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Subject: Greg Brown's Weekend Reading and Other Things.... 04/05/2015

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DEAR FRIEND.....

Stupid.... Stupid.... Stupid....



Inline image 2

On February 26, 2015 Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker (R) said his experience undermining labor unions in Wisconsin has prepared him to take on the threat of the Islamic State in the Middle East. *"If I can take on 100,000 protesters, I can do the same across the world,"* Walker told a packed crowd at the Conservative Political Action Committee, in response to a question about how he would fight the terrorist group, which has killed thousands in Iraq and Syria. Walker was referring to protesters who led an unsuccessful recall effort against him in 2012, after he proposed a budget that stripped public sector unions of their collective bargaining rights. The protests lasted for months and catapulted Walker onto the national political stage.

Lets remember that just two weeks earlier Governor Walker in his first trip to the United Kingdom in an endeavor to establish his foreign policy experience firmly declined to address a multitude of subjects:

- *United Kingdom membership in the European Union.
- *The fight against the Islamic State.
- *Whether the U.S. should arm Ukraine against Russia-backed rebels.
- *His general foreign policy vision.
- *Whether he believes in evolution.

Yet somehow this likely 2016 presidential candidate, Governor Walker, dodged questions on almost ever import issue that would show his understanding of a vision that his leadership would have if he were President. Doubling down two weeks later, the person who couldn't address any substantive foreign issues in London, said that nation needs *"someone who leads"* and who will *"send a message, not only that we'll protect American soil, but do not take this upon freedom-loving people anywhere else in the world. We need a leader with that kind of confidence...."* And that this person was himself.... **is laughable.**

We need serious leaders who can bridge alliances to deal with the barrage of dangerous situations around the world coming at us on a daily basis. We need leaders with vision. What we don't need are leaders who believe that because they were able to bully state unions was evidence that they can successfully deal with ISIS and Putin, as well as bring peace to the Middle East and Ukraine. And as Chris Cillizza wrote in The Washington Post: ***"Memo to Scott Walker: Islamic State ≠ Wisconsin protesters."***

It's Not Our Fight

Critics of President Obama has spent much of this year upset because he refuses to label jihadi terrorist **"Islamic"** -- except that by doing so it will start an ideological war giving the proponents of radical Islam legitimacy. And as Fareed Zakaria wrote in a recent op-ed in **The Washington Post** this is – ***An ideological war America must watch, not fight.***

Zakaria pointed out that "our" image of an ideological war comes from the Cold War, a titanic struggle between opposing worldviews. But the Cold War was so pervasive and intense because each side's ideas were potentially attractive to anyone, anywhere in the world. Communism and capitalism were both secular ideologies, each trying to seduce the world's *"undecideds"* into its camp. And because the

West did everything possible to delegitimize communism from its birth. But one should remember that tens of millions of people around the world were greatly attracted including some of the West's greatest intellectuals — such as playwright George Bernard Shaw and novelist and historian H.G. Wells — wrote sympathetically about it.

By the 1930s, when democracy seemed to be foundering and fascism was on the march, many thought socialism was the obvious answer to the world's woes. In the first elections after World War II, Communist parties got about a quarter and a fifth of the vote in France and Italy, respectively, leading many to worry that those countries would become communist. Around the developing world, the call of socialism and communism was real and strong.

Whereas the ideology of "*Radical Islam*," by contrast, is severely limited in its global appeal. Almost by definition, it is deeply unattractive to all non-Muslims. What Christian would want the forced imposition of sharia law? Even within the Muslim world, radical Islam does not resonate. In the half of that world that holds elections — including Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Bangladesh, Turkey, Iraq, even Pakistan — such ideologies have not garnered many votes. The Muslim Brotherhood's electoral success in Egypt is a partial exception to this rule, but it fared well for a variety of reasons unrelated to its Islamic ideology (which was also not nearly as radical as Egypt's military dictatorship claims).

Because the ideas at stake are potentially seductive only to Muslims, the ideological war today is really a struggle within Islam. It's a cultural war that has to be waged by Muslims. If outsiders such as the United States want to play a role, they should listen to and support Muslims fighting the good fight. This is why President Obama is inclined not to describe the Islamic State as Islamic and the current terrorist barbaric actions a *War against Islam*, which these terrorists would love as it gives them international legitimacy far beyond their numbers or support.

More importantly this is not a West versus Islam fight. It is a small fringe element in the Middle East trying to hijack the religion of 1.5 billion people around the world. It's irrelevant what Obama wants to call these terrorists because it is up to the moderates in Islam and the Arab World to rid their region of these outlaws. As the king of Jordan, Abdullah II said to Fareed Zaharia, "*This is a fight inside of Islam where everybody comes together against these outlaws.*" Those most insistent that we need to name and know the enemy want the Obama administration to jump into the fight, guns blazing. But the irony is that, if one does understand the ideology behind the Islamic State properly, it leads in the opposite direction.

Graeme Wood, in his recent essay in the Atlantic, discusses the prospect of a larger U.S. military involvement against the group. "*The biggest proponent of an American invasion is the Islamic State itself*," he writes. "*The provocative videos . . . are clearly made to draw America into the fight. An invasion would be a huge propaganda victory for jihadists worldwide.*" Instead, Wood counsels containment, selective airstrikes and support for Muslims who are working to dissuade their brethren from falling prey to radical Islam.

In other words, fighting an ideological war against the Islamic State actually points toward a sophisticated strategy that involves, for the United States, military restraint and close political cooperation with Arabs. Let's think before we are goaded into another war that has little to do with us other than our presence gives the opponents legitimacy.

This chart should terrify Republicans

As we know the Republican Party is becoming overwhelming white and male and increasingly less sensitive to the needs of minorities. From its hard stance on voter rights and immigration, as well as its overt vitriol against American's first African American President and policies that provide access and the safety net for minorities, it is difficult for Blacks and Hispanics to feel any love from the Republican Party. With nowhere else to go, more than 92% African Americans and 76% of Hispanics vote Democrat. In a new study called "**States of Change**" conducted by the Center for American Progress, the American Enterprise Institute and Brookings, contains a chart of the tipping point at which states will become majority-minority. The results are striking -- and should be terrifying for Republicans. Here's the chart:

 Inline image 1

At the moment, there are only four states -- California, Texas, Hawaii and New Mexico -- that are majority-minority in population. But the trend line is remarkable. The study's authors write:

The next two majority-minority states, Maryland and Nevada, should arrive in the next five years. After that, there should be four more in the 2020s: Arizona, Florida, Georgia, and New Jersey. In the 2030s, these states should be joined by Alaska, Louisiana, and New York, and in the 2040s, these states should be joined by Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Virginia. The 2050s should round out the list by adding Colorado, North Carolina, and Washington. By 2060, that should bring the number of majority-minority states to 22, including seven of the currently largest states and 11 of the top 15. Together, these 22 states account for about two-thirds of the country's population.

Think about that for a minute. By 2060, 11 of the 15 largest states will be majority-minority -- states that includes electorally critical battlegrounds such as Florida, Arizona, Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia. When you consider that Mitt Romney won 27 percent of the Hispanic vote nationally (*13 points worse than George W. Bush did eight years earlier*), you begin to see that if things continue in their current direction, Republicans will be hard-pressed to be competitive in national elections in a decade or two.

