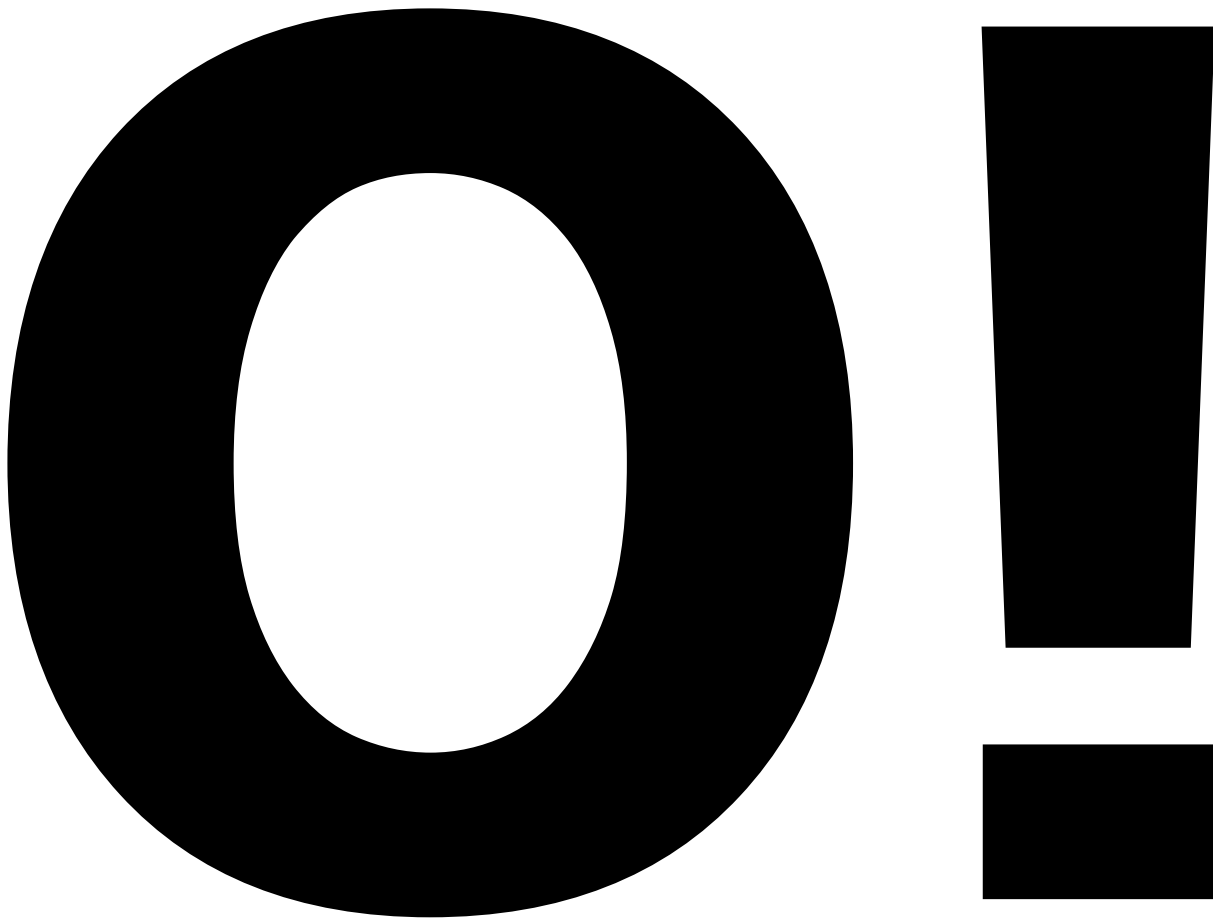




FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE
NEWSLETTER #264 — NOV. 7, 2012

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

INDEX: Click here.



(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Nov. 7, 2012)

As we have been saying here at Friends of the Middle for months (years?), there is no lying Republican alternate reality! Well...there is...but it's now been definitely proven not to be true and not to be reality!

No one ever took my months-long \$10,000 bet! Cowards! Now, the next step...**WAKE UP, GOP!!!!!!**

"Barack Obama' Acceptance Speech after Winning the 2012 U.S. Federal Election"

Nov. 7, 2012 (w/ full audio), (<http://www.680news.com/news/world/article/419571--obama-s-acceptance-speech-and-romney-s-concession-speech-audio-and-full-transcript>)

OBAMA: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much.

Tonight, more than 200 years after a former colony won the right to determine its own destiny, the task of perfecting our union moves forward.

It moves forward because of you. It moves forward because you reaffirmed the spirit that has triumphed over war and depression, the spirit that has lifted this country from the depths of despair to the great heights of hope, the belief that while each of us will pursue our own individual dreams, we are an American family and we rise or fall together as one nation and as one people.

Tonight, in this election, you, the American people, reminded us that while our road has been hard, while our journey has been long, we have picked ourselves up, we have fought our way back, and we know in our hearts that for the United States of America the best is yet to come.

I want to thank every American who participated in this election...

... whether you voted for the very first time or waited in line for a very long time.

By the way, we have to fix that.

Whether you pounded the pavement or picked up the phone...

... whether you held an Obama sign or a Romney sign, you made your voice heard and you made a difference.

I just spoke with Governor Romney and I congratulated him and Paul Ryan on a hard-fought campaign.

We may have battled fiercely, but it's only because we love this country deeply and we care so strongly about its future. From George to Lenore to their son Mitt, the Romney family has chosen to give back to America through public service and that is the legacy that we honor and applaud tonight.

In the weeks ahead, I also look forward to sitting down with Governor Romney to talk about where we can work together to move this country forward.

