

# The Uconn Undergraduate Political Review

*Edition One: 2016 Election Issues*

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## Letter From The Editor

Dear Readers,

I would like to introduce you to the first edition of the Uconn Undergraduate Political Review. The Review will be publishing analysis and opinion pieces on political topics written and edited by undergraduates. This journal has been an effort of months, conceived by graduating students last year in consultation with the Political Science Department, and carried to first print by a dedicated team of student-editors this Fall.

Each edition of the Review will publish on a specific theme, focusing contributions around one topic. For this first edition, we have chosen to present a varied mix of submissions under the general guideline of issues important to the 2016 Presidential Election. The contained article topics range from healthcare to education, and from trade to terrorism. We have attempted to produce a publication that carries a variety of views, with multiple perspectives on each raised issue.

Going forward, our fundamental goal for the Review is to produce a publication which engages the UConn undergraduate community in a shared dialogue on the political issues important to Uconn and to our nation. We strive to enable a conversation with viewpoints as varied as our undergraduates, but held to the standards of scholarly discussion. Strong views, but civil contributions. Unpopular positions, but supported arguments. It is our aspiration that the Review not only be the setting for an undergraduate dialogue, but also help that dialogue occur in its most informed and persuasive form.

Invaluable to this effort has been the aid and guidance of Political Science faculty. Professor Bayulgen, our faculty advisor, advocated for this project, and provided invaluable guidance throughout its construction. Professor Yalof provided the Review with the opportunity to present our project to the faculty at large. The entire Department has sponsored and supported the Review with space and resources. We extend our sincere thanks. This effort would not be possible without this generous support.

In the Spring semester the Review will be producing two more editions. If you have an interest in contributing, please visit our website at [www.uconnpolitics.com](http://www.uconnpolitics.com). There you can find our application guidelines for new writers. If you have a specific response or article idea you would be interested in submitting for consideration, that is also welcome. Finally, we will soon be announcing our next edition's thematic focus, and calling for submissions. Look for announcements through the Political Science Department and the Daily Digest.

I hope you enjoy the final product.

Sincerely,

**Peter Bassine**

*Editor-in-Chief*

# Turnout or Turn Up: Repairing America's Voting Booths

*Will Fricke*

The United States has a problem. I'm not talking about the budget deficit, climate change, ISIS, or Donald Trump. Nor am I referring to the concerning amount of Iggy Azalea and Pitbull appearances at music award shows. The problem in question is voter turnout at elections.

The term "voter turnout" is misleading. The figure does not show what percentage of actual voters actually voted, i.e. registered voters. It shows what percentage of American citizens over the age of eighteen voted, registered or not. In the 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014 elections, voter turnout was 64%, 46%, 62%, 42%, respectively.<sup>1</sup> But the percentage of registered voters who actually vote was twenty-three to twenty-six percent higher, reaching even reaching 90% in 2008.<sup>2</sup> This debunks several classic theories of why people do not vote, from weather to work. According to these statistics, the chief reason people do not vote is because they are not registered to.

However, it does not rule out the possibility that some people are simply not interested in voting. For these non-politically efficacious Americans, it would not make a difference to be registered or not.

On the other hand, the situation for many is that they do not know how to register to vote. The process is different for each state, and may involve traveling, internet access, a mailbox, or the possession of photo identification, which can make it difficult for the poor, the hard-to-reach, and disabled.

What is a democracy where only two thirds of eligible voters, maximum, take the time to participate in the political process, where the only requirement is checking off a box once every other year? Voters need to show up and make their voices heard, but they cannot do it alone. How we vote needs to change.

The first step in fixing the voter turnout problem is for each state to pass same-day registration legislation. This means that any citizen over the age of eighteen can show up to his or her local designated voting location and register to vote at the same time and place as they vote. Thirteen states have already enacted this type of legislation.<sup>3</sup> In the 2014 Congressional election, six of the top ten highest voter turnouts were states with same-day registration. Eight of the thirteen states with more than half of eligible voters voting were same-day registration states. Maine, a same-day registration state, had the top voter turnout with 62%, while West Virginia, not a same-day registration state, fell at the bottom with just a third of eligible voters voting. These statistics show that same-day voting registration is effective in getting people to the polls.

The second step in fixing the voter turnout problem is for Congress to move Election Day and declare it a national

<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau. 2015. "Who Votes? Congressional Elections and the American Electorate: 1978–2014." July. <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p20-577.pdf> (November 5, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> United States Census Bureau. 2012. "Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2008." July. <https://www.census.gov/prod/2010pubs/p20-562.pdf> (November 5, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures. 2015. "Same Day Voter Registration." June 2. <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/same-day-registration.aspx> (November 6, 2015).

holiday. Congress set Election Day on the first Tuesday in November in 1845, with the intention to give farmers the chance to vote between the end of the harvest and the beginning of the harsh winter weather.<sup>4</sup> In our current age, however, half of Americans do not work in the agriculture industry. Moving Election Day to a warm month, like April, where there are no federal holidays, and declaring it a national holiday, would allow for everyone to go vote, unrestricted by work hours. On Independence Day we celebrate the country, and on Veterans Day we celebrate the bravest among us. Why not celebrate our democracy on Election Day?

Voting in America needs to be simple, accessible, and most of all, celebrated. What kind of a modern democracy only has two thirds of its voters show up the polls, in a good year? The United States needs to rethink the way its citizens vote.

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<sup>4</sup> Andrews, Evan. 2013. "Why do we vote on a Tuesday in November?" October 30. <http://www.history.com/news/ask-history/why-do-we-vote-on-a-tuesday-in-november> (November 7, 2015)

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# Time to Approve the Trans-Pacific Partnership

*Harrison Fregeau*

On Monday, October 05, 2015, twelve countries, Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States, and Vietnam reached an agreement to form the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The TPP is an extensive free trade agreement designed to eliminate tariffs imposed by the twelve nations against one another; reducing the cost of exporting goods to other member nations. President Obama, with significant Republican support, endorses the bill, claiming “this partnership levels the playing field for our farmers, ranchers, and manufacturers, by eliminating more than 18,000 taxes that various countries place on our products” and that “it includes the strongest commitments on labor and the environment of any trade agreement in history, and these commitments are enforceable, unlike in past agreements<sup>1</sup>.” Despite this assertion, the proposal faces strong Congressional opposition, particularly from Democrats. After a 90 day period, President Obama will sign the pact, and Congress may either vote yes or no on the proposal.

Congress should vote to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership. As a liberal, I am certainly outnumbered in this belief: as most liberals oppose this deal. The TPP’s opponents argue the deal harms American workers and the environment. Worker and environmental protection are noble causes to support, and opposing the TPP harms those causes in the long term.

To explain why, I shall delve into the arguments against joining the TPP. Bernie Sanders sums up the argument nicely in a release titled “the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement Must Be Defeated”. Sanders claims the TPP “is part of a global race to the bottom, to boost the profits of large corporations and Wall Street by outsourcing jobs; undercutting worker rights; dismantling labor, environmental, health, food safety and financial laws...”<sup>2</sup> These claims are interesting, and many are true to a degree. However, Sanders’ viewpoint here is trapped in a widespread antiquated view of how the American economy and the American worker thrives. In order to prepare the American worker for the future, this nation cannot encourage Americans to take jobs in dying industries through hopeless protectionist measures. Rather, American workers in such industries must be re-trained and the TPP provides the best impetus to retrain American workers in over 20 years.

The mechanism through which to accomplish this is the Trade Adjustment Assistance; passed alongside the TPA fast track bill in June. Trade adjustment assistance provides re-training and income support to workers who lost jobs via the trade bill. Whether or not Congress passes the TPP, labor will remain cheaper in Vietnam than in the United States. Thus, to repatriate American jobs, American workers must enhance their knowledge and skills advantage to offset the cheaper cost of foreign labor. Thus, better higher paying jobs will replace those lost through TPP and America will have a better educated workforce.

I would love to delve into the specifics of why the TPP has superior environmental and labor protections than past free trade agreements. Unfortunately, much of the specifics remain shrouded in secrecy; a necessary condition for negotiation. However, the rules and regulations regarding labor rights and environmental protection in an American-led trade pact will surely surpass standards required by the alternative power in the Asia-Pacific region: China. The TPP represents the critical thrust of President Obama’s intended “pivot towards Asia”. The pivot to Asia responds to the growing economic and political clout of the Asia-Pacific region: one riddled with potential

<sup>1</sup> Barack Obama, Office of the Press Secretary Statement,

<sup>2</sup> Sanders Bernie, “THE TRANS-PACIFIC TRADE (TPP) AGREEMENT MUST BE DEFEATED” Accessed online.

sparks for conflict. These potential flare ups include a divided Korea and numerous disputed islands in the South China Sea. The soft-power implications of promoting worker's rights and environmental protection in the crucial Asia-Pacific and Latin American regions promote American leadership more effectively than any hard-power "liberation" in the Middle East. With Chinese dams and other infrastructure projects committing environmental atrocities from Myanmar to Ecuador, providing an effective American alternative in the region is vital. Through reducing costs, the TPP will help American corporations secure contracts overseas against fierce Chinese state-run competition, while providing a framework for protecting labor and the environment.

Which brings me to a crucial player in the TPP and with free trade in general: the American corporation. Will corporations benefit from TPP? Yes. American corporations will benefit massively from the Trans-Pacific Partnership. With all free trade agreements, the basic purpose is to reduce costs for all countries by eliminating tariffs on imports within the agreed area. Under the American capitalist system, the vast majority of the windfall from the TPP will fall into the hands of American corporations. That does not mean the TPP is at fault: rather the American tax code is at fault. The after-effect of the TPP, with American corporations hogging the extracted wealth from the TPP, can be another impetus to reform the American tax code and make it fairer to the American populace.

A final argument against TPP concerns its investor-state dispute settlement program. This provides a mechanism to resolve conflicts between corporations and member states in an international court. This is a necessary reality, as inevitably there will be differences between the two parties. For the alternative to establishing this international court to try these cases would be holding them in national courts. National courts in countries like Mexico and Vietnam do not have a great record on protecting workers and the environment. Plus, if the TPP is to be one unit, its regulations cannot be interpreted differently in Chile than in Brunei. Thus the court must exist to solve these disputes: much as the International Criminal Court exists to prosecute criminals who may be protected in their own countries.