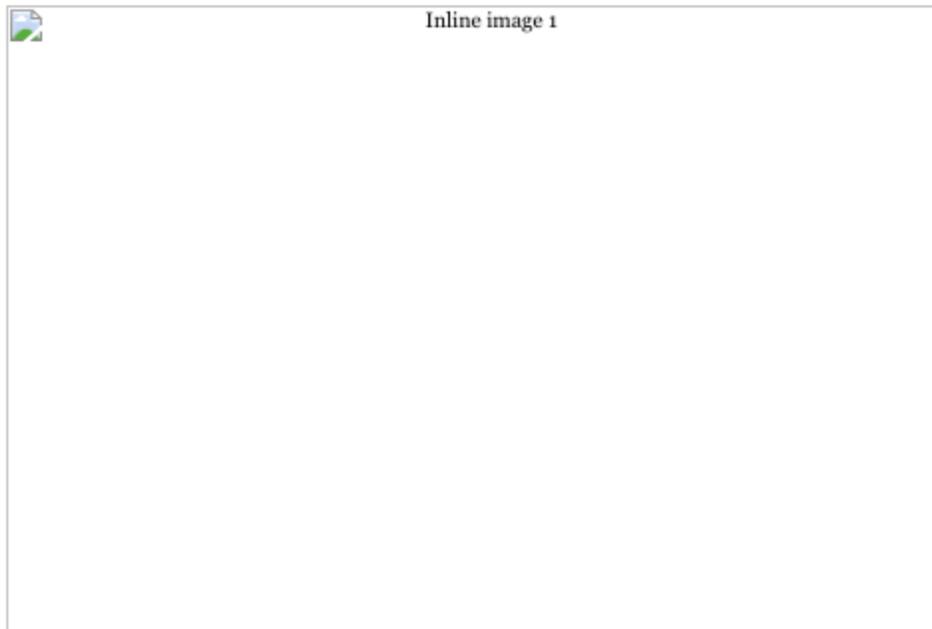
And although Texas is ALREADY majority minority by population, and Republicans won overwhelmingly there in 2014, it's worth noting that the Hispanic population, nationally and in Texas, is younger and less registered to vote as a percentage of its eligible voting population than any other demographic group. But as that community ages and gets more acclimated with the voting process, those numbers are likely to change.

New Mexico provides a recent example. In 1994, New Mexico became a majority-minority population. And yet, Bush was able to be extremely competitive in the state in 2000 (*he lost the state to Al Gore by about 350 votes*) and 2004 (*he won by a point over John Kerry*). By 2006, New Mexico became a majority-minority state by eligible voter population, and you began to see it shift heavily away from

Republicans at the federal level. Barack Obama won the state by 15 points in 2008 and 10 points in 2012. Democrats won open Senate seat races in the Land of Enchantment in 2008 and 2012.

And yes, “white” Hispanics can win as Republicans but a overwhelming number of Hispanic families have overtly Brown members within their families, who often face similar prejudices to that African Americans. The simple fact is that Republicans can't simply hope that that the trend line on the Hispanic vote magically changes. While the party has done a very good job at the state level electing Hispanics -- Martinez and Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval are two major stars -- the fight over immigration reform happening in Congress and in the early stages of the 2016 presidential race could very well set back the party's attempts to make inroads with voters who are absolutely critical to their future as, well, a party. Demographics might not be destiny. But Republicans are staring at the wrong end of a demographic transformation that threatens to upend the current political map.

When Ted Cruz Asks Us To Imagine



As Carl Cannon wrote in **Real Clear Politics** the article – *Imagine the Unintended Irony of Ted Cruz* – which was the theme – IMAGINE – of the freshman senator from Texas when he announced his candidacy of the 2016 Presidential Election a week ago on Monday at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, the famous Virginia Bible College founded by the Rev. Jerry Falwell. He asked his audience to imagine a world without Obamacare, Common Core education standards, gun control, and a president afraid of uttering the phrase “*radical Islamic terrorism*.” He also asked Americans to essentially imagine a world without tax collectors, political moderates, liberals, atheists, gay marriage –and voters old enough to remember John Lennon’s music. Too bad that Ted Cruz is too young to understand what John Lennon’s lyrics really meant. “Imagine there’s no heaven,” Lennon’s classic begins. In the second verse, he really gets going: “*Imagine there’s no countries*,” he sings. “*It isn’t hard to do. Nothing to kill or die for—and no religion, too. Imagine all the people, living life in peace...*”

Cannon believes that due to [REDACTED] ultra-thin résumé beyond bravado, candidate Cruz cannot afford to sound like a generic conservative. So then he added this: *“Imagine abolishing the IRS.”* At the risk of sounding ungenerous, this is just kooky. Cruz didn’t go anywhere with that idea, but where could he go, really? He prefaced his brief tax talk by characterizing the nation’s current tax code as one “that crushes innovation,” which assumes facts not in evidence, before adding: *“Imagine a simple flat tax that lets every American fill out his or her taxes on a postcard.”* Again Cannon: “Not to sound pedantic, but if there’s no Internal Revenue Service, where should I send that post card? To whom do I pay my taxes? And if my neighbor, balking perhaps at President [REDACTED] governing priorities, refuses to even pay his *“simple flat tax,”* which government agency persuades him to pony up? Won’t we need that tax money to fight radical Islamic terrorism?”

As title of an op-ed that Matt O’Brien recently wrote in **The Washington Post** pointed out – **Ted [REDACTED] flat tax couldn’t even work in your imagination.** First of all it wouldn’t raise nearly enough money to fund the country’s obligations. Secondly it would be a colossal giveaway to the rich – and maybe even take away for the poor – and that doesn’t help the economy much. Who would pay after President Cruz abolished the IRS. And finally trickle-down economics doesn’t work and we have had three decades of evidence as proof.

Now that Ted Cruz is a presidential candidate, his views on science are, naturally, getting a lot of scrutiny. That’s particularly the case in that while he does seem to acknowledge the reality of at least some amount of climate change, he nonetheless seems a skeptic of the idea that human-caused climate change is happening right now, or has been happening lately. In a much cited episode on **“Late Night with Seth Meyers,”** Cruz recently said the following about climate change:

My view actually is simple. Debates on this should follow science and should follow data. And many of the alarmists on global warming, they’ve got a problem cause the science doesn’t back them up. And in particular, satellite data demonstrate for the last 17 years, there’s been zero warming. None whatsoever. It’s why – you remember how it used to be called ‘global warming’ and then magically the theory changed to ‘climate change’? The reason is it wasn’t warming, but the computer models still say it is, except the satellites show it’s not.

The key phrase here is *“satellite data demonstrate for the last 17 years, there’s been zero warming. None whatsoever.”* And it’s noteworthy, because it shows that Cruz has done some homework and found a particular type of data that would appear to support his claim. But interestingly, Cruz doesn’t say why we should trust satellite data over, say, ground-based weather station data, or sea-based buoy data. Based on such surface temperature measurements, NASA and NOAA both called last year the warmest on record, followed by 2010, followed by 2005, and then only maybe followed by 1998 – which is presumably the year Cruz considers to have been the hottest, given that it was 17 years ago.

Individual years can vary in temperature, but decades tell you more about trends. Using this approach, the World Meteorological Organization has ably demonstrated that the decade of the 2000s was warmer globally than the 1990s, which was in turn warmer than the 1980s. So while 1998 may have been one of the top four or five hottest years on record that hardly means the globe hasn’t been warming in the past 17 years. In claiming the globe hasn’t warmed in 17 years, Cruz selectively highlighted satellite temperature data, rather than other data (which NASA and NOAA recently used to call 2014 the hottest year on record). He also selectively focused on one year (1998), rather than

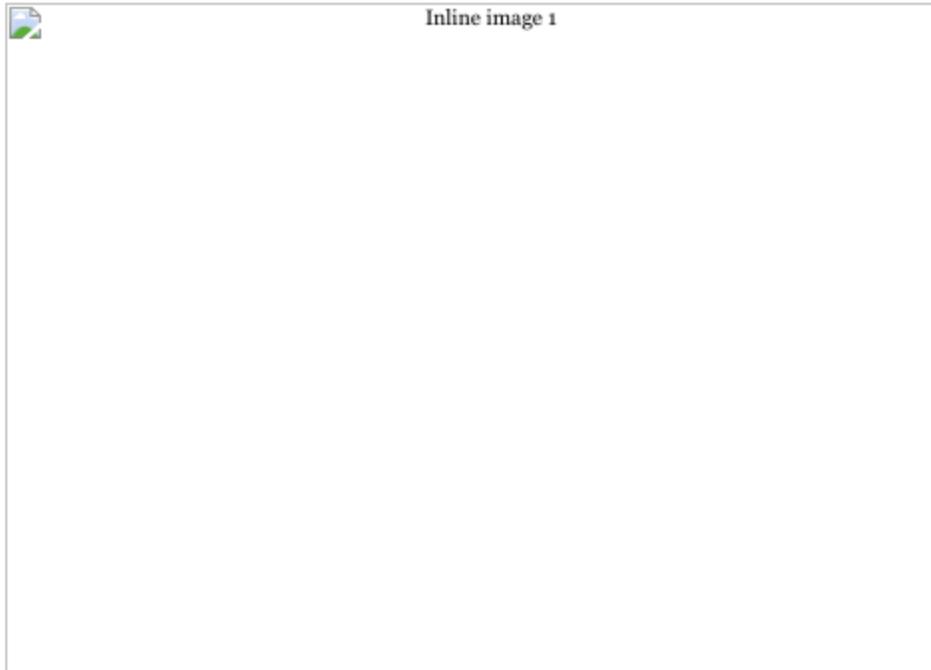
examining the aggregate temperatures of many years or decades. And finally, a key scientist who studies this type of satellite data, and whose work was cited by Cruz's spokesman (as backup), criticizes Cruz's approach and conclusions.

