the Bush doctrine of bullying and attacking countries that fail to cooperate with administration policies?

How do we get rid of the crony capitalism that has ruined the economy and cased so much suffering here and around the world?

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20120823-07 13:54 SteveB "Bain Documents Released by Gawker"

I told you he was a blatant liar!

"Bain Documents Released by Gawker" by Huffington Post

Aug. 23, 2012, ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/23/bain-documents-released- n\\_1825231.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/23/bain-documents-released- n_1825231.html))

The website Gawker published online hundreds of pages of documents from Mitt Romney's tenure at Bain Capital on Thursday.

Romney's work at the firm, as well as statements he's made on the issue, have come under scrutiny over the course of the presidential campaign.

John Cook at Gawker reports on one of the revelations from the files released:

**Romney has long claimed, despite evidence to the contrary, that he retired from Bain Capital in 1999. The Bain documents we obtained indicate that his involvement with the company extended years past that date.**

**Romney indicated in a financial disclosure form that he "retired" from Bain on Feb. 11, 1999. Gawker reports, however, that the presidential candidate had a stake in Sankaty Credit Opportunities, which was not created until 2002.**

Click here to read the Bain documents: <http://gawker.com/5933641>.

20120823-10 15:50 SteveG "The Bain Files: Inside Mitt Romney's Tax-Dodging Cayman Schemes"

Facts or fiction?

<http://gawker.com/>

20120823-11 15:53 SteveG Re: "The Bain Files..." (to SteveB)

Guess I was a little late getting to Gawker.

20120823-15 16:08 SteveB Re: "The Bain Files..." (reply to SteveG, above)

Not by very darned much, if any! Jeez, I hope some of this stuff sticks. How can the guy sleep at night?

20120823-16 16:17 SteveG Re: "The Bain Files..." (reply to SteveB, above)

Have you read the article in *Newsweek* with Obama on the cover saying that Obama has to go?

20120823-18 16:38 SteveB Re: "The Bain Files..." (reply to SteveG, above)

Niall Ferguson. An old enemy. Much rebuttal out there already, thank goodness, but this turns out to be the heart of the Republican campaign. Nothing about R0mney-Ryan, only that the President didn't fulfill his promises, though half the government and many billionaires have been out to bring him down since the day he was elected, and America and its workers and citizens be damned!

They would destroy America to gain control of it. That much has been proven.

Is this how stupid Americans have become that they buy this cr\*p?

<a href="#">20120823-01</a> 10:13 MarthaH "Romney Campaign Rolls Out Energy Policy"
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Here we go again:

"Romney Campaign Rolls Out Energy Policy" by Garrett Haake, NBC

Aug. 23, 2012, (<http://firstread.nbcnews.com/news/2012/08/23/13423039-romney-campaign-rolls-out-energy-policy?lite>)

(LITTLE ROCK, Ark.) With just one week until Mitt Romney takes the stage at the GOP convention in Tampa, his campaign rolled out the candidate's energy policy -- one that they hope illustrates stark differences with President Obama, and which excites middle class voters looking for an economic boost.

The Romney policy, spelled out in a white paper and on a conference call with reporters on Wednesday, focuses on developing domestic fossil fuels like oil, gas and coal - in large part by shifting federal responsibilities to the states, and by expanding exploration and production nationwide. Romney will outline the policy in oil-rich New Mexico on Thursday.

**Romney's plan would make states the custodian of energy production on federal lands within their borders and allow them to implement their own federally-approved leasing practices. Such a move would effectively shift responsibility for permitting, leasing and environmental regulation to states, with the hope of speeding energy development by cutting red tape.**

Romney's plan calls for reaching North American energy independence by 2020, primarily through expansion of traditional fossil fuels. The United States is currently the world's third largest oil producer, which Romney would hope to expand. The U.S. also currently imports more than half its oil from countries in the Western Hemisphere, with Canada making up a 29-percent share. Those imports could be increased through greater cooperation and by the immediate approval of the Keystone XL Pipeline, and similar projects.

"The challenge in getting there is not about the resources we have, it's not about the technology we have, it's about the government that we have," said Oren Cass, Romney's domestic policy director. "And the real question is: are we going to pursue the political reforms that will allow us to develop the resources to their fullest?"

Those reforms will also include greenlighting increased offshore drilling, slowed after 2009's BP oil spill disaster, particularly off the coasts of Virginia and North Carolina where Romney's advisers argue there is already widespread support for increased offshore drilling.

"One of the things that's detailed here in the policy under the offshore section is to establish the most aggressive leasing plan ever put forward, as compared to President Obama's, which was the least aggressive ever put forward," Cass told reporters.

The GOP challenger's plan pays little attention to renewable fuels like wind and solar power, long championed by Democrats, including Obama, who has touted green jobs creation as a major part of his own economic and energy plans.

Romney's plan, in contrast, includes continued research support for alternative fuels, but would have wind and solar generation succeed or fail on their own, without government subsidies or loan guarantees, a politically unpopular position in some wind and solar producing states like Iowa and Colorado, but one Romney's advisers said they believed could be overcome by the overall economic benefits of their plan.

President Obama makes a similar argument about continued oil industry tax subsidies, arguing that the highly profitable major oil companies don't need the tax breaks, the extension of which is supported by Romney.

Romney is expected to further outline his energy plan in remarks later today in New Mexico, the sixth largest oil producing state in the country, pumping roughly 3-percent of the nation's oil on an annual basis, according to the Energy Information Administration.