Congress should vote to enter the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The jobs which TPP will steal from the country are those about to be lost to globalization. TPP, through Trade Adjustment Assistance, will provide those who lost jobs with better, more sustainable jobs going forward. Enacting the TPP will be a signal to the world, and the American public, that the American worker and the environment will not be left behind in the globalization race that is the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



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# The TPP: Another Driver of Inequality and Degradation

*Christian Caron*

In these hyperpartisan times, one would be hard-pressed to find an issue on the political agenda that does not divide Democrats and Republicans—in government and in the electorate—along party lines. One would have an even more difficult time finding an issue upon which there is a consensus among Bernie Sanders and Ted Cruz—the presidential race’s two most ideologically driven Democratic and Republican candidates, respectively—and Ed Schultz and Mark Levin—firebrand talk-radio hosts who occupy diametrically opposite positions on the political spectrum. Opposition to harmful free trade agreements (FTAs) such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), it seems, transcends partisanship and ideology, and with good reason. The results of the TPP’s predecessors are in: by way of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and other FTAs, multinational corporations have reaped huge profits at the expense of workers and the environment. Because there is reason to believe the TPP will have economic and environmental ramifications akin to those brought about by prior FTAs, Congress should reject it.

Proponents of the TPP argue that its tariff reduction measures will be a boon for American exports and lower the price of imported manufactured goods. As economists such as former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich point out, however, most tariffs between partner nations are already low. Indeed, over the past two decades, 10 out of the 12 partner nations have cut their tariffs by half or more.<sup>1</sup> It is safe to say, therefore, that the TPP will have minimal impact on the U.S. economy and that its supposed economic benefits will elude the average American.

At a time of nearly unprecedented economic inequality, the TPP is the last thing America needs. According to a report released by the Center for Economic and Policy Research, increased trade intensity has been at least partly responsible for stagnant wages since 1990, a trend the TPP will surely perpetuate, if not exacerbate. Furthermore, America’s highest earners, who are least susceptible to competition from workers overseas, will likely see their incomes rise as a result of the TPP’s restrictive intellectual property provisions.<sup>2</sup> Pharmaceutical companies are prepared to use these provisions as a means of stymieing competition from cheaper generic brands, thereby raising drug costs for American consumers.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, Congress refuses to pass legislation that would help offset these effects: the federal minimum wage, for instance, remains at its woefully inadequate rate of \$7.25. In light of this information, it is disappointing that President Obama, who has repeatedly denounced widening inequality and has proven himself to be an ally of organized labor, is an unabashed supporter of the agreement.

Jobs will rank among the United States’ top exports to the Pacific Rim following implementation of the TPP. In the years since the implementation of NAFTA, alarming trade deficits with Mexico have led to the elimination of 700,000 American jobs. Currency manipulation is a major contributor to the growth of trade deficits, and President Obama himself admits the TPP contains no enforceable provisions against this behavior. Although

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<sup>1</sup> Cooper, Preston. 2015. “TPP Won’t Be a Game Changer for the Economy.” October 7. <http://www.economics21.org/commentary/tpp-wont-game-changer-economy> (October 18, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Rosnick, David. 2013. “Gains from Trade? The Net Effect of the Trans-Pacific Partnership on U.S. Wages.” *Center for Economic and Policy Research*. <http://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/TPP-2013-09.pdf> (October 5, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Marcin, Tim. 2015. “Trans-Pacific Partnership Health And Medicine Policies Could Hurt Poor Nations, Boost Pharmaceutical Companies.” *International Business Times*, 12 May.

Congress did reauthorize the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, which provides aid to workers displaced by global competition, its effectiveness in promoting reemployment is in question, to say the least.<sup>4</sup> A program to rebuild America's crumbling infrastructure, on the other hand, would create thousands of good-paying jobs, but Republicans have resisted such proposals in the past. And as the Republican speakership fiasco demonstrated, Tea Party obstructionists continue to exert tremendous influence over the proceedings of the House of Representatives, making it highly unlikely that that chamber will take any positive action on behalf of American workers anytime soon. The TPP will be just the latest example of congressional action—or inaction—that has harmed the American worker.

Leaked documents validate the notion that the TPP is bound to contribute to environmental degradation. The agreement contains an investor-state dispute settlement provision, which would enable multinational corporations to sue governments whose regulations violate their property rights. Even more disturbingly, suits involving the United States would be adjudicated not by the federal courts, but rather by an international panel of arbitrators. While the TPP recognizes the “inherent right to regulate . . . [and] to protect legitimate public welfare objectives, such as . . . the environment,” a fine line often exists between legitimate government regulation and a property rights violation.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Dr. Kyla Tienhaara, a research fellow at the Australian National University College of Asia and the Pacific, argues that similar provisions have enabled corporations to not only successfully challenge environmental regulations, but also deter governments from developing future environmental policies.<sup>6</sup> It is ironic indeed that many of the TPP's chief negotiators will be meeting in Paris later this year to hopefully forge a global climate change accord.

As he seeks congressional approval of the TPP, President Obama has echoed many of the assurances President Clinton made in the months leading up to the enactment of NAFTA. That agreement has not lived up to the hype by any means, however, and the American people have taken notice. If Congress desires to contain the damage from prior FTAs and undermine the notion that it is accountable to corporations and campaign contributors rather than to ordinary citizens, it should reject the TPP.

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<sup>4</sup> Scott, Robert E. 2011. “Heading South: U.S.-Mexico Trade and Job Displacement After NAFTA.” *Economic Policy Institute*. <http://www.epi.org/files/page/-/BriefingPaper308.pdf> (October 5, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Farrell, Henry. 2015. “People are Freaking Out About the Trans-Pacific Partnership's Investor Dispute Settlement System. Why Should You Care?” *Washington Post*, 26 March.

<sup>6</sup> Tienhaara, Kyla. 2009. *The Expropriation of Environmental Governance: Protecting Foreign Investors at the Expense of Public Policy*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.

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# Orientalism and Xenophobia in Republican Foreign Policy

*Rubayet Lasker*

A significant conservative shift has occurred in the Republican Party, especially illustrated in the inflammatory rhetoric of the GOP road to primary elections. For example, Donald Trump led in the polls after claiming the Mexican government was exporting “drug dealers and rapists”. Additionally, Ben Carson, who recently surpassed Trump, denounced the right of a Muslim to potentially become President. These comments reflect an ideology coined by scholar Edward Said—Orientalism, or the tendency of the Western world to categorize the nonwestern world as one monolithic identity the civilized West will never be able to understand. GOP rhetoric also illustrates xenophobia, towards the Middle East, or an inherent fear of the unknown. This article studies the Republican presidential candidates’ foreign policy platforms towards the Middle East. More specifically, it aims to identify how their foreign policy platforms are shaped by orientalism and xenophobia, by studying the rhetoric used in the first GOP debate in August 2015.

Discourse surrounding foreign policy decisions in the Middle East in the GOP debate revolved predominantly around the Iran deal and ISIS. Fox news journalist, and cohost of the debate, Brett Baier began the questioning on foreign policy, asking Senator Rand Paul, an unyielding isolationist, about his outspoken animosity against the Republican party’s traditionally militaristic perspective towards the Middle East. Before defending himself, the Senator clarified this: “First of all, only ISIS is responsible for the terrorism. Only ISIS is responsible for the depravity”. After defending his isolationist perspective, he reiterated, “We didn’t create ISIS—ISIS created themselves”. While analyzing these answers, it is important to recognize that all of the GOP candidates are appealing to the widest base of the Republican Party during the primary elections. Senator Paul deviates from the military intervention norm, thus he makes sure to align himself with the party in another way; he establishes ISIS as an isolated enemy, “the other”, implying that “we” the United States remain blameless in its creation or development. Later in the debate, Senator Ted Cruz reinforces this static image of ISIS. When asked by cohost Megyn Kelly about his plan to destroy ISIS in 90 days, Cruz expresses the importance of emphasizing the link between “radical Islamic terrorism” and ISIS, and criticized President Obama for not doing so. He characterizes followers of ISIS as wagers of jihad upon America, which further develops a link between Islam and ISIS. It is important to note that jihad in this context is defined as “holy war”; only Muslim extremists agree with the West on this interpretation. Jihad translates to “struggle” in English, and is discussed in the Qur’an as the right to struggle for one’s survival in life. While Senator Paul’s characterization of ISIS as “the other” may have some justification, Senator Cruz uses inflammatory rhetoric to construe Muslims, the Middle East, and ISIS as one ideological entity which must be destroyed...in 90 days. The GOP discourse, and consensus on ISIS, during the debate, illustrates a deep-rooted orientalism in foreign policy platforms of the Republican Party.

Another hot topic during the debate was the Iran Deal. The Iran Deal is a historic agreement and a demonstration of potential friendly relations between the Middle East and the United States. Yet, all of the Republican candidates expressed their stark opposition to it, primarily arguing Iran cannot be trusted with nuclear weapons. However, this very argument is orientalist, because it assumes the United States has the authority to determine which countries are allowed to have nuclear weapons, and which countries are not. Additionally, it characterizes Iran as a monolithic state which naturally inspires mistrust. This orientalist and xenophobic perspective was re-

flected throughout the GOP rhetoric. To start off the discourse, Fox News played a video clip of Carly Fiorina characterizing Iran as “the heart of the evil that is going on in the Middle East through their proxy”. There is a great deal of imagery in her remarks. When hearing them, I think of a darkness that originates in Iran and spreads across the Middle East. However, upon further analysis, it becomes evident that there is no substance in her words. Firstly, it is completely unclear what “evil” in the Middle East she refers to, whether it is the Arab Spring, ISIS, the refugee crisis, or countless other issues. Secondly, she does not identify how this “evil” originates from Iran. In her vagueness, she relates the general concept of “evil” with the entire Middle East. Following the video clip, Governor Scott Walker was asked to respond to the Iran Deal. He urges Congress to “put in place even more crippling sanctions”. Furthermore, he states, “This is not just bad with Iran, this is bad with ISIS. It is tied together”. It is interesting that he implies that Iran and ISIS are allies, especially because it is in the best interest of the Shia-led Iranian government to battle Sunni-led ISIS. In fact, militias supported by Iran are widely considered the most competent fighters against ISIS. The facts do not support Governor Walker’s argument. Yet, his foreign policy platform considers Iran and ISIS one enemy, connected singularly by their relation to the Middle East despite the fact that the two entities are completely in opposition to one another. His remarks clearly illustrate ignorance of the complexities of the region, and his willingness to view the entire Middle East as one monolithic enemy.

Many factors indicate a possibility that the Republican Party is crumbling. The party is divided and increasingly being pushed towards a more radical right wing, while moderate Republicans are no longer able to thrive in office. The extensive xenophobia and orientalism coloring GOP rhetoric, cannot possibly survive in the midst of continued modernization and increased interconnectedness.