I want to thank my friend and partner of the last four years, America's happy warrior, the best vice president anybody could ever hope for, Joe Biden.

And I wouldn't be the man I am today without the woman who agreed to marry me 20 years ago.

Let me say this publicly: Michelle, I have never loved you more. I have never been prouder to watch the rest of America fall in love with you, too, as our nation's first lady.

Sasha and Malia, before our very eyes you're growing up to become two strong, smart beautiful young women, just like your mom.

And I'm so proud of you guys. But I will say that for now one dog's probably enough.

To the best campaign team and volunteers in the history of politics...

The best. The best ever. Some of you were new this time around, and some of you have been at my side since the very beginning.

But all of you are family. No matter what you do or where you go from here, you will carry the memory of the history we made together and you will have the life-long appreciation of a grateful president. Thank you for believing all the way, through every hill, through every valley.

You lifted me up the whole way and I will always be grateful for everything that you've done and all the incredible work that you put in.

I know that political campaigns can sometimes seem small, even silly. And that provides plenty of fodder for the cynics that tell us that politics is nothing more than a contest of egos or the domain of special interests. But if you ever get the chance to talk to folks who turned out at our rallies and crowded along a rope line in a high school gym, or saw folks working late in a campaign office in some tiny county far away from home, you'll discover something else.

You'll hear the determination in the voice of a young field organizer who's working his way through college and wants to make sure every child has that same opportunity.

You'll hear the pride in the voice of a volunteer who's going door to door because her brother was finally hired when the local auto plant added another shift.

You'll hear the deep patriotism in the voice of a military spouse whose working the phones late at night to make sure that no one who fights for this country ever has to fight for a job or a roof over their head when they come home.

That's why we do this. That's what politics can be. That's why elections matter. It's not small, it's big. It's important. Democracy in a nation of 300 million can be noisy and messy and complicated. We have our own opinions. Each of us has deeply held beliefs. And when we go through tough times, when we make big decisions as a country, it necessarily stirs passions, stirs up controversy.

That won't change after tonight, and it shouldn't. These arguments we have are a mark of our liberty. We can never forget that as we speak people in distant nations are risking their lives right now just for a chance to argue about the issues that matter, the chance to cast their ballots like we did today.

But despite all our differences, most of us share certain hopes for America's future. We want our kids to grow up in a country where they have access to the best schools and the best teachers.

A country that lives up to its legacy as the global leader in technology and discovery and innovation, with all the good jobs and new businesses that follow.

We want our children to live in an America that isn't burdened by debt, that isn't weakened by inequality, that isn't threatened by the destructive power of a warming planet.

We want to pass on a country that's safe and respected and admired around the world, a nation that is defended by the strongest military on earth and the best troops this -- this world has ever known.

But also a country that moves with confidence beyond this time of war, to shape a peace that is built on the promise of freedom and dignity for every human being. We believe in a generous America, in a compassionate

America, in a tolerant America, open to the dreams of an immigrant's daughter who studies in our schools and pledges to our flag.

To the young boy on the south side of Chicago who sees a life beyond the nearest street corner.

To the furniture worker's child in North Carolina who wants to become a doctor or a scientist, an engineer or an entrepreneur, a diplomat or even a president -- that's the future we hope for. That's the vision we share. That's where we need to go -- forward.

That's where we need to go.

Now, we will disagree, sometimes fiercely, about how to get there. As it has for more than two centuries, progress will come in fits and starts. It's not always a straight line. It's not always a smooth path.

By itself, the recognition that we have common hopes and dreams won't end all the gridlock or solve all our problems or substitute for the painstaking work of building consensus and making the difficult compromises needed to move this country forward. But that common bond is where we must begin. Our economy is recovering. A decade of war is ending. A long campaign is now over.

And whether I earned your vote or not, I have listened to you, I have learned from you, and you've made me a better president. And with your stories and your struggles, I return to the White House more determined and more inspired than ever about the work there is to do and the future that lies ahead.

Tonight you voted for action, not politics as usual.

You elected us to focus on your jobs, not ours. And in the coming weeks and months, I am looking forward to reaching out and working with leaders of both parties to meet the challenges we can only solve together. Reducing our deficit. Reforming our tax code. Fixing our immigration system. Freeing ourselves from foreign oil. We've got more work to do.

But that doesn't mean your work is done. The role of citizens in our Democracy does not end with your vote. America's never been about what can be done for us. It's about what can be done by us together through the hard and frustrating, but necessary work of self-government. That's the principle we were founded on.

This country has more wealth than any nation, but that's not what makes us rich. We have the most powerful military in history, but that's not what makes us strong. Our university, our culture are all the envy of the world, but that's not what keeps the world coming to our shores.

What makes America exceptional are the bonds that hold together the most diverse nation on earth.

The belief that our destiny is shared; that this country only works when we accept certain obligations to one another and to future generations. The freedom which so many Americans have fought for and died for come with responsibilities as well as rights. And among those are love and charity and duty and patriotism. That's what makes America great.

I am hopeful tonight because I've seen the spirit at work in America. I've seen it in the family business whose owners would rather cut their own pay than lay off their neighbors, and in the workers who would rather cut back their hours than see a friend lose a job.

I've seen it in the soldiers who reenlist after losing a limb and in those SEALs who charged up the stairs into darkness and danger because they knew there was a buddy behind them watching their back.

I've seen it on the shores of New Jersey and New York, where leaders from every party and level of government have swept aside their differences to help a community rebuild from the wreckage of a terrible storm.

And I saw just the other day, in Mentor, Ohio, where a father told the story of his 8-year-old daughter, whose long battle with leukemia nearly cost their family everything had it not been for health care reform passing just a few months before the insurance company was about to stop paying for her care.