20120823-02 11:39 SteveM Re: Sign of the Times (reply to SteveB, FotM Newsletter #210)



What Obama is saying is you don't own your business, dummy, because he's a f\*cking socialist. Businesses et al PAID FOR IT! Wise up, dummy

The Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, AKA the Interstate, was **built with taxes** collected by Federal, state and local government from companies and highway users in business long **before the roads were completed.**

from Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interstate\\_Highway\\_System](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interstate_Highway_System)):

Initial federal planning for a nationwide highway system began in 1921 when the Bureau of Public Roads asked the Army to provide a list of roads it considered necessary for national defense.

**In 1938**, President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave Thomas MacDonal, chief at the Bureau of Public Roads, a hand-drawn map of the U.S. marked with eight superhighway corridors for study. In 1939, Bureau of Public Roads Division of Information chief Herbert S. Fairbank wrote a report entitled Toll Roads and Free Roads, "the first formal description of what became the interstate highway system," and in 1944 the similarly themed Interregional Highways.

Eisenhower gained an appreciation of the German Autobahn network as a necessary component of a national defense system while he was serving as Supreme Commander of the Allied forces in Europe during World War II.[9] He recognized that the proposed system would also provide key ground transport routes for military supplies and troop deployments in case of an emergency or foreign invasion

About 70 percent of the construction and maintenance costs of Interstate Highways in the United States have been paid through user fees, primarily the fuel taxes collected by the federal, state, and local governments. To a much lesser extent they have been paid for by tolls collected on toll highways and bridges. The Highway Trust Fund, established by the Highway Revenue Act in 1956, prescribed a three-cent-per-gallon fuel tax, soon increased to 4.5 cents per gallon. In 1993, the tax was increased to 18.4 cents per gallon, where it remains as of 2012.

The rest of the costs of these highways are borne by general fund receipts, bond issues, designated property taxes, and other taxes. The federal contribution comes overwhelmingly from motor vehicle and fuel taxes (93.5 percent in 2007), and it makes up about 60 percent of the contributions by the states. However, any local government contributions are overwhelmingly from sources besides user fees. The portion of the user fees spent on highways themselves covers about 57 percent of their costs, with about one-sixth of the user fees being sent to other programs, including the mass transit systems in large cities.

In the northeastern United States, some large sections of Interstate Highways that were planned or constructed before 1956 are still operated as toll roads. Others have had their construction bonds paid off and they have become toll-free, such as in Connecticut (I-95), Maryland (I-95), Virginia (I-95), and Kentucky (I-65).

Some Interstates are privately maintained ,e.g., the VMS company maintains I-35 in Texas

[Ya, right, the Interstate Highway system would have been built without the government—just like those coast-to-coast high speed trains and Newt Moonbases we're so proud to use daily! Big corporations and the uber-rich love us so much that they just want to do things for us! How nice! How visionary! WE DON'T NEED NO STINKING GOVERNMENT! –SteveB]

[20120823-06](#) 13:43 SteveB Re: Sign of the Times (reply to SteveM, above)

Of course that's not what he's saying! The whole subject is TAXES! The rich are not paying their fair share. Some businesses are not paying their fair share. They think they don't owe taxes because Ayn Rand says they created their businesses themselves, without help from society, therefore, they owe society nothing (or very little, like Mitt's 7% or so). Therefore, your Republican buddies are guaranteeing that you pay MORE, while their fat-cat friends pay LESS.

Always happy to bring you the truth free of commercials.

[20120823-03](#) 12:11 SteveM Fw: Photo: Special Republican Interstate Highway



[20120823-04](#) 12:24 Art Fw: From the Right: Obama Stops Soldier from Speaking

Not sure this is worth it, but I guess we have to keep trying to understand what is going on. The e-mail below came to me via a friend who lives in Germany and he got it from a local national, so this has spread well beyond our shores. I am sure most of my foreign friends are amazed. The e-mail is an outright lie and completely untrue. Yet I suspect that half or more of the people who read it believe it and pass it along as yet another example of how terrible this President is. The Snopes article just below provides the truth of the matter.

The question you have to ask yourself is:

1. If President Obama is so bad, why is it necessary to make up all of these lies.
2. Have the American people really become this stupid?

By the way, this has been Government Ethics 101 for all government personal, not just military, for a very long time.

Snopes.com: Military Speakers at Faith-Based Events:

<http://www.snopes.com/politics/religion/faithbased.asp#3mQ1XQ74peM5juSt.03>.

[Source of original email unknown, --SteveB]

Please pass this on. We need to, people must know that our freedom is being taken from us slowly but surely.

Obama Stops Soldier from Speaking (sent by Retired Vice Admiral Bob Scarborough, of Arlington, Va.)

I wanted to give you all some disturbing information on our wonderful president. I work with the Catch-A-Dream Foundation, which provides hunting and fishing trips to children with life-threatening illnesses. This past weekend we had our annual banquet/fund raiser event in Starkville . As a part of our program, we had scheduled Sgt. 1st Class Greg Stube to come; he's a highly decorated U.S. Army Green Beret and inspirational speaker who was severely injured while deployed overseas and didn't have much of a chance for survival. Greg is stationed at Ft. Bragg , NC and received permission from his commanding officer to come speak at our function.

Everything was on go until Obama made a policy that NO U.S. SERVICEMAN CAN SPEAK AT ANY FAITH-BASED PUBLIC EVENTS ANYMORE. Needless to say, Greg had to cancel his speaking event with us. Didn't know if anyone else was aware of this new policy. You're just starting to see the Obamanation. This is just how the Nazis did it in the 1930s -- slowly, one step at a time.

This should be forwarded to everyone regardless of party affiliation!

