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**Subject:** Greg Brown's Weekend Reading and Other Things.... 10/27/2013

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**Attachments:** 13\_Things\_That\_Define\_the\_New\_American\_Center\_Esquire\_Magazine\_Editors\_November\_2013.docx;  
3\_Charts\_Revealing\_America's\_Disappearing\_Middle\_Class\_Wall\_Street\_CheatSheet\_10\_18\_2013.docx;  
Conservatives\_Misunderstand\_What\_Went\_Wrong\_Under\_Bush\_The\_Atlantic\_October\_17\_2013.docx;  
The\_U.S.\_Blows\_Everyone\_Else\_Out\_Of\_The\_Water\_In\_1\_Key\_Way\_\_Huff\_Post\_10\_17\_2013.docx;  
Obamacare\_Not\_The\_First\_New\_Program\_To\_Have\_Launch\_Problems\_Arthur\_Delany\_Huff\_Post\_10\_23\_2013.docx;  
Most\_Walmart\_Store\_Workers\_Didn't\_Earn\_\$25,000\_Last\_Year\_Dave\_Jamieson\_Huff\_Post\_10\_23\_2013.docx;  
PRISONERS\_OF\_PROFIT\_Chris\_Kirkham\_Huff\_Post\_10\_22\_2013.docx;  
PRISONERS\_OF\_PROFIT\_Part\_2\_Chris\_Kirkham\_Huff\_Post\_10\_23\_2013.docx;  
Bank\_of\_America\_liable\_for\_Countrywide\_mortgage\_fraud\_Nate\_Raymond\_Reuters\_10\_23\_2013.docx;  
Eric\_Holder\_Finally\_Gets\_Tough\_On\_Banks\_Jonathan\_Weil\_Huff\_Post\_10\_25\_2013.docx;  
JPMorgan\_\$31.28\_billion\_in\_fines\_and\_other\_legal\_costs\_since\_2009\_Huff\_Post\_10\_24\_2013.docx; Gordon\_Lightfoot\_bio.docx

**Inline-Images:** image.png; image(1).png; image(2).png; image(3).png; image(4).png; image(5).png; image(6).png; image(7).png; image(8).png; image(9).png; image(10).png; image(11).png; image(12).png; image(13).png; image(14).png; image(15).png; image(16).png; image(17).png; image(18).png; image(19).png; image(20).png; image(21).png; image(22).png; image(23).png; image(24).png; image(25).png; image(26).png; image(27).png; image(28).png; image(29).png; image(30).png; image(31).png; image(32).png

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## DEAR FRIEND.....

Last weekend I had the pleasure of attending a wonderful party in Houston, Texas at the St. Regis Hotel celebrating the sixteenth birthday of *Rachel* and *Tamara Coleman*, twin daughters of my dear friends *Mayada* and *Thomas Coleman*. On the flight Saturday morning from Los Angeles to Houston I sat next to a young man who turned out to be Justin Nguyen, one of the biggest pop stars in Viet Nam. He was articulate, engaging and fun to talk with, so last Sunday I looked forward to meeting and speaking with my travel-mate on the return flight, who turned out to be a white man, fifty years older than Justin. And as most of you know, I am a political wonk..... so soon after the niceties of exchanging names, I asked my seat-mate, what did he think of President Obama. To which he immediately replied, "*He is a disaster.*"

To which I replied, "*Why?*" And his response, "*is because he is a liberal and incompetent.*" I then ran off a litany of the President's actions; expanded the troop surge in Afghanistan, kept Guantanamo Bay

open, gave Wall Street a pass, went after Bin Laden, bombed Libya, etc. His response then was, “*yeah, but he did Obamacare.*” I then reminded him that Obamacare was actually the brainchild of **The Heritage Foundation**, a highly regarded Conservative think-tank, which was then enacted by a Republican Governor in Massachusetts to huge success and lauded as the blue-print for the rest of American..... until President Obama embraced it..... instead of a single-payer national health plan that almost every other industrialized country in the world has, including Canada. And having suffered two strokes and unable to get health insurance because of pre-existing conditions, I was able to speak personally of the obvious benefits of Obamacare, to which he had not coherent response.

I then asked my seat-mate, what else he disliked about our President. To which he replied, “*He’s done nothing except to make things worse.*” I then reminded him that on January 20, 2009, the day that President Obama assumed office, the country was experiencing a 750,000 a month in job-loss, the financial markets were in a free-fall, the major banks were on the verge of collapse, the housing market had tanked, the federal debt had ballooned from a \$230 billion surplus to \$1.1 trillion yearly deficit under the eight years of the Bush/Cheney Administration, the country was in two wars without an end and the country’s international prestige was at an all-time low. And since then we have had 42 straight months of job growth, the federal yearly deficit has been cut by more than 25%, the housing market has turned around, banks are solvent, our major corporations are making more money than ever, we are no longer in the war in Iraq and by years-end the country will have wound down our military involvement in Afghanistan to a token assistance, the big-three American automakers have been saved and Bin Laden is dead, but most importantly, we have stayed out of wars in Libya, Syria and Iran, which Conservative hawks including Richard Pearle, John McCain would have wanted. My *coup de gras* was to then invoke Ronald Regan’s re-election slogan, “***are we better off now than we were four years ago.***” After that there was no need to beat this dead horse anymore....

To move the conversation along, I asked my seat companion after telling him that I would vote for Hillary in 2016, who would he support? He immediately answered Marco Rubio, the junior Senator from Florida who came to office in January 2011. To which I asked why? He replied, “*Because he is a doer.*” To which I asked, “*what has he done?*” And when he could not come up with one single achievement, I knew that I was talking to a lost-soul, so I changed subjects. And then when he told me that **Global Warming** was a hoax perpetuated by liberals, I decided forget thinking of this guy as a lost-soul, because he is intellectually illiterate. The problem with that assessment is that my seat companion was a Yale educated Psychologist who has traveled extensively internationally and taught for more than thirty years at USC in Los Angeles before retiring several years ago.

I am sharing this story because I am still at a loss to why someone who is highly educated dismisses the President and Democrats with the brush of incompetence and ignorance, without being able to articulate a rationale. And why someone with a PhD from one of American’s foremost universities, still denies global warming (and I don’t mean man-made global warming) but that the earth is getting warmer. When in a study released two months ago by a group of European, Australian and Canadian scientists who examined more than 17,000 accredited scientific papers concluded that without a doubt, the earth is warming at an alarming rate and within 20 to 30 years if this is not stopped or reversed the polar ice caps will have melted to the point that sea levels will rise by more than six feet and temperatures by four to seven degrees creating havoc on shorelines and low-lying island nations.

We are living in a country where even many educated people are so in denial that they are stupid. We are living in a country where one political party says no to everything that the other party offers as a matter of course. We are living in a country where my 80 year old new-friend could justify opposition of Obamacare, but would not give up his own Medicare. We are living in a country where political

leaders who shut down the government for sixteen days, causing untold pain for millions of Americans, as well as an estimated \$24 billion and credibility around the world, felt comfortable saying, *"we fought the good fight."* *Bullshit.....* We have to call these people out. We have to make them explain their ignorance and justify their intolerance. And yes, there is *"your side, my side and the truth."* But that doesn't mean that it is somewhere in the middle, since either side can be right, therefore like referees, umpires and judges, the media should call the plays for what they are, because balance reporting is only accurate when the facts are..... We have an increasingly dysfunctional culture in America and it isn't just in Washington..... And maybe we have to address it, one person at a time.... So the next time you are sitting next to a stranger on a plane, train or bus, engage them, because only through a exchange of opinions and ideas will we..... ever see the truth.

