

May 10, 2012

[Michael Barone](#) says the Warren story highlights the corrupt system of affirmative action.

... The important thing is the Warren story illustrates the rottenness of our system of racial quotas and preferences. Although the people in charge of administering them deny this, just about everyone with eyes to see knows that you're more likely to be hired and promoted if you have checked one of the non-Asian minority boxes: black, Hispanic, Native American, Pacific Islander.

You don't hear Republicans criticizing this system, and it was a Republican president, Richard Nixon, who introduced it in the federal government in 1970. It quickly spread to academia and corporate America.

People who classify themselves as approved minorities get into schools and get jobs that they wouldn't if they classified themselves as white. Not surprisingly, some people, perhaps including Warren, game this system.

The original justification was that this would overcome the disadvantages that American blacks endured during decades of slavery and segregation. That made sense to many people at the time. Those disadvantages were real, and most Americans wanted to be fair.

But the extension of minority status to other groups and the perpetuation of racial preferences for nearly half a century since the abolition of legal segregation means that there is increasingly little correlation between membership in the favored categories and genuine disadvantage. ...

You think the Warren story could not get better? Turns out the great great great grandmother who might have been a Cherokee, was married to a man who helped round up the Cherokees for their displacement from the Southeast to Oklahoma (Trail of Tears). [Hot Air](#) has the story.

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This new information about Ms. Warren's true heritage came as a direct result of a lead provided to me by William Jacobson over at [Legal Insurrection](#), who in turn had received the information from one of his readers. Jacobson, who has questioned Warren's explanation for her law faculty listing, calls this discovery "the ultimate and cruelest irony" of the Warren Cherokee saga. ...

Fred Barnes on the president's full time job – campaigning.

President Obama is breaking new ground in his campaign for reelection. He is going where incumbent presidents have never gone before. He is doing things for which President George W. Bush would have been pilloried. And Obama is doing all this in plain view.

Yet the media have rarely found the new ploys and gambits of Obama's campaign worth mentioning, much less spotlighting. For instance, in his address at the National Prayer Breakfast in February, Obama treated his agenda and Jesus Christ's as one and the same. Since the media didn't raise any flags, one might have concluded a comment such as Obama's was normal for that event. It wasn't.

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Linking his tax plan to Jesus was anything but routine. Presidents have been speaking to the prayer breakfast, a Christian-sponsored event, since the 1950s. Their talks have tended to be mildly Christian, not at all political, and never exploited as a vehicle to claim Christ's endorsement of their policies.

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David Hansanyi says we can do without the "to do list."

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Correct answer: I didn't say "no" enough.

The problem is that so-called fiscal conservatives say "yes" too often to populist notions masquerading as policy. With the state of the economy, what's scarier, that the administration would pretend that these are serious proposals or that the president might actually believe they are?

Jennifer Rubin posts on more stupidity from Joe Biden.

One theory is that Karl Rove has kidnapped the real vice president and is now going around sowing discord and spreading gaffes as fast as the press can record them. That would be the most charitable explanation for why, just a couple days after making [a mess on gay marriage](#), Vice President Biden chose in a speech to the Rabbinical Assembly's annual conference to deliver Mitt Romney [more ammunition](#).

He declared: "When we took office, let me remind, there was virtually no international pressure on Iran. We were the problem. We were diplomatically isolated in the world, in the region, in Europe."

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Daniel Henninger can't understand why anyone under 25 would vote for this president.

Why would anyone under the age of 25 vote for Barack Obama in November?

Mr. Obama resumed his College Tour 2012 last week, visiting campuses in Iowa, North Carolina and Colorado for the purpose of replicating his 66% youth-vote total from 2008.

In 2008, he reeled them in with promises of hope and change. In 2012 he's offering cash, promising to protect 3.4% interest on their college loans. We're about to find out if it's true that when you're young, hope springs eternal.

Put differently, the past three years have been a Peter Pan presidency for Peter Pan voters. If you're going to college, it's good to vote for Barack Obama again, so long as you'll never have to turn 23. But for many young Americans, there will be no Tinker Bell showing them how to land a job with lovely thoughts.

The youth unemployment rate for Americans has hovered around 16%. Anecdotal stories abound of college graduates living in the bedroom they grew up in, jobless. But hey, the president they voted for as freshmen is promising 3.4% interest on the average \$25,000 or so of college debt they owe four years later. ...

Jeff Jacoby says "income inequality" is not a defining issue of our time. You'll never guess who says it is.