We have lost 50% of our freedom of speech in the last 2 years. The news media is not allowed to print anything negative about this evil Obama.

ARE YOU STILL GOING TO RE-ELECT HIM?????????????

Robert D. Sinacola  
COL (Ret), AVN, USAR  
Thanks To ALL Who Served And Are Serving  
Please Pray For Our Troops And Leaders.  
God Bless America ... Land That I love

20120823-05	12:48	SteveB	"The Fanatical GOP"
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**"The capture of one of our great parties by fanatics is nothing to celebrate. A democracy needs at least two sane political parties."**

"The Fanatical GOP" by Robert Reich, NationofChange

We're witnessing the capture by fanatics of what was once a great and important American political party.

The Republican Party platform committee now includes a provision calling for a constitutional amendment banning all abortions, without an exception for rape or incest. This is basically Missouri senatorial candidate Todd Akin's position. (At least the GOP platform doesn't assert that women's bodies automatically reject "legitimate" rapists' sperm.)

Paul Ryan, Romney's selection for vice president, has co-sponsored 38 anti-abortion measures while in the House of Representatives, including several containing no exception for pregnancies caused by rape or incest. But the GOP's fanaticism goes far beyond the its growing absolutism about abortion.

Ryan's proposed budget, approved by almost all House Republicans, is also an exercise in fanaticism. It replaces Medicare with vouchers that won't possibly keep up with rising healthcare costs — thereby shifting costs directly on to the elderly.

That budget also harms the poor and rewards the rich, but does little or nothing to reduce the federal budget deficit. Over 60 percent of its spending cuts come out of programs for lower-income Americans. Its tax cuts for the rich reduce revenues by \$4.6 trillion over the decade while saving the typical millionaire hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. The GOP's looniness doesn't even stop there. Republicans remain unwavering in their support of state laws allowing or encouraging the profiling of Latinos. And unrelenting in their war against gay rights.

It's not just women, seniors, budget hawks, the poor, Latinos, and gays who are catching on to the Republicans' extremism. Americans who don't fall into one of these categories are becoming alarmed, too — as they should. Although the GOP lurch to the right-wing margin of America may bode well for Democrats this coming Election Day, it bodes ill for America. **The capture of one of our great parties by fanatics is nothing to celebrate. A democracy needs at least two sane political parties.**

<a href="#">20120823-08</a>	14:19	Ben	Photo: Today's Lunch at Apple
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Yam Thua Ngawk. "Shrimp Salad" doesn't do it justice. This is a Far East line Chef Alejandro special; as you know, Alex' dishes can range from wild complexity to fine, simple classics, but he thrives on subtlety. This dish was one of deceptive simplicity.

I didn't count, but the obvious ingredient was the dozen or so very large, perfect poached or steamed shrimp. They may have been lightly brined, or it may just have been the slight saltiness of the seawater from which they came, but they were moist, and (no surprise) not by any stretch of the imagination overcooked, as is so common and easy to do with shrimp. Getting them right, deep translucence just short of complete opacity, is an art of timing and observation. The shrimp were accompanied by crisp, fresh Chinese bean sprouts, thin parings of shallot, fine bits of mint, with a very light, nearly clear dressing of lime juice, fish sauce, and sugar; all was garnished with a light sprinkling of some slightly sweet unidentifiable peanut-fragment crunchy stuff.

A glass of fresh-squeeze lemonade merged beautifully with my light entree.

For me, for today, this was an ideal filling but light lunch.

So I took a liberty and accessorized with a tiny Faith Bomb: a petite Mini chocolate raspberry soffiato, a wonderfully soft and gooey treat of dense bittersweet chocolate cake with a Faith-made raspberry compote center. This is by far the tastiest combination of chocolate with raspberry I've had; it's not a combination that normally does a lot for me. Additives to chocolate, sure, but I usually prefer spices or herbs. This worked wonderfully for me, though! I had to unwrap the paper, scraping morsels from it with the edge of my fork...



[20120823-09](#) 15:38 Art Re: You Always Have Something to Say... (reply to SteveM, FotM Newsletter #210)

I just looked up the Queen of England one...totally bogus. So much for any of this being verifiable.

[20120823-13](#) 16:03 SteveB Re: You Always Have Something to Say... (reply to Art, above)

OK, great! Thanks, Art. I'll pass that info along to SteveM

And, if the President said "Cinco de Quatro"... well, I think that's pretty cute!

[20120823-24](#) 19:16 Art Re: You Always Have Something to Say... (reply to SteveB, above)

You know this is such BS. People like SteveM are impossible to reach. They only read what they want to believe and anything else is just "the biased liberal press". Not sure they are worth wasting time with. By the way according to SNOPEs, the Queen was given a I Pad or phone, I forget which, with pictures of her visit to the States in 2007 and show tunes which she reportedly loved.

Note how the teabags have become a bit more cunning and attach just enough truth to the statement to then make an outrageous lie by adding words like "tacky and the Presidents speeches" . It is just crap but as someone smarter than I said, "It is hard to have a logical conversation with someone who never used logic to get to their position in the first place."

20120823-25 19:37 SteveB Re: You Always Have Something to Say... (reply to Art, above)

Amen!

20120823-12 15:55 SteveG "The Fascinating Differences Between the Conservative & Liberal Personality"

**"But if our partisan personalities are deeply rooted in our early development and wired in our brains, is honest and thoughtful consideration of our own biases and predeterminations enough, or even possible?"**

Here is some people's opinion. Others say...