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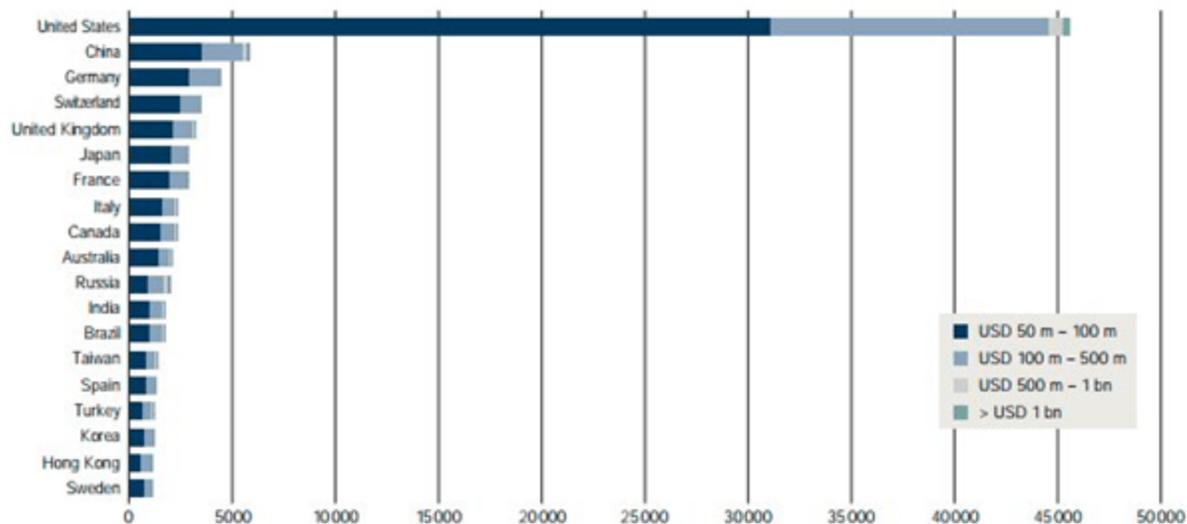
## The U.S. Blows Everyone Else Out Of The Water In 1 Key Way

That one way? We're really, really good at creating really, really rich people -- like, \$50 million-plus rich. Just ignore the fact that our 400 wealthiest people are worth more than the entire bottom half of the country combined. And now, the chart:

Figure 5

### Ultra high net worth individuals 2013: selected countries

Source: James Davies, Rodrigo Lluberas and Anthony Shorrocks, Credit Suisse Global Wealth Databook 2013



(via [Credit Suisse's Global Wealth Report](#))

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## 3 Common Breast Cancer Myths Debunked

(That every Man or Women should know.)



In the United States, October is celebrated as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Pink is the color used to symbolize this month, and by now, you've no doubt seen it everywhere: stores, labeled onto your favorite products, and even on the jerseys of pro football players. It's both a month-long national health campaign and reminder for women to be mindful of early detection. With so much ongoing research and coverage on the disease compared to other cancers, you'd think by now certain misconceptions would be thoroughly debunked. Yet, many myths remain that often lead people to assume something inaccurate about the disease, including these three myths:

### **1. Men don't get breast cancer**

While women are 100 times more likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer, men are not exempt. Men have breast tissue too, and thus can still develop the disease. To put things in perspective, the lifetime risk of getting breast cancer is about 1 in 1,000 men. In 2013 alone, there will be an estimated 2,240 new cases of invasive breast cancer among men. However, because of the general lack of awareness about breast cancer risk in men, some individuals may delay visiting their doctor. As a result, men are often diagnosed when the disease is more advanced.

### **2. Ethnic groups have a higher risk of being diagnosed**

To clarify, there are actually several variations of this myth. The first variation is that Black and Latino women are diagnosed with the disease the most. In truth, white women are more likely to get diagnosed, while Black and Latino women are more likely to die from this disease. Conversely, there's the myth that Asian women don't have to worry about breast cancer altogether. While diagnoses for Asian women is the lowest for any ethnic group, the number of cases has increased 1.2% every year since 1988. To get even more specific, Japanese American women have the highest breast cancer rate, and the disease is the leading cause of death among Filipino women.

Statistics do shed light on diagnoses rates among all groups, but taking the necessary health precautions is always important.

### **3. Young women don't have to worry about the disease**

Like myth number one, statistics help conclude that cases among young women are also considerably low. Breast cancer risk increases with age, and only one in eight invasive cancer diagnoses is found in women under 45. Yet, more young women who come forward to discuss their experience give this message loud and clear: no one is immune from the disease. Anything alarming should be spoken about with a physician, even if your age is atypical for certain conditions.

There are many other myths that circulate around the disease, but these three are perhaps the most well-known. Breast Cancer Awareness Month is not simply about celebrating survivors and remembering who passed from the disease, but to also remind ourselves of the ongoing research and prevention efforts that need support today. While the celebration will round out by November 1 and the pink will be put away, what many survivors advocate can be applied year-round: live as healthy a lifestyle as possible, and learn to understand your body as each year passes.

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Much like Dwight Eisenhower speech concerning the Military Industrial Complex, this week Former defense secretary Gates warns against lure of drone warfare – that the seductive power and precision of armed drones had led many in the White House and Congress to view war as a “*bloodless, painless and odorless*” affair. “*Remarkable advances in precision munitions, sensors, information and satellite technology and more can make us overly enamored with the ability of technology to transform the traditional laws and limits of war,*” Gates said in a speech to a group of current and former soldiers, according to a copy of his prepared remarks. “*A button is pushed in Nevada and seconds later a pickup truck explodes in Kandahar.*”

The former defense secretary, speaking at the Association of the U.S. Army’s annual conference in Washington, suggested that the infatuation with technology had led some politicians and defense experts to believe that the military’s budget can be cut deeply with little harm. He called on Republicans and Democrats to put aside partisan fighting to solve the budget crisis and reverse plans to reduce defense spending by almost \$1 trillion over the next decade. Gates was especially harsh in his critique of the political climate, saying that “*the biggest threat to U.S. national security is the political dysfunction within two square miles of Washington, D.C.*” “*My hope – and it is a faint hope – is that the remaining adults in the two political parties will make the compromises necessary to put this country’s finances back in order, end the sequestration of military dollars, and protect military capabilities that are as necessary today as they have been through the last century,*” he said.

Gates’s remarks were certain to be warmly received in the Army, which faces the deepest cuts of all the military services. Leaders in both Congress and the White House have spoken of the need to reduce ground troops and shift the focus to Asia, where air and sea power are thought to be more important. Too often, Gates said, U.S. defense experts have come to view war as a “*kind of video game or action movie. . . . In reality, war is inevitably tragic, inefficient and uncertain.*” The former defense secretary also called on the military to hold on to the hard lessons it had learned during the long stretch of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, especially lessons involving how to fight low-tech, guerrilla wars. “*It is too easy to forget that there are still tens of thousands of soldiers serving in Afghanistan; too easy to forget the tremendous sacrifices that led to the security progress of recent years,*” he said.

What Gates didn’t mention is that wars often lead to unintentional consequences and making military conflict, however framed, (i.e. going after terrorist, protecting civilians, helping friendly forces, saving democracy, etc.), often create untold misery on local populations, disabling regional balances of power and sometimes turns those are being saved into enemies. Although many took Eisenhower seriously in 1960, those in power didn’t listen to the point that the United States has almost bankrupt itself financing a military whose budget is larger than the combined defense budgets of the next 13 countries..... and it hasn’t made us any safer than Japan, Canada, Australia or Brazil. Hopefully the powers that be will listen to Gates.....