... But what Americans honor is equality in the eyes of the law, political equality -- not equality of income or material circumstances. The two kinds of equality are inherently in conflict, as every effort to [impose egalitarianism](#) eventually proves. "There is all the difference in the world between treating people equally and attempting to make them equal," wrote Friedrich Hayek in 1948. The fact that some people make much more money than others has never convinced the American people that a fundamental overhaul of society is necessary or even desirable. For all the extravagant claims made last year about Occupy Wall Street's significance, is anyone surprised that the movement has fizzled?

For months President Obama has been calling income inequality "[the defining issue of our time](#)," but relatively few Americans agree. In a [recent Gallup poll](#), only 2 percent of respondents identified the gap between rich and poor as their top economic concern. Even among the Democrats in Gallup's survey, inequality didn't show up as a major worry. ...

Late night humor from [Andrew Malcolm](#).

Leno: *So President Obama had an imaginary girlfriend. Big deal! He also had an imaginary economic plan.*

Leno: *Obama's new campaign slogan: "Forward." Good one. It tells voters, 'Don't look back at all those promises I made but didn't keep. Just look Forward.'*

Fallon: *Joe Biden and New York Mayor Bloomberg play golf together. Biden shot an 89 while Bloomberg shot the guy who arranged a round of golf with Joe Biden.*

Leno: *President Obama getting around these days. He was in Afghanistan last week as part of his 'Did I Mention I Killed Osama bin Laden Tour?'*

Washington Examiner

[Warren ancestry claim puts light on corrupt system](#)

by Michael Barone

Washington Post editorial writer and liberal blogger Jonathan Capehart is puzzled. Why does the "non-issue" of Harvard law professor and Democratic Senate candidate Elizabeth Warren's Native American ancestry "require so much attention?" he asked last week.

When Warren was teaching at Pennsylvania, Texas and Houston law schools, she identified herself as Indian, or, to be politically correct, Native American.

Then she was hired at Harvard, and dropped the Native American from her biographical description. Harvard Law today says it has one faculty member of Native American heritage. But it won't say which one.

Capehart argues this shouldn't matter because Warren's claim is accurate. When the issue first broke, I thought that was likely. Warren grew up in Oklahoma, much of which was once the Indian Territory. Many people there have Indian ancestors.

And a researcher at the New England Historic Genealogical Society found that in a transcript of an 1894 marriage application, Warren's great-great-great-grandmother listed herself as Cherokee.

It's a heritage to be proud of. The Cherokee were one of the "civilized tribes," and their leader, Sequoyah, created an ingenious 86-letter alphabet. You can see it, together with English, on street signs in Tahlequah, Okla.

Let's assume the 1894 document is accurate. That makes Warren 1-32nd Native American. George Zimmerman, the Florida accused murderer, had a black grandmother. That makes him

one-fourth black, four times as black as Warren is Indian, though the New York Times describes him as a "white Hispanic."

What's wrong with what Warren did? Capehart seems to understand that. "The implication in these stories is that Warren used minority status to advance her career," he writes.

Well, yes. When she was hired, Harvard Law School had just denied tenure to a female teacher and was being criticized for not having enough minorities and women on its faculty.

Of course Harvard and Warren say her claim to minority status had nothing to do with her being hired. And if it did, no one is going to say so. Nothing to see here, just move on.

The important thing is the Warren story illustrates the rottenness of our system of racial quotas and preferences. Although the people in charge of administering them deny this, just about everyone with eyes to see knows that you're more likely to be hired and promoted if you have checked one of the non-Asian minority boxes: black, Hispanic, Native American, Pacific Islander.

You don't hear Republicans criticizing this system, and it was a Republican president, Richard Nixon, who introduced it in the federal government in 1970. It quickly spread to academia and corporate America.

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The original justification was that this would overcome the disadvantages that American blacks endured during decades of slavery and segregation. That made sense to many people at the time. Those disadvantages were real, and most Americans wanted to be fair.

But the extension of minority status to other groups and the perpetuation of racial preferences for nearly half a century since the abolition of legal segregation means that there is increasingly little correlation between membership in the favored categories and genuine disadvantage.

Black leaders lament that black college admissions increasingly favor affluent blacks (Barack Obama has made this point) and recent immigrants from Africa. Hawaii U.S. Sen. Daniel Akaka sought to separate Pacific Islanders from Asians because the former are more disadvantaged.

One solution would be to ban self-description and come up with rigorous definitions of race, like Louisiana's post-Reconstruction racial code or South Africa's apartheid laws. But those don't seem like very attractive models.

An alternative is to ditch racial quotas and preferences altogether. Retiring Democratic Sen. Jim Webb has made a proposal for something like this.