# Analyzing United States Immigration Discourse: A Historical Look at Trans-American Relations

*Rebecca Kaufman*

“First of all, I want to build a wall, a wall that works,” Republican Presidential candidate Donald Trump said in the second Republican debate. Trump is widely recognized as one of the most controversial candidates, but his sentiments on immigration are indicative of the widespread conservative view that isolationism ideology should be the primary informer of American immigration policy. Immigrants from developing Latin American nations receive a bad reputation—these populations are stigmatized by claims that they are lazy free riders, or dangerous drug traffickers<sup>1</sup>.

These attitudes are offensive and unfairly generalized about an entire population. However, underlying the argument that anti-immigration attitudes are fundamentally misguided, is history of formal political decisions that holds the U.S. responsible for creating better, more comprehensive immigration policy.

During the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the U.S. implemented counter-insurgency policies supporting the regimes of economically and politically unstable Latin American countries to prevent these countries from transitioning to socialist/communist political systems. Marxist ideology was popular in these areas where sharecropping was one of the largest sources of national income and income inequality was growing<sup>2</sup>. The exploited workers began to rebel—first through the electoral process, and, when this proved ineffective, through guerrilla tactics. However, at the same time, the U.S. Army’s School of the Americas was training thousands of Latin American military personnel, many of whom went on to commit brutal violations of human rights (such as state-sanctioned murders and disappearances) in the name of maintaining order and control in their state<sup>3</sup>. The widespread violence dominating Latin American life produced an environment adverse to sustainable development, even after peace had been, albeit partially restored. Rural indigenous communities were deeply affected by the counter-insurgency efforts as authority shifted from the elders to military patrols who would use force against members of their own communities to quell uprisings, generating an environment of mistrust and disrupting power structures that had been in place for hundreds of years. Furthermore, the region’s history of brutally punishing citizens for expressing political views unaligned with those of the people in power repressed social and political participation, making it difficult to strengthen an integral rule of law in the modern era of democracy<sup>4</sup>. This has left much of Latin America disproportionately marginalized, with some of the widest income gaps in the world. While it is wrong to say that the United States was the sole cause of the instability that remains in much of Central America, it would be naïve to dismiss the hand the U.S. played oppressing the ability of the Global South, and especially Central America to develop and be economically competitive with First World countries.

Today, the United States continues to promote and implement international policies that disadvantage Latin America. The late 20<sup>th</sup> century North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and its 2005 extension, the

<sup>1</sup> sdonline. 2011. ‘Reframing US Immigration Discourse for the 21st Century\*.’ Journal of the Research Group on Socialism and Democracy online. <http://sdonline.org/48/reframing-us-immigration-discourse-for-the-21st-century/> (October 9, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> White, Tom. 2012. ‘Civil War in El Salvador and United States Counterinsurgency Strategy.’ Perspectives of the Past. <http://perspectivesofthepast.com/terrorism-and-insurgency-in-the-contemporary-world/civil-war-in-el-salvador-and-united-states-counterinsurgency-strategy/> (October 9, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Van Den Anker, Christien, and Rhona K M Smith. 2006. *The Essentials of Human Rights (The Essentials of ... Series)*. New York: Distributed in the USA by Oxford University Press.

<sup>4</sup> Flores, Walter, Ana Lorena Ruano, and Denise Phé Funchal. 2009. ‘Social Participation within a Context of Political Violence: Implications for the Promotion and Exercise of the Right to Health in Guatemala.’ *Health and Human Rights* 11(1).

Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) have reinforced unsatisfactory economic conditions in Mexico and Central America. Large proportions of the population work in the informal sector (the realm of property and employment that is unregulated and untaxed). The social infrastructure necessary to protect these workers from the consequences of this legislation is not yet in place, resulting in the exploitation of workers. An analysis of CAFTA conducted by the Oxford Journal of Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy demonstrates how CAFTA currently is not comprehensive enough to address the complexity of poverty and income inequality in Central America. The removal of import tariffs on agricultural goods proposed in the agreement negatively affects the production of and revenue generated by these goods. The analysis reveals how the agreement not only indirectly causes migration because agrarian workers cannot make a living doing what they have always done, but actually stimulates it.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore it is surprising that American politicians hold beliefs averse to welcoming immigrants who are fleeing nations plagued by corruption and poverty considering the policies we have created that perpetuate an unjust economic system. It is surprising that many Americans do not feel any sense of moral obligation to support, at least in some way, people who have suffered at the expense of American-sponsored programs that have trained some of the most violent human-rights offenders in international history.

However, the implications of Central America's struggle to develop at the same pace as the rest of increasingly globalized markets go far beyond just the liberal guilt associated with hegemonic discourse informing our foreign policy. This historical context brings us to the ultimate argument; that the United States needs better immigration policy, and isolationist discourse is harmful and ineffective.

Many regions of the U.S. with large immigrant populations demonstrate a decrease in crime and growth in sustainable urban development. In Los Angeles, immigrant teens were less likely to be involved in crime than their peers of the same socioeconomic status. While one cannot assume causality, they can negate the notion that immigrants exacerbate or cause social ills.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, comprehensive research has shown that immigration actually benefits the economy because diversity generates innovation and entrepreneurship.<sup>7</sup>

Beyond the tangible economic benefits of promoting a more inclusive immigration policy is the fact our global reputation. We live in an interconnected society and it is becoming increasingly important to form relationships with our regional allies, especially considering the threats of nations like Russia and Syria uniting with global superpower China and rejecting American influence in foreign policy.<sup>8</sup> By undermining rights to freedom of movement and to seek asylum, the U.S. not only sets the precedent that it is permissible to violate such rights, but also blocks itself from forming valuable relationships with other countries in the region. And despite countless obstacles, Central America is developing rapidly and becoming more economically competitive—demonstrated by its significantly increased share in the global agriculture trade<sup>9</sup>. It would not be in U.S. interests to refuse Central American countries as valuable allies.

Immigration policy must be thought of as a strategic form of foreign policy. If the U.S. wants to be a global leader, it must set a precedent of only economic dominance, but of moral lead and global acceptance. Common conservative discourse has pushed potentially effective liberal policies to take more moderate measures, it will continue to damage the United States' economy, international relationships, and reputation.

<sup>5</sup> Taylor, J. E., A. Y. Naude, and N. Jesurun-Clements. 2010. 'Does Agricultural Trade Liberalization Reduce Rural Welfare in Less Developed Countries? The Case of CAFTA.' *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy* 32(1): 95–116.

<sup>6</sup> Macdonald, John M., and Robert J. Sampson 2012

<sup>7</sup> Florida, Richard. 2011. 'Why Immigrants Are Good for Our Economy.' <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2011/06/why-immigrants-are-good-for-our-economy/240209/> (October 19, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Berger, Ryan, and Christopher Sabatini. 2012. 'Why the U.S. Can't Afford to Ignore Latin America.' CNN. <http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2012/06/13/why-the-u-s-cant-afford-to-ignore-latin-america/> (October 9, 2015).

<sup>9</sup> Herzog, Tim, and Michele Ruta. 2015. 'Future Looks Bright for Food Production in Latin America and Caribbean.' The World Bank. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/10/16/food-production-trade-latin-america-caribbean-future> (October 19, 2015).

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# Anchors, Away!

*William Welenc*

“When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best. They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists.”<sup>1</sup> While he is known as the Achilles heel of the Republican ticket, Donald Trump brought what seemed to be the back burner topic of immigration into the center of public attention. His controversial opinions and more specifically his mentioning of “anchor babies,” children born in the United States to foreign-born parents with the intention that the parents can gain U.S. citizenship through their children, has caused uproar. Many called Trump racist and a bigot for using this term- not unjustifiable considering his above statement. However, his statements about “anchor babies” and how they are hurting the United States immigration system are factually accurate. In fact, over the years “anchor babies” and maternity tourism have become highly profitable industries. Unfortunately, it is difficult to prosecute those individuals who are entering the U.S. illegally under the Citizenship Clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment which reads, “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.”<sup>2</sup> The vagueness of this text ensures that these provisions can be used to undermine our legal immigration system. In maintaining this ambiguous language we ensure that taxpayers will be forced to pay for the social services of those illegally residing in the United States.

The current presidential administration has made attempts that it believes will improve our immigration system, but the promises of amnesty and less harsh penalties for repeat offenders have left a bad taste in the mouth of the American public. According to The Heritage Foundation, “the average unlawful immigrant household costs taxpayers \$14,387 per household.”<sup>3</sup> One may wonder how this is possible considering that undocumented immigrants are not eligible for many welfare programs. This is true, but they do have access to emergency medical care and schooling. Furthermore, amnesty to immigrants hurts the African American population, according to Peter Kirsanow of the US Commission on Civil Rights: “Illegal immigration has a disparate impact on African-American men because these men are disproportionately represented in the low-skilled labor force.”<sup>4</sup> Granting amnesty to illegal immigrants would allow thousands upon thousands of low-skilled, low educated laborers to enter the workforce and push many African American and White workers out of a job. Under the Naturalization Clause of the Constitution, Congress has the power to define the nature of naturalization in the United States. However, President Obama has chosen to take executive action in declaring amnesty for thousands of undocumented immigrants in this country, essentially disregarding the Naturalization Clause entirely. Nevertheless, one cannot blame the President for all of the issues with the current immigration system as they long predate the Obama administration.

A related issue that is dismantling the foundation of the immigration system and hurting the American economy is maternity tourism. Thousands of pregnant Chinese women are traveling to the United States, claiming a variety of false reasons on their visits. In fact, they arrive to give birth on American soil. They do so only so that their children are born citizens, with all the associated rights and privileges. These mothers break the law by lying on their visas and entering the United States under false pretenses.

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<sup>1</sup> Nina Storchlic, “The Dumbest Stuff Donald Trump Has Ever Said,” *The Daily Beast*, June 30, 2015, accessed October 15, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> [Amendment] U.S. Const. amend. XIV. Sec. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Maria Santana, “5 Immigration Myths Debunked,” *CNN*, November 20, 2014, accessed November 3, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> “Illegal Alien Surge From Mexico Will Hurt Teen Jobs,” *breitbart.com*, accessed November 3, 2015.

It is unclear exactly what Donald Trump or Jeb Bush truly meant when they discussed anchor babies this summer. If they were discussing children born in this nation of immigrants who entered this country illegally, or whose mothers claimed false entry purposes, then they have a legitimate point. We cannot allow persons from outside of the United States to bypass our immigration system by simply having children within our borders, leaving the United States taxpayers responsible for their upkeep. While the goals of these people may be noble, they take advantage of a broken system. Ultimately, the children of legal immigrants, who saved up for years in order to legally enter this country, are the ones who will pay for it.