In 2012, Mitt Romney was excoriated for his self-defeating claim that *"47 percent of the people will vote [Democratic] no matter what."* Ted Cruz makes Romney seem like a populist by contrast. Cruz also turns on its head Jeb Bush's assurance to Republican donors that he won't campaign for the primary in a way that makes a general election victory impossible. That's exactly what Cruz is proposing, whether he realizes it or not. Here's one key story line to keep in mind: If you are a conservative or an independent — and independent-minded voters determine the outcome of every close national election — the moral of the Obama presidency is not that experience is unimportant. Quite the opposite, actually. This is a complaint even many loyal Democrats have about the president. But Ted Cruz has even less experience in American public life — considerably less, actually — than Obama did when he started running for president in 2007. In place of a cogent rationale for his candidacy, or any explanation about his path to the presidency, Cruz offered aspirational rhetoric. That word *"imagine"* — he used it 38 times a week ago.

Although he is an outstanding campaigner, Cruz offers not a coherent plan for governing but a series of applause lines. *"Imagine abolishing the IRS!"* is one. How he would pay for his proposed trebling of the Border Patrol after scrapping the Internal Revenue Service is unclear, but no matter. He reveres the constitution, yet he wants to change it quite a lot, for example to require a balanced budget. He is one of the few top-tier Republicans who still harps on about stopping gay people from marrying. He occasionally takes a stance that is both brave and wise: he protests when Uncle Sam lines the pockets of Iowa's corn farmers, for example. But for the most part he offers feel-good mush: *"Imagine young people coming out of school with four, five, six job offers!"* And during his three years in the Senate, he has treated it not as a place to craft laws but as a stage for self-publicizing stunts. And although Cruz will not win the presidency, since he repels the swing voters who decide things. But he could still do harm. If he turns the Republican primary into a conservative purity contest, in which anyone softer on President Obama is labelled a sell-out, other contenders may be dragged so far to the right that they become unelectable in the general election. And as the editor's at **The Economist Magazine** points out, his run for the President is bad for Republicans as he pushes the party to the extreme right. Most of all he would make a terrible President.

Back to his announcement: Many of the references came in the biographical description of his family and his family's faith, and the description of his educational and work journey, all of which comprised the first third of his speech. This part was as evocative an explication of the American Dream as we are likely to hear on the 2016 campaign trail. Too bad he couldn't have stopped there. And what is funny is that the man who shut down American's government now wants to fun it, or run what is left after he guts as much as he can.... *now that's irony..... And by the way last week CNN Dana Bash reported that the Presidential candidate told him that because his wife has taken a unpaid leave her job at Goldman Sachs so that she can work full-time on his campaign, he will sign up for healthcare coverage through the Affordable Care Act -- the law that he has been on a crusade to kill... What hypocrisy,,,,,*

Kudos to the President and Secretary Kerry



A reason to smile: U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, center, waits for the start of a meeting to pin down a nuclear deal with Iran, on March 30, 2015, at the Beau Rivage Palace Hotel in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Kudos to President Obama for braving the criticism of Israel, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Congressional Republicans and hawks in his own party for forging forward on the high-stakes, complicated and extremely difficult negotiations with Iran, as he was able to announce an historic agreement which will fully implemented will halt and prevent it from developing a nuclear weapon. In the press conference at the Rose Garden on Thursday the President explained that this agreement meets our core objectives of cutting off every pathway that Iran could take to develop a nuclear weapon:

- Prohibits Iran from developing weapon's grade plutonium
- Prohibits Iran from developing nuclear weapons that use enriched uranium
- Iran has agreed to reduce existing installed centrifuges by two-thirds
- The agreement allow third party monitoring to ensure that Iran does not build a nuclear weapon in secret.

If this deal is fully implemented, Iran will be unable to build a nuclear bomb by enriching uranium or by reprocessing plutonium for at least 10 years. Some of the restrictions imposed by this deal would last 15 years. The international inspections of certain aspects of Iran's nuclear program would stay in place for 25 years. And a number of the restrictions, including the ban on building any nuclear weapons could likely to last forever. As for the economic sanctions against Iran, they would be lifted not upon the deal's signing, as the Iranians initially demanded, but only after the inspectors have verified that Iran has fulfilled all of its commitments in the deal.

These commitments include reducing the number of Iran's installed centrifuges by two-thirds (from about 19,000 to 6,104, with only 5,060 allowed to enrich uranium); reducing its stockpile of enriched uranium by 97 percent (from 10,000 kilograms to 300 kilograms); to remove all advanced centrifuges (those that can enrich uranium at a much faster rate) and to place them in internationally monitored storage; to destroy the core of the Arak heavy-water reactor (which could produce a plutonium bomb), ship all its spent fuel out of the country, and forgo additional reprocessing; among other things. And if the Iranians honor these terms, they will not be able to build a bomb for at least a decade, maybe longer. Still, there are two questions that a final deal would have to answer concretely.

Netanyahu's unlikely allies in opposing the deal — the rulers of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and other Sunni Muslim oligarchies — simply don't want a deal at all. They fear above all an ascendant Shiite Iran, especially an Iran enriched by the flow of money that comes with the end of sanctions and the resumption of global investment and trade. They would, in fact, prefer an Iran that aspires to build nuclear weapons — an Iran that blatantly looks like a threat — to an Iran that might be stalled in the nuclear realm (and thus might seem more peaceful) but in fact still pursues its expansionist aims.

This fear is understandable, from their point of view, but the United States shouldn't adopt the Sunnis' perspective—shouldn't get drawn into their war with the Shiites— especially if it means forgoing the opportunity of a truly historic, potentially transformative deal. Even from the Sunnis' point of view, which would they prefer: an expansionist Iran with nuclear weapons or without?

They're right, the end of sanctions could make Iran more powerful; but the international community has held firm on the sanctions for as long as they have only because they've been seen as the lever for a deal. If the deal collapses, and if the United States is held responsible for the failure, the sanctions would collapse as well leaving Iran to continue to develop weapons grade plutonium and other fuels, if not the weapons themselves.

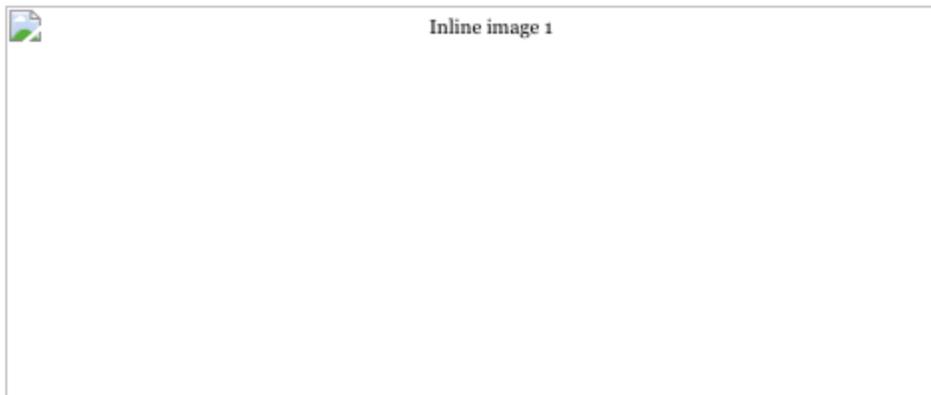
Which leads to another reason for continuing these talks: If there is any chance that Iran might modify its stance over the next decade or so, might even become a "normal" nation, these talks might usher in this change. Tehran's rulers have long justified their alliance with terrorists and their repressive domestic policies by raising alarms about the threat from demonic America. If the Iranian people see their own leaders meeting and smiling with American diplomats, even negotiating deals, trusting them enough to dismantle huge pieces of the nation's cherished nuclear program, then the chants of "*Down with America*" might soon lose their potency — and the regime's political legitimacy, the rationale for its existence, could gradually evaporate. As evidence the government allowed President Obama's speech to be broadcast locally to the cheers of millions of Iranians. Therefore there are expectations in Iran for normalization and should this olive branch fail, there could be unexpected negative consequences for the Iranian government.