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Paraphrasing Malcolm X, in his famous December 4, 1963 speech often called “***The Chickens Come Home To Roost***”, -- that the culture of malfeasance by the big banks has come back to them with major consequences. Much of this has been ignored because of the headline grabbing government shutdown, debt ceiling debacle and ongoing dysfunctionality in government . But this week, Bank of America Corp was found liable for fraud over defective mortgages sold by its Countrywide unit, a major win for the U.S. government in one of the few trials stemming from the financial crisis. After a

four-week trial, a federal jury in New York found the bank liable on one civil fraud charge.

Countrywide originated shoddy home loans in a process called "*Hustle*" and sold them to government mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the government said. And any penalty would add to the more than \$40 billion Bank of America has spent on disputes stemming from the 2008 financial crisis.

Coupled with this is that JPMorgan, the nation's largest bank, was recently exposed to be liable for \$31.28 billion in fines and other legal costs since 2009 as result of its illegal practices. JPMorgan spokesman points to the bank's regulatory filings, in which it periodically tells investors how much money it sets aside for legal costs. The bank earlier this month said it had \$23 billion in reserves for such costs. The spokesman also pointed to CEO Jamie Dimon's annual letters to investors, in which Dimon discusses the pros and cons of being ginormous. The pros obviously include being able to digest \$31 billion in legal costs with hardly any discomfort.

If you get all your news from the financial press, you might have the mistaken idea that these legal costs are the petty punishments of a government that hates success and redistributes wealth. Jon Stewart on Wednesday documented the spectacle of Jim Cramer, Maria Bartiromo, Charlie Gasparino and other JPMorgan apologists in financial news rushing to the bank's defense. Another member of JPMorgan's PR team, America's cuddliest capitalist, Warren Buffett, has also moaned this week about the shoddy treatment of JPMorgan and its sainted CEO. As Stewart eloquently put it, "F\*ck all y'all."

It is obvious that JPMorgan is getting a sweet deal in paying only \$13 billion (maybe \$9 billion after tax breaks) to close the books on those alleged mortgage mis-sales, even if many of them were allegedly mis-sold by Bear Stearns and Washington Mutual, which JPMorgan bought during the financial crisis. JPMorgan knew the risks it was taking when it bought those companies, and has made way more cash from them than it is paying in fines. And, yes, \$30 billion is a lot of money. But that \$30 billion is just the cost of doing business for JPMorgan, which has netted about \$82 billion in profit since 2009. That figure includes the bank's \$400 million loss in the third quarter, the one time the bank's legal headaches finally hurt its bottom line. The bank's stock price is near an all-time high, proving just how much damage these costs are doing -- by which we mean none.

At the time when politicians in Washington are demanding that people be fired for the Affordable Healthcare website debacle, few are calling for the firing of JP Morgan's Chairman, Jamie Dimon. But as ProPublica's Jesse Eisinger points out, Dimon's job is probably safe. Nobody at the bank is calling for his head, and if Lloyd Blankfein can survive the whole "*Vampire Squid*" era at Goldman Sachs, then Dimon can probably survive this. Obviously, firing Dimon and others would send a useful message, but it will probably not keep the bank out of trouble. Because, when you've got a global outfit with \$2.4 trillion in assets, populated by bankers incentivized to take risks and push regulatory envelopes to keep turning profits, you're going to break rules. The bigger the bank, the more rules get broken. So the problem is not so much Dimon, but the fact that the bank is simply too big to fail and/or jail. A mere \$30 billion in fines is plainly not enough to change the bank's course significantly. Getting it to admit wrongdoing, as the Securities and Exchange Commission has admirably done, won't change much, either. Prosecuting the bank for crimes might make a difference, but it is doubtful the Justice Department is going to take that risk.

If there's a silver lining, it's that the \$30 billion in legal costs, along with JPMorgan's sinking reputation, have at least pushed the bank to keep a closer eye on its bankers and their rule compliance -- at least for the moment, while we're all paying attention. The bank is also dumping some

businesses, including commodities warehousing and private equity, partly to avoid more regulatory stinkeye. That is helping keep it from getting any bigger, at the very least. So, there's that. But the good news is that Attorney General Eric Holder is finally getting tough on these too-big-to-fail banks. And that these Masters of Universe are mere mortals, whose culture of "greed is good" is as bogus as believing that these same captains of finance are job generators, when in truth many are greedy little bastards only interested in their own self-interest.

I don't want to paint everyone on Wall Street with the same brush, because I believe that those who create or work hard should definitely be reward. But the fact that JP Morgan, BofA and the other financial intuitions who were caught perpetuating hundreds of thousands if not millions of illegal acts, and only a handful of people go to jail, is a travesty. To change this culture, we need to treat these organizations like prosecutors treat drug dealers and Mafia kingpins..... with RICO which would allow government seizure of the assets of individuals involved as well as the kingpins, thus making these titans on Wall Street think twice when they go into the gray areas of business.

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A big story like the recent government shutdown and debt ceiling debacle tends to push things that often matter off the front pages and TV. Here is just one that got almost no attention. ***A survey out last week showed that nearly half the students in the nation's public schools, 48% come from families so poor that they qualify for free or reduced priced meals. And even more disgraceful is that a majority of students now qualify for food subsidies in 17 states across the South and West.*** And echoing Bob Shaffer the moderator on CBS's ***FACE THE NATION***, Sunday morning news program said last week, "I like to see our elected officials focus on how we can fix things like that..... Because I losing interest on who wins the partisan games."

## THIS WEEK'S READINGS



I love history, even though much of it is rewritten by the winners but occasionally you can see what works and what doesn't because history often repeats itself. Over the centuries we have seen that there is a tipping point when there is too much economic inequality, with people revolting over-throwing their leadership. Ask the royal families in Russia, France, China and the Middle East. You can also look at Ben Ali in Tunisia, Batista in Cuba and the Shah of Iran. And although I am starting this section by using economic inequality, this piece is actually about the Affordable Healthcare Act, aka, "Obamacare," which The Washington Post said last week, is now owned totally by Democrats as well as the President. And yes without a doubt the website problems that have plagued the roll-out of

President Barack Obama's signature health care reform law, has become fodder for late night television comics and Republican talking heads, as my father use to say, "it doesn't matter where you start as long as you end well." Please feel free to view the video Web Link:

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/23/obamacare-problems\\_n\\_4148466.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/23/obamacare-problems_n_4148466.html)

As Arthur Delaney pointed out in **The Huffington Post** last week in his article – **Obamacare Not The First New Program To Have Launch Problems** – Big problems are not unusual for big, new programs. The technology involved may be different, but previous expansions of the safety net have all suffered glitches. Even Social Security, the first and arguably the most successful federal social program, faced serious challenges before the first monthly retirement checks went out in 1940. *"There was a lot of doubt about whether it was the right thing to do and whether they could do it,"* Edward Berkowitz, a history professor at George Washington University, said in an interview. *"They somehow managed to solve the technical problem."* It wasn't easy. After Congress passed the Social Security Act in 1935, a nascent Social Security Board faced a daunting task: enrolling 26 million industrial workers in less than a year, and another 2.5 million each year after that. One major problem: A lot of people had the same name. *"There were, according to board calculations, hundreds of thousands of workers with the surnames Smith, Jones, Brown, Miller, and dozens of other common family names, all of whose records would have to be kept straight, their wage histories following them through all geographical and job moves,"* Nancy Altman, co-director of advocacy group Social Security Works, wrote in her 2005 book *The Battle for Social Security*.