"The Fascinating Differences Between the Conservative and Liberal Personality" by Jared DeFife, AlterNet

Aug. 20, 2012, (<http://www.alternet.org/fascinating-differences-between-conservative-and-liberal-personality>)

"There are three things I have learned never to discuss with people: religion, politics, and the Great Pumpkin," laments Linus van Pelt in a 1961 *Peanuts* comic strip. Yet in today's hyperpartisan political climate, religion and politics are obsessively debated, while the "American people" that politicians and reporters constantly refer to seem hopelessly divided. Meanwhile, psychologists are increasingly exploring the political arena, examining not just the ideological differences, but also the numerous factors - temperamental, developmental, biological, and situational - that contribute to the formation and maintenance of partisan political beliefs.

Personality differences are a leading candidate in the race toward understanding the rift between political liberals and conservatives. Using data compiled from nearly 20,000 respondents, Columbia University researcher Dana Carney and colleagues found that two common personality traits reliably differentiated individuals with liberal or conservative identifications. Liberals reported greater openness, whereas conservatives reported higher conscientiousness. This means that liberals (at least in their own estimation) saw themselves as more creative, flexible, tolerant of ambiguity, and open to new ideas and experiences. Across the political personality divide, conservatives self-identified as more persistent, orderly, moralistic, and methodical. These personality differences were even reflected in the bedroom belongings and offices or workspaces of ideological undergrads, with liberal students collecting more CDs, books, movie tickets, and travel paraphernalia, as opposed to their conservative peers, who showed more sports décor, U.S. flags, cleaning supplies, calendars, and uncomfortable furniture. Lest you think that the partisan personality is a uniquely American phenomenon, similar findings on personality and political ideology have emerged in samples across the globe, from North America, Europe, and Australia.

Evidence suggests that these personality differences between liberals and conservatives begin to emerge at an early age. A 20-year longitudinal study by Jack and Jeanne Block showed that those who grew up to be liberals were originally assessed by their preschool teachers as more emotionally expressive, gregarious, and impulsive when compared to those who became conservatives, who were considered more inhibited, uncertain, and controlled. Liberals may show greater tolerance for diversity and creativity, but they may also be more impulsive, indecisive, and irresponsible. On the flip side, conservatives may be organized, stable, and thrifty, but also have stronger just-world beliefs (leading to a greater tolerance for inequality), and stronger fears of mortality and ambiguity. Even recent neuroscience work published in *Current Biology* from University College London identifies fundamental differences in the partisan brain. Brain scans revealed a larger amygdala in self-identified conservatives and a larger anterior cingulate cortex in liberals, leading the researchers to conclude that conservatives may be more acute at detecting threats around them, whereas liberals may be more adept at handling conflicting information and uncertainty.

Some evidence suggests, however, that we aren't always so divided. In situations that remind people of death and mortality (such as terrorist attacks or implicitly primed images of funeral hearses and chalk body outlines) conservatives and liberals alike gravitate toward more conservative leaders and beliefs. By contrast, greater

acceptance of liberal values occurs during events in which people feel disillusioned by government authorities and the politically powerful (such as the Vietnam War or after the 2008 housing crisis).

Of course, the field of psychology isn't immune to political biases and partisanship. Liberal psychology professors vastly outnumber their conservative counterparts by as much as 10 to 1 (perhaps conservatives have some justification for a general distrust of science and academia). A similar imbalance was found by Dyer Bilgrave and Robert Deluty in their 2002 survey of more than 200 clinical and counseling psychologists, published in the journal *Psychotherapy*. They also found that cognitive-behavioral therapists tended to hold more conservative religious and political beliefs than their more liberally oriented psychodynamic and humanistic-oriented colleagues. Other findings implicative for psychotherapy suggest that liberals and conservatives conceptualize different values in their family narratives, and that individuals fail to empathize completely with the nonpolitical concerns and problems of others if they're perceived as belonging to an opposing political party.

No matter which side of the couch they sit on, therapists are inevitably bound to confront political and moral issues in treatment. In research, practice, and training, therapists are expected to achieve the kind of bipartisan collaboration that politicians seem to only talk about. According to Bilgrave and Deluty, "Therapists should ask themselves regularly how their religious and political beliefs, values, and attitudes may be influencing their practice of therapy-how they see clients and their problems, how they help clients frame and understand their concerns, and how and in which direction they encourage clients to act." **But if our partisan personalities are deeply rooted in our early development and wired in our brains, is honest and thoughtful consideration of our own biases and predeterminations enough, or even possible?** And when even your furniture choices betray your political persuasions, then what does your office tell patients about you?

#### Resources

*American Psychologist*, 61, no. 7: 651-70; *Current Biology*, 21, no. 8: 677-80; *Psychotherapy*, 39, no. 3: 245-60.

<a href="#">20120823-22</a>	18:46	Art	Re: "The Fascinating Differences Between the Conservative & Liberal Personality" (reply to SteveG, above)
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Thanks SteveG, really interesting. Still not sure where I sit.

<a href="#">20120823-17</a>	16:23	Pam	Re: "The Fascinating Differences Between the Conservative & Liberal Personality" (reply to SteveG, above)
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Interesting article. I do think people are mostly born a "little liberal" or a "little conservative." (Thank you Gilbert and Sullivan.) Like so many things, I believe it's innate. My dad and I were always more liberal, my mother and brother more conservative. My BFF couldn't be a liberal if you offered her a million dollars, and she says she absolutely can't vote for Obama. (Why is she my BFF, you ask? Because she's a good person.) I just read a great article in *The Atlantic* (I'll post a link if I can figure it out) about racism in America and how it's affecting Obama's presidency. We do not live in a post-racial society, more's the pity. I truly believe that much of Congress's obstructionism is racist at its core.