But even if there is no regime change, this deal is far better than no deal -- and there is no deal on the table but this one -- and it's a lot better than anyone would have predicted just a few days ago. For those looking for regime change they are delusional. We have seen regime change in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen and Libya and from results in those countries – we should realize that regime change doesn't mean democracy as it easily lead to new fertile grounds for more terrorists. Also remember one persons terrorist is another person's freedom fighter. I watch David Brooks on PBS Newshour describing how Iran funds terrorist who kill American soldiers. But lets think about that - because the only American soldiers that these "terrorists" are trying to kill are ones who have traveled five thousand miles to fight in a war that is actually between Shia and Sunnis - not even Arabs and Persians. This is a religious war within Islam and we are backing a group of mega-rich families, who if they really shared the wealth with their countrymen this divide may not have become so severe.

A diplomatic solution is the best way to stop Iran from developing a nuclear weapon as it can lead to a more comprehensive and long-lasting solution. And in spite of anything else it is our best option so far. Because do we really think that bombing Iran is first a legal thing or a wise thing to do? And as most experts will tell you that even if we bomb the hell out of Iran's installations we most likely wouldn't get them all and at best we would only delay development by only two to three years, while at the same time turning moderate Iranians against us for decades to come.

Again kudos to President Obama and we should not allow critics of this agreement to torpedo it before all negotiations are exhausted. And let's remember that war is always failure while peace through democracy is a pathway to success. Ryan Grim recently wrote an article in **The Huffington Post** – **Iran, Cuba And China: Obama Steadily Builds Diplomatic Legacy** – and if this is the case he may finally deserve the Nobel Peace Prize that he was awarded in 2009.... And although not a final agreement and there is still lots more to do this is a strong first step..... **Bravo Mr. President and Bravo Secretary Kerry....**

More Good News About the Deficit



Obama Budget Would Shrink Deficits By \$1.2 Trillion Over 10 Years, CBO Says

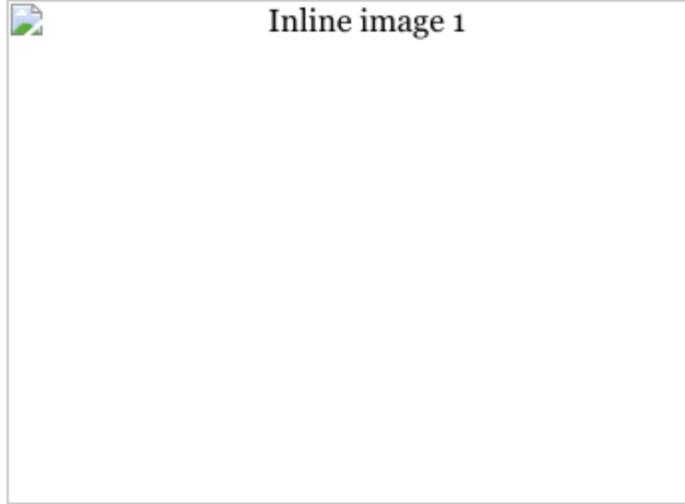
I often have to remind my friends who are critics of President Obama's economic policies that when his predecessor took office he inherited a \$230 billion budget surplus and when he left office the Obama Administration inherited a \$1.1 trillion deficit as well as an economy in free-fall. On March 5, 2015 the Congressional Budget Office announced that President Barack Obama's fiscal 2016 budget proposal would shrink U.S. deficits by \$1.232 trillion over 10 years compared to those expected under current tax and spending laws. The reduction is largely due to Obama's proposals for fewer tax deductions and exclusions for the wealthy and plans for lower spending on military operations in Afghanistan. For fiscal 2016, the first full year under Obama's fiscal blueprint if Congress were to adopt it, the deficit would fall to \$380 billion from \$455 billion, CBO's latest forecast under current laws. So why aren't we hearing of any kudos from Conservatives who several years ago were trying to label the President as the *deficit king*? **And this is my rant of the week.....**

WEEK'S READINGS

Sorry.... The U.S. Was Never A Christian Nation....



Inline image 1



"The government of the United States is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion."

--John Adams

I recently read a blog by Jeff Schweitzer in **The Huffington Post – *Founding Fathers: We Are Not a Christian Nation*** – sparking my interest as a number of my friends seem to be becoming more and more xenophobic and specifically Islamophobic fanned by the brutal and bloody beheadings, random slaughter and other barbaric actions of religious intolerance by ISIS terrorists. As a result, a majority of Republicans are pining for a Christian America. Proponents of converting the United States into a theocracy do not see the terrible parallel between religious excess in the Middle East and here at home and that their blindness to reason is the inevitable consequence of religious zealotry.

Conservatives who so proudly tout their fealty to the Constitution want to trash our founding document by violating the First Amendment in hopes of establishing Christianity as the nation's religion. This is precisely what the Constitution prohibits: *"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."*

Let's Go Back To The Beginning

The irony is that the louder that these professed Christians protest against the excesses of Islam, the more they agitate for Christian excess. We really need to stop this ridiculous argument about being a Christian nation. If there should be any doubt, let us listen to the founding fathers themselves. This from Thomas Jefferson in an April 11, 1823, letter to John Adams: *"The day will come when the mystical generation of Jesus by the Supreme Being in the womb of a virgin, will be classed with the*

fable of the generation of Minerva in the brain of Jupiter. ... But we may hope that the dawn of reason and freedom of thought in these United States will do away with all this artificial scaffolding...."

These are not the words of a man who wishes to establish a Christian theocracy. Jefferson promoted tolerance above all and said earlier that his statute for religious freedom in Virginia was "*meant to comprehend, within the mantle of its protection, the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and the Mohammedan, the Hindoo and Infidel of every denomination.*" He specifically wished to avoid the dominance of a single religion.

Let us be perfectly clear: We are not now, nor have we ever been, a Christian nation. Our founding fathers explicitly and clearly excluded any reference to "God" or "the Almighty" or any euphemism for a higher power in the Constitution. Not one time is the word "*god*" mentioned in our founding document. Not one time. The facts of our history are easy enough to verify. Anybody who ignorantly insists that our nation is founded on Christian ideals need only look at the four most important documents from our early history -- the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the Federalist Papers and the Constitution -- to disprove that ridiculous religious bias. All four documents unambiguously prove our secular origins.

Declaration of Independence (1776)

The most important assertion in this document is that "to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

Note that the power of government is derived not from any god but from the people. No appeal is made in this document to a god for authority of any kind. In no case are any powers given to religion in the affairs of man.

Remember, too, that this document was not written to form or found a government but was stating intent in a way that was meant to appeal to an audience with European sensibilities. Only four times is there any reference at all to higher powers -- "*Laws of Nature and of Nature's God,*" "*Supreme Judge of the world,*" "*their Creator,*" and "*divine Providence*" -- and in all four cases the references to a higher power appeal to the idea of inherent human dignity, never implying a role for a god in government.