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# An Analysis of Immigration from the Perspective of Human Rights

*Kylie Moyle*

As the 2016 Presidential Election nears in the United States, the world is reminded of the issues politicians and voters find most pressing. Certainly the decisions made in the United States, such as electing a new president or passing legislation, impact the citizens of the U.S. directly. But nearly all policy decisions made by a sovereign state have *global* impacts, in economic, social or political terms. In this manner, we should view U.S. citizens as *global* citizens, and consider our policy decisions with respect to their *international* influence. The degree to which immigration is considered a national issue rather than an international issue in the U.S. is alarming. The U.S. is not the only nation guilty of such thinking, but with an election around the corner we have the opportunity to reconsider this mindset.

François Crépeau, a professor of law at McGill University, was given the UN title of special rapporteur on the human rights of migrants in 2011. His job, in a simplified sense, is to update the world through the UN on the status of migrants. He writes:

Irregular migration is not a crime. Crossing borders may be in violation of the law, but it is an abstract violation of it, since moving from one country to the other does not per se hurt or endanger anyone else... [thus] migration concerns us all and no State can escape from its obligations under international human rights law to protect and ensure respect for the human rights of migrants, irrespective of their migration status.<sup>1</sup>

Declaring that immigration is a human rights issue is a bold claim. But it provides a basis for any respectable state to protect the inherent rights of any human being regardless of nationality. It is evident that immigration is happening across many jurisdictions, regardless of laws intended to limit movement. Therefore, it is not a question of how to stop it, but instead how to deal with it.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the United Nations that affirms the dignities and rights inherent to every person. This fundamental contract binds UN members and non-members alike in a commitment to uphold these values, regardless of nationality or legal circumstance. Included in the UDHR is the right to free movement. Therefore, immigration must be understood as a human rights issue first and foremost. Human rights is one of the few legal concepts which penetrates the borders of all sovereign states, and should thus be made a priority by all nations.

Any discussion of election priorities should reflect a commitment to uphold the human rights outlined in the UDHR. Yet we are forced to (mildly) entertain the idea of “build[ing a] wall”<sup>2</sup> to keep immigrants out. Across the aisle there is agreement that the logistics of immigration management are complicated (with respect to security, economics, privacy, monitoring etc.) and warrant further debate. But these issues should be considered secondary to the fundamental, international responsibility to protect human rights. Ultimately this wall is unbuildable both physically and theoretically. For even if this wall were built, it would not address the injustices committed against

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<sup>1</sup> “We Are All Migrants’ – Time to Change Inflammatory Talk on Migration.” Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, accessed October, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Anna Br, “Donald Trump: I Would Force Mexico to Build Border Wall,” MSNBC, June 28, 2015, accessed October, 2015.

those migrants seeking the protection of their basic human rights. Maybe not every individual currently running for president is quite so extreme on the issue, but it is unclear whether any are attempting to change immigration policies to the extent that it aligns with the UDHR.

The immigration debate involves individuals identified as immigrants (legal and illegal), refugees, asylum seekers, or combinations of the above. Because of these distinctions, it is difficult to argue that anyone who waltzes across our border deserves the protection we all enjoy as lawful residents and citizens. They do, however, undoubtedly deserve the protection of certain rights as human beings regardless of how or why they found their way into the United States. The issue as it is discussed today is instilled with a national selfishness, while the more pressing concerns of human rights are left unaddressed.

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# The Flaw in his Plan: Why Donald Trump is Wrong About Syrian Refugees

*Evelyn Luchs*

The Syrian conflict has forced almost twelve million people from their homes. In nearby nations, such as, Jordan, Turkey, and Lebanon, life is untenable for refugees due to strained resources. In Turkey alone, there are over 1.9 million Syrian refugees, who cannot realistically remain there as they are not legally allowed to work.<sup>3</sup> With no other option, smuggling refugees has become a multimillion dollar industry; albeit an illegal one. The smuggling industry, a last hope for Syrian refugees not admitted to the US or another potential host country, presents many dangers to its clients. Cheap rafts deflate halfway across the ocean, and rapidly-produced vests are sometimes filled with water-absorbent foam; not that the smugglers care- they still get paid if the refugee dies.<sup>4</sup> Risking drowning or detainment should not be the only option; instead, the United States should increase the amount of Syrian refugees accepted into our country.

Earlier this month, Donald Trump controversially announced if he wins the election, he plans to send Syrian refugees “back”.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Trump also stated he doesn’t believe the United States can or should get involved.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps he should reconsider. Despite his concerns, both historical precedent and public opinion indicate that the United States should allow more Syrian refugees to move to the United States.

While Mr. Trump certainly has a lot to say on the subject, his arguments lack logic. In response to CNN asking about his stance on refugees, Mr. Trump claimed

We cannot help everybody through the world. Europe should help. Russian should help. China, they’re not doing anything... They should all help. And then maybe we could do something.<sup>2</sup>

This response fails to consider that the United States is in a better position than other countries to take in refugees. The United States has the resources and infrastructure to support an influx of refugees whereas other nations do not, and historical precedent supports this- as this article will elaborate on further, the United States has taken in large amounts of refugees many times throughout history. No, we cannot help everybody in the world. But that does not mean that we should help no one.

Mr. Trump further insinuated that Syrian refugees could cause unrest in the United States:

“This could be one of the great military coups of all time if they send them to our country -- young, strong people and they turn out to be ISIS,” he told Fox News’ Eric Bolling. “Now, probably that won’t happen, but some of them definitely in my opinion will be ISIS.”<sup>1</sup>

This quote is an excellent example of Donald Trump’s utter lack of reasoning and logic regarding the refugee crisis. The mere fact that he had to follow up his own statement with “that probably won’t happen” is a good indicator that Mr. Trump’s thoughts on the matter should be taken with a boulder-sized grain of salt. Additionally, this quote fails to take into account the actual process of gaining entry to the United States as a refugee. In reality, all refugees must have a referral from either a US embassy or an NGO, and, after that, must be interviewed by either US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or the Department of Homeland Security<sup>5</sup>. Given that every single refugee is

interviewed before being allowed to settle in the United States, the probability of a majority or even a significant portion of refugees being ISIS members in disguise is not nearly as high as Donald Trump seems to think.

Apart from these glaring flaws, Trump's argument is flat-out wrong. He claims there will be an "army" of 200,000 refugees<sup>1</sup>, however, the United States has only taken 1,500 in the past four years, and President Obama has committed to just 10,000 more.<sup>1</sup> And, when Mr. Trump claims that he will send them back, what does he have in mind? Actual plans aren't really his forte; he doesn't specify. This might be for the better, given there is no safe place to send them back to. Refugees, obviously, do not choose to leave their homes. For them, there is no going back.

Despite Donald Trump's claims that the United States does not have the ability to support refugees<sup>1</sup>, the US actually has a rich history of taking people in. The first refugee legislation in the United States was in 1948, and allowed over 400,000 Europeans to enter the country after World War II (in addition to those 250,000 who had already come)<sup>6</sup>. Even after fighting a war, the United States was still able to support the addition of hundreds of thousands of people. In the 1960s, there was an influx of Cubans fleeing from Fidel Castro's regime. At the end of the Vietnam War, 1.3 million people were resettled worldwide; including over 800,000 in the United States alone.<sup>7</sup> And, since 1975, over 3 million refugees have settled in the United States<sup>6</sup>. As history shows, taking in refugees is nothing new for America. The United States can support greater amounts of Syrian refugees because, the United States has a century of experience taking hundreds of thousands of refugees at a time. While it may not be simple or uncomplicated, it certainly won't cause the turmoil Trump predicts.

In addition to the historical indicators that the United States can handle more refugees, it seems that public opinion favors increasing the amount of Syrian refugees admitted. Surveys have shown that 55% of Americans favor taking more refugees and 83% favor increasing humanitarian aid.<sup>9</sup> A recent Kickstarter campaign to raise money for the Syrian refugees raised \$40,000, more than double the amount the average successful campaign raises.<sup>8</sup> The numbers show Americans want to help the Syrian refugees, and while more citizens favor increasing aid than taking in refugees, increasing the number of refugees taken in is an option which accomplishes the end goal of helping the refugees, which many Americans want.

The United States has both the opportunity to aid in a humanitarian crisis, and the responsibility to do so. In other nations, infrastructure is strained, and resources are running out under the burden of thousands of refugees, whereas a large, rich country like the United States has the resources to support these people. Furthermore, offering refuge is more than a duty- it is an American tradition. Even the pilgrims landing at Plymouth Rock could be considered refugees; they fled from religious persecution. Since that moment, people from all around the world have come to America seeking refuge, in search of a better life. And, throughout history, America has offered them that life. The Syrian refugees of today are no different. They come from a war-torn region, forced to survive in the most wretched of conditions, inspired by their hope for a new life. At this very moment, the United States has the chance to offer thousands of refugees the gift- the basic human right- of life, and America can and should take that chance.

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# **Bernie Sanders and Isolationism in Foreign Policy**

*Zachary Dukoff*

In recent months, it has been nearly impossible to avoid the media's obsessive Middle East coverage. From the rise of the Islamic State, to the Humanitarian Crisis in Syria, to the Iranian Nuclear deal, there are a plethora of issues to be addressed in the near future.

Naturally, given the upcoming 2016 Presidential election, any potential point of international conflict allows the media to question the candidates' stances on what they would do if elected Commander-in-Chief. One of these potential leaders of the free world, Senator Bernie Sanders, is a lone sheep in his opinions of American Foreign Policy and what to do in the future. A self-described Democratic-Socialist, the Senator from Vermont has been in a category of his own when it comes to his opinion of American Foreign Policy since he first was elected to The House of Representatives in 1991. Broadly classified as a non-interventionist, Mr. Sanders believes the United States of America should stop funding nation-building projects, and instead direct those funds towards diplomatic efforts meant to promote the development of democracy.

In the wake of the often ridiculed invasions of Iraq in 2003, and our nation's subsequent obsession with the "War on Terror", Senator Sanders offers a stark contrast to our nation's history of blind military intervention. Military hawks often ridicule President Obama for his lack of leadership on the Syrian Civil war, and the rise of the Islamic State. These same critics are also equally as hostile towards Senator Sanders's opposition to military intervention and using American forces abroad. There appears to be a feeling that those in favor of using America's military might, regardless of how needed it may be, are considered to be National Security hawks determined to do whatever it takes to protect the interests of The United States of America. Senator Sanders, on the other hand, believes this mindset brought our nation into the First Gulf War, the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and the potential future invasion of this same area to stymie the growth of ISIS. Senator Sanders referred to ISIS as a "barbaric organization", and a "growing threat". However, he does not believe the American military should lead the charge against this enemy thousands of miles away: considering past American intervention subsequently destabilized the region and built a culture allowing The Islamic State to flourish.