<a href="#">20120823-19</a>	16:42	SteveB	Re: "The Fascinating Differences Between the Conservative & Liberal Personality" (reply to Pam, above)
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Agree completely about the racism. But, of course, Rush would say that just proves my "reverse racism".

That's how much sense these racists make!

<a href="#">20120823-14</a>	16:03	SteveB	Fw: Avaaz Petition: Help the Lakota Sioux Save Their Sacred Black Hills Land!
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from Avaaz:

This weekend an area considered sacred by the Native Sioux people could be auctioned off to the highest bidder, to potentially be bulldozed into a road or a golf course. The Sioux have launched a last-ditch campaign to save their land - if we join them now we can stop the sell off.

For generations the Sioux have used this undeveloped but privately owned stretch of prairie in the Black Hills of South Dakota for important annual ceremonies, but this Saturday's auction could pave the way for its destruction. That's why Avaaz member Sara Jumping Eagle, of the Oglala Lakota Sioux tribe, started a petition asking the government to protect the land by designating it a historical landmark. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar has the power to do that, but to push him to use it, we need to show that the Sioux have support from every corner of the country.

**There's no time to lose, the auction is this Saturday.** Stand with Sara and the Sioux tribes of the Dakotas to save this land from the auction block.

Pe' Sla ("The heart of all that is") is an area in the Black Hills of South Dakota, not far from Mount Rushmore, that's at the center of the Lakota Sioux's creation story, a place Sioux families visit every Spring for important rituals of rebirth and renewal. **More than a hundred years ago, the US Government stole the Black Hills from the Sioux after gold was found there**, and the treaty granting them "permanent" land rights was ripped to shreds. In 1980, the Supreme Court ruled on behalf of the Sioux Nation, ceding that their land had been taken unlawfully, but the Sioux have refused to accept compensation, saying the land has never been for sale.

Now with Pe 'Sla at risk of being lost forever, an unprecedented coalition of Sioux tribes have come together launching an online fundraiser to buy back the land, but with only days to go until the auction, they are nowhere near raising the millions needed. That's why taking the land out from under the auctioneer's gavel is the only real way to save it, and why Avaaz member Sara Jumping Eagle is asking for support from around the country to help stop the sale.

Sara tells us, "Pe `Sla is a symbol of a resurgence and belief in who we are as Lakota Oyate (the people). If somebody were to come and build a road or desecrate it in any way, it would be like the Wounded Knee Massacre happening all over again. Can you imagine the Vatican, or Mecca or Bethlehem being bulldozed for an amusement park?"

Right now if enough of us support the Sioux and their fight to protect this land central to their tradition and their religion, we can help correct a longstanding historic injustice, and make the United States a little more united around the rights of Native people. We only have four days to stop the sale -- sign the urgent petition and please share with your friends and family:

[http://www.avaaz.org/en/petition/Help\\_Lakota\\_Sioux\\_Save\\_Buy\\_Pe\\_Sla\\_Sacred\\_Black\\_Hills\\_Land/](http://www.avaaz.org/en/petition/Help_Lakota_Sioux_Save_Buy_Pe_Sla_Sacred_Black_Hills_Land/).

From the Massai people of Tanzania fighting displacement, to indigenous tribes of the Amazon battling a destructive mega dam, the Avaaz community has long stood side by side with native people defending their rights. Here in the US let's not let history repeat itself -- and join hands with the Sioux to protect what's sacred.

With hope, determination, and spirit, Joseph, Ian, Emily, Emma, Ricken and the whole Avaaz team

More Information

Sioux tribes worry sale of sacred site in South Dakota's Black Hills could lead to development (*Washington Post*), [http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/sioux-tribes-worry-sale-of-sacred-site-in-south-dakotas-black-hills-could-lead-to-development/2012/08/18/ede0c628-e961-11e1-9739-eef99c5fb285\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/sioux-tribes-worry-sale-of-sacred-site-in-south-dakotas-black-hills-could-lead-to-development/2012/08/18/ede0c628-e961-11e1-9739-eef99c5fb285_story.html).

The Sioux campaign to buy back the Black Hills that belong to them ( *The Guardian*), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/aug/16/sioux-campaign-buy-back-black-hills>.

UN human rights expert calls on US to consult with indigenous people over land sale (UN News Centre), <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42723&Cr=United+States&Cr1>.

Exclusive: Sioux Spiritual Leader Speaks Out on Land Sale at Sacred Site (Truth Out), <http://truth-out.org/news/item/11035-exclusive-truthout-interview-sioux-spiritual-leader-speaks-out-on-land-sale-at-sacred-site>.

Black Hills Auction: The Auction of the Sacred (Winona LaDuke), [http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/ict\\_sbc/black-hills-auction-the-auction-of-the-sacred](http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/ict_sbc/black-hills-auction-the-auction-of-the-sacred).

Pe' Sla: Help Save Lakota Sioux Sacred Land! (Sioux fundraiser to save the land) <http://www.indiegogo.com/PeSla-LakotaHeartland>.



[20120823-20](#)

16:51

MarthaH

"Texas Democrats: Judge Who Said Obama Could Trigger Civil War Should Quit"

Just when I think...something else.

"Texas Democrats: Judge Who Said Obama Could Trigger Civil War Should Quit" by Josh Levs, CNN

Aug. 24, 2012, (<http://edition.cnn.com/2012/08/23/us/texas-judge-warning/index.html>)

Texas Democrats are calling for the resignation of a Republican elected county judge who warned this week that the nation could descend into civil war if President Barack Obama is re-elected.