They had no computers, and no precedent for creating such a system. Board Chairman Arthur Altmeyer brought in management expert Harry Hoff, who studied the problem for months before delivering the sad news that it would not be possible. *"He recommended that the board notify Congress that the government could not run the Social Security program, after all,"* Altman wrote. Meanwhile, Alf Landon, the Republican nominee for president in 1936, that year called the program a "cruel hoax" and a "fraud on the workingman" that could never live up to its own promises. The Social Security Board told Hoff to get back to work, and after several more months they devised a numerical system in which the first three digits of enrollees' identification numbers corresponded to their location. But how to reach the workers? The board turned to the postal system and its 45,000 offices around the country. *"Letter carriers delivered applications for numbers, helped people fill out the forms, answered questions about the program, returned the forms to typing centers where the cards could be produced, delivered the cards to the workers, and transmitted the applications of workers together with their newly-assigned Social Security numbers to [headquarters in] Baltimore,"* Altman wrote. *"By June 30, 1937, the index of workers covered over an acre of floor space and contained what had now grown to about 30 million workers' names and numbers,"* Altman wrote. "It was so efficient, that, despite its size, a clerk could locate an individual's name and number literally in seconds."

Though Social Security currently faces a financing shortfall that could lead policymakers to trim benefits, the Obama administration would be jubilant if health care reform left a similar legacy. Social Security's supporters today describe it as one of the most successful social programs in the world. The problems the administration is encountering in getting Obamacare off the ground are inherently different than what FDR encountered in the 1930s. Technologically, the construction of online exchanges is more complex. Moreover, the Affordable Care Act has a shorter lag time between when people sign up and eventually receive benefits -- just a few months. The bumpy rollout of the federal Supplemental Security Income program in the early 1970s might be the closest parallel for what could go wrong with Obamacare. In 1974, officials estimated 7.2 million would be eligible for the new initiative, which absorbed state welfare programs. But by 1976, only 4.3 million had signed up. (Today the program covers 8.3 million.)

The Social Security Administration had developed a new data acquisition system to transmit information about beneficiaries and claims between headquarters and various field offices. But officials said the system received more queries per day than expected. *"Also, due to computer or power failures, the response system could not provide timely replies,"* the Government Accountability Office (then known as the General Accounting Office) said in a 1976 report. *"This hindered district office employees from completing their work promptly and imposed a longer wait on SSI applicants."* Sound familiar? Berkowitz and fellow historian Larry DeWitt, who have co-authored a book on the SSI program, said in interviews that technology was key to the program's bad start. *"It was a disaster,"* Berkowitz said. *"Maybe one of the morals is that high-tech stuff can fail."*

Without a doubt, it appears that the Obamacare website roll-out has been a disaster but this can and will be fixed. But we shouldn't throw the baby out with the bathwater. The United States is the only industrialized country on the planet that doesn't have a national healthcare system or access to affordable healthcare for its citizens. It would be unthinkable for America to not offer free *K through 12* education to every American. Hopefully one day the thought that every American might not have access to world-class healthcare will be unthinkable. And like Social Security, which started out without computers, using file cards, ledgers, tens of thousands of clerks and miles of filing cabinet which has grown into one of the most successful government programs ever, it is easy to see blue skies in the future of Obamacare. Summarizing this piece, I urge my fellow Democrats, as well as Republicans and Independents to do whatever they can to make access to affordable healthcare another example of American success.



Last week I ran across an interesting article by Conor Friedersdorf, who is a staff writer at **The Atlantic** titled – ***Conservatives Misunderstand What Went Wrong Under Bush***, because as he points out that you would swear from today's rhetoric that the problem was too much compromise, when the truth is actually the opposite. The Tea Party which is composed largely of Republicans, supported George W. Bush when he was the GOP standard-bearer, voting for him twice and criticizing him far less frequently than they defended him, only to rebel against his record at the end of his second term. At that point, partisan loyalty and shared hatred of liberals finally gave way to the realization that the GOP's time in power was a disaster for conservatives.

Friedersdorf points out that humans seldom look inward when assigning blame for bygone disasters, and the story conservatives have settled on seems to be that establishment Republicans have long been selling them out by failing to fight hard enough. As a **Fox News** commentator put it, echoing talking points used by many hardliners, *"I'm sure we will hear establishment apologists calling the events of recent days a compromise. But seeing how the president refused to compromise, it's more likely the Grand Old Party was the only one bending. Establishment Republicans always talk about doing the right thing for the nation, no matter the price. But when push comes to shove, they always throw in the towel."*

What ought to be evident, when Tea Partiers reflect on what they disliked about the Bush years, is that neither insufficient fight nor excessive compromise was the problem. The Iraq War, the most disastrous, budget-busting initiative of the aughts, occurred when the GOP establishment fought for war and didn't give up. The K Street Project involved neither capitulation nor compromising with Democrats. And conservatives were pleased when the establishment "threw in the towel" on immigration reform and the Harriet Miers nomination.

Many in the Tea Party seem to have conflated compromising one's principles, a bad thing, with negotiating to reach agreements that make both sides better off. The latter kind of compromise is the only way American government can function when power is divided. There is no logical reason that it should be regarded by conservatives as a dirty word—the Bush years weren't bad for conservatives because of negotiated deals that gave both sides some of what they wanted.

Pretending that compromise is what went wrong during the Bush years helps conservatives evade responsibility for supporting an agenda many parts of which they find indefensible in hindsight. It permits them to blame Democrats and establishment Republicans for events they themselves only rebelled against after the fact, and to delude themselves into thinking that everything will get better if only they vehemently insist on getting their way, sans compromise, all of the time.

Who wouldn't want to believe that's all success takes? It's a pretty lie that talk-radio hosts find it easy to tell over and over again, despite contrary evidence, because conservatives want to believe that it's true. Reality is much harder to face. In order to mount a comeback and wield influence in American politics, conservatives need to face their own flaws, negotiate savvy compromises with President Obama and Democrats, build credibility and momentum with small gains in the short term, persuade people of their ideas and governing vision in the medium term, and implement their agenda by winning elections rather than brinkmanship. But hard truths don't attract a large enough audience to sustain a radio show.

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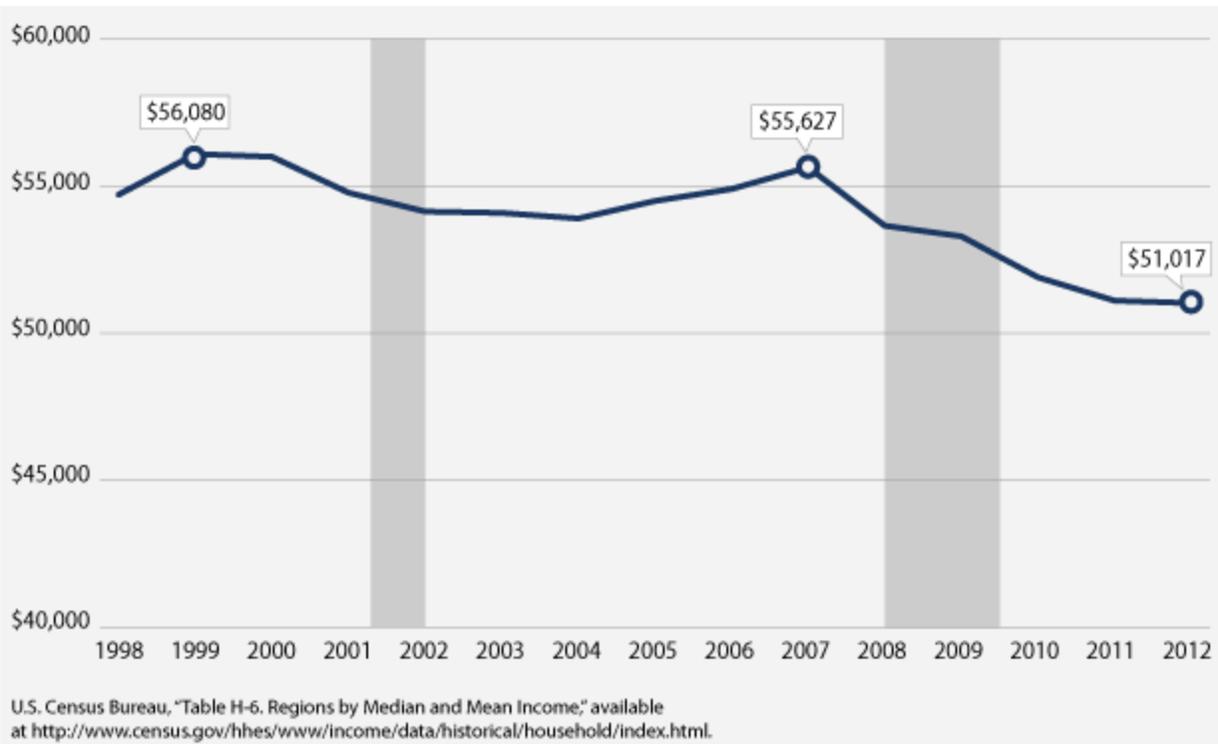
### **3 Charts Revealing America's Disappearing Middle Class**