The strongest argument for this is not that some whites (and Asians) get passed over; these individuals will probably do fine nonetheless. The strongest argument against the system is that it casts a pall of illegitimacy over the genuine achievements of the intended beneficiaries.

In the meantime, what may undermine racial quotas and preferences most effectively is ridicule. For isn't the idea that the blond, blue-eyed Warren suffered some terrible disadvantage and is in need of special preference because she is 1-32nd Cherokee just laugh-out-loud funny?

Hot Air

[Report: Elizabeth Warren's ancestor may have ... rounded up Cherokee for Trail of Tears](#)

by Allahpundit

Out: Elizabeth Warren, Native American. In: Elizabeth Warren, [Jacksonian Democrat](#).

Man, in hindsight it's a good thing she [didn't attend the annual Harvard Powwow](#) yesterday after all, huh? Awwwk-ward.

As I pointed out in my article here on Sunday, no evidence supports this claim [that her great-great-great grandmother was Cherokee]. O.C. Sarah Smith Crawford had no Cherokee heritage, was listed as "white" in the Census of 1860, and was most likely half Swedish and half English, Scottish, or German, or some combination thereof. (Note, the actual 1894 marriage license makes no claim of Cherokee ancestry.)

But the most stunning discovery about the life of O.C. Sarah Smith Crawford is that her husband, Ms. Warren's great-great-great grandfather, was apparently a member of the Tennessee Militia who rounded up Cherokees from their family homes in the Southeastern United States and herded them into government-built stockades in what was then called Ross's Landing (now Chattanooga), Tennessee—the point of origin for the horrific Trail of Tears, which began in January, 1837.

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Follow the link [to Breitbart.com](#) for background. All that's left now is the inevitable revelation that *Scott Brown* is part Cherokee and that his ancestors were rounded by Warren's and this narrative will be wrapped up in a pretty little bow.

Speaking of Brown, this afternoon his team called on Warren to [release her law-school applications and personnel files](#) to prove that she never used her alleged Native American identity to gain a hiring advantage. That's the lingering mystery in all this, of course. For someone who was so dogged about claiming minority status — nine years in a row in those faculty listings, remember — supposedly in order to make friends with "[people who are like I am.](#)" she seems to have been curiously passive about making friends with Native Americans who were right in front of her. Case in point: The executive director of Harvard University's Native American Program [told Team Breitbart](#) yesterday that she can't remember Warren ever having participated in program events. Go figure. Maybe if they'd invited Ben Affleck and Matt Damon to campus and charged \$5,000 a head for her campaign, [she might have showed up.](#)

Weekly Standard

His Fulltime Job

Obama's shameless electioneering.

by Fred Barnes

President Obama is breaking new ground in his campaign for reelection. He is going where incumbent presidents have never gone before. He is doing things for which President George W. Bush would have been pilloried. And Obama is doing all this in plain view.

Yet the media have rarely found the new ploys and gambits of Obama's campaign worth mentioning, much less spotlighting. For instance, in his address at the National Prayer Breakfast in February, Obama treated his agenda and Jesus Christ's as one and the same. Since the media didn't raise any flags, one might have concluded a comment such as Obama's was normal for that event. It wasn't.

Obama offered his own version of the WWJD question—what would Jesus do?—on the issue of raising taxes on the rich. Obama wants to, arguing that seniors, young people, and the middle class shouldn't be forced to "shoulder the burden alone."

Instead, "I think to myself, if I'm willing to give something up as somebody who's been extraordinarily blessed, and give up some of the tax breaks that I enjoy, I actually think that's going to make economic sense," he said. "But for me as a Christian, it also coincides with Jesus' teaching that 'for unto whom much is given, much shall be required.' □"

Linking his tax plan to Jesus was anything but routine. Presidents have been speaking to the prayer breakfast, a Christian-sponsored event, since the 1950s. Their talks have tended to be mildly Christian, not at all political, and never exploited as a vehicle to claim Christ's endorsement of their policies.

Obama, however, got off without so much as a slap on the wrist from the press. There's a double standard here. Had Bush linked his tax policy to Christ, the media would have not only reported it, but no doubt assailed him for breaching the wall between church and state.

Obama, by the way, also said his plan to tax the rich "mirrors the Islamic belief that those who've been blessed have an obligation to use those blessings to help others, or the Jewish doctrine of moderation and consideration for others."

In April, speaking to newspaper editors in Washington, D.C., the president took a unique approach to the 2013 budget passed by the House. "I want to actually go through what it would mean for our country if these [spending] cuts were to be spread out evenly," he said. "So bear with me."