"It's really up to Judge (Tom) Head to do the right thing and resign and stop embarrassing Lubbock County," said Kenny Ketner, who became the county Democratic Party's chief Monday.

"I wish we were getting worldwide attention for something better than a crazy county judge," Ketner told CNN. "But what are you going to do?"

There is no recall process for Head's office in Texas, Ketner said.

The county's Republican Party chief, Carl Tepper, accused the Democrats of "opportunism" and said he had called Head and left him a message offering "moral support."

"I don't agree with him, but everyone has their opinion," Tepper said. "I can respectfully disagree with him and he can still be an elected official."

While Tepper said he had not heard from state Republican Party chiefs, the Texas Democratic Party did weigh in with a statement.

"This nonsense is what passes for mainstream in today's Republican Party," the statement said. "It's not only ridiculous, it's dangerous. It's crystal clear that Judge Head should resign."

In remarks this week, Head called for a well-equipped force to battle the United Nations troops that he said Obama might bring in.

The comments by Head, who oversees emergency planning efforts, were broadcast by CNN affiliate KJTV. He made similar remarks on radio station FOX Talk 950.

Saying that as the county's emergency management coordinator he has to "think about the very worst thing that can happen and prepare for that and hope and pray for the best," Head told radio host Jeff Klotzman that he believes "in this political climate and financial climate, what is the very worst thing that could happen right now? Obama gets back in the White House. No. God forbid."

Referring to unexplained "executive orders" and other documents that Obama and "his minions have filed," Head said, "regardless of whether the Republicans take over the Senate, which I hope they do, he is going to make the United States Congress and he's going to make the Constitution irrelevant. He's got his czars in place that don't answer to anybody."

Obama, Head said, will "try to give the sovereignty of the United States away to the United Nations. What do you think the public's going to do when that happens? We are talking civil unrest, civil disobedience, possibly, possibly civil war. ... I'm not talking just talking riots here and there. I'm talking Lexington, Concord, take up arms, get rid of the dictator. OK, what do you think he is going to do when that happens? He is going to call in the U.N. troops, personnel carriers, tanks and whatever."

Head vowed to personally stand "in front of their personnel carriers and say, 'You're not coming in here.' And I've asked the sheriff. I said, 'Are you going to back me on this?' And he said, 'Yeah, I'm going to back you.' Well, I don't want a bunch of rookies back there who have no training and little equipment. I want seasoned veteran people who are trained that have got equipment. And even then, you know we may have two or three hundred deputies facing maybe a thousand U.N. troops. We may have to call out the militia."

Sheriff Kelly Rowe told KJTV there had been no conversation about such a civil war scenario. The two have discussed contingencies for emergency management, he said.

The lone Democrat on the Lubbock County Commissioner's Court, Gilbert Flores, described Head with a colorful West Texas saying: "He's a six-pack short of a full case of beer, if you know what I mean."

KJTV reported that the warning was linked to taxes. Head "indicates a tax increase is needed to shore up law enforcement to protect us," the station reported, adding that a tax increase is under consideration that "would largely benefit the district attorney and sheriff's offices. But the emphasis is more on salary competitiveness than doomsday scenarios."

On Wednesday at a county commissioner meeting, he emphasized that his remarks were about "worst-case scenario in my opinion," and added, "Do I think those are going to happen? Probably not."

Also Wednesday, he told the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, "I cannot divorce my theology and my philosophy from me, from my office, you know? I am pro-life, I am pro-gun rights, and if you're going to vote for me and say you don't believe in gun rights, you don't want me in office, so you won't vote for me."

Attorney Rod Hobson jokingly put up U.N. flags outside his Lubbock office, KJTV reported. "When I saw the story I thought, once again, Lubbock is going to be the laughingstock of the entire nation," Hobson said. "What makes it so sad is he is our elected county judge, who is in charge of a multimillion-dollar budget. That is scary. It's like the light's on, but no one is home. ... I'd just like to think he's off his meds."

But video from the Wednesday meeting showed at least one citizen supporting him. "Judge Head, thank you, and God bless," the citizen said.

Head did not respond to e-mail or phone calls to his office on Thursday.

Both Ketner of the county Democratic Party and Tepper of the county Republican Party said they have received calls from people on both sides of the issue.

While many callers to Ketner have asked if there is any way to boot him from office, some have said they support the judge, Ketner said.

Tepper said Republicans are split over the issue. "There's quite a divergent mix of views" within the party, he said. "Some people are very staunch defenders of Judge Head. And some people don't appreciate how he said what he said."

Democrats are pushing for members of the public to show up Monday to a county commission budget meeting. "Normally, nobody shows up," Ketner said.

But given the attention Head's remarks are getting, this meeting just might draw a crowd, he said.

<a href="#">20120823-26</a>	20:37	Pam	Re: "Texas Democrats: Judge Who Said Obama Could Trigger Civil War Should Quit" (reply to MarthaH, above)
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The right wing in America is CRAZY. And they're setting the agenda. Politicians cater to them, and they get what they want, like a toddler with a temper tantrum. Makes me sick.

<a href="#">20120823-23</a>	19:00	Art	Re: "Texas Democrats: Judge Who Said Obama Could Trigger Civil War Should Quit" (reply to MarthaH, above)
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There has got to be some sort of medical explanation for these home grown wackos who live in a fantasy world. I think you have one in Greencastle. Are they really that stupid? Could be. I think however it must be a bit more complex. They are not very bright bulbs to begin with, who are heavily influenced by what little stimulation they receive through movies, TV and the Internet. I'll bet you, if a study were run, they have never gone anywhere, except maybe on a Caribbean cruise, speak no foreign languages and haven't read a real book in 20 years.