Senator Sanders's position on American foreign relations can be classified as non-interventionist. Sanders advocates to our nation's youth to change our ways, or be forever entangled in military altercations far from home, which only increase global anti-American sentiment. His emphasis on diplomacy and economic development, as a means of fostering democratic growth, is the cornerstone of his proposal to reinvigorate American foreign policy. Opponents of the Senator's positions deem him weak, or out of touch with the immense problems facing America abroad. To these detractors, the Senator typically scoffs and reverts back to his history of casting votes against military force except as a last resort. It will be interesting to see if the Senator's foreign policy positions resonate with his usual supporters, who can be broadly classified as youthful populists thirsting for something beyond the status quo politician we are so accustomed to seeing.

Senator Sanders's foreign policy is a yet to be tested philosophy. For decades, America has tended to intervene in the affairs of nations worldwide, and, if need be, invaded said nations in the name of liberty and democracy. The question, at this point, is whether or not the American Public is ready for such a drastic shift in policy. Presidential candidates, on the right, argue the "Obama-Clinton" foreign policy directly caused the deterioration

of the Middle East. They believe in sending more troops into these conflict areas as a way to not just fight terrorism, but also promote democracy. Senator Sanders, on the other hand, believes what is transpiring in this region today, is a direct consequence of past American intervention in the region, and the only way for peace to flourish is ending Americas role as the world's police officer. For context, I consider myself a staunch supporter of Senator Sanders's foreign policy prescriptions. Nobody knows what the future holds, but in Senator Bernie Sanders's opinion, it must be free of unilateral action by our nation's military as a means of promoting democracy.

# The Trial Hillary Won't Get

*Sam Julien*

On September 11, 2011 four Americans were killed in an American consulate in Benghazi, Libya. A couple months prior, Libya's ruler Muammar Gaddafi had been deposed by insurgents after NATO and Western Powers established a no-fly zone and aided the insurgents. Secretary of State Clinton was an advocate for the intervention. However, in recent months she has undergone intense scrutiny from the media and on October 29<sup>th</sup>, she testified in front of the select congressional committee on Benghazi, a bi-partisan committee chaired by Trey Gowdy. The "Benghazi trials", have been described as a witch hunt by some, and for others a clear example of Clinton corruption. Secretary Clinton has been accused of failing to keep diplomats at the consulate safe by many individuals, even after Ambassador Chris Stevens called for increased security. Some in the media have even gone as far to say the ambassador's blood is on Clinton's hands. After many investigations into what happened at Benghazi, it was discovered that Clinton was using a private e-mail for work purposes, which goes against State Department protocols. While the Secretary did violate protocol, former Secretary of State Colin Powell also used a private e-mail when he held the position in the Bush administration.<sup>1</sup> Although this is not an excuse for her actions, it may point to the hypocrisy of some Republican officials and the role partisanship has played surrounding this attack. But the controversy over the attack and who was responsible belies a far more important question: Why were militants in Libya so angry at the U.S. that they would target an embassy? It's time to move beyond the simplistic "they hate us for our freedoms" argument that has been accepted in understanding political violence and terrorism.

A more logical explanation as to why these attacks happened is that the U.S. left a power vacuum after removing Gaddafi, who held power for 40 years. This led to increased violence and political instability in Libya, which led to a phenomenon called blowback. Blowback is a term first used after the C.I.A. overthrew the democratically elected leader of Iran, Mohammed Mossadegh, in 1953. "Blowback" is a *metaphor for the unintended consequences of covert operations against foreign nations and governments.*<sup>2</sup> Many times individuals or groups use violence against the United States when the world power either covertly, or in this case, overtly, intervenes in the affairs of other nations for its own self-interest. In the 1980's the C.I.A. armed Osama Bin Laden and Mujahadeen fighters in the 1980's to draw the Soviets into a what would be costly war in Afghanistan. Bin Laden later condemned the U.S. after winning the war against the Soviets and driving them out of Afghanistan. Later, this would lead to another instance of "blowback" where America's intervention in other nations led to political terror against our people and consuls. The NATO led bombing of Libya and subsequent ousting of Muammar Gaddafi, the country's leader, which Clinton advocated strongly for, were the real reasons for "blowback" against U.S. diplomats, or what is referred to as terrorism in today's political discourse.

The civil conflict in Libya began in 2011. Gaddafi's security forces were accused of using force against rebel insurgents around the country who were rising up in protest against his autocratic and unjust rule. Citing concerns for the citizens of Libya; France, the United States, and Britain established a no-fly zone over Libya and started to aid rebels that would eventually overthrow Gaddafi. Mainstream reports often demonized Gaddafi as a crazy man, a threat to international peace, and sometimes even a terrorist. This portrayal is problematic because it ignores what Gaddafi had done for his country. In 1969 he overthrew King Idris, the British colonial administrator, in a coup.<sup>3</sup> By 2010, Libya had the highest Human Development Index in all of Africa.<sup>4</sup> Gaddafi had transformed Libya from one of the poorest countries in the world to an independent nation on the rise, using Libya's vast oil wealth to enrich his people. Now in 2015, four years after the war, Libya is on the verge of being a failed state.<sup>5</sup> It has become a safe haven for Islamic radical groups. Militants loyal to the Islamic terrorist group ISIS have gained power in Libya as well, and have taken over the eastern city of Derna since the war.<sup>6</sup> Arms have also been shipped from

Libyan militants to Syria to aid the Islamic State.

In the year following the ousting of Gaddafi, Libya was touted as a foreign policy victory for Hillary Clinton. Events unfolding in recent months have forced her to change this narrative. The chaos in Libya is one of the main reasons why tens of thousands of Libyans are crossing the Mediterranean and risking their lives to make it to Europe. Migrants from other African countries have found it easy to get into Libya before making the same journey Clinton still may be the most qualified Democratic presidential candidate, but if liberals are to criticize George W. Bush for Iraq, then one must apply that criticism to Hillary's intervention in Libya as well. Both have yielded disastrous results. Thousands of innocent people have died from our intervention and we're clueless as to why extremists have gained power and legitimacy? It is time for our leaders to acknowledge the effects of our foreign policy have had and the offer a better alternative to war and the forced removal of foreign leaders. Whether it's the thousands of lives lost in Libya, the instability that has contributed to the refugee crisis, or the 4 people that died at the consulate, there are consequences to dropping bombs and killing innocent families that are vital to understanding terrorism and current political situations.

While Hillary's support of the intervention in Libya would seem like an easy attack for her political opponents, few Republicans have spoken out against her policies in Libya. The exception is Senator Rand Paul, who has called Libya "a mistake". A dissident in the Republican party for his dovish foreign policy views, Paul is a rare voice on the right in criticizing American military intervention, drone strikes, and is more wary of military engagement. On the other side of the Republican party, any attempt to understand the reasons for political terrorism are tantamount to justifying its violence. Richard Perle, a prominent conservative, has said that any attempt to understand terrorism is an attempt to justify it. That rational is used to shield any blame from Western Governments violence and imperialism in third-world countries in understanding reactive forces. The Islamic State did not exist in its current form in 2001. It came to exist as a powerful force in 2011 and 2012 after the U.S. invaded and occupied Iraq in 2003 and left, leaving another power vacuum for terrorists to organize there, contributed to the arming of insurgents in Syria to topple Bashar Al-Assad, and previously mentioned removal of another Arab leader, Gaddafi. All of these interventions combined to create political vacuums and laid the foundations for terrorists to increase their influence and further unite against Western powers.

Hillary's other critic, would seemingly come from her left, but Senator Bernie Sanders has been reluctant to attack Hillary, saying he wants to "focus on the issues". If Bernie wants to contend for the nomination in any serious way, bringing up Libya would certainly score him points with liberal Democrats who see Hillary as hawkish on foreign policy,

The crisis in Libya and subsequent Benghazi hearings are a classic example of how Americans understand foreign policy. With the recent bombings in Paris, it is more crucial than ever to understand these problems so we can respond effectively. Personal e-mail scandals dominate the conversation while substantive issues and a critical analysis of foreign policy are pushed aside.. Should politicians and government be more transparent? Absolutely. Secretary Clinton should have been much more forthright and honest when being asked about her e-mails. However, when talking about Hillary's record and policy views, it is necessary to discuss her actual decisions in office and the lack of preparedness her policies were carried out with, especially after she voted for the Iraq war, which many credit that for helping her lose the 2008 election. We should talk about the effects a war with no exit strategy could have for a large African nation. And as Libya continues to fall to warring factions of Islamic state like groups and becomes an increasing safe-haven for terrorist cells, we should care less about which party we are a part of, and more about what the consequences of our own military interventions.

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# The Problems with Clinton's New College Compact (Section Break)

*Joy Sgobbo*

Today, students are swimming in student loan debt. According to Mark Kantrowitz of the Wall Street Journal, the average student loan debt for the class of 2015 was over \$35,000. Seventy percent of college students graduate with debt, compared to forty-five percent in 1993<sup>1</sup>. These changes hit students of low and middle incomes hard. College affordability is an issue that is extremely important to graduates and students. Therefore, it only makes sense that Hillary Clinton would take a strong stance on the issue to attract young voters.

Clinton's plan can be broken down into three main goals. The first goal is to increase the amount of state grants so in-state students will not have to take out loans. The second is to make community colleges free. Lastly, her plan aims to lower interest rates on student loans. She promises to do this by "closing tax loopholes and expenditures for the most fortunate."<sup>2</sup> On the surface, Mrs. Clinton's plan is attractive to students who will graduate in debt. However, there are some drawbacks to the plan.

Under Mrs. Clinton's initiative, students will need to work ten hours a week or more to contribute to the assistance of their aid. This could be an issue for many students with heavy workloads. Not all students would be able to balance a ten hour work week on top of schoolwork, especially those who take the heaviest work loads from classes; the same students that may even end up contributing the most to society in the long run. Logically speaking, the students who would be most deserving of a reduced-cost education are those who are least likely to qualify under this plan. It is to be expected that students contribute in some way to their education, however, if when finalized her plan mandates that students work ten hours a week in order to receive aid, there may instantly be a significant number of students who cannot qualify. Many students do work to help pay for their college educations, and often times they may work more than ten hours a week<sup>2</sup>. However, this is not every student, and many will not be able to fulfill this requirement if it is necessary to qualify for a reduced-cost education.