The Great Recession technically ended more than four years ago after the U.S. gross domestic product rebounded from the trough of the credit meltdown. However, high unemployment, stagnant wages, and government policy continue to weigh on living standards and economic confidence.

In its most recent reading, Gallup's Standard Living Index plunged 8 points over the past month to reach 31, the lowest level since January. The index is a summary of whether Americans are satisfied with their current standard of living and perceive it as getting better or worse. The sharp move lower came as Congress created another political soap opera involving the nation's debt ceiling and budget. In comparison, the index reached an all-time high of 45 in May.

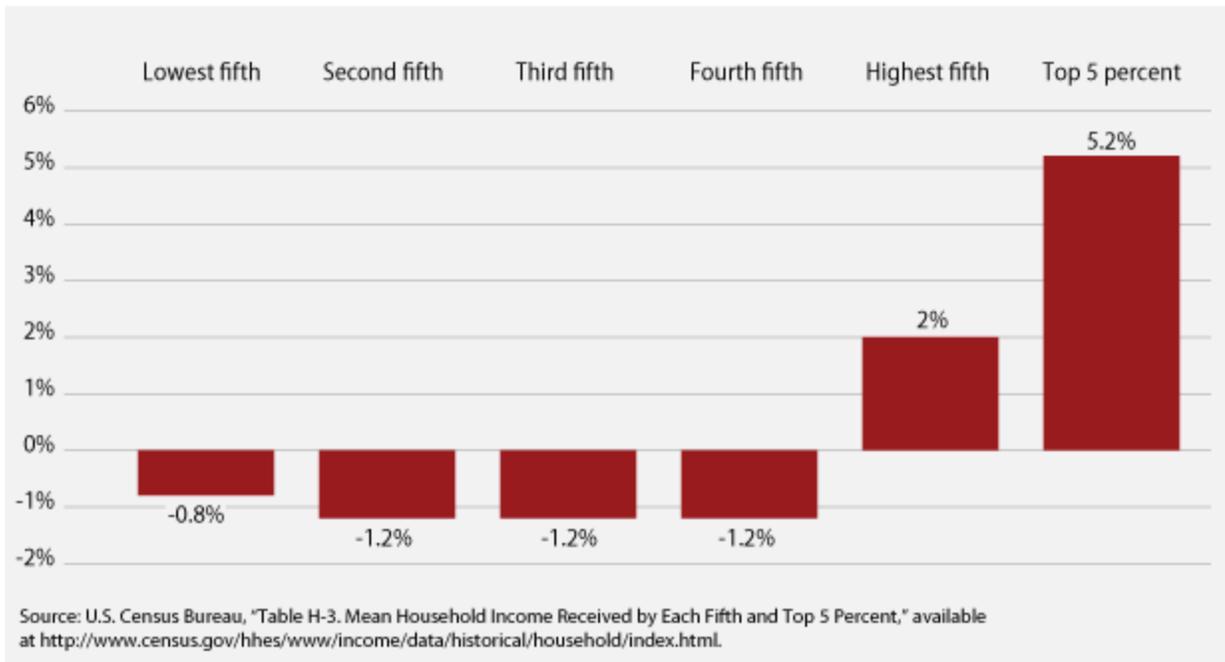
*"The recent decline echoes sentiments seen in Americans' broader attitudes about the U.S. economy, although the magnitude in the decline in the Standard of Living Index is not as great," Gallup said. "Gallup's Economic Confidence Index faltered during the run-up to the government shutdown in late September, and has fallen further in October since the shutdown began, for a total decline of 24 points since mid-September."*

Here's a look at three charts from the Center for American Progress Action Fund detailing the slide in living standards for the middle class:



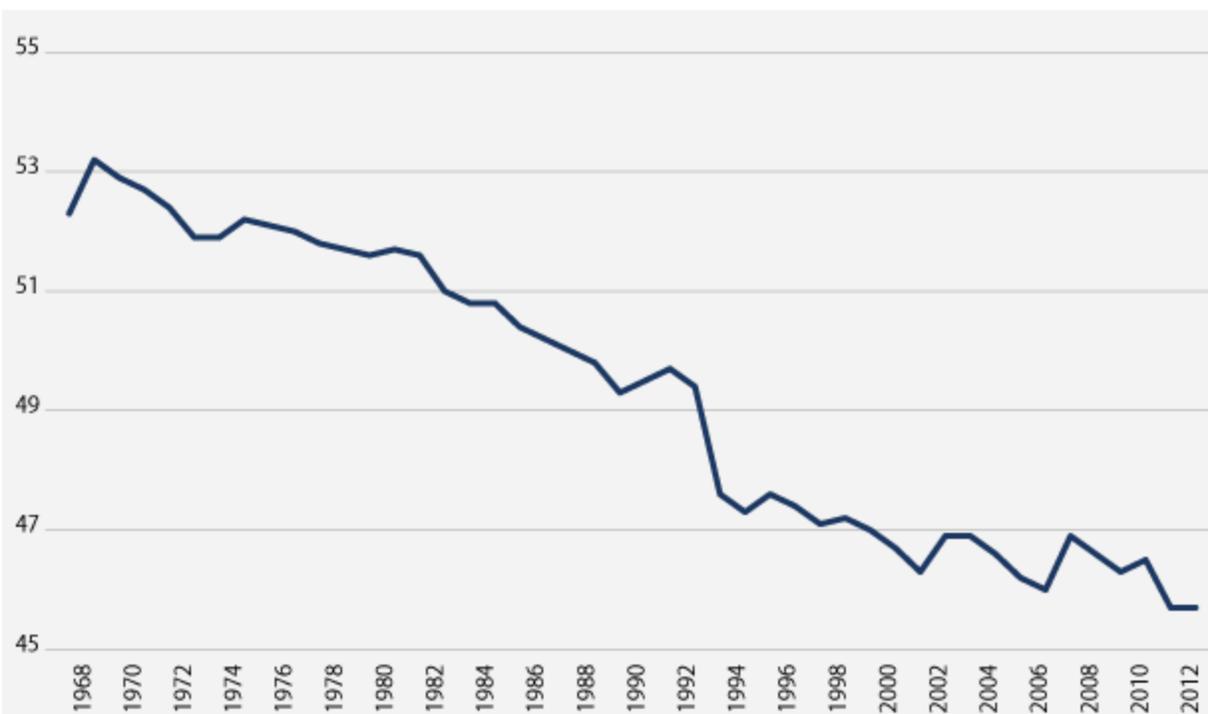
### Median Household Income

According to a recent report from the U.S. Census Bureau, millions of households are struggling in the wake of the financial crisis. Real median household income in 2012 totaled \$51,017, down slightly from \$51,100 in 2011. Incomes have been in a steady decline for the past five years, and remain 8.3 percent below 2007 levels, the year before the nation entered the worst financial downturn since the Great Depression. Between 2001 and 2007, incomes only grew by 1.6 percent.