<a href="#">20120823-27</a>	20:42	Pam	Re: "Texas Democrats: Judge Who Said Obama Could Trigger Civil War Should Quit" (reply to Art, above)
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And yet they exert a ton of influence. Politicians are scared of them, and Fox, Rush, & co. keep fanning the flames.

[20120823-28](#) 22:33 SteveB Re: "Texas Democrats: Judge Who Said Obama Could Trigger Civil War Should Quit" (reply to Pam, above)

They have destroyed the positive attitude in America that would help us overcome Bush's Depression. Next: America? If we let them...

[20120823-29](#) 23:50 MarthaH Re: "Texas Democrats: Judge Who Said Obama Could Trigger Civil War Should Quit" (reply to SteveB, above)

My father's favorite expression was "Empty wagons rattle." This mentality rattles more than it studies. Unfortunately, there are more than a few in Greencastle. There are some names you would recognize and no surprises in the educational level, etc. One has made a lot of money and has toys sitting around. His white toy's tire kit [used to be continental kit, we said!] says VOTE THEM OUT in tacky letters...Remember Male Chauvinist Pig? He's a herd of them by himself! And he seems to be the ramrod of the Teabaggers locally. I really should take my senior government final exam to a meeting and see who could pass it. Simplicity is theirs, but it's not a simple world. Those who fan the hatred laugh all the way to the bank. The dominoes seem to be falling and the future at jeopardy. SURELY there are more intelligent folks in the country than these who want to have theirs and no one else have anything. Yes, surveys say we are headed in the wrong direction--but pollsters never ask who is responsible? When I see every day something REALLY STUPID it is distressing. Did our ancestors feel this way as the Civil War went on? WW I and then WW II?

How stupid are the voters? What fans a majority to make the effort to become leaders? What makes a minority rise up and become a majority? We have always had in's and out's in election cycles, BUT, as we creep towards being a theocracy like what we fight in faraway places, why are not intelligent people winning over clever ones with tunnel vision? Why do some good people not believe the truth? Once an "R" always one? NOT I! [and nameless others, :-)] The lies are easier and say what they feel in their guts with their paranoia...and pandering to get power is backed by \$\$\$\$\$\$, thanks to the Supreme Court. Behind closed doors do they admit they SCREWED UP????

Funny thing: The first two people to call me a liberal were my pastors, one a few years back and one more recently. Really??? I thought I was just practical...I have my conservative thoughts and actions...I truly believe we are awakened to the WHOLE world through education, formal and personal. Those with narrow minds were brainwashed into thinking only what they hear superficially and feel makes them comfy...while the rest of the world awaits their exploration! My job through their young lives has been to try to awaken our grandchildren to possibilities, not limitations. What makes others limit themselves to a narrow tunnel? What makes them believe the first words they hear and never question them? I think we are back to education again...hmmm...And now education seems taken over by limitations, too.

Just a morning rant. And I didn't even get to racism... Bias destroys, education builds. Now I will duck my head and live in my own world so the rage doesn't destroy me, :-). My, reading soothes the soul.

[20120823-30](#) 23:55 SteveB Re: "Texas Democrats: Judge Who Said Obama Could Trigger Civil War Should Quit" (reply to MarthaH, above)

I love it, Martha! I'm happy to have your words to start my day! Thank you,

Now...I do completely disagree...haha!

[20120823-21](#) 18:04 SteveB "Pew: Middle Class Poorer, Earning Less And Shrinking"

Of course! All the money is being redistributed upward to the fat cats like Mitt R0mney!

"Pew: Middle Class Poorer, Earning Less And Shrinking" by Eyder Peralta, NPR

Aug. 22, 2012, (<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2012/08/22/159798269/pew-middle-class-poorer-earning-less-and-shrinking>)

The researchers at Pew Social & Demographic Trends aren't holding back in their new report on the middle class. It calls the last 11 years, "the lost decade" for the country's middle class:

<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/08/22/the-lost-decade-of-the-middle-class/>.

The highlight from the report issued today is that the middle class is poorer, earning less and shrinking.

In its press release, Pew reports:

These stark assessments are based on findings from a new nationally representative Pew Research Center survey that includes 1,287 adults who describe themselves as middle class, supplemented by the Center's analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Federal Reserve Board of Governors.

Fully 85% of self-described middle-class adults say it is more difficult now than it was a decade ago for middle-class people to maintain their standard of living. Of those who feel this way, 62% say "a lot" of the blame lies with Congress, while 54% say the same about banks and financial institutions, 47% about large corporations, 44% about the Bush administration, 39% about foreign competition and 34% about the Obama administration. Just 8% blame the middle class itself a lot.

Most of what you need to know is in these graphs:

They show that the median household income for example, dropped from \$72,956 in 2000 to \$69,487. Perhaps the most dramatic figure is that median net worth took a major hit during the recession. It plummeted from \$152,950 to \$93,150.

Another interesting graph shows that in past decades, the middle class continues to lose ground to upper incomes when you aggregate household income.

For example in 1970, the middle class held 62 percent of the income in the country. The upper income held 29 percent. Those numbers have now flipped: The middle class is at 45 percent and the upper income class is at 46 percent.