The editors and the media covering the speech did just that. From all appearances, they accepted the spread-the-cuts-evenly tactic as perfectly legitimate. It wasn't. It was neither honest nor fair.

The GOP budget, which would increase the national debt by \$3 trillion over 10 years, distributed cuts quite unevenly. That's the way budgets are put together: Some programs are cut, others have their spending increased. In both cases, changes are imposed from a higher spending base, reflecting inflation and expected growth in programs.

That didn't stop Obama. He insisted college students would lose \$1,000 in aid, 1,600 medical grants to research Alzheimer's, cancer, and AIDS would disappear, and two million mothers and babies would be dropped from a program that "gives them access to healthy food."

That's not all. Weather forecasts would be less accurate because fewer satellites would be launched. There would be flight cancellations, plus shutdowns of air traffic control systems at some airports.

"This is math," Obama said. Only it wasn't. It was make-believe. "This is not conjecture," he said. "I am not exaggerating. These are facts." In truth, they were facts based on a false premise. Which means they were fiction.

Another departure by Obama began last September when he summoned a joint session of Congress to unveil his new "jobs bill." This has two twists. It was crafted to be rejected by Republicans in hopes of creating the impression of a "do-nothing Congress." To make sure Republicans wouldn't seek a compromise, Obama said he wouldn't negotiate. It was take it or leave it. The media barely blinked.

The president devoted weeks to traveling the country and demanding that Congress "pass this bill." Indeed, Majority Leader Harry Reid could have brought it to the Senate floor for a vote. And if Obama had wanted him to, he would have. But Obama's urgent-sounding plea was a sham. There was no vote, though several individual parts of the bill were passed later.

Obama has used similar fakery again and again. He's relentless in touting the Buffett Rule, despite zero chance of its passage. It would require those making more than a million dollars to pay at least 30 percent of their annual earnings in federal income taxes. He's threatened to veto a Republican bill to prevent a doubling of the interest rate on college loans on trumped-up grounds, hoping to tag them as opposed to the popular aid program.

And last month, the White House spread the word about its need for executive action to govern, as the *New York Times* put it, "in the face of Congressional obstructionism." This is a straw man. Obama is eager to create the illusion he's been forced to rely on executive orders because Republicans are blocking his agenda.

But it's the Senate, controlled by Democrats, that has become the graveyard of legislation. It has refused to pass a budget for the third straight year, and Reid has said he'll call as few votes as possible this year. Rather than a do-nothing Congress—in other words, Republicans—there's a do-nothing Senate, led by Democrats.

In running for reelection, Obama has already set records. As of March 6, he's held more fundraising events (104) than the previous five presidents combined (94). And I suspect Obama has set the record for blaming his predecessor for his own troubles. If he hasn't, there's still time. The election is six months away.

Human Events

Obama's Ridiculous 'To-Do List'

by David Harsanyi

President Barack Obama has compiled a handy [to-do list](#) for Congress that, "if acted upon quickly, will create jobs and help restore middle class security," according to the White House's blog. And it's about time. This is most certainly not, as cynics might suggest, another transparent political scheme. After all, these initiatives, the White House claims, enjoy bipartisan support -- which, I gather, is meant to impress you, even if it's not exactly true.

Regrettably, the sentiment of the to-do list does garner bipartisan support and illustrates how cheap populism leads to bad policy and why Washington shouldn't be in the business of "creating jobs" in the first place.

Obama says passing his to-do list would help create "an economy built to last -- one that creates the jobs of the future and makes things the rest of the world buys -- not one built on outsourcing, loopholes, and risky financial deals." History tells us that when government "creates" an economy, it won't be much of an economy to speak of -- but here's the new plan:

"Reward American Jobs, Not Outsourcing." Hey, let's play on the genuine frustration of struggling Americans. Most politicians will latch on to this protectionist notion to some extent. But need it really be repeated that outsourcing, by generating more productivity, creates more wealth and more jobs? On this point, most economists actually [agree](#).

But even if you believe "outsourcing" is a job killer, does anyone believe the notion that "passing legislation that gives companies a new 20 percent tax credit for the cost of moving their operations" will make a dent on employment? Liberals frequently argue that high corporate taxes aren't chasing companies abroad, yet a one-time tax break on moving expenses is now a cornerstone of "an economy built to last"?

To do: "Create Jobs By Investing In Affordable Clean Energy." It is difficult to calculate just how many subsidies and breaks are already "invested" in unproductive clean-energy projects -- many of them supported by Republicans. Whether it be morally fulfilling or good for the environment, an expansion of "the 30 percent tax credit to investments in clean energy manufacturing" could cost jobs, [not create them](#). As one Spanish study found, 2.2 conventional jobs are destroyed for every job created in the alternative energy industry. "Investing" in inefficient energy is no way to economic growth.