I had an opportunity to not just talk to the father, but meet this incredible daughter of his. And when he spoke to the crowd listening to that father's story, every parent in that room had tears in their eyes, because we knew that little girl could be our own.

And I know that every American wants her future to be just as bright. That's who we are. That's the country I'm so proud to lead as your president.

And tonight, despite all the hardship we've been through, despite all the frustrations of Washington, I've never been more hopeful about our future.

I have never been more hopeful about America. And I ask you to sustain that hope. I'm not talking about blind optimism, the kind of hope that just ignores the enormity of the tasks ahead or the roadblocks that stand in our path. I'm not talking about the wishful idealism that allows us to just sit on the sidelines or shirk from a fight.

I have always believed that hope is that stubborn thing inside us that insists, despite all the evidence to the contrary, that something better awaits us so long as we have the courage to keep reaching, to keep working, to keep fighting.

America, I believe we can build on the progress we've made and continue to fight for new jobs and new opportunity and new security for the middle class. I believe we can keep the promise of our founders, the idea that if you're willing to work hard, it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from or what you look like or where you love. It doesn't matter whether you're black or white or Hispanic or Asian or Native American or young or old or rich or poor, able, disabled, gay or straight, you can make it here in America if you're willing to try.

I believe we can seize this future together because we are not as divided as our politics suggests. We're not as cynical as the pundits believe. We are greater than the sum of our individual ambitions, and we remain more than a collection of red states and blue states. We are and forever will be the United States of America.

And together with your help and God's grace we will continue our journey forward and remind the world just why it is that we live in the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, America. God bless you. God bless these United States.



FotM NEWSLETTER #264 (Nov. 7, 2012)—HYPERTEXT INDEX

| <u>DATE-ID</u> | <u>TIME</u> | <u>FROM</u> | <u>SUBJECT/TITLE</u> |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|--|
| 20121107-00 | | SteveB | O! by Steven W. Baker / SteveB ("Barack Obama' Acceptance Speech after Winning the 2012 U.S. Federal Election") |
| 20121106-01 | 04:39 | MarthaH | "The Road Not Taken" |
| 20121106-04 | 14:02 | SteveB | Re: "The Road Not Taken" (reply to MarthaH, above) |
| 20121106-02 | 08:04 | MarthaH | "See Which Industries Funneled the Most Cash into Presidential Race" |
| 20121106-03 | 13:26 | SteveG | "25 Reasons from 25 People Who Are Voting Obama" |
| 20121106-05 | 14:47 | Ben | Photo: Today's Seafood Lunch at Apple |
| 20121106-06 | 17:53 | SteveB | "Why I Voted for Mitt Romney" |
| 20121106-07 | 18:15 | Pam | Re: "Why I Voted for Mitt Romney" (reply to SteveB, above) |
| 20121106-08 | 18:38 | SteveB | Re: "Why I Voted for Mitt Romney" (reply to Pam, above) |
| 20121106-09 | 18:42 | Pam | Re: "Why I Voted for Mitt Romney" (reply to SteveB, above) |
| 20121106-10 | 19:00 | SteveB | Re: "Why I Voted for Mitt Romney" (reply to Pam, above) |
| 20121106-11 | 21:54 | Tom | Fw: Follow Immigration Election Results Tonight |
| 20121106-12 | 22:57 | MarthaH | "Nonvoters: They're Too Busy, Fed Up, or Say Their Vote Doesn't Count" |
| 20121106-13 | 23:04 | MarthaH | Cartoon: Comic Relief #1 |
| 20121106-14 | 23:58 | Marci | Photo: Cool Photos #1 |
| 20121106-15 | 23:59 | SteveB | Photo: Explosion! |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|---------|----------------------|
| 20121106-01 | 04:39 | MarthaH | "The Road Not Taken" |
|-----------------------------|-------|---------|----------------------|

Today...

The Road Not Taken (by Robert Frost)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I marked the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

I have been to that place in New Hampshire the poem refers to...haha.

Actually, I guess I've been to that place—in life—many more times.

And very apropos for this November day. I'd like to see us not make any turns...

"See Which Industries Funneled the Most Cash into Presidential Race" by Rachel Marcus and Andrea Fuller, The Center for Public Integrity/NBC News

Nov. 6, 2012, (<http://openchannel.nbcnews.com/news/2012/11/06/14949546-see-which-industries-funneled-the-most-cash-into-presidential-race?lite>)

Despite his vast wealth, Sheldon Adelson was not exactly a household name when the Republican presidential primary campaign got under way. But the casino magnate's multimillion-dollar contributions to a pro-Newt Gingrich super PAC ended that.

Adelson's support was linked to a shared stance with Gingrich as staunch supporters of Israel. Not quite so well publicized was Adelson's financial stake in who wins the presidency.

A second Obama term, thanks to the incumbent's proposed tax policies — could cost Adelson billions if he brought home profits earned at his overseas casinos, according to tax experts.

Since Gingrich flamed out in the primaries, Adelson and his wife Miriam have shifted their allegiance to GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney, giving the pro-Romney super PAC Restore Our Future \$20 million.

With Romney as president, Adelson, the billionaire chairman and CEO of the Las Vegas Sands Corp., could bring his profits home tax-free.

The Las Vegas Sands' overseas operations account for 86 percent of its revenue from casinos, hotels and shopping, according to its 2011 annual report to the Securities and Exchange Commission. The Sands' most lucrative holdings are in Macau, a special administrative region in China.

Super PACs like Restore Our Future can accept unlimited contributions from billionaires, corporations and unions and spend the money on ads helping their favorite candidates, thanks to the U.S. Supreme Court's 2010 *Citizens United* decision.