Articles of Confederation (1777)

Throughout the entire document, in all 13 articles, the only reference to anything remotely relating to a god is a term used one time, "*Great Governor of the World,*" and even then only in the context of general introduction, like "*Ladies and gentlemen, members of the court....*" Unlike the Declaration of Independence, this document did indeed seek to create a type of government in the form of a confederation of independent states. The authors gave no power or authority to religion. And this

document is our first glimpse into the separation of church and state, because just as the Articles of Confederation give no authority to religion in civil matters, so too does the document deny any authority of government in matters of faith.

U.S. Constitution (1787)

This one is easy, because the Constitution of the United States of America makes zero reference to a god or Christianity.

The only reference to religion, found in Article VI, is a negative one: "*[N]o religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.*" And of course we have the First Amendment, which states that "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.*"

Federalist Papers (1787-88)

While Thomas Jefferson was the genius behind the Declaration of Independence, John Jay, Alexander Hamilton and James Madison (publishing under the pseudonym "Publius") were the brains providing the intellectual foundation of our Constitution. And what brilliance they brought to the task. There is no better way to get into the minds of our founding fathers and understand their original intent than by reading this collection of amazing essays. As with the Constitution, at no time is a god ever mentioned in the Federalist Papers. At no time is Christianity even mentioned. Religion is only discussed in the context of keeping matters of faith separate from concerns of governance, and of keeping religion free from government interference. The founding fathers could not be clearer on this point: God has no role in government; Christianity has no role in government. They make this point explicitly, repeatedly, in multiple founding documents. We are not a Christian nation.

"In God We Trust"

Our national obsession with God in politics is actually a recent phenomenon and would seem completely alien to any of our founders. "*In God We Trust*" was first placed on United States coins in 1861, during the Civil War. Teddy Roosevelt tried to remove the words from our money in 1907 but was shouted down. Only in 1956 was that expression adopted as the national motto by the 84th Congress. The clause "*under God*" in the Pledge of Allegiance was inserted only in 1954, when President Eisenhower signed legislation to recognize "*the dedication of our Nation and our people to the Almighty.*" But conservatives, ignorant of our history, or willfully ignoring it, wish us to believe that the pledge always referenced God. Here is Sarah Palin's take, defending the "*under God*" clause: "*If the pledge was good enough for the founding fathers, its [sic] good enough for me and I'll fight in defense of our Pledge of Allegiance.*" One wonders if she thinks the founders were alive in 1954. I guess if Noah could live to be nearly 800 years old and the world was created in six days..... who knows.....

That we are a secular nation was obvious to past generations, so much so that in the mid-1800s several groups formed to rectify what they considered a mistake of our forefathers in founding our country on principles of reason rather than faith. Perhaps the most prominent was the National Reform Association, established in 1863 for the purpose of amending the preamble to the Constitution to acknowledge God and Jesus Christ as the sources of all government power, because the original document does not.

The National Reform Association believed that the Civil War was evidence that God was punishing the country for their failure to put God into the Constitution (nothing to do with slavery, of course). Also, note that this apparent knowledge of God's mind is reminiscent of Pat Robertson's claims about God's wrath in Haiti, Florida and anywhere else he believes the devil has taken hold. Anyway, in their 1864 convention the National Reform Association agreed on a preamble that would replace "*We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union...*" with "*Recognizing Almighty God as the source of all authority and power in civil government, and acknowledging the Lord Jesus Christ as the governor among the nations, his revealed will as the supreme law of the land, in order to constitute a Christian government....*"

They presented their suggestion to President Lincoln, who is said to have "*avoided it like a dirty diaper.*" The Congress also dodged the idea but threw the group a bone by agreeing to put "*In God We Trust*" on our currency, in an act of pure political pandering. So "*In God We Trust*" was first placed on United States coins in 1861 during the Civil War. From the Treasury we also find out:

The use of IN GOD WE TRUST has not been uninterrupted. The motto disappeared from the five-cent coin in 1883, and did not reappear until production of the Jefferson nickel began in 1938. Since 1938, all United States coins bear the inscription. Later, the motto was found missing from the new design of the double-eagle gold coin and the eagle gold coin shortly after they appeared in 1907. In response to a general demand, Congress ordered it restored, and the Act of May 18, 1908, made it mandatory on all coins upon which it had previously appeared. IN GOD WE TRUST was not mandatory on the one-cent coin and five-cent coin. It could be placed on them by the Secretary or the Mint Director with the Secretary's approval.

The motto has been in continuous use on the one-cent coin since 1909, and on the ten-cent coin since 1916. It also has appeared on all gold coins and silver dollar coins, half-dollar coins, and quarter-dollar coins struck since July 1, 1908. For much of our existence, the United States never included God in its motto, on its currency, or in any document creating the Republic. We were born a secular nation and must remain one to sustain our future, unless we want to go the way of ISIS.

Our founding fathers understood well the extraordinary danger of mixing religion and politics; we forget that lesson at our great peril. If we forget, just glance over to the Middle East. We should tremble in fear for our country when the majority of conservatives believe we are a Christian nation; that frightening majority has forgotten our history, ignored our founding principles and abandoned our most cherished ideal of separating church and state. In mixing religion and politics, the religious right subverts both. And the world suffers.

Priceline.com for Medicine



Inline image 3

Knee replacement. Coloured X-ray of a total knee replacement in a 70 year old man.

Buying health care in America is like shopping blindfolded at Macy's and getting the bill months after you leave the store, economist Uwe Reinhardt likes to say. A tool just went online that is supposed to give patients a small peek at the products and prices before they open their wallets. Got a sore knee? Having a baby? Need a primary-care doctor? Shopping for an MRI scan? Guroo.com shows the average local cost for 70 common diagnoses and medical tests in most states. That's the real cost — not "charges" that often get marked down — based on a giant database of what insurance companies actually pay.

Obviously this isn't just like Priceline.com for knee replacements. What Guroo hopes to do for consumers is limited so far. It won't reflect costs for particular hospitals or doctors, although officials say that's coming for some. And it doesn't have much to say initially about the quality of care. Still, Guroo should shed new light on the country's opaque, complex and maddening medical bazaar, say consumer advocates. *"This has the potential to be a game-changer,"* said Katherine Hempstead, who analyzes health insurance for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. *"It's good for uninsured people. It's good for people with high deductibles. It's good for any person that's kind of wondering: If I go to see the doctor for such-and-such, what might happen next?"*

Guroo is produced by the Health Care Cost Institute (HCCI) working with three big insurance companies: UnitedHealthcare, Aetna and Humana, soon to be joined by a fourth, Assurant. The idea is to eventually let members of these plans use a companion site to see how differing provider prices affect their co-payments. A nonprofit known for its cost and utilization reports, HCCI receives some industry funding but is governed by an independent board. This is its first tool for consumers.

Consumer advocates praised Guroo but cautioned that the movement toward *"transparency"* in medical prices is still in its very early stages. Data on insurer, employer or government Web sites are often limited or inaccurate. Consumer information from Fair Health, which manages another huge commercial insurance database, is organized by procedure code. Even on Guroo, *"the average user may not have a good sense of what they're looking at and what they're supposed to do with the resulting price,"* said Lynn Quincy, a health care specialist at Consumers Union.

HCCI says its prices are what insurers pay for about 70 tests and “*bundles*” of services described in understandable terms so patients don’t need a medical textbook to figure out what they are. Users get the average as well as a range for local and national prices. It plans to add more procedures later — all for “*shoppable*” services that can be scheduled, not emergency treatment of a heart attack. “*This at least arms consumers with information about the range of prices in their community [for] one of these care bundles,*” said David Newman, HCCI’s executive director.

If you have a high deductible, for example, you might use Guroo as a starting point for checking prices from medical providers if your insurance company doesn’t provide such a tool. As a result, it’s not the same as seeing provider-specific prices online, of course. But within a year, HCCI expects to let members of UnitedHealthcare, Aetna, Assurant and Humana track spending on a companion site and check how switching caregivers could lower their out-of-pocket costs.

Initially Guroo doesn’t have much information about quality of care, either, which is essential to help patients to make smart choices. Newman says that is coming, too. It’s also missing information for Alabama, Michigan and several other states. BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina set a high standard for disclosure recently by posting prices — doctor by doctor and hospital by hospital — based on its reimbursement rates, Quincy said. Guroo doesn’t do that.