There are other feel-good to-dos on the list: "Invest in a New Hire Tax Credit For Small Business," wherein Washington jump-starts new hiring by giving "a 10 percent income tax credit for firms that create new jobs or increase wages in 2012." Losing money? Give a raise; get a tax break.

Then there is the admirable "Put Returning Veterans to Work Using Skills Developed in the Military." (Hey, Republicans, why do you hate veterans?)

Also to do: "Cut Red Tape So Responsible Homeowners Can Refinance" -- wherein Congress passes legislation to cut red tape in the mortgage market, allowing "responsible" homeowners to refinance at today's lower rates. Guess what? Banks already allow responsible homeowners to refinance, and there are tons of government programs designed to help homeowners. Is it good for the economy? That's another story.

But [according to](#) White House press secretary Jay Carney, the function of the to-do list is that it ensures that come election time, Republicans will have to explain to their constituents "what they did while they were in Washington these last two years. Did they just say no?"

Correct answer: I didn't say "no" enough.

The problem is that so-called fiscal conservatives say "yes" too often to populist notions masquerading as policy. With the state of the economy, what's scarier, that the administration would pretend that these are serious proposals or that the president might actually believe they are?

Right Turn **[Biden blows it, again](#)**

by Jennifer Rubin

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He declared: "When we took office, let me remind, there was virtually no international pressure on Iran. We were the problem. We were diplomatically isolated in the world, in the region, in Europe."

The Romney camp pounced, releasing a statement from policy director Lanhee Chen that read:

All too often, President Obama and his administration have sought to blame America first, yet Vice President Biden's reckless statement today blaming America for — of all things — the progress of Iran's nuclear weapons program, has reached a new low. The problem is not America. It is the ayatollahs who oppress their people, threaten their neighbors, and are pursuing nuclear weapons. President Obama's naïve approach to Iran has given the regime valuable time to get closer than ever before to a nuclear weapons capability. Vice President Biden's comments are wrong and completely inappropriate. Mitt Romney will stand up for America and our allies, and he will not apologize for America's leadership role in the world.

Strictly speaking, Biden's comments weren't an apology but an "It's Bush's fault" moment. It is one in a series of defensive comments by the administration to blame whatever ails us on Obama's predecessor and paint his own efforts to dig ourselves out of the purported Bush-made mess as Herculean.

While not an apology, the comment is inane and inaccurate. George W. Bush and his then-secretary of state Condoleezza Rice in essence let the Europeans carry the ball on Iran talks in the second term. It might not have been very effective, but it wasn't our "fault" that Iran proceeded with its plans. Moreover, the only time Iran actually halted its nuclear weapons program was in 2003, when, in the wake of Saddam Hussein's ouster, the mullahs feared for their political and personal survival.

All Biden had to say was that his administration put together a sanctions program. He could have easily delivered his speech without the gratuitous swipe at Bush. (Of course, the efficacy of a sanctions approach without a credible military threat is in doubt as the Iranians seem to be speeding along in their weaponization efforts.)

I'm sure Biden is simply reflecting the pervasive woe-is-me attitude in an administration that feels underappreciated and is incapable of refraining from blaming others.

Poor Joe. I'm sure, if Obama loses November, he'll be added to the long list of "people to blame for Obama's missteps."

WSJ

Henninger: Memo to the Youth Vote

Unless they plan to be union lifers, what's in an Obama vote for young Americans?

by Daniel Henninger

Why would anyone under the age of 25 vote for Barack Obama in November?

Mr. Obama resumed his College Tour 2012 last week, visiting campuses in Iowa, North Carolina and Colorado for the purpose of replicating his 66% youth-vote total from 2008.

In 2008, he reeled them in with promises of hope and change. In 2012 he's offering cash, promising to protect 3.4% interest on their college loans. We're about to find out if it's true that when you're young, hope springs eternal.

Put differently, the past three years have been a Peter Pan presidency for Peter Pan voters. If you're going to college, it's good to vote for Barack Obama again, so long as you'll never have to turn 23. But for many young Americans, there will be no Tinker Bell showing them how to land a job with lovely thoughts.

The youth unemployment rate for Americans has hovered around 16%. Anecdotal stories abound of college graduates living in the bedroom they grew up in, jobless. But hey, the president they voted for as freshmen is promising 3.4% interest on the average \$25,000 or so of college debt they owe four years later.