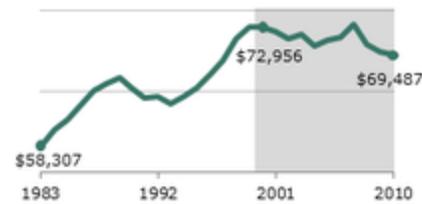
It's important to note that Pew considers three-person household making \$39,418 to \$118,255 middle class.

When asked, most said it took at least \$70,000 to be middle class.

## A Decade of Decline

### Middle-Tier Median Household Income Falls ...

Incomes are scaled to reflect a three-person household (in 2011 dollars)



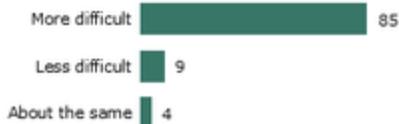
### ... Median Net Worth Plummets ...

in 2011 dollars



### ... and the Middle Class Says its Lifestyle is Harder to Maintain

% of middle-class who say it is ... for middle class to maintain standard of living today than 10 years ago

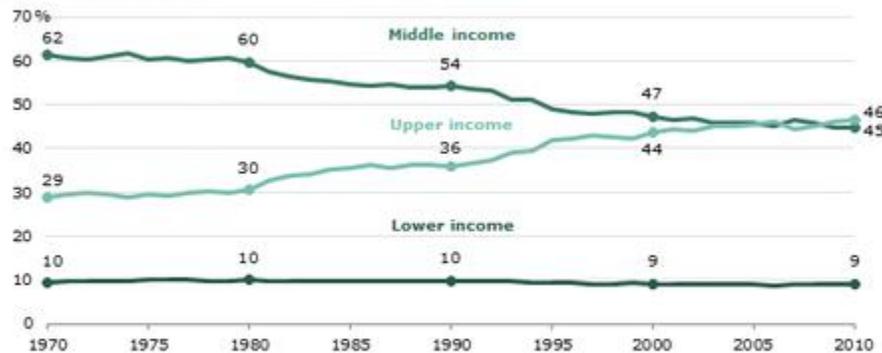


Notes: Income and wealth trends based on households with household-size adjusted incomes 67% to 200% of the national median. Attitudes chart based on respondents who say they are middle class, n=1,287. "About the same" is a volunteered category. "Don't know/Refused" not shown.

Source: Pew Research tabulations of the Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, 1984-2011, and Survey of Consumer Finances, 1983-2010; Pew Research survey, July 16-26, 2012

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

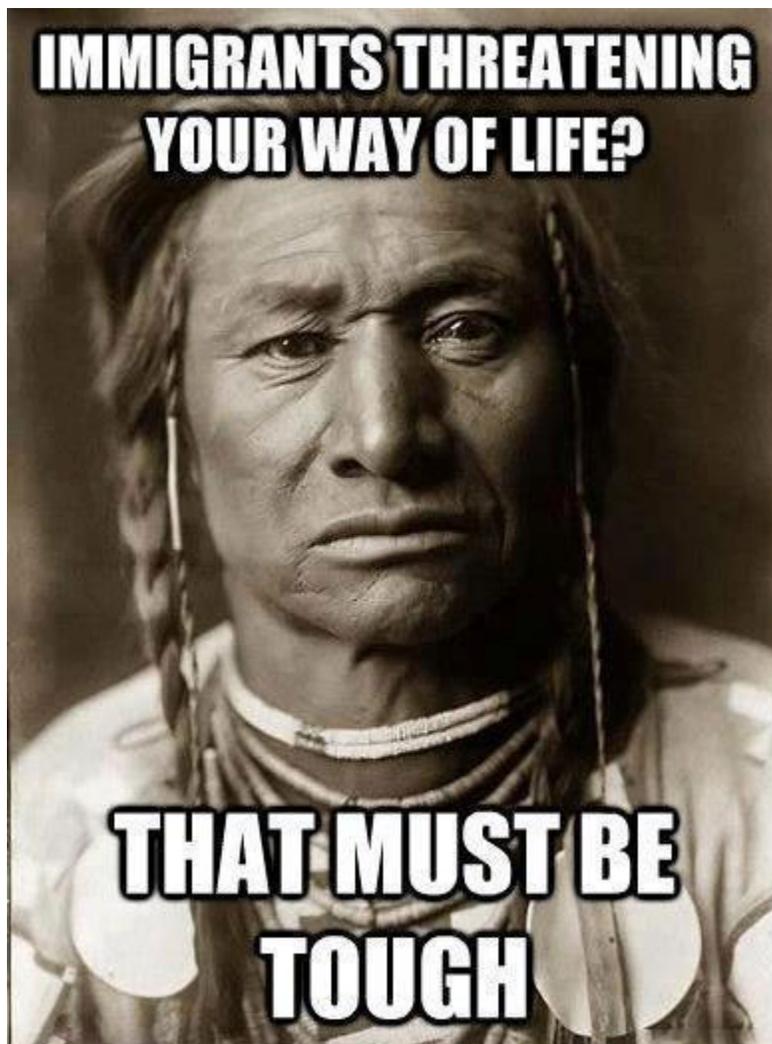
## Percentage Distribution of U.S. Aggregate Household Income, by Income Tier, 1970-2010



Notes: Households are assigned to income categories based on their size-adjusted income in the calendar year prior to the survey year (e.g., 2010 income is reported in the 2011 survey). Their unadjusted incomes are then totaled to compute the share of an income group in U.S. aggregate household income. Percentages in each year may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, 1971-2011

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<http://www.wayfaring.info/2008/07/13/devils-tower-national-monument/>



—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.

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<http://www.FriendsOfTheMiddle.org>  
[FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com](mailto:FriendsOfTheMiddle@hotmail.com)

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