If Guroo lives up to the potential, it could be an important step. Because given its size, influence and openness, Guroo could become a dominant portal for health care prices, said Hempstead. Especially since their suggested stance as a neutral broker and the amount of data that they have and the amount of data that they’re going to have really could make Guroo a game changer.

Hot.... Hot.... Hot.... and Hotter.....

Earth Has Now Had 30 Straight Years of Record Monthly Temperatures



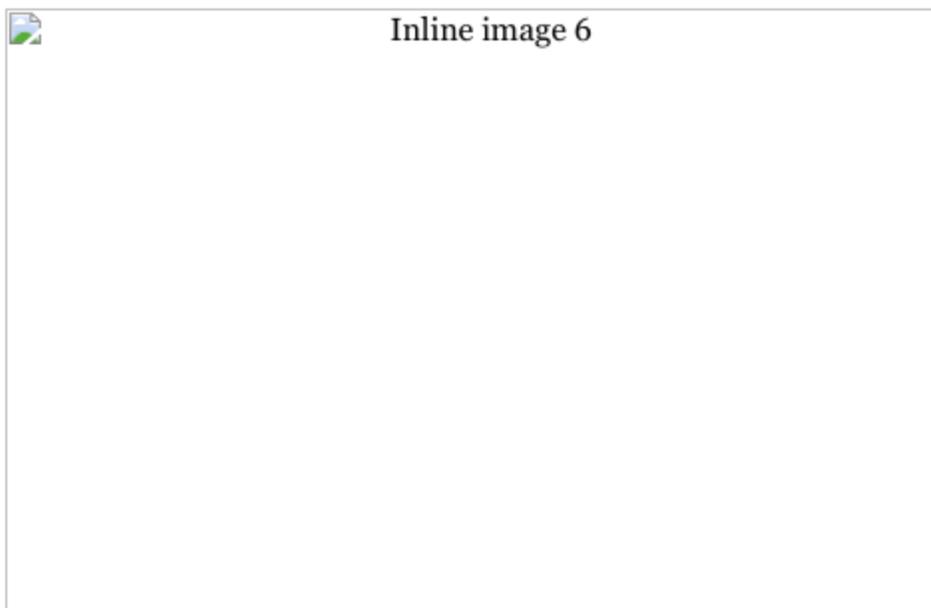
Inline image 5

Richard B. Rood recently pointed out in **The New Republic** that – ***If you’re younger than 30, you’ve never experienced a month in which the average surface temperature of the***

Earth was below average. The Earth has now had 30 straight years of record monthly temperatures which is a fact that climate change deniers refuse to accept.

Each month, the US National Climatic Data Center calculates Earth's average surface temperature using temperature measurements that cover the Earth's surface. Then, another average is calculated for each month of the year for the twentieth century, 1901-2000. For each month, this gives one number representative of the entire century. Subtract this overall 1900s monthly average — which for February is 53.9F (12.1C) — from each individual month's temperature and you've got the anomaly: that is, the difference from the average. The last month that was at or below that 1900s average was February 1985. Ronald Reagan had just started his second presidential term and Foreigner had the number one single with "I want to know what love is."

These temperature observations make it clear the new normal will be systematically rising temperatures, not the stability of the last 100 years. The traditional definition of climate is the 30-year average of weather. The fact that—once the official records are in for February 2015 — it will have been 30 years since a month was below average is an important measure that the climate has changed.

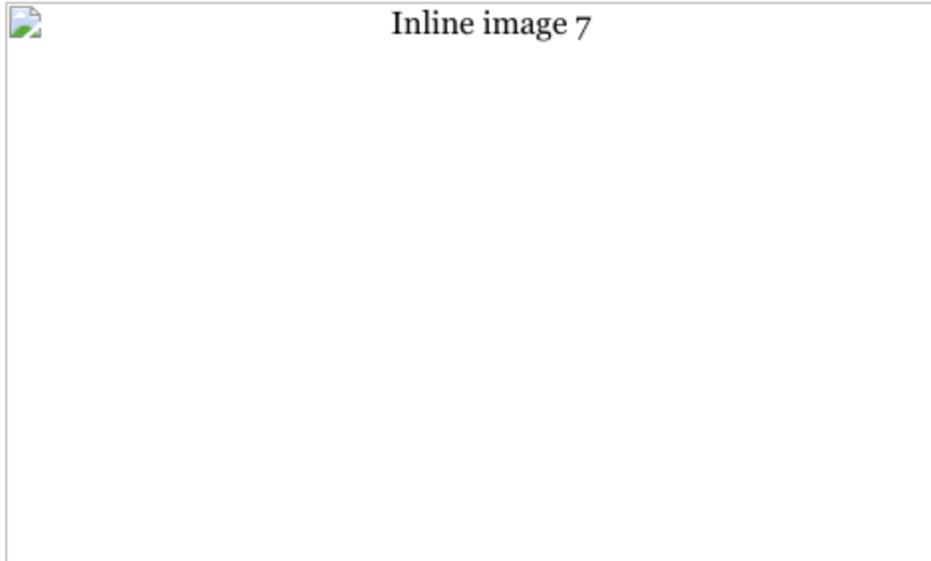


It is important to understand how the Earth warms. As you can see in the graphic above, ocean temperature doesn't vary as much as land temperature. This fact is intuitive to many people because they understand that coastal regions don't experience as extreme highs and lows as the interiors of continents. Since oceans cover the majority of the Earth's surface, the combined land and ocean graph strongly resembles the graph just for the ocean. Looking at only the ocean plots, you have to go all the way back to February 1976 to find a month below average. (That would be under President Gerald Ford's watch.)

You can interpret variability over land as the driver of the ups and downs seen in the global graph. There are four years from 1976 onwards when the land was below average; the last time the land temperature was cool enough for the globe to be at or below average was February 1985. The flirtation with below-average temps was tiny—primarily worth noting in the spirit of accurate record keeping.

Looking at any of these graphs, it's obvious that earlier times were cooler and more recent times are warmer. None of the fluctuations over land since 1976 provide evidence contrary to the observation that the Earth is warming.

Some of the most convincing evidence that the Earth is warming is actually found in measures of the heat stored in the oceans and the melting of ice. However, we often focus on the surface air temperature. One reason for that is that we feel the surface air temperature; therefore, we have intuition about the importance of hot and cold surface temperatures. Another reason is historical; we have often thought of climate as the average of weather. We've been taking temperature observations for weather for a long time; it is a robust and essential observation.



Despite variability, a stable signal

Choosing one month, February in this instance, perhaps overemphasizes that time in 1985 when we had a below average month. We can get a single yearly average for all the months in an entire year, January-December. If we look at these annual averages, then the ups and downs are reduced. In this case, 1976 emerges as the last year in which the global-average temperature was below the 20th century average of 57.0F (13.9C)—that's 38 years ago, the year that Nadia Comaneci scored her seven perfect 10s at the Montreal Olympics.

We live at a time when the Earth is definitively warming. And we know why: predominately, the increase of greenhouse gas warming due to increasing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Under current conditions, we should expect the planet to be warming. What would be more important news would be if we had a year, even a month that was below average.

The variability we observe in surface temperature comes primarily from understood patterns of weather. Many have heard of El Niño, when the eastern Pacific Ocean is warmer than average. The eastern Pacific is so large that when it is warmer than average, the entire planet is likely to be warmer

than average. Looking at averages, 30 years, ten years, or even one year, the fact that these patterns, some years warmer, some cooler, become less prominent. The trend of warming is large enough to mask the variability. The fact that there have been 30 years with no month below the twentieth-century average is a definitive statement that climate has changed.

The 30-year horizon

There are other reasons that this 30-year span of time is important. Thirty years is a length of time in which people plan. This includes personal choices — where to live, what job to take, how to plan for retirement. There are institutional choices — building bridges, building factories and power plants, urban flood management. There are resource management questions—assuring water supply for people, ecosystems, energy production and agriculture. There are many questions concerning how to build the fortifications and plan the migrations that sea-level rise will demand. Thirty years is long enough to be convincing that the climate is changing, and short enough that we can conceive, both individually and collectively, what the future might hold.