At his appearance before students at the University of Iowa, President Obama ran straight at those who've criticized his student interest-rate gift as small beer: "These guys don't get it. . . . This is the economy!" Mr. Obama shouted. "This is about your job security! This is about your future! If you do well, the economy does well. This is *about* the economy!"

We get it: The election really is about the economy. If so, the job market for many young people during the Obama presidency has bordered on, well, social Darwinism. Many students who did well in school either don't have a job or took one far below their expensive skills.

Last May, the Nobel laureate economist Robert Lucas, an expert on economic growth, put together a lecture on the economy because so many people asked him why the U.S. economy's post-recession growth rate was struggling around 2%.

He noted that in the years after World War II, both the U.S. and Europe grew at an annual rate of about 3%. But in the mid-1970s, Western Europe dropped below that growth rate and stayed there, creating a 20% to 40% gap in income levels between Europe and the U.S. Prof. Lucas suggested this had to do with the cost of maintaining the social-welfare commitments Europe accumulated in the postwar years.

He then looked at the levels of U.S. social-welfare commitments, including the new Obama health-care entitlement, and ended with a simple observation: "Is it possible that by imitating European policies on labor markets, welfare and taxes, the U.S. has chosen a new, lower GDP trend? If so, it may be that the weak recovery we have had so far is all the recovery we will get."

That stark assertion—this may be all the growth we're going to get—is something the youth vote should think about. And there's a good place to do that: Backpacking through Europe. But this time try to get a look behind the fabulous theme-park façades in Italy, France, Spain, the U.K., Portugal and Greece. In Spain the youth unemployment rate is 50%; in Italy it's 36%.

Don't miss visiting Europe's famed and beautiful universities. The Chronicle of Higher Education this week has a nightmarish story about what low economic growth has done to the Continent's intellectual seed corn. In Spain, 300,000 of last year's graduates left the country. A Portuguese professor says the system there is falling into "a sort of third-world pattern." A side-bar story is headlined: "In Italy, a Dysfunctional University System Sinks Deeper Into Decay."

For new American college graduates, there is an alternative to that job you thought you'd have: Join a union.

If your new goal in life is to join the United Auto Workers (saved by Mr. Obama with your parents' taxes) or work for a government agency somewhere for the next 40 years, the president is your candidate. The modern Democratic Party from top to bottom is the party of all unions, hardly different than the European political parties whose union members and unemployed college graduates filled city squares Tuesday in forlorn May Day demonstrations. If a career inside an American union is what it's all about, then an Obama vote ("Forward") is a no-brainer.

But aside from the aspiring union lifers, what's in an Obama vote for the rest of the youth vote? The U.S. annualized growth rate in the first quarter this year was 2.2%. Perhaps the life raft is that provision in ObamaCare that extends health-insurance coverage to children living at home until the age of 26. If Barack Obama wins another four years, you may need it.

Jewish World Review

'The defining issue of our time'? Hardly

by Jeff Jacoby

There is nothing new under the sun, including politicians who seek to win votes by milking the gap between rich and poor.



President Obama calls income inequality "the defining issue of our time," but relatively few Americans agree. In a Gallup poll, only 2% of respondents identified the gap between rich and poor as a top economic concern.

Today it's Barack Obama, [demanding a "Buffett rule"](#) and decrying the harm caused when "the gap between those at the very, very top and everybody else keeps growing wider and wider and wider and wider." Not so long ago it was John Edwards, intent on riding his ["Two Americas" stump speech](#) ("One America does the work while another America reaps the reward") all the way to the White House. [Earlier still it was FDR](#), lambasting the wealthy who "did not want to pay a fair share" and boasting that he'd "increased still further the taxes paid by individuals in the highest brackets" because that was "the American thing to do."

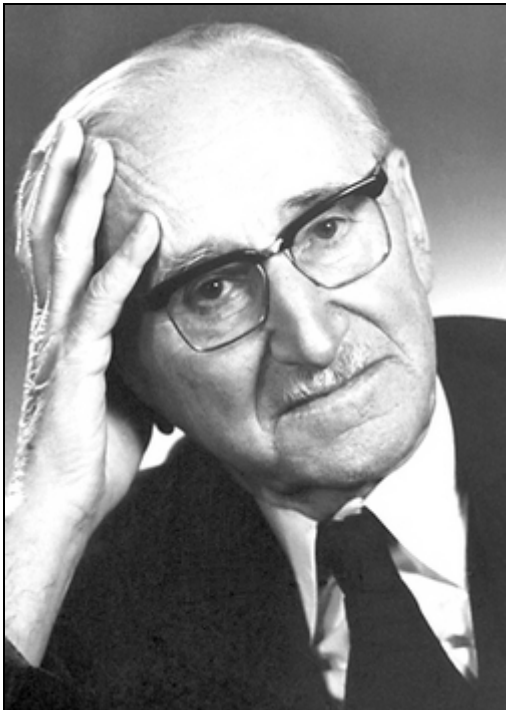
Indeed, presidential candidates have been picking at the income-inequality scab since at least [1840](#). That was the year William Henry Harrison, running against incumbent Martin Van Buren during a recession, accused the president of pursuing policies "directed to the purpose of [making the rich richer and the poor poorer](#)." (Harrison won, but died a month after taking office.)