### Income Gains

Since the end of the Great Recession in June 2009, the majority of American households have seen their average annual incomes decline. The average incomes of the top 5 percent grew by 5.2 percent, but families in the middle class experienced a decline of 1.2 percent.



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, "Table H-2. Share of Aggregate Income Received by Each Fifth and Top 5 Percent of Households," available at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/data/historical/household/index.html>.

## Share of Income

With stagnant incomes for many, but rising incomes for the wealthiest 5 percent, the share of national income earned by the middle 60 percent of households has been in a clear downtrend for decades. In 2012, the middle class received 45.7 percent of national income, down sharply from 53.2 percent in 1968.

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As Adam Grant wrote this week in **The Huffington Post – Does Studying Economics Breed Greed?** – He starts the article with Adam Smith's 1976 quote: *"It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we can expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest."* Economists have run with this insight for hundreds of years, and some experts think they've run a bit too far. Robert Frank, an economist at Cornell, believes that his profession is squashing cooperation and generosity. And he believes he has the evidence to prove it. Consider these data points:

**Less charitable giving:** in the U.S., economics professors gave less money to charity than professors in other fields -- including history, philosophy, education, psychology, sociology, anthropology, literature, physics, chemistry, and biology. More than twice as many economics professors gave zero dollars to charity than professors from the other fields.

**More deception for personal gain:** economics students in Germany were more likely than students from other majors to recommend an overpriced plumber when they were paid to do it.

**Greater acceptance of greed:** Economics majors and students who had taken at least three economics courses were more likely than their peers to rate greed as *"generally good," "correct,"* and *"moral."*

**Less concern for fairness:** Students were given \$10 and had to make a proposal about how to divide the money with a peer. If the peer accepted, they had a deal, but if the peer declined, both sides got nothing. On average, economics students proposed to keep 13 percent more money for themselves than students from other majors.

In another experiment, students received money, and could either keep it or donate it to the common pool, where it would be multiplied and divided equally between all participants. On average, students contributed 49 percent of their money, but economics students contributed only 20 percent. When asked what a "fair" contribution was, the non-economists were clear: 100 percent of them said "half or more" (a full 25 percent said "all"). The economists struggled with this question. Over a third of them refused to answer it or gave unintelligible responses. The researchers wrote that the "meaning of 'fairness'... was somewhat alien for this group."

But the truth could be that students who already believe in self-interest are drawn to economics. There is evidence for selection. In a study of over 28,000 students in Switzerland, 62 percent of economics students gave money at least once to help students in need, compared with 69 percent of non-economics students. These differences were already present before the students took a single economics course: students with lower giving rates were drawn to economics. As freshmen, before their first lectures, 71 percent of the students who chose economics contributed, compared with 75 percent of non-economists.

But this doesn't rule out the possibility that studying economics pushes people further toward the selfish extreme. Along with directly learning about self-interest in the classroom, because selfish people are attracted to economics, students end up surrounded by people who believe in and act on the principle of self-interest. Extensive research shows that when people gather in groups, they develop even more extreme beliefs than where they started. Social psychologists call this group polarization. By spending time with like-minded people, economics students may become convinced that selfishness is widespread and rational -- or at least that giving is rare and foolish.

To figure out whether economics education can shift people in the selfish direction, we need to track beliefs and behaviors over time -- or randomly assign them to economics exposure. Here's what the evidence shows:

### **1. Altruistic Values Drop Among Economics Majors**

At the very beginning of their freshman year, Israeli college students who planned to study economics rated helpfulness, honesty, loyalty, and responsibility as just as important as students who were studying communications, political science, and sociology. But third-year economics students rated these values as significantly less important than first-year economics students.

### **2. Economics Students Stay Selfish, Even Though Their Peers Become More Cooperative**

When faced with choices between cooperating and defecting, overall, 60 percent of economics majors defected, compared with only 39 percent of non-economics majors. For non-economists, 54 percent of freshmen and sophomores defected, while only 40 percent of juniors and seniors did. The economists, on the other hand, did not decrease in defection significantly over time. Roughly 70 percent defected across the board. Non-economists became less selfish as they matured; economists didn't.

### **3. After Taking Economics, Students Become More Selfish and Expect Worse of Others**

Frank and his colleagues studied college students in astronomy, economic game theory, and economic development classes. Self-interest was a fundamental assumption in the game theory class, but had little role in the economic development class. In all three classes, students answered questions about benefiting from a billing error where they received ten computers but only paid for nine and finding a lost envelope with \$100. They reported how likely they would be to report the billing error and return the envelope, and predicted the odds that other people would do the same.

When the students answered these questions in September at the start of the semester, the estimates were similar across the three classes. When they answered the questions again in December at the end of the semester, Frank's team tracked how many students decreased their estimates. After taking the game theory course, students came to expect more selfish behavior from others, and they became less willing to report the error and return the envelope themselves. *"The pernicious effects of the self-interest theory have been most disturbing,"* Frank writes in ***Passions Within Reason***. *"By encouraging us to expect the worst in others it brings out the worst in us: dreading the role of the chump, we are often loath to heed our nobler instincts."*

### **4. Just Thinking about Economics Can Make Us Less Caring**

Exposure to economic words might be enough to inhibit compassion and concern for others, even among experienced executives. In one experiment, Andy Molinsky, Joshua Margolis, and I recruited presidents, CEOs, partners, VPs, directors, and managers who supervised an average of 140 employees. We randomly assigned them to unscramble 30 sentences, with either neutral phrases like [green tree was a] or economic words like [continues economy growing our].

Then, the executives wrote letters conveying bad news to an employee who was transferred to an undesirable city and disciplining a highly competent employee for being late to meetings because she lacked a car. Independent coders rated their letters for compassion.

Executives who unscrambled sentences with economic words expressed significantly less compassion. There were two factors at play: empathy and unprofessionalism. After thinking about economics, executives felt less empathy -- and even when they did empathize, they worried that expressing concern and offering help would be inappropriate.

## **Changing Economics and Business Education**

As a business school professor, these effects worry me. Economics is taught widely in business schools, providing a foundation for courses in management, finance, and accounting. Business is now the most popular undergraduate major in the U.S., and it's growing in market share. From 1997-1998 to 2007-2008, the number of bachelor's degrees conferred in the U.S. grew by 32 percent. In the same time period, the number of business degrees grew by roughly 45 percent. It's true at the graduate level, too: business degrees are right behind education as the most common graduate degrees conferred in the U.S.

Business economics may be more devastating than other brands. When comparing students in political economics and business economics, economists found that "the willingness to contribute decreases dramatically for business students." This may be why the late Stanford professor Hal Leavitt lamented that business education distorts students into "critters with lopsided brains, icy hearts, and shrunken souls."

If economics can discourage prosocial behavior, what should we do about it? I'm not suggesting that we stop teaching economics. An understanding of economics has vital importance to individuals and society. Instead, I recommend three steps for reducing the odds that economics will corrupt students:

- (1)** Require economics majors to take courses in behavioral economics, which considers the role of "*social preferences*" like fairness, altruism, cooperation, and even being rationally altruistic.
  
- (2)** Require economics majors to take breadth courses in social sciences like biological anthropology, sociology, and psychology, which place substantial emphasis on how people are concerned about others, not only themselves.
  