Adelson and family's nearly \$54 million in contributions through Oct. 17 to conservative super PACs puts the gambling industry at second place among super PAC donors' corporate interests, according to the Center for Public Integrity's analysis of data from the Center for Responsive Politics and the Federal Election Commission.

Slideshow: On the campaign trail

With no limits on giving, economic analysis of donations to super PACs are more about a few wealthy individuals' interests than fulfilling an industry's legislative goals.

Adelson and family are responsible for more than 98 percent of all casino industry contributions to super PACs — or \$53.7 million out of \$54.6 million — but his legislative agenda does not necessarily reflect that of the American Gaming Association, which lists as major issues online gambling and visa reform to allow more high rollers to come to American casinos.

[Finance industry tops list](#)

The top industry-donor to super PACs in the 2012 election cycle by far has been securities and investments at roughly \$94 million, according to records.

The list of donors is dominated by a relatively small number of extremely wealthy hedge fund and private equity millionaires and billionaires. The top 10 individual donors to this industry are responsible for almost half of its super PAC contributions. Twenty-one people and two corporations have given \$1 million or more.

The average itemized individual contribution to all super PACs is a little more than \$23,000, according to the Center's analysis. The average contribution to a super PAC from the investment industry is more than \$96,000.

The third-leading industry-donor, chemicals and related manufacturing, accounts for \$31 million of all super PAC contributions, and almost \$27 million comes from Harold Simmons, his wife Annette and his company. Contran Corp. controls several subsidiaries involved in chemical manufacturing, waste disposal and other businesses.

Topping Simmons' agenda is minimizing the regulatory reach of government, according to an interview he gave to *The Wall Street Journal* in March. Many of Contran's subsidiaries are subject to environmental regulations that cut into profits.

The fourth-leading donor by industry is real estate at about \$23 million thanks to seven-figure donations from the National Association of Realtors and Harlan Crow and Crow Holdings. The NAR favors access to credit and tax breaks so more people can afford to buy homes.

Fifth is the homebuilding industry with about \$22 million, again a category dominated by a single wealthy individual — Texan Bob Perry. He has given \$21.5 million to conservative super PACs to date.

Perry is perhaps best known for financing the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth ads during the 2004 election that helped sink John Kerry's presidential campaign, but he has been a major donor to Texas political campaigns since the 1980s. He favors limiting damages a jury can award plaintiffs in civil suits.

Romney is 'one of them'

The largest donors from the investment industry are not investment banks but an exclusive sub-group known as "alternative investing" — hedge funds and private equity firms.

Among the 26 donors to Restore Our Future who have given \$1 million or more, 11 are in the hedge fund or private equity business.

Among the alternative investment industry's top donors are Robert Mercer, a co-CEO of the hedge fund Renaissance Technologies, who gave \$1 million to Restore Our Future and \$600,000 to Club for Growth Action, which favors eliminating the capital gains tax.

Other top donors include TD Ameritrade founder Joe Ricketts, PayPal co-founder Peter Thiel, who now runs an investment firm, Paul Singer of Elliott Management, Wyoming investor Foster Friess and John Childs, chairman and CEO of a private equity firm.

Eighty percent of super PAC contributions from the investment community have gone to conservative super PACs, according to the Center's analysis.

James Simons, the founder of Renaissance Technologies, and George Soros*, the chairman of the hedge fund Soros Fund Management, have given a combined \$10.1 million to pro-Obama and pro-Democratic super PACs. Romney himself was a private equity man in his days at Bain Capital, which he co-founded.

"They view (Romney) as one of them," said David Kautter, the director of the Kogod Tax Center at American University. "They tend to view him as someone who accumulated substantial wealth doing what they do, someone who understands what they do and someone who believes that what they do provides substantial value to the economy."

Romney has said he would maintain, lower or eliminate the capital gains rate at various points during the race. Low rates benefit hedge fund and private equity managers, whose compensation comes primarily from investment returns.

Obama supports treating this type of compensation as regular income and subject to income tax rates up to 39.6 percent. In addition, Obama advocates raising the capital gains rate to 20 percent.

Adelson's gamble on Romney

Romney was not Adelson's top choice. Adelson invested \$16.5 million in former House Speaker Gingrich via Winning Our Future, the primary pro-Gingrich super PAC, before the candidate dropped out May 2.

Now the top supporter of Restore Our Future, Adelson has said he is willing to spend \$100 million electing Romney and a Republican Congress. The spending has made him newsworthy.

Adelson's steadfast and occasionally controversial positions on Israel's national security have also increased his profile in the national media and provided fodder for the opposition.

He opposes a two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinian Authority, once calling it a "stepping stone for the destruction of Israel and the Jewish people."

He was also once one of the biggest backers of AIPAC — the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. But Adelson broke off relations with the group in 2007, when it supported increasing U.S. economic aid to Palestinians.

Adelson shifted his financial support to the Republican Jewish Coalition, where he sits on the board. The politically active nonprofit has reported spending \$4.6 million on ads attacking Obama.

In an op-ed for the JNS News Service, Adelson wrote that American Jews should not trust Obama when it comes to Israel.

"For Obama, the issue is only political; for Israel, it's existential — a matter of survival," he wrote.

On paper, both Obama and Romney have similar positions on Israel — they both are committed to having a "special relationship" with the nation.

"Where they differ is in the way the current president perceives Israel," said Aaron David Miller, an Israel expert at the Woodrow Wilson Center. "Israel is more of a matter of national security interest than it is a values argument."

While Romney has a more "spontaneous, emotional instinct" to identify with Israel, Miller said, Obama seems less emotionally connected.