Those who peddle class resentment can always find ready takers; otherwise politicians wouldn't keep selling the same rug. But the demand for it is never as great as the demagogues imagine. Most Americans don't hate the rich, or even the very rich, and they don't despise the economic system that makes great wealth possible. "That all men are created equal" goes to the core of our national creed; its undeniable moral force led Americans to fight a horrific Civil War over slavery in the 19th century, and to embrace the legal and social upheaval of the Civil Rights movement in the 20th.

But what Americans honor is equality in the eyes of the law, political equality -- not equality of income or material circumstances. The two kinds of equality are inherently in conflict, as every

effort to [impose egalitarianism](#) eventually proves. "There is all the difference in the world between treating people equally and attempting to make them equal," wrote Friedrich Hayek in 1948. The fact that some people make much more money than others has never convinced the American people that a fundamental overhaul of society is necessary or even desirable. For all the extravagant claims made last year about Occupy Wall Street's significance, is anyone surprised that the movement has fizzled?

For months President Obama has been calling income inequality "[the defining issue of our time](#)," but relatively few Americans agree. In a [recent Gallup poll](#), only 2 percent of respondents identified the gap between rich and poor as their top economic concern. Even among the Democrats in Gallup's survey, inequality didn't show up as a major worry.



"There is all the difference in the world between treating people equally and attempting to make them equal" -- Nobel Laureate Friedrich Hayek

Armed with a bully pulpit and backed by a liberal media chorus, Obama may have good political reasons to keep hammering away at the wealth gap. No doubt he can mobilize some voters with his [suspect claims](#) about billionaires paying a 1 percent tax rate, or the charge that Republicans want "everybody left to [fend for themselves](#) and play by their own rules."

But most voters understand intuitively that in a free society, unequal productivity will generate unequal wealth. Incentives and rewards are powerful motivators of work and risk-taking; and the greater the potential rewards, the more an economy will achieve. A Bill Gates or Steve Jobs or Sam Walton is far more likely to flourish in a nation where people can become millionaires and billionaires -- and to enrich all of us in the process of enriching themselves.

"In a democratic, capitalist society, gaps in income are inevitable," [write Peter Wehner and Robert Beschel Jr.](#) in the current issue of National Affairs. "Yet it is worth noting that democratic

capitalism has done far more to create wealth, advance human flourishing, and lift people out of destitution than any other economic and political system. A policy agenda that has as its top priority the elimination of income gaps not only encourages resentment but also threatens the American economy because a narrow focus on closing gaps tends to go along with reduced overall growth."

There is no fixed limit to the wealth a society can produce, and today's "1 percent" produce an amazing amount of it. But their wealth takes nothing away from the other 99 percent. We are all free to rise as high as talent, education, and hard work will take us. Wealth is not theft. Productivity is not zero-sum. If economic disparity is a problem, then the way to solve it is by raising those who are stuck near the bottom, not tearing down those who have climbed to the top.

Investors.com

Late Night Humor

by Andrew Malcolm

Leno: So President Obama had an imaginary girlfriend. Big deal! He also had an imaginary economic plan.

Leno: Obama's new campaign slogan: "Forward." Good one. It tells voters, 'Don't look back at all those promises I made but didn't keep. Just look Forward.'

Fallon: Joe Biden and New York Mayor Bloomberg play golf together. Biden shot an 89 while Bloomberg shot the guy who arranged a round of golf with Joe Biden.

Leno: President Obama getting around these days. He was in Afghanistan last week as part of his 'Did I Mention I Killed Osama bin Laden Tour?'

Leno: Little bit of history tonight. Today in 1789, George Washington became the first president of the United States, after just narrowly beating out Ron Paul.

Fallon: An Australian billionaire is building a replica Titanic. A great way to travel, if you couldn't get a seat on the Hindenburg, Jr.

Fallon: Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg launches a new tool to show which users are organ donors. In case there's a plow accident in FarmVille.

Fallon: A Kansas hunter shot his friend twice. He thought he was a turkey. The first time the pal yelled he wasn't a turkey. But, c'mon, that's exactly what a turkey would say.