- (3)** Within economics courses, do a better job defining the principle of self-interest around utility, which involves anything a person values -- including helping others. This might mean covering evidence that natural selection can favor unselfish behavior, and that pure selfishness is less common than being "*groupish*" (willing to put group interests ahead of their own personal interests) and "*otherish*" (often motivated to help others and themselves at the same time).

Until then, we may be dooming students and society to a fate foreshadowed by Nobel Prize-winning economist and philosopher Amartya Sen. Calling economists "*rational fools*," Sen observed: "*The purely economic man is indeed close to being a social moron.*"

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As they seek to boost the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 per hour, House Democrats joined a group of Walmart employees on Capitol Hill Wednesday to criticize the world's largest retailer over its pay and scheduling practices, arguing that its low wages steer workers toward public assistance programs. The group representing the workers, **OUR Walmart**, took the opportunity to publicize figures shared by Walmart U.S. CEO Bill Simon, at a Goldman Sachs retail industry conference last month. According to Simon's presentation, under the heading "*Great job opportunities*," he noted that more than 475,000 Walmart associates earned a salary over \$25,000 last year. Using Walmart's statistic of 1.3 million U.S. associates, **OUR Walmart** members said that would leave 825,000 workers -- or nearly two-thirds -- who earned less than \$25,000 for the year.

But Kory Lundberg, a Walmart spokesman, said they were misreading Simon's figure. Simon's allusion to the 475,000 associates pertained solely to store workers, Lundberg said, while the workforce of 1.3 million includes Walmart employees of all stripes, including truck drivers throughout the country and executives at corporate headquarters in Bentonville, Ark. The more relevant number would be Walmart's roughly one million store workers, Lundberg said. Using the 475,000 figure, that would mean a little less than half of them earned at least \$25,000 last year. *"And for those folks that aren't earning that much, there's unparalleled opportunity to do that,"* Lundberg said.

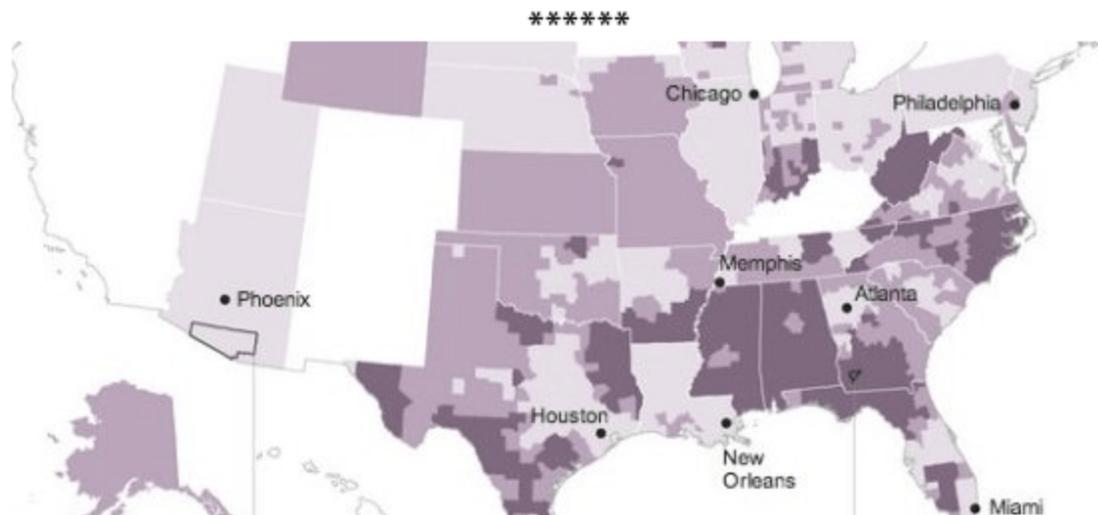
Whether it's two-thirds or one-half probably wouldn't mean much to the company's critics assembled on Wednesday, including Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.), ranking member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. Miller's office released a report earlier this year extrapolating that a single Walmart in Wisconsin could account for \$900,000 in public assistance for the working poor; Walmart blasted the report as being based on "*unrealistic scenarios*." *"There are only two places that workers get their income -- they either get it from their employer, or they get it from the taxpayer, in the form of public assistance. That's basic economics,"* said Miller, who was joined by Reps. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) and Grace Napolitano (D-Calif). ***"A decent wage is [the workers'] demand. A fair wage. A livable wage. I think Americans understand the power of their case. They understand it when they walk into a Walmart."***

OUR Walmart is backed by the United Food and Commercial Workers union, and the statistic on workers earning \$25,000 a year will serve as a new arrow in the labor group's quiver as they pressure Walmart to boost its wage floor. Given what's already public, the number shouldn't be shocking. According to Walmart's website, the average wage for a full-time store worker is \$12.83 per hour, which translates into a salary of about \$27,000 per year. Since the workforce in that statistic includes

some store managers and leaves out all of the retailer's part-time employees, it stands to reason that most of Walmart's store workers would be earning under \$25,000 per year.

As HuffPost has reported before, Walmart's exclusion of part-time workers in its public wage data likely skews the average upward. The company says a "majority" of its workers are full-time but it does not disclose exactly how many, making a true average wage unknowable. The site Glassdoor.com, which is based on employee reviews of companies, pegs the average sales associate pay at \$8.86 per hour, or a salary of \$17,841. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median pay for retail sales people at large in the U.S. economy was \$20,990 in 2010, or \$10.09 per hour.

Anthony Goytia, a Walmart store worker in California who spoke on Capitol Hill Wednesday, said he earns \$9.60 per hour after working a year for the company. Given his hours, Goytia said he's on a schedule to earn about \$12,000 this year. He said his family relies "off and on" upon food stamps, as well as their state-run health insurance program for the poor, and he's gone so far as to donate blood plasma and volunteer in clinical trials to make ends meet. **"No one who works at the world's largest private employer should have to rely on food stamps," Goytia said. "I make so little at Walmart I'm forced to get payday loans to pay my rent."** Please feel free to read Dave Jamieson's article – **Most Walmart Store Workers Didn't Earn \$25,000 Last Year** – in **The Washington Post** because the fact that the largest employer in the country is not paying its workers a living wage, should be an affront to every American and another example of why the US economic recovery is so anemic because in a consumer driven economy, people who don't make enough money can't buy.



Like many things the people who need it most are the last to receive, and another example of this are the benefits of the Affordable Healthcare Act, as evidence is emerging that one of the program's loftiest goals – to encourage competition among insurers in an effort to keep costs low – is falling short for many rural Americans. While competition is intense in many populous regions, rural areas and small towns have far fewer carriers offering plans in the law's online exchanges. Those places, many of them poor, are being asked to choose from some of the highest-priced plans in the 34 states where the federal government is running the health insurance marketplaces, a review by The New York Times has found. Of the roughly 2,500 counties served by the federal exchanges, more than half, or 58 percent, have plans offered by just one or two insurance carriers, according to an analysis by **The Times** of county-level data provided by the Department of Health and Human Services. In about 530 counties, only a single insurer is participating.

The analysis suggests that the ambitions of the Affordable Care Act to increase competition have unfolded unevenly, at least in the early going, and have not addressed many of the factors that contribute to high prices. Insurance companies are reluctant to enter challenging new markets, experts say, because medical costs are high, dominant insurers are difficult to unseat, and powerful hospital systems resist efforts to lower rates. *"There's nothing in the structure of the Affordable Care Act which really deals with that problem,"* said John Holahan, a fellow at the Urban Institute, who noted

that many factors determine costs in a given market. *“I think that all else being equal, premiums will clearly be higher when there’s not that competition.”*

The Obama administration has said 95 percent of Americans live in areas where there are at least two insurers in the exchanges. But many experts say two might not be enough to create competition that would help lower prices. For example, in Wyoming, two insurers are offering plans at prices that are higher than in neighboring Montana, where a third carrier is seen as a factor in keeping prices lower. It is unclear how the online marketplaces might evolve over time. Many large insurers are closely watching what happens in the first year to decide whether to more aggressively pursue new markets. In the meantime, problems with the [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov) Web site are making it harder for them to know whether the exchanges’ slow start is the result of technical difficulties or more serious underlying problems, such as a lack of consumer demand that would discourage them from entering.