"In part it's a generational thing," Miller said — Obama came of age after the Israeli occupation. "And in part it's a matter of temperament."

Idealism or self-interest?

It is impossible to say for certain whether Adelson's support of Romney is based on idealism or self-interest or both. Adelson's spokesman refused to comment for this report.

Romney's tax policies and Adelson's financial interests are aligned, especially when it comes to tax treatment of overseas profits.

The Romney-backed "territorial tax system" would allow the Sands to bring its future foreign profits back to the U.S. free from U.S. income tax. Romney's plan also calls for a "tax holiday" that would allow American companies with profits stashed abroad to repatriate them tax-free.

A 2004 tax holiday resulted in the repatriation of one-third of all offshore earnings, according to a report from the Congressional Research Service.

Experts predict a territorial system would have a similar effect.

"I think it is very likely that more foreign earnings will end up back in the U.S. than we would have under the current worldwide system," said Kautter.

Obama opposes the territorial tax system and has proposed a minimum tax for multinational corporations' overseas earnings.

Under the current system, American companies that have operations abroad pay income tax to the country in which they earn the money then pay U.S. income tax when they bring profits home. Income taxes paid to the foreign government are deducted from the U.S. income tax when the money is repatriated; earnings left abroad are not subject to U.S. taxes.

Will McBride, the chief economist at the conservative Tax Foundation, calls the U.S. income tax on foreign profits a "repatriation tax."

"Naturally that discourages business from bringing that money back home," he said.

Obama and others argue that a territorial tax system would encourage American businesses to move overseas.

The Sands holds \$5.6 billion in overseas profits, according to its 2011 annual report. Under Romney's policy, Adelson and his company could repatriate it all for free.

The tax holiday combined with a switch to a territorial tax system would potentially provide a \$1.8 billion tax break to the Sands the first year, according to a study from a liberal think tank, the Center for American Progress.

Adelson himself, as majority owner, stands to benefit.

"By a reasonable but conservative estimate, the tax cut he stands to get from Romney's tax policies over a four-year term would be well over \$2 billion," said Seth Hanlon, the author of the study. "When you consider he's going to spend \$100 million on the presidential race, the return on investment is more than 2000 percent."

(George Soros is the chairman of the Open Society Foundation, which provides funding for the Center for Public Integrity. For a list of Center donors, visit the website: <http://www.publicintegrity.org/about/our-work/supporters>. The Center for Public Integrity is a nonprofit, independent investigative news outlet. For more of its stories go to <http://www.publicintegrity.org>.)

| |
|---|
| 20121106-03 13:26 SteveG "25 Reasons from 25 People Who Are Voting Obama" |
|---|

"25 Reasons from 25 People Who Are Voting Obama" (<http://my.barackobama.com/25-Reasons>)

1. "The Affordable Care Act is saving my daughter's life." [Stacey, Arizona](#).
2. "Obama is for the vets. He helped us wind down in Iraq, he's improved mental health policy with VA benefits." [Joel, Minnesota](#).
3. "Obama stuck his neck out for us, the auto industry. He wasn't going to let it just die, and I'm driving in this morning because of that, because of him." [Brian, Ohio](#).
4. "Osama bin Laden is dead, and General Motors is alive." [Joe Biden, Delaware](#).
5. "Supreme Court Supreme Court Supreme Court." [Andrew, California](#).

6. "Arithmetic." [Bill Clinton, New York.](#)
7. "He cares for the 100 percent." [Shana, Texas.](#)
8. "When Obama came into office, he successfully renewed our country's place in the community of nations, making cooperation in tackling the world's challenges possible." [Willis, North Carolina.](#)
9. "The actions he has taken with respect to protecting us from terrorism have been very, very solid." [Colin Powell, Virginia.](#)
10. "I was really very grateful to him for standing up for those kids who are having a really rough time out there because of their orientation." [Jane Lynch, California.](#)
11. "For me, President Obama is our best choice because he has a vision of the United States as a place where we are all in this together." [Bruce Springsteen, New Jersey.](#)
12. "He has a real plan for rescuing the economy that passes the 'math' test." [Teresa, Virginia.](#)
13. "Having someone in office who understands how powerful our voice can be is very important." [Jay Z, New York.](#)
14. "I am voting for Barack Obama and Joe Biden because I can trust them to care for the middle class and restore the American dream." [Steven, Florida.](#)
15. "The first measure he signed into law after becoming president was the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act -- so a female high school counselor or physical education teacher can fight for equal pay for equal work." [Connie Britton, California.](#)
16. "I believe in the America he wants for my grandchildren." [Nancy, Michigan.](#)
17. "We need four more years of repair, of helping the middle class achieve a sustainable economy." [James Taylor, North Carolina.](#)
18. "I've watched him fight for our country, stand by the middle class, the working class, the military, the education of our children, universal health care, women, the environment, and matters of national and domestic security." [Susan, Virginia.](#)
19. "The gifted 12-year-old I taught, whose parents were deported and left her here with her grandmother, will be allowed to stay and finish her education. She's been in the U.S. since age one." [Jamie, North Carolina.](#)
20. "I want our president to place scientific evidence and risk management above electoral politics." [Michael Bloomberg, New York.](#)
21. "I have four children who are under 26 and able to stay on my health care plan. That's been huge." [Amy, Pennsylvania.](#)
22. "He's fighting to defend and better Social Security and Medicare -- because millions of Latino seniors rely on them." [Cristina Saralegui, Florida.](#)
23. "Thanks to the President's efforts to keep student loan rates low, I can expect to save nearly \$1000 as I work to repay my student loans. And I don't have too many of those, thanks to the Federal Pell Grant program." [Sam, Minnesota.](#)
24. "It's been wonderful to have President Obama as a champion for access to health care for all women in this country." [Cecile Richards, New York.](#)

25. "Re-electing Barack Obama would lead to a stronger economic recovery than would be the case were Mitt Romney to win on November 6th." [Jared Bernstein, Washington, D.C.](#)

[20121106-05](#) 14:47 Ben Photo: Today's Seafood Lunch at Apple

Yep: quite a deal for \$6.50. I had a choice of four kinds of beans; I like the dry, unfatty, lightly seasoned version of refried beans served here; the Mexican rice, too, is surprisingly un-oily and light. (It's seasoned a bit more, as you can tell from its color.)