Letterman: Just had the anniversary of the Osama bin Laden killing. When the SEALs arrived, he was watching TV with his three wives. So a lot of people think it was suicide.

Leno: Germans report finding terrorist plot details in a digital file hidden in a porn movie. This was the very first time ever a porn movie ever contained a plot.

Fallon: A new survey found that a third of Americans would not be able to pass the U.S. citizenship test. It's true. That's a real insult to our founding fathers—Denzel Washington and George Jefferson.

Fallon: Florida firefighters rescued a cat from the top of a light pole with a Doritos bag on its head. Afterward, the cat said, 'Do I get on YouTube now?'

Fallon: ABC is launching a 'Dancing with the Stars' online game. Fans can virtually dance with the show's stars. So now you can pretend-dance with a pretend-version of a pretend-celebrity.

Fallon: A Penn college student designs a robot that cooks, cleans and does laundry. College students responded 'It does what, what, and what?'

Letterman: Osama bin Laden is still dead. He lived in that Abbottabad compound all those years. He couldn't go out except twice a year for jury duty.

Leno: Obama's new campaign slogan is: "Forward." Well, if unemployment doesn't improve by November, it'll be "Forward My Mail."

Fallon: President Obama hosts early Cinco de Mayo White House party. I thought it was weird when he made all the guests climb over the fence to get in.

Fallon: Qantas Airlines is starting to attach electronic tags to luggage to prevent loss. And they're gonna start doing that once they find the suitcase containing all the electronic tags.

Letterman: In New York City and you want to see a great play? See 'Death of a Salesman.' It's a serious indictment of capitalist greed at \$200 a ticket.

Fallon: 'The Avengers' made \$18.7 million in midnight showings the first night. Which explains why the next morning, BestBuy's entire Geek Squad called in sick.

Fallon: A Canadian woman sets world record 46 MPH on a motorized toilet. Onlookers were surprised. But not as much as the woman who thought she was on a regular toilet.



THE INDIAN GIVER

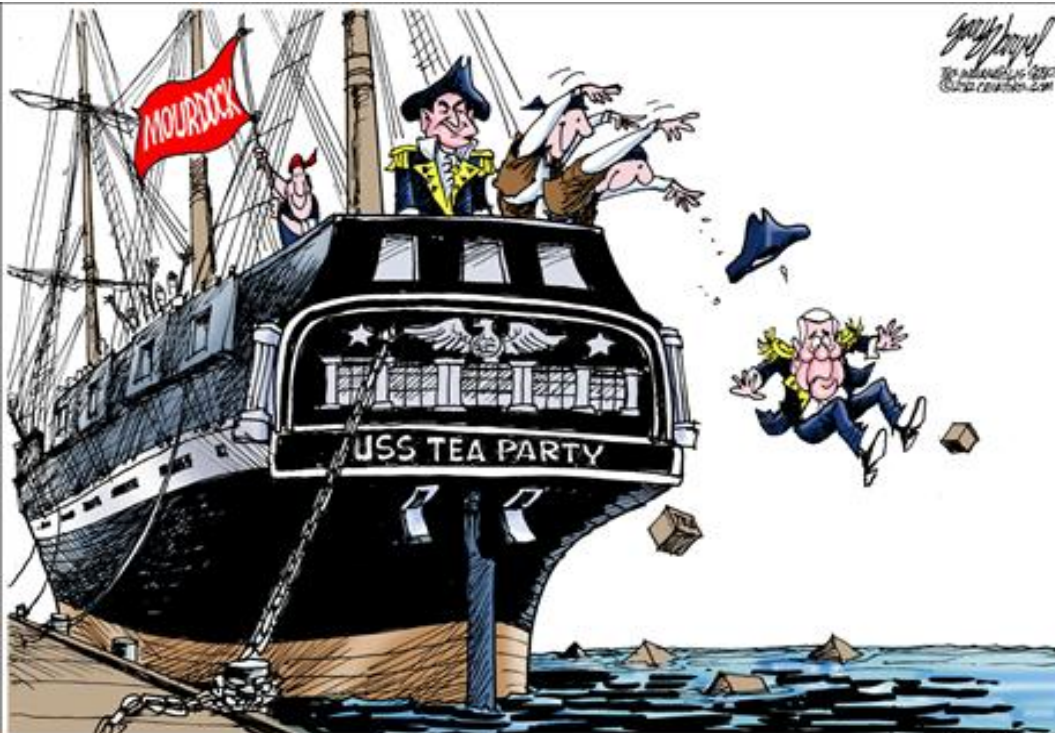
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