Mrs. Clinton's plan is ideal in a perfect world, but in 2015 it could almost be too good to be true. Mrs. Clinton proposes a program that will make community colleges free and sets a goal that students attending state colleges will not need to take out any loans. She claims that the states will be rewarded if students graduate without debt for tuition. Yet, the largest drawback to Mrs. Clinton's New College Compact is the cost. According to her website, her higher education policy would cost three-hundred and fifty billion dollars over the course of ten years. With Entitlements nearing seventy-one percent of the discretionary budget and a national debt now exceeding eighteen trillion dollars, this is not the time to embark on more federal government spending. Since the new plan is so expensive, middle class taxpayers will face an even greater burden. New taxes to help pay for cheaper college educations could have the opposite effect that is intended, by making Americans even less able to pay for tuitions by decreasing their disposable income. Additionally, with more students going to college, the value of a college degree could decrease. Therefore, more students will need to seek graduate degrees that will make them more competitive in the job market. This will also increase the amount students have to pay for degrees to enter into the work force.

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<sup>1</sup> wsj.com. 2015. "Congratulations, Class of 2015. You're the Most Indebted Ever (For Now)." May 8. <http://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2015/05/08/congratulations-class-of-2015-youre-the-most-indebted-ever-for-now/> (accessed October 3, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> cbsnews.com. 2013. "More student working (a lot) in college." February 8. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/more-students-working-a-lot-in-college/> (date accessed October 3, 2015).

Even though many parts of the plan are desirable, including more federal funding to states to provide grants, lower interest rates, and free community colleges, its feasibility is questionable. Whether or not the United States can afford the expensive New College Compact in the future is something that may hinder its execution.

# A Step in the Right Direction: Hillary Clinton's New College Compact

*Darren D. Daughtry Jr.*

Hillary Clinton's higher education plan is called the New College Compact. Its goal is to ensure that no student has to take out a loan to cover tuition at four-year public colleges and universities. Tuition at community colleges would also be free.<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Clinton's plan would make college "as debt free as possible," by changing the student loan system, providing grants to states, and creating incentives for states to invest more in higher education<sup>2</sup>.

In total, student loan debt in the U.S. is over \$1.2 trillion<sup>3</sup>, which is half of what the federal government spent in fiscal year 2014<sup>4</sup>. Part of the reason student loan debt is so high is because paying off the loans is difficult. Under the New College Compact, students would be allowed to refinance their loans at a lower interest rate. Which would lower their monthly payments. Also, Mrs. Clinton's plan wants to make all student loan payments income based<sup>5</sup>. This means, when your income is lower shortly after you graduate, your monthly payments would be lower. When your income increases, so do your monthly payments. Another of Mrs. Clinton's proposals, is giving students the option of having their monthly payment deducted from their income<sup>6</sup>. In other words, your payment would be automatically deducted from your pay every month. This would eliminate any chance of someone missing their monthly payment. Finally, after twenty years, or ten years for public service jobs, if you haven't paid back your student loans, your remaining debt will be forgiven.

In addition to changing how student loans are paid back, Clinton's plan will also get the states involved. Part of the New College Compact is to make states eligible for grants from the federal government to make sure all students can pay for their education<sup>7</sup>. In addition, the New College Compact will create incentives for states to increase the amount of money they invest in public colleges and universities<sup>8</sup>. During the great recession, many state governments drastically cut funding to public colleges and universities<sup>9</sup>. This forced schools to increase tuition to make up for cuts. Although the economy has largely recovered, states haven't brought their funding of public colleges and universities back to pre-recession levels. To make matters worse, many public colleges and universities have increased spending over the past several years. Increased spending coupled with a smaller amount of government funding means the cost of attending a public college or university increases. The more expensive college becomes, the harder it is for middle and lower income students to attend.

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<sup>1</sup> Bidwell, Allie. 2015. "2016 Presidential Candidates Scattered on Higher Ed, Student Aid Views." August 12th. [http://www.nasfaa.org/news-item/5223/2016\\_Presidential\\_Candidates\\_Scattered\\_on\\_Higher\\_Ed\\_Student\\_Aid\\_Views](http://www.nasfaa.org/news-item/5223/2016_Presidential_Candidates_Scattered_on_Higher_Ed_Student_Aid_Views)

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> Holland, Kelly. 2015. "The High Economic and Social Costs of Student Loan Debt." June 15. <http://www.cnn.com/2015/06/15/the-high-economic-and-social-costs-of-student-loan-debt.html> (October 5th 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Lew, Jacob; Donovan, Shaun. 2014. "Joint Statement of Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew and Office of Management and Budget Director Shaun Donovan on Budget Results for Fiscal Year 2014." October 15. <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl2664.aspx> (October 5th 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Bidwell, Allie. 2015. "2016 Presidential Candidates Scattered on Higher Ed, Student Aid Views." August 12th. [http://www.nasfaa.org/news-item/5223/2016\\_Presidential\\_Candidates\\_Scattered\\_on\\_Higher\\_Ed\\_Student\\_Aid\\_Views](http://www.nasfaa.org/news-item/5223/2016_Presidential_Candidates_Scattered_on_Higher_Ed_Student_Aid_Views)

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*

<sup>8</sup> Vara, Vauhini. 2015. "Does Hillary Clinton's College Plan Go Far Enough." August 11. <http://www.newyorker.com/business/currency/does-hillary-clintons-college-plan-go-far-enough> (October 6th 2015).

<sup>9</sup> Mitchell, Michael; Palacios, Vincent; Leachman, Michael. 2014. "States are Still Funding Higher Education Below Prerecession Levels." May 1. <http://www.cbpp.org/research/states-are-still-funding-higher-education-below-pre-recession-levels> (October 19th 2015).

Now this is all fine and dandy, but like with everything in government, the question is how to pay for it. The answer is pretty straightforward and fairly reasonable; closing specific loopholes in the tax code<sup>10</sup>. These loopholes are ones used by extremely wealthy people and large companies to reduce the amount of taxes they pay. In addition, itemized deductions such as charitable contributions, tax deductions, and medical expenses, would be limited for high income households and people. This could generate roughly \$600 million over the course of ten years<sup>11</sup>, while the New College Compact is estimated to cost about \$350 million over a decade. These estimates vary depending on which loopholes and itemized deductions Clinton wants to limit<sup>12</sup>.

Overall, Hillary Clinton's New College Compact would bring some badly needed changes to the way Americans pay for higher education. Paying off student loans would be more practical, states would increase funding in higher education, and states would be provided with funds to ensure no student would have to take out a loan to pay for tuition would all contribute to making college education more accessible for all.

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<sup>10</sup> Jeanne Sahadi. 2015. "Who Will Pay for Hillary Clinton's College Plan." August 10. <http://money.cnn.com/2015/08/10/news/economy/hillary-clinton-college-plan/> (August 6th 2015).

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*

# Why You Should Care About Free Education

*Humza Mirza*

Democratic candidates are pushing for free education amongst the slew of other important issues that are pressing in our society today, with no candidate pushing harder than Bernie Sanders. Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton have been the candidates discussing cheaper education, but with widely varied policy plans. It could be said that these candidates could just be pandering for the millennial vote and that cheap education isn't a problem that should be faced urgently, but from an economic standpoint, it is imperative that we focus on a reform in education financing, as our economy will face severe problems in the long run.

How is it fair on future members of the work force to be subjected to such predatory student loans, where the federal government reportedly made \$51 billion dollar profit in 2013<sup>1</sup>. Big corporations are making a huge profit on student loans as well, with companies such as Citibank, Discover, and most recently Wells Fargo, under investigation by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau for "overstating the minimum amount due on bills, misrepresenting how much interest some students had paid, and engaging in aggressive and sometimes illegal collection practices"<sup>2</sup>. Students who were ushered into the era of student loans are now facing crippling debt coming into the workforce on a loan that both has a high interest rate and zero ability to default. These are just a few of the reasons you should care about which candidate has the best plan for cheap education.

The Sanders plan, which was released last May, would make all public colleges and universities tuition-free. It would eliminate the federal "profit" from student debt and would allow students to refinance at significantly more favorable rates. Mr. Sanders has a very clear plan as to how he would generate enough revenue to cover the increasing cost of education. He has written and attempting to pass a bill called the College for All Act, which introduces legislation for restoration of historically low student loan interest rates, student loan refinancing, work study reforms, simplifying the student aid application process and fully paid for by imposing a robin hood tax on wall street. The first four points are fairly standard and consistent with most liberal education reform policies, but the Robin Hood tax is the most intriguing part of this bill. The Robin Hood tax is a tax on stock exchange transaction on Wall Street, which, according to CNN Money explanation of the bill, "would lower interest rates on federal student loans, give graduates a chance to refinance existing loans at lower rates, and stop the government from making profits on student loans. To fund the legislation by generating up to \$300 billion a year, Sanders proposes instituting a 0.5% tax on trades of stocks and 0.1% tax on bonds and an even smaller fee on so-called derivatives, such as stock options and futures contracts"<sup>3</sup>.

Free education sounds great and all, but how economically sound is it? There are certain problems that could occur just through basic economic principles, for example, creating a monopoly of sorts against private education institutions, decreasing incentive for innovation and could cause community colleges and public universities to be inefficient when it comes to cost control. These are all factors that should be considered when you decide which candidate you are choosing for the primaries especially, because whether millennials like it or not, education reform is a pressing issue. It is up to you to decide whether you want to be in a society where the government and big corporations make money off of your education, while you are stuck with high loans and the

<sup>1</sup> Woodruff, Mandy. 2013. "The US Government Will Make A Record \$51 Billion Off Student Loan Debt This Year." <http://www.businessinsider.com/student-loans-net-51-billion-profit-2013-5>. (November 1, 2015)

<sup>2</sup> CNN.com. 2015. "Citibank investigated over its student loan services." August 3. <http://money.cnn.com/2015/08/03/pf/college/citibank-student-loans-investigation/>. (accessed November 1, 2015)

<sup>3</sup> CNN.com. 2015. "Free college and healthcare for all - how would Bernie Sanders pay for it?" October 16. <http://money.cnn.com/2015/10/16/news/economy/sanders-taxes-spending/>. (accessed November 1, 2015)

potential for a terrible credit score just as you are entering adulthood, or worry about potential economic factors that would affect free education. The economic implications of education should not be overlooked, but those can be fixed through regulation, whereas our right for an affordable and complete education should not be placed on the back burner of today's politics.

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# Vouchers for Education

*Isabel Blank*

The implementation of vouchers is an education reform policy that has received very little publicity or discussion during the 2016 presidential primaries. However, vouchers are already implemented in fourteen states and the District of Columbia. A policy that is represented in almost 30% of the United States should be challenged, especially during the primaries, to determine the viability of the strategy and whether or not politicians should look to expand it into other states.

Voucher programs that currently exist in the United States are scholarships funded by states that allow students to attend private schools using the same money normally allotted to their public education<sup>1</sup>. This type of program was first implemented in Wisconsin in 1989 and focused on low-income students. Many of the programs currently in place in the United States are also concentrated on low-income students, while some also focus on disabled children or on students enrolled in schools that have received low ratings on the school grading system. The goal of the system is to increase competition between schools that should lead to lower costs and improved student success<sup>2</sup>.