The tacos, though, were show-stealing, plato-dominating perfection, among the best shrimp tacos I can recall assimilating. Two fresh warmed flour tortillas enrobed half a dozen very crisp, lightly breaded, delicately golden-fried fresh jumbo Gulf shrimp. Each tortilla also contained a generous a generous dollop of smooth, cool avocado-watermelon relish and a tasty blob of zesty cabbage and red onion cole slaw glued together with creamy house-made mayonnaise... sounds pretty tasty, doesn't it?



Shrimp Taco Plate

[20121106-06](#) 17:53 SteveB "Why I Voted for Mitt Romney"

["Why I Voted for Mitt Romney" by Alex Pareene, Salon](#)

Nov. 6, 2012, (http://www.salon.com/2012/11/06/why_i_voted_for_mitt_romney/)

(Sure, he's a charlatan and a pathological liar, but Romney may be the only man to save us from the Republican Party.)

I supported Barack Obama in 2008, and expected to find myself doing so again in 2012. The Republican primaries were dispiriting. The party seemed to have learned nothing from its time in the wilderness and taken all the wrong lessons from its return to prominence in 2010. No one seemed to be presenting the Big Ideas Americans know we

need to solve our current problems. As the election drew nearer, though, I began to waver. Barack Obama is a good man, who did his best with an awful situation, but elections are about which man has what it takes to lead the country in the future.

Here is why I held my nose, today, and cast a vote for Romney:

As a believer in the urgent necessity of government action to address climate change, I had practically no choice but to support Romney. Romney was a responsible environmentalist as a governor, and I have no reason to doubt that he will once again become one, tomorrow. Plus, only a powerful and well-respected Republican president can strip the partisanship from the issue of global warming, and I am confident that congressional Republicans would soften their opposition to climate science once their beloved party leader gave them political cover to do so. Our best — perhaps only — hope for a carbon tax is a Mitt Romney presidency.

On civil rights for gay and lesbian Americans, the choice is clear: Only Mitt Romney can ensure that gay rights won't be turned into yet another partisan football.

While Romney's current stated position is opposition to same-sex marriage, and while he also opposed allowing gay and lesbian couples to adopt children, and while his church has long led the fight against LGBT rights, he is such a craven, soulless empty husk of a politician that he will probably just not do anything anti-gay while in office, because gay rights are much more popular than they used to be. This will give activists — including LGBT conservatives, long a marginalized voice in the conservative movement — a chance to fundamentally remake their party from the inside. By the end of the Romney presidency, gay rights might be the default position of both major parties. That cannot happen with an Obama victory.

It is true that the modern Republican Party is extremist, irresponsible, reckless and wholly unfit to govern. They campaign with grotesque white populism, stoke bigotry and xenophobia, and shamelessly work to suppress legal votes by poor and minority citizens. In Congress their unprecedented obstruction sabotaged the economic recovery and ground even routine federal business to a standstill.

This, again, is why we must elect Mitt Romney, the Republican nominee for president.

You see, only with a Republican in the White House is the Republican Party willing to occasionally sometimes act somewhat responsibly. With various worldwide economic and military crises likely to require urgent attention in the coming years, we need our Republicans to be only a little bit reckless and stupid, and not apocalyptically so.

While Mitt Romney has surrounded himself with discredited Bush-era foreign policy failures, he doesn't care that much about foreign policy and he might let one of the reasonable old Republicans run stuff.

Obviously I am strong supporter of universal healthcare. I don't want to see Obamacare eliminated. While Mitt Romney has repeatedly and unequivocally promised to repeal it, I don't believe him. He won't. In fact, maybe he will introduce a public option. It's definitely possible.

Once he's in office, I am confident that Romney will embrace the Radical Center, the old Massachusetts Mitt that we loved. He will definitely get along well with Senate Democrats and probably all the Bush tax cuts will be repealed to fix the deficit.

Finally, the most pressing economic issue of our time is the staggering growth of income inequality. Romney may seem an unlikely person to address that festering rot at the heart of modern American capitalism, but Obama didn't fix it with liberal stuff so maybe Romney will fix it with business knowhow.

Mitt Romney is by no means a perfect candidate. He may have no coherent or consistent principles beyond a steadfast belief in his own superhuman competence. He may have surrounded himself with charlatans and liars in his pursuit of power for the sake of flattering his staggering self-importance. His vice-presidential nominee may be a bizarre combination of overgrown adolescent Randian and pious ultra-Catholic misogynist. He may have a sociopathic indifference to the concept of honesty.

But there is still a chance that he will magically decide to do all the things that I like and want him to do once he is office.

Also, maybe he will build high-speed rail, that would be cool. Vote Romney.

[20121106-07](#) 18:15 Pam Re: "Why I Voted for Mitt Romney" (reply to SteveB, above)

Somehow this doesn't make me feel any better.

[20121106-08](#) 18:38 SteveB Re: "Why I Voted for Mitt Romney" (reply to Pam, above)

Don't worry. It's not even going to be close.