Finally, 30 years is long enough to educate us. We have 30 years during which we can see what challenges a changing climate brings us. Thirty years that are informing us about the next 30 years, which will be warmer still. This is a temperature record that makes it clear that the new normal will be systematically rising temperatures, not the ups and downs of the last 100 years.

Again as Richard Hood points out: Those who are under 30 years old have not experienced the climate he and I grew up with. In thirty more years, those born today will also be living in a climate that, by fundamental measures, will be different than the climate of their birth. Future success will rely on understanding that the climate in which we are all now living is changing and will continue to change with accumulating consequences.

Map: The salary you need to buy a home in 27 U.S. cities



Inline image 1

Here's definitive proof that San Francisco's real estate market is insane. [REDACTED], a mortgage research site, has estimated how much salary you need to earn to afford the principal, interest, taxes and insurance payments on a median-priced home in 27 metro areas.

On a national scale, a buyer who puts 20 percent down would need to earn a salary of \$48,604 to afford the median-priced home in America. But that total varies a lot from city to city. Pittsburgh, Cleveland, St. Louis and Cincinnati rank as the most affordable metros in which to buy a new home – HSH.com estimates that you can buy the median home while making less than \$34,000 – while New York, Los Angeles and San Diego are at the high end, requiring salaries of nearly \$90,000 or more. But the most expensive city by far is San Francisco, where the site estimates you would need to make \$142,448 to buy the median home in the area.

The site's calculations assume that a buyer spends 28 percent of gross monthly income on housing, including principal, interest, taxes and insurance, (in line with industry guidelines for standard "front-end" debt ratios) and makes a 20 percent down payment on a house. To calculate the cost of buying the median-priced house in a given urban area, HSH.com combines its own average interest rate for 30-year, fixed-rate mortgages in the fourth quarter; the National Association of Realtors' data on median-home prices in the fourth quarter; average metropolitan property tax data from the Tax Foundation, a Washington-based think tank; and statewide average homeowner insurance premium costs from the Insurance Information Institute, an industry organization.

The data is, of course, an estimate – for one, property taxes and insurance costs will vary depending on the property – but it gives you a good idea of how housing costs varied around the country in the fourth quarter. You can read more about the methodology and see the site's data here.

The untold story of how the sugar industry
shaped key government research about your teeth



Inline image 1

Indispensable Wikipedia says that a **Special Interest Group** (SIG) is a community within a larger organization with a shared interest in advancing a specific area of knowledge, learning or technology where members cooperate to affect or to produce solutions within their particular field, and may communicate, meet, and organize conferences. In Washington Special Interest Groups primary objectives is to lobby members of congress to advance the interests of their employers. And nowhere were they more effective than the efforts they did on behalf of the sugar industry. The Washington Post recently published an article by Roberto Ferdman wrote an interesting article – The untold story of how the sugar industry shaped key government research about your teeth – that illustrates how special interest groups operate.

Decades-old documents have surfaced showing that the powerful U.S. sugar industry skewed the government's medical research on dental care — and ultimately what officials recommended for American diets. Despite a widespread understanding that sugar played a key role in tooth decay, sugar industry leaders advocated for policies that did not recommend people eat less sugar, according to an archive of industry letters dating back to the 1950s preserved by the University of Illinois and analyzed by a team of researchers at the University of California in San Francisco. And the government listened, according to a new report published in the journal PLOS Medicine.

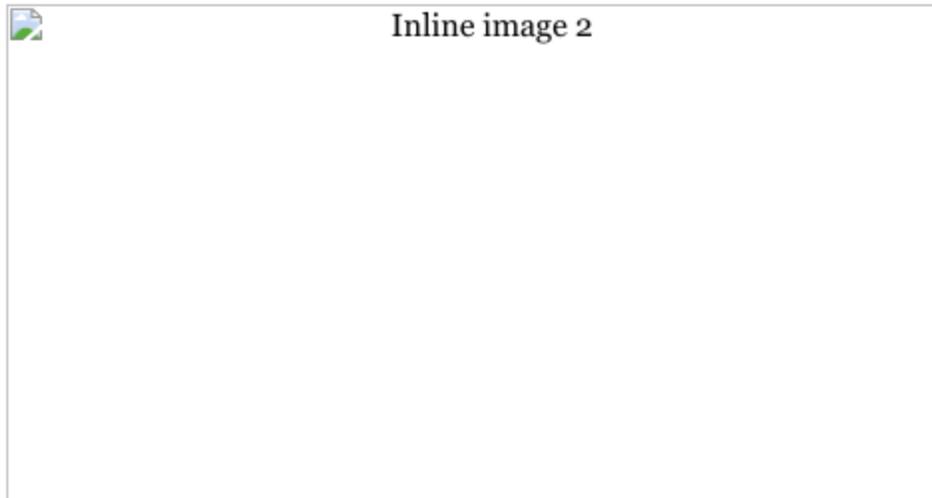
In the 1960s, amid a national effort to boost cavity prevention, the U.S. government spearheaded a research program, known as the National Caries Program (NCP), which aimed to eradicate tooth decay by the end of the 1970s. But instead of turning to an obvious solution — having people eat less sugar — the government was swayed by industry interests that pushed alternative methods, such as ways to break up dental plaque and vaccines for fighting tooth decay, according to more than 300 internal industry documents, including old letters and meeting minutes.

How did the industry wield so much power?

For one, the sugar industry had a strong presence in the subcommittee that developed the very research priorities that later guided dental care policies. A task force committee that was set up by the

government to set research priorities for the NCP included many doctors and scientists who were also working closely with the sugar industry. These committee members were also part of another group called the International Sugar Research Foundation, which was established by the sugar industry.

The overlap included all but three members, as shown by the table below.



It's no surprise then that the research plan laid out by the government ended up looking eerily similar to what the sugar industry had proposed. Some 80 percent of the industry's recommendations were adopted, and research that was seen as being potentially harmful to the industry was noticeably absent from the proposal, according to the report. And, what's more, as much as 40 percent of the recommendations included in a report written by the sugar industry's research group, ISRF, ended up being used — almost verbatim.

Rather than recommending that people reduce sugar intake, government-funded research focused on interventions that wouldn't advise Americans to lower their sweets consumption. For instance, the research encouraged the wider use of fluoride and sealants in dental hygiene. The approach essentially conceded that imploring people to reduce sugar intake was impractical, even if it would help prevent tooth decay.

The problem with the industry's influence on cavity research, aside from the obvious conflicts of interest, is that it led to a series of recommendations that never proved effective. For instance, the government also proposed using a mixture of fructose and glucose to substitute sugar, but scientists figured out that was ineffective a decade later. There were also efforts to create an additive that nullified the effects of sugar on tooth decay. That research was soon abandoned.

These days, the sugar industry might not wield the same level of power it did when these documents were written, but it still spends a lot of money to get its way.

In 2009, for instance, ahead of a possible federal excise tax on sugary drinks, the American Beverage Association, Coca-Cola Company, and PepsiCo spent nearly \$40 million to prevent the policy proposal

from passing into law. The effort was unsuccessful.... Thank God!

More recently, the industry attempted to influence the ongoing debate about changes to the Food and Drug Administration's nutrition facts label. One of the key changes currently being mulled is the inclusion of an *"added sugar"* label, which is meant to communicate how much of any given food's sugar content was added during processing. The industry is vehemently opposed. The American Bakers Association, American Beverage Association, American Frozen Food Institute, Corn Refiners Association, International Dairy Foods Association and National Confectioners Association wrote a letter this past fall imploring the FDA to reconsider the proposed change.

"When you take on Big Sugar, you take on a huge political money operation," Rep. Mark Steven Kirk from Illinois said back in 2007.