Milton Friedman was the first economist to suggest the modern voucher plan in 1955. His foundation, The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, is a huge supporter of voucher programs, and strives for their implementation throughout the country. The foundation argues that vouchers save tax dollars that could be used to cut taxes or to improve state entities such as school systems. The public school would eliminate additional costs attached to teaching students with disabilities who choose to attend private school because they would no longer require speech therapists or special education programs.<sup>3</sup> Many supporters argue that an influx in students newly able to attend private schools would also cause competition between private schools. While private schools normally market themselves to certain types of prospective students, the creation of a new type of student, the voucher student, would cause different schools in the same area to compete over their enrollment. This competition could lead to improvements in the learning process as each school searches for new innovative approaches to learning in the hopes of attracting new students<sup>4</sup>. With improved financial mobility, public schools would then be able to improve, and they too could compete with private schools and other public schools.

Opponents of the voucher program argue that shifting students from public schools to private schools will not lower the expense of teachers and facilities. The program would therefore cause schools to lose money rather than save it because funding is dependent on the number of students. They also argue that competition between private schools would not increase enough to lead to any significant innovations in learning. Competition is already high between schools and the introduction of voucher students as prospective students would comparatively not be very impactful<sup>5</sup>. When vouchers are being used to pay for a religiously associated school, many argue that it is also a violation of separation of church and state because government money is funding a religious institution.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cunningham, J. (2015) *School Choice: Vouchers*. Available at: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/school-choice-vouchers.aspx> (Accessed: 11 October 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice (2015) *Breaking Down the '2015 Schooling in America Survey'*. Available at: <http://www.edchoice.org/breaking-down-the-2015-schooling-in-america-survey/> (Accessed: 11 October 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Patrinos, H. (2012) 'How do School Vouchers Help Improve Education Systems?', *Education for Global Development*, 9 April. Available at: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/education/how-do-school-vouchers-help-improve-education-systems> (Accessed: 11 October 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Cunningham, J. (2015) *School Choice: Vouchers*. Available at: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/school-choice-vouchers.aspx> (Accessed: 11 October 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Analysis of school systems with implemented voucher programs suggest some gains among low-income and minority voucher recipients' reading and math scores, along with a higher percentage of graduating students. School competition, which is a measurement based on spatial location and enrollment levels in different schools, also improved in multiple areas that offer vouchers.<sup>7</sup> Since the programs in the US are new and limited to only a few states and counties, it is difficult to ensure that these result solely from vouchers and not other educational reforms, however, similar programs implemented in Colombia and the Netherlands have been extremely successful in raising graduation rates and test scores. A program in Chile, however, has been under scrutiny for polarizing public and private schools and causing the highest achieving public school students to leave for a private education<sup>8</sup>.

Due to limited research within the United States, focusing on older institutions in other countries may be the best way to determine the effectiveness of a voucher system in the US. With mixed success globally, voucher systems have proven both effective and ineffective. Further research must determine in what context voucher systems are successful and whether they could effectively improve the United States' education system.

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<sup>7</sup> Chi, G. and Misra, K. (2011) *Measuring Public School Competition from Private Schools: A Gravity-Based Index*. Available at: <http://www.scirp.org/journal/PaperInformation.aspx?PaperID=8027> (Accessed: 22 October 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice (2015) *Breaking Down the '2015 Schooling in America Survey'*. Available at: <http://www.edchoice.org/breaking-down-the-2015-schooling-in-america-survey/> (Accessed: 11 October 2015).



# Why Reform in Education is Doomed to Fail

*Andrew Bolger*

For as long as Americans can remember, our Presidents have promised to be the “Education President”. They’ve implemented reform after reform and we have seen test scores continue to fall relative to other countries around the world. Presidents and politicians will try to blame teachers, tenure, or crumbling schools, calling for voucher programs or more spending on public schools. President Bush enacted the *No Child left Behind Act* in 2002, increasing the number of test students take. President Obama’s *Race to the Top* program gave states grants for achieving ambitious goals set by themselves. Programs like these are well intentioned, but their goals will not be achieved in the long run. They will not be effective until we address the wider issue of childhood poverty in the United States.

When a child is born into poverty it can significantly affect academic outcomes. Professors Misty Lacour and Lauara Tissington, in their study *The Effects of Poverty on Academic Achievement*, assert that kindergarten students living in poverty do systematically worse on tests than those who are not living in poverty. Diane Ravitch, in her book *Reign of Error*, talks about “the achievement gap” between rich and poor students. She says “When one considers the difference in life circumstances of children who are poor and children who are not poor, it is conceivable how any responsible person could claim that poverty doesn’t matter or that poverty is an ‘excuse’”. Poverty affects a child’s life in almost every way. Children born into poverty are more likely to be exposed to crime, have uneducated parents, health problems, and are absent from school more often. Furthermore, children living in poverty often do not have the tools to be successful in school, like a quiet place to study or access to books. In addition, poverty in a family often leads to self-esteem issues<sup>1</sup>. Having to worry about where your next meal will come from, if your parents can find work, or if you have to worry about crime outside your house can make learning and academic achievement extremely challenging for students. All of these factors drastically affect how a child does in school.

Over the last few decades, childhood poverty has nearly doubled and has affected educational outcomes dramatically<sup>2</sup>. As our economy shifted, middle income jobs left and wages stagnated. Furthermore, we’ve also see a widening wealth gap and inequality between the rich and the poor. This change in the economy has dramatically affected the educational outcomes of American students<sup>3</sup>. Presidential candidates will often say the solution is in reshaping our educational system itself. For example, former Governor Jeb Bush of Florida, as well as many other Republican candidates, advocates for a voucher system, saying parents should be able to choose where they want to send their children to school. Policy makers and voters should focus on lifting students out of poverty, before lifting them out of school. The rate of childhood poverty is greater in the U.S. than in any other developed nation<sup>1</sup>. We as a society have come to accept poverty as an inevitable part of the way our country works, and that our schools are the flawless tool escaping it. The reality is that schools are not a method of escaping poverty; rather, they are meant to prepare students for life after education. Poor students cannot be as successful as their non-poor peers

<sup>1</sup> Ravitch, Diane 2003. *Reign of Error*: Vintage Books

<sup>2</sup> Lacour, Misty. Tissington, Laura 2001. *The effects of poverty on academic achievement*. Academic Journals. (May 12): <http://www.academicjournals.org/journal/ERR/article-full-text-pdf/31F3BFB6129> (October 10, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Ludwig, Jens, Helen F. Ladd and Greg J. Duncan, eds. 2007. *Urban Poverty and Educational Outcomes*:. Brookings Institution Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25058785> (October, 11 2009)

until they have the same tools and conditions at home as they do in school.

The first step in fixing education in America is realizing that childhood poverty is a serious issue, and that rather than looking at poverty as a symptom or excuse for why there is such disparity in academic achievement. We as a country need to realize that poverty is the problem when looking at academics. A child born into a poor family will have completely different life circumstances compared to a child born into a richer family. We as a country need to create the economic and political will to address childhood poverty. Rather than strictly blaming teachers, unions, test scores, or lack of funding, we should all take a closer look at the lives of children who live in poverty and how those conditions affect a student's performance.

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# The Tax Program from God

*Joseph Fong*

For many of the Republican candidates, tax reform is a major talking point, with all offering unique approaches to the issue. A popular solution has been the idea of the flat tax, which has been proposed by four candidates: Rand Paul, Rick Santorum, Ted Cruz, and Ben Carson.<sup>[1]</sup> The flat tax is not a new concept in the American political realm, in fact in the 2012 election, the Republican Party saw Newt Gingrich propose a popular optional flat tax to the incremental tax in place.<sup>[2]</sup> Dr. Benjamin Carson, world renowned neurosurgeon and currently polling in second place, poses this very tax in a way that does not put the burden of responsibility on any one demographic. He proposes a tithe—a flat tax of 10-15% on all incomes in the United States.<sup>[3]</sup> The idea of flat tax has gained popularity because, for the working and middle classes, it simplifies their yearly filing process and eliminates the cost in time and money of working with an accountant or tax service. It's also popular for the wealthy, because it eliminates double taxation on both their wage income and income from capital gains.<sup>[4]</sup> Through this simple and easy to understand method of taxation, Carson hopes to win over voters through promises of a streamlined and fair policy that will quickly pay down the national debt. Unfortunately, contrary to his and the popular belief, such a tax policy would only increase the income disparity between rich and poor while additionally failing to pay down the debt in any way that is better than the incremental tax system already in place.

Carson's American tithe is based on the medieval concept that required compulsory payment of a tenth of one's crops paid to the church for upkeep costs. In theory, all sacrifice for the common good. In application, the flat tax is a sacrifice from the poor and a tax break for the rich. Under his policy, a person making \$25,000 per year will pay \$2500 in taxes and someone making \$1 Million will pay \$100,000. The working class individual is left with only \$22,500 for yearly spending while the wealthier individual still has \$900,000. In pursuit of Ben Carson's vision of fairness, everybody pays the same amount, but in terms of proportional equality, those of the lower income brackets suffer significantly. Carson believes that poor people have pride and find it very condescending that they cannot pay taxes<sup>[5]</sup> but, while the poor may be willing to do their part to the nation, will they be financially capable? An across the board flat tax will ensure that the poor remain poor, while the rich continue to enjoy their prosperity.

Carson attacks the American tax system as being full of loopholes and tax breaks, from which only the wealthy can benefit from through clever accountants and lawyers.<sup>[6]</sup> Using the above example again, employing the current system, a person making \$25,000 is taxed at an effective rate of \$3,000 or 13%<sup>[7]</sup>. In actuality, the amount paid is much lower, brought down by deductions and tax breaks yielded from costly ventures such as owning a house or having multiple dependents. Under a flat tax without any sort of deductions, it has been projected that the lowest 5% of taxpayers would see a \$2887 increase in actual yearly taxes paid, while the top 1% would see a decrease of \$209,562<sup>[8]</sup>.