[20121106-09](#) 18:42 Pam Re: "Why I Voted for Mitt Romney" (reply to SteveB, above)

I hope you're right. I'm not going to watch a minute of the election coverage. My nerves are shot as it is. What's the view from Bolivia? Do you get an absentee ballot?

[20121106-10](#) 19:00 SteveB Re: "Why I Voted for Mitt Romney" (reply to Pam, above)

Yep, voted long ago and I told Marci, the new US citizen, she had to vote my way or there'd be no sex for her for a long time. Haha

Actually, we agree about almost everything political...and I think we have each done a lot to inform each other's views—we learn from each other.

Funny, how you see exactly the same problems everywhere, but different things are possible everywhere, so that leads to an interesting variety of solutions, often poles apart.

Well...gotta get back to Wolf and the election coverage. The champagne is ready but not yet uncorked.

[20121106-11](#) 21:54 Tom Fw: Follow Immigration Election Results Tonight

from NumbersUSA:

You likely will be frantically switching TV channels and surfing the internet tonight trying to keep up with all the races that most interest and affect you.

But you won't have to surf to find results that have implications for immigration policies over the next few years. NumbersUSA is trying to make life as easy as possible for you on a single web page that we will be updating all through the night.

<http://hub.numbersusa.com/route/7/5099262db8880a6293000000/154355/9>

[20121106-12](#) 22:57 MarthaH "Nonvoters: They're Too Busy, Fed Up, or Say Their Vote Doesn't Count"

"Nonvoters: They're Too Busy, Fed Up, or Say Their Vote Doesn't Count" by Isolde Raftery, NBC News

Nov. 4, 2012, (<http://usnews.nbcnews.com/news/2012/11/04/14837739-nonvoters-theyre-too-busy-fed-up-or-say-their-vote-doesnt-count?lite>)

(For different reasons, Suzann Holland, of Monroe, Wis., Heather Felton, of Parrish, Fla., and Ryan King, of Buffalo, N.Y. will not be voting in the Nov. 6 elections.)

Tabitha Brown, 29, of Oregon, says she won't vote because she finds her ballot too confusing. "I'm just a simple girl," she said. "Dumb it down for us."

In Buffalo, N.Y., Ryan King, 19, said he won't vote because he doesn't know if he's registered. He mailed in a registration form, but no one replied, so he doesn't know where to show up. Further south in the Bronx, Lala, a woman who is staying at a shelter, isn't voting because she thought she needed a state ID, which she can't afford. When she learned she didn't need an ID, it was too late to register.

Political pundits say undecided voters will determine the election, but little is said about people like Brown, King and Lala, who aren't voting. Since the 1960s, voter turnout has steadily declined in the U.S., which already ranks near the bottom among established democracies. In 2008, 64 percent of voting-age citizens voted, compared with 93 percent in Chile, 86 percent in Germany and 74 percent in Canada.

NBC News recently asked readers via Twitter, Facebook and through NBCNews.com to tell us why they won't cast their ballots. Their responses paralleled those from a 2008 survey by the U.S. Census Bureau: They don't like their choices, they're busy or they're not interested.

Broken down, the least likely voters have the lowest level of education. In fact, the most pronounced voting gap in 2008 was not between young and senior (49 to 72 percent) but between those without a high school degree and those with advanced degrees – 39 percent to 83 percent.

The wealthier are more likely voters -- 52 percent of those whose annual family income is less than \$20,000 voted versus 80 percent among those whose families bring in more than \$100,000. That could be partly because low-income people have more trouble taking time off work to vote.

"Everyone's pressed for time these days and therefore whether or not an employer is actively allowing people to vote the employees may feel time-pressed or constrained to take that legally protected time," said Susan Schoenfeld, senior legal editor for Business & Legal Resources, which provides guidance to employers on human resources issues.

Although some states require that employers give workers time off to vote, human resource experts say those laws are sometimes too confusing for employers and employees to understand.

About 13 percent of those responding to the Census survey said they didn't vote because they didn't like the 2008 candidates. That theme emerged among our readers too – many of them women in their 30s and 40s – who said not voting was itself political. Leaving their forms blank was, in a sense, a vote of no confidence.

"It feels like a third choice," said Suzann Holland, a 41-year-old public library director from Monroe, Wis. "We tend to think we have two choices because third parties are not viable, but there is a third choice – to let other people decide because sometimes either choice goes against everything we believe in."

Holland has voted in the past but this year, she said the debates between President Barack Obama and former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney "cemented my distaste for both candidates."

Breeanne Findley, 32, of Moline, Ill., is also fed up with Obama and Romney. She and her husband have five children between the two of them; she is a stay-at-home mom and is devoutly Pentecostal.

"I kept going back and forth, I looked online at who else was running for president – the Green Party and some other independent groups – but I didn't like those guys either," Findley said.

Her sister-in-law was appalled, she said. "She says that I'm not allowing my voice to be heard, saying that I should reconsider because my vote matters, there these are things I need to be voting for."

She has decided it doesn't matter who becomes president: "I'm a Christian and I believe that God is in charge. If this guy wins, it's not the end of the world because God is still God."

In Parrish, Fla., Heather Felton, 37, said she found herself lost in the political middle. She is Catholic, opposed to abortion, but also opposed to the death penalty and in favor of gun control. She has nuanced views about immigration.

"I posted to my Facebook page, 'Who should I vote for? Give me a good moral reason,'" she said. "But people aren't giving me a good moral reason. They're presenting negative inflammatory language."

Back in New York, King, a student at Cansius College, is not alone in struggling with registering to vote. Six percent of nonvoters between the ages of 18 and 24 didn't vote in 2008 because they didn't know how or where to sign up, according to the Census data.