The industry, for its part, is critical of the new report. *"It is challenging for the current Sugar Association staff to comment directly on documents and events that allegedly occurred before and during Richard Nixon's presidency, given the staff has changed entirely since the 1970s,"* said Tonya Allen, a spokesperson for the Sugar Association. *"Sugar has been safely used by our mothers and grandmothers for hundreds of years."*

Tooth decay, though preventable, is still widely prevalent in the United States. It's the most common chronic disease among children and adolescents, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And it affects adults, too—as much as 90 percent of them in some way or other, per the CDC. Eradicating it, as we aspired to in the 1960s, might be a bit far-fetched. But it's easy to imagine there could have been more progress made if the government had not been influenced so much by the industry.

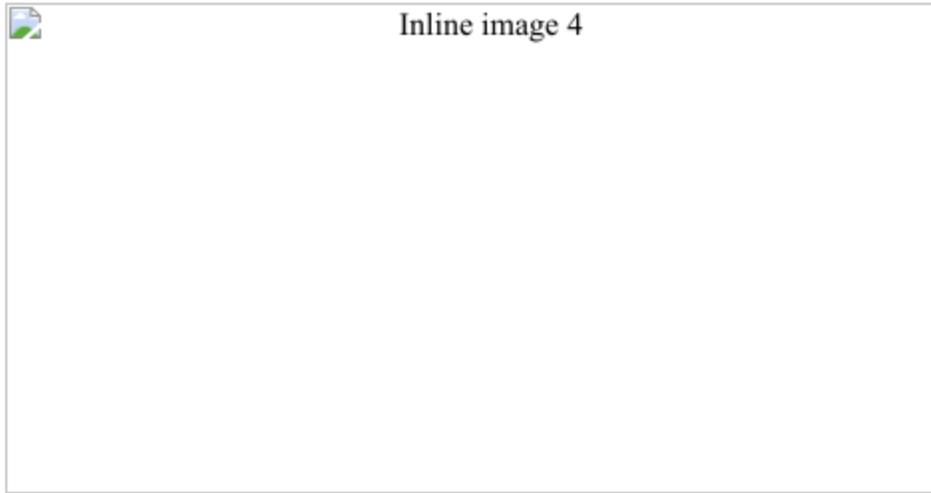
THIS WEEK'S QUOTE

We need to raise the minimum wage. So there has to be pressure on the bottom to raise these wages. ***No one in America should work 35 or 40 hours a week and live in poverty.*** It makes no sense. But that's what Republicans stand for.

Governor Dan Malloy of Connecticut

BEST VIDEO OF THE WEEK

Insane in the Ukraine



Web Link:

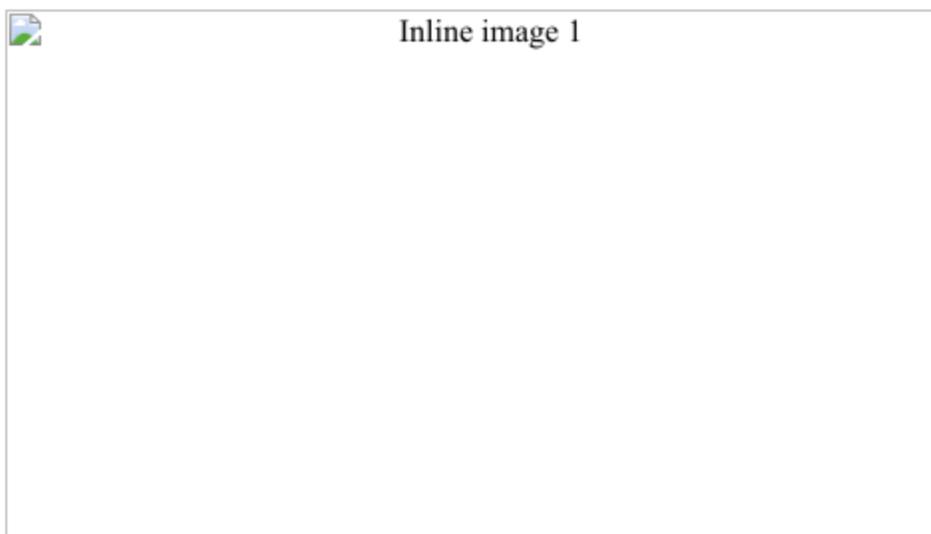


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I am not sure if you can describe what this lady does as talent but without a doubt it is simply amazing....

THIS WEEK'S MUSIC

Don McLean



The ever indispensable Wikipedia describes the word TROUBADOUR as a composer and performer of Old Occitan lyric poetry during the High Middle Ages (1100–1350). And today the word Troubadour is associated with singer songwriters who travel around sharing their music often reflecting the times

that they have and are living in. No one epitomizes this better than Don McLean who came to prominence in 1971 with his mega opus classic song "*American Pie*" which he will always be associated with as well as his other classic hits, "*Vincent (Starry Starry Night)*", "*Castles in the Air*", "*And I Love You So*" and "*Crying*". Since first hitting the charts in 1971, Don has amassed over 40 gold and platinum records world-wide and, in 2004, was inducted into the Songwriters' Hall of Fame. His songs have been recorded by artists from every musical genre, most notably Madonna's No. 1 recording of "*American Pie*" in 2000 and George Michael's version of "*The Grave*" in 2003, sung in protest at the Iraq War.

Some of the many people who have covered McLean's songs include Elvis Presley, Helen Reddy, Shirley Bassey, Glen Campbell, Engelbert Humperdinck, Howard Keel, Claude François, and a 1973 hit for Perry Como. Another hit song associated with McLean (*though never recorded by him*) is "*Killing Me Softly with His Song*", which was claimed by Lori Lieberman to have been written about McLean after she, also a singer/songwriter, saw him singing his composition "*Empty Chairs*" in concert. Gimbel and Charles Fox reworked the poem and the phrase into the song "*Killing Me Softly with His Song*", recorded by Roberta Flack (*and later covered by The Fugees*). However, this claim is disputed, notably by Fox.

I first met Don McLean in the early 1970s at the famed Blakes Hotel in London when he was in Europe promoting his "*American Pie*" album and I was in the middle of develop an international music television show. Aside from the both having a love of music, McLean grew up in Port Chester, New York and I Mount Vernon, eight miles away while he went to Iowa College in New Rochelle just up the street from my High School. And at a time when we were all young in search of fame and fortune, Don McLean was extremely reluctant about his fame and success longing for the anomy and intimacy of being back playing in the coffee shops and bars in New York's Greenwich Village to our chagrin and envy. And like many others I am still trying to figure out the exact meaning of American Pie which McLean would not disclosed other than say that the words speak for themselves. For you guys in in living in UK and Ireland, Don McLean will be touring there in May/June 2015. ***And for everyone else, I invite you to enjoy the music of the amazing American troubadour..... Mr. Don McLean.....***

Don McLean – *Vincent* -- <http://youtu.be/YQhmsGiyHFg>

Don McLean – *American Pie* -- <http://youtu.be/5QUYvRaQ4XM>

Don Mclean – *And I Love You So* -- <http://youtu.be/qog65XHM-ok>

Don McLean – *Crying* -- <http://youtu.be/XjMNOouIb0k>

Don McLean – *Castles in the Air* -- <http://youtu.be/YGvUIISljk>

Don McLean – *Babylon* -- <http://youtu.be/HpydaQgOviA>

Don McLean – *Empty Chairs* -- <http://youtu.be/o6tGft50rJk>

Don McLean – *Crossroads* -- <http://youtu.be/ea0mD2QSq1w>

Don McLean – *Till Tomorrow* -- <http://youtu.be/ZJdamx1GHq4>

Don McLean – *Raining In My Heart* -- <http://youtu.be/Hkrm-0VAT6c>

Don McLean – *If We Try* -- <http://youtu.be/VbjyVBJjMcU>

Don McLean – *Fools Paradise* -- <http://youtu.be/OmUCzmoXmL0>

Don McLean – *The Very Thought of You* -- <http://youtu.be/BW5iyWxtytE>

Don McLean – *Wonderful Baby* -- <http://youtu.be/oMtHuofjZD0>

Don McLean – *The meaning of American Pie* -- <http://youtu.be/VsZFiMo8Tlc>

I hope that you enjoyed this week's offerings and wish you and the ones you love a Happy Easter and a great week.....

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

--

Gregory Brown
Chairman & CEO
GlobalCast Partners, LLC