Extrapolating this concept to the national scale, we can get an idea of how truly ineffective in aggregate Carson's plan is. Taking Governmental income, estimated for 2016 at approximately \$11.25 trillion, and multiplying it by the flat rate proposed of 10% yields tax revenues of around \$1.1 trillion. Though this may seem like a sizeable amount, one must consider the burdens the nature of the tax puts upon working people and tax breaks for the rich. The progressive tax we currently have, though also not necessarily the optimum solution of taxation, is projected to yield \$3.5 trillion, over three times more than what was gained from the flat tax<sup>[9]</sup>. To have a flat tax

with the same effectiveness as the incremental tax, rates would have to be in excess of 30%. Instead of striving to balance the budget, Carson's tax instead loses out on trillions of dollars that could have been used to pay off American debt. This increased deficit would make cuts other budgetary line items an absolute necessity. The first items most likely to be eliminated, or at least significantly defunded would be many of the national welfare programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP, etc., being but another blow to the working and middle classes, eliminating more aids in place for those in need of financial assistance. <sup>[10]</sup>

Carson's plan does not fully take into account the long term economic issues of such a tax. By actively gaping the class divide, this tax deprives working people any aid they receive based on their financial status while allowing for sanctioned tax breaks to the wealthiest citizens. Financially, there is no macroeconomic logic either that puts it ahead of the incremental tax system that we already have in place. This is not the first time the flat tax has been proposed by a candidate and, while it may be a popular topic to campaign for office with, in practice, it is an idea that possesses little virtue in helping the American people or the American economy.

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2. Washington Post. 2011. "A Closer Look at Gingrich's Tax Plan" . November 29, 2011. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/post/a-closer-look-at-gingrichs-flat-tax-plan/2011/11/28/gIQA5Y25N\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/post/a-closer-look-at-gingrichs-flat-tax-plan/2011/11/28/gIQA5Y25N_blog.html) . October 17, 2015.
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6. Fox News. 2015. "2015 GOP Primary Debate." August 6. <http://www.foxnews.com/live-coverage/fox-news-republican-presidential-primary-debate>. October 8, 2015.
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# Parties in Flux: Two Decades of Parallels Between the British Labour Party and the Republican Party

*Peter Hopko*

In 1994, the left-wing British Labour Party, and the right-wing American Republican Party, were in strikingly similar, ascendant positions. Labour, under the leadership of Tony Blair, was a few years away from achieving its first parliamentary majority since 1974. Blairite Labour moved to the center of British politics, abandoning its dedication to nationalization and socialism, before finally entering government in 1997. The party removed the call for “common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange” from its party constitution. Blair endorsed both free market economics and an interventionist foreign policy. Notably, Blair separated himself from an isolationist Labour tradition by supporting the Iraq War. Meanwhile, 1994 saw the culmination of the Newt Gingrich led “Republican Revolution”. The Republicans achieved control of the House of Representatives for the first time since 1954, while simultaneously gaining control of the Senate. Gingrich emphasized the corruption of Democratic incumbents, in contrast to the ideological purity of his insurgent Republicans. Interestingly, by disappointing the conservative members of his party, Gingrich was ultimately removed from the speakership by his own protégées.

21 years later, the Republican and Labour Parties once again find themselves in parallel conditions. This time the two parties are in disarray. Labour, having lost a general election in May, held a leadership election. In America, the race for the Republican Nomination for President in 2016 began in earnest. In August, rebellious socialist firebrand Jeremy Corbyn was elected to the Labour leadership; explicitly rejecting the centrism that had dominated the Party since 1994. The election of Corbyn exposed the immense gap between the Labour grassroots and the parliamentary Labour Party. As Corbyn rose in Britain, political outsiders, such as billionaire reality TV Star, and real estate hegemon, Donald Trump, and retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson, surged to the lead in Republican presidential polling; leaving traditional, high-profile politicians in the dust. At the same time, under pressure from the most conservative members of his caucus, notably the House Freedom Caucus, Republican Speaker of the House John Boehner was forced to resign, and his deputy, Kevin McCarthy, was prevented from succeeding him.

Both the Labour Party, and the Republican Party, face uphill battles in convincing the electorate, in their respective countries, they are capable of governing. The Labour Party has a leader who is ideologically distant from its parliamentary party. Corbyn supports nuclear disarmament and has an economic platform similar to Hugo Chavez’s. The chaos in the parliamentary Labour Party calls into question Labour’s ability to govern the country; or even to credibly oppose the Conservative government. Meanwhile, the Republicans, while controlling the Senate and the House, seem incapable of finding a coherent method of opposing the Obama Administration. The party is not so much ideologically separated, however it is strategically divided. Some favor a confrontational approach, while the current leadership team would rather bide its time, waiting for a potential Republican President in 2016. Ultimately, the Labour Party and the Republican Party face dramatic internal divisions and chaos, and it is difficult to imagine an easy path to intra-party peace in either situation.

In search of the origins of the current populist, anti-establishment fever that dominates the Republican and Labour Parties, I return to the two leaders mentioned earlier: Tony Blair and Newt Gingrich. Blair purpose-

fully separated himself from the Labour base. This was acceptable during Blair's electorally successful leadership. However, when the party was defeated in consecutive general elections under Gordon Brown, Tony Blair's Chancellor of the Exchequer, and then Ed Miliband, also from the moderate wing of the party, the frustrated Labour base demanded a return to socialist purity under Jeremy Corbyn. Left wing purity is the new Labour priority: symbolized by Corbyn's support for potential charges of war crimes against Tony Blair for his role in the Iraq War. Moderate Blairite politicians are seen as traitors or conservatives in disguise. In America, Gingrich made diametrically opposite mistakes that produced similar results. As Thomas Mann and Norman Ornstein argued in their 2012 Washington Post editorial "Let's just say it: The Republicans are the Problem", by portraying himself and his protégées as crusaders against corruption and compromised principles, Gingrich energized a base of intensely anti-Washington conservative activists who see moderate Republicans as part of the problem. This conservative base encourages unrealistic conservative purity from elected officials: totally eschewing compromise. This McCarthyite search for purity even reaches to people such as Representative Paul Ryan, onetime Vice-Presidential nominee and paragon of conservatism, who was nearly prevented from a candidacy for the newly vacant Speakership due to his moderate views on immigration: despite being a doctrinaire conservative in nearly every other circumstance. Meanwhile, the Republican base is embracing Donald Trump as its Presidential frontrunner, despite his former support for progressive causes like single payer healthcare and expansive gun control. The Republican Party is tearing itself apart in an oddly inconsistent search for ideological purity.

Though distant in ideological orientation, both the Labour and Republican Parties fell victim to the success of radical insurgencies from within their own ranks. The anger of the party faithful towards its leadership is real and intense. The establishment wings of both parties will try to reassert control. However, it seems that their return to dominance will be a difficult one.

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# The Great Recession and the Resurgence of European and Domestic Populism

*Harrison Fregeau*

The rise of populism defines the post-recession political realm in both America and Europe. Populist parties and candidates, both of the left and the right, are fiercely challenging the once dominant political center. This rise creates a moment of great opportunity, but also a moment of great danger.

The Great Recession changed much in the world; the world political system was no exception. The bursting of the American property bubble collapsed the laissez-faire neo-liberal banking system developed under Alan Greenspan and Hank Paulson during the Clinton and Bush Administrations. This provided extra momentum to Barack Obama's presidential campaign, helping him score victory over John McCain in 2008. America's borders failed to contain the contagion of toxic assets, triggering the collapse of massive housing bubbles in Ireland and Spain and plunging most of Europe into a sharp recession. The slow growth PIGS countries (Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain) suffered acutely, causing great suffering to their citizens. The dire situation forced the Eurozone to bail out three separate nations (Portugal and Cyprus once and Greece three times). Countries with higher savings rates, particularly the Netherlands, Finland and powerhouse Germany, footed the bill for bailing out the debts of free spending southern countries. In return, these countries imposed austerity measures which caused even further recession to Greeks, Portuguese, and Cypriots.

The recession and these previously mentioned conditions lit the fire for European populist anger directed at these governments. In the wake of the recession, extremist groups like the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) in the UK, le Front National (NF) in France, and Syriza and Golden Dawn in Greece, have grown in strength. Though there is considerable variation among the parties, their common thread is hatred of the Euro-zone. UKIP helped force a referendum in England on whether or not to leave the EU. NF won nearly 25% of the vote in France on an anti-EU and virulent anti-immigrant platforms, and NF has an anti-Semitic background to boot. Syriza became the majority party in Greece, and won a dangerous referendum to reject the initial terms of a vital 3<sup>rd</sup> bailout back in July.<sup>1</sup> Golden Dawn, does not even bother to hide its neo-fascist stance. Above all, in the wake of the 2008 recession, European voters turned their anger at the economy and the boogymen of the European Union and the immigrants and refugees flooding into the euro-zone.

At home in the United States, populism is rising as well. Right wing Tea Party activists dominated the 2010 midterm elections. In 2016, leftist elements advocating for issues like Black Lives Matter and income inequality clash with reactionary elements advocating for deporting immigrants and erasing the Affordable Care Act. These elements are represented by presidential candidates Bernie Sanders on one side, and Ben Carson and Donald Trump on the other. Populism also shook the position of the Speaker of the House of Representatives. After 5 painful years as House Speaker, John Boehner of Ohio abruptly resigned the speakership: likely frustrated that the extremist Freedom Caucus prevented him from compromising with Democrats numerous times. This caucus also successfully derailed the candidacy of Kevin McCarthy, Boehner's understudy, and plunged the race into chaos. Finally Representative Paul Ryan was eventually coaxed into running for an office which, though granted nominal power, has great uncertainty moving forward.

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<sup>1</sup> Liz Alderman, *With Greek 'No' Vote, Tsipras Wins a Victory That Could Carry a Steep Price*, New York Times, July 5, 2015.

All this being said, I expect October 2015 will be a high water mark for American populism. Unemployment has sunk to a healthy level of around 5%: wage growth should follow shortly. Donald Trump's poll numbers have declined, Hillary Clinton's campaign is finding its footing (and thus is boxing out Bernie Sanders) and Ben Carson's support resembles the flash in the pan popularity of previous unsuccessful president candidates like Michele Bachmann and Herman Cain. The most important reason for populism's impending American decline is structural. The dominance of the two party system of Democrats and Republicans wards off the rise of disruptive parties seen in Europe. Both parties' proven track record of electoral success dissuades both voters and (some would say more importantly) donors from supporting candidates bold enough to run under an independent banner. This keeps minority interests out of power, for better or for worse.

In Europe, the future is far murkier. In France, polls show Marine Le Pen, the leader of NF, would defeat sitting president Francois Hollande in the first round of the next election, if held today.<sup>2</sup> Leftist and unpredictable Syriza remains the plurality party in Greece. The outcome of the British referendum to exit the European Union is in doubt. The more democratic European systems leaves themselves more vulnerable to extremist political impulses. I feel far safer in the more elitist American system designed to keep centrist ideas front and center, so to speak. Populism is certainly far more exciting, but in the wake of the Great Recession, its power is also more terrifying.

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<sup>2</sup> Gerard Bon (ed. Gareth Jones), *France's Le Pen would lead first round of 2017 presidential result – poll*, Reuters UK, January 29, 2015.