After mailing in a voter registration form, he looked online for clues about where he should vote. He asked the College Democrats and the College Republicans at his school, but they told him they didn't know.

Increasingly jaded, King now questions whether his vote would count. (Which lands him in another Census category: Four percent of nonvoters said they didn't register because they didn't believe their vote would make a difference.)

"I just feel so disenfranchised voting in New York," he said. "It doesn't matter anyway. If I voted for Obama, it wouldn't count, so why bother?"

He added: "If you want me to vote so bad, at least meet me halfway."

In the Bronx, Lala was slightly sheepish to find out she didn't need an ID to vote. (She used to live in Georgia, where ID is required.) But mostly, she said, she feels increasingly apathetic. More pressing was food for dinner and ultimately, a job. She checked her wallet – she had \$30 to her name.

She said she read Romney's five-point plan but found it lacking and disjointed.

"As much as I would love to be bitter about living in poverty during the Obama administration, I have to consider that the alternative is a man without a plan," Lala said. Then she grew contemplative.

"All I need is something as simple as a job," she said. "I could have my quality of life back. I don't know how voting is going to meet my immediate needs."

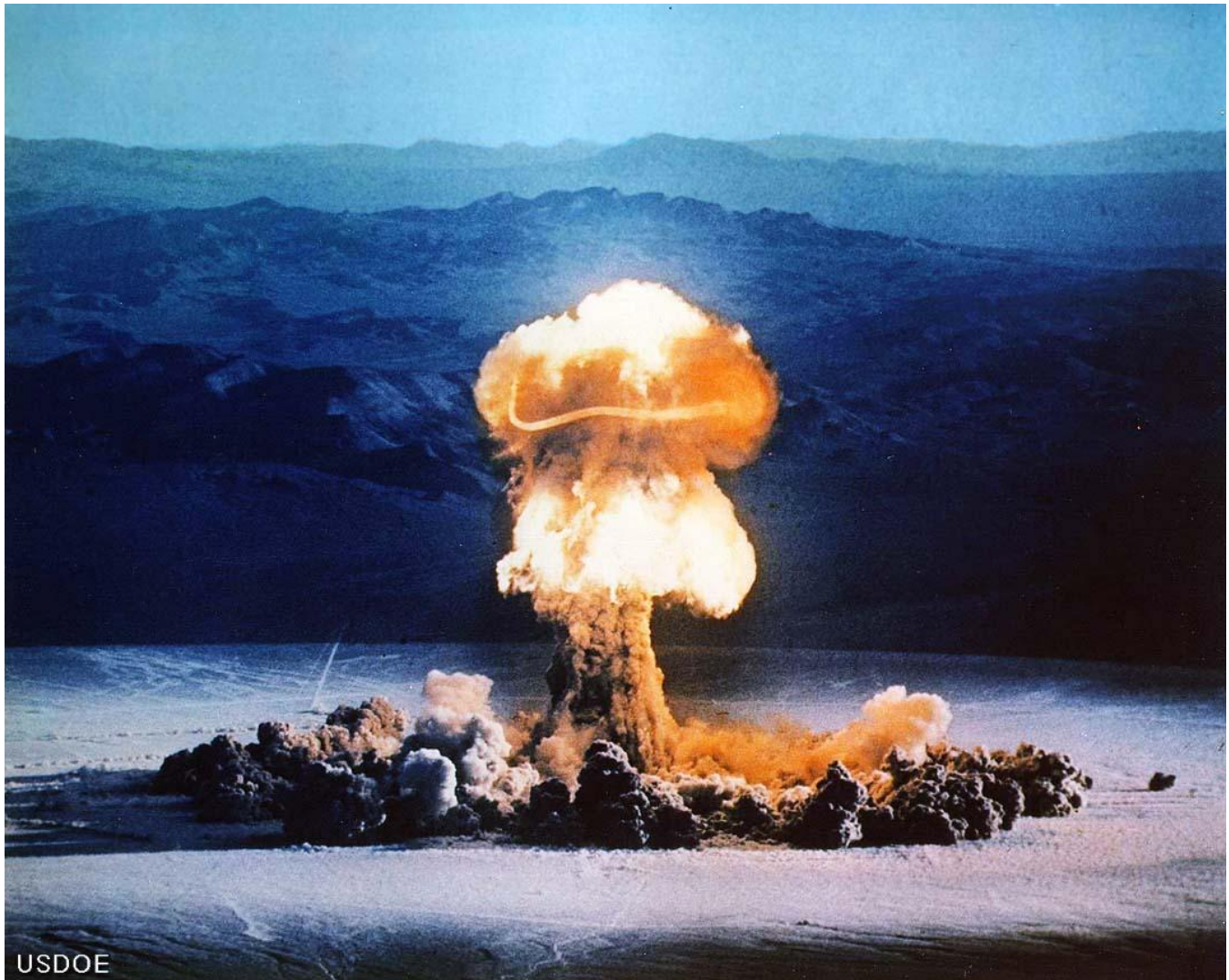
(NBC's Allison Linn contributed reporting to this story.)



70 Lightning Strikes in One Shot



<http://magsol.wordpress.com/2012/03/06/a-week-of-scripting/>



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

You can subscribe to this free, no-obligation, daily Newsletter filled with lively, intelligent discussion centered on politics and government, but ranging to anything members feel is important, interesting, or entertaining. To subscribe, use the form on our website or blog, or simply reply to this email with "Yes" or "Start" in the Subject line, then add our email address (below) to your Contacts or Safe list. To opt-out, reply with "No" or "Stop" in the subject line.

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

original material ©2012 Steven W. Baker, all rights reserved