In some cases, competition varies markedly across county lines. In Monroe County, Fla., which includes the Florida Keys, two insurers, Cigna and Florida Blue, offer plans on the federal exchanges. In neighboring Miami-Dade County, there are seven companies, including Aetna and Humana, two of the nation’s largest players. While in rural Baker County, Ga., where there is only one insurer, a 50-year-old shopping for a silver plan would pay at least \$644.05 before federal subsidies. (Plans range in price and levels of coverage from bronze to platinum, with silver a middle option.) A 50-year-old in Atlanta, where there are four carriers, could pay \$320.06 for a comparable plan. Federal subsidies could significantly reduce monthly premiums for people with low incomes.

Counties with one carrier are mostly concentrated in the South. Nearly all of the counties in Mississippi and Alabama, for example, are served by just one insurer, according to **The Times’s** analysis. Other states with scarce competition include Maine, West Virginia, North Carolina and Alaska. *“The consumer wants some level of choice,”* said Alexander K. Feldvebel, the deputy insurance commissioner for New Hampshire, where one carrier, Anthem Blue Cross, owned by WellPoint, now offers plans. *“You don’t have that when you have a single carrier offering all the products.”*

The Times examined carriers and prices on the federal exchanges for the second-cheapest silver plan, the level on which subsidies are based, available to a 50-year-old. Comparable data for state-run plans was unavailable. The Obama administration, while not disputing the findings, responded to the analysis in a statement that the marketplaces *“allow insurers to compete for customers based on price and quality.”* It added that the tax-credit subsidies that will lower monthly payments for many consumers had also *“brought more companies to the market, resulting in increased options for consumers and lower-than-expected premiums.”* Insurance executives say they set their rates without knowing what other insurers were doing.

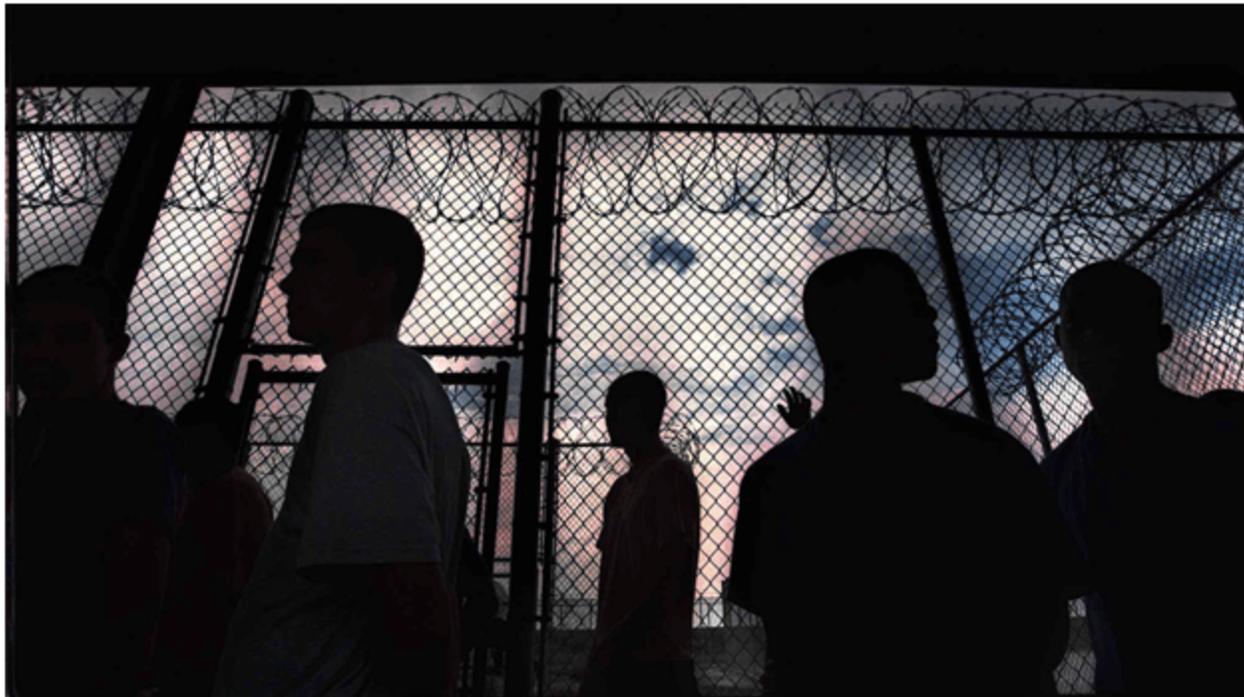
Although critics may suggest that this is due to structural deficiencies, the truth is before the passage of the Affordable Healthcare Act, in many rural communities and states dominated by rural communities, the existing insurance marketplace was often dominated by a single insurer and today this insurer has to accept people with pre-existing conditions and are no longer able to cancel people’s policies because of a cap or other reason. The Affordable Care Act, which was passed in 2010, was designed to make health insurance available to people who had not been able to afford it or had been denied coverage because of pre-existing conditions. It has transformed the market for individual insurance by creating marketplaces aimed at making it easier for consumers to compare their options. The law also sought to level the playing field for new insurers.

One of the problems is that in rural regions, several factors combine to create a landscape that is inhospitable to newcomers. Developing relationships with doctors and hospitals can be costly where cities and towns are widely scattered and the pool of potential customers is small. In states like Wyoming, with a population of less than 600,000, insurers simply don’t find the potential market attractive. On top of this, in states such as North Carolina, Florida and Texas where the governors have declared war against Obamacare, in many subtle ways they are doing whatever they can to undermine its success, often hurting those who need it most.

Again, from its strongest supporters to the President himself, all will agree that the Affordable Healthcare Act is far from perfect..... But at least it is a positive step in the right direction..... And if we really want to help rural America, where many are currently lacking access to affordable healthcare,

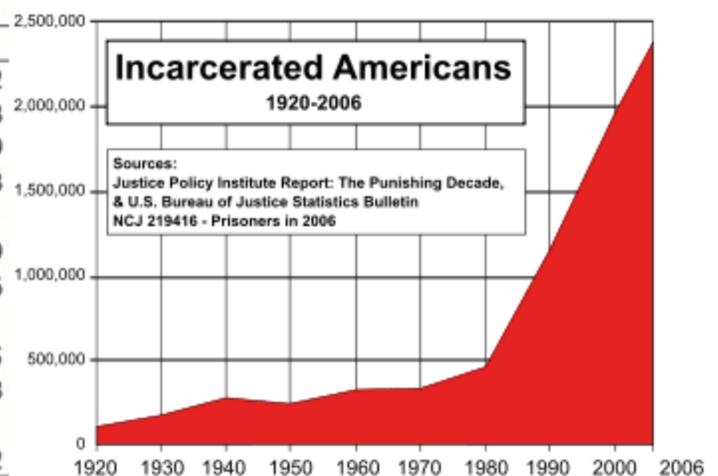
it should be a priority of every American, especially our politicians, to make sure that they get it....  
 Please feel free to read the **New York Times** article – **Obamacare Is Failing People In Rural Areas** – by Reed Abelson, Katie Thomas and Jo Craven McGinty.

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Incarceration in the United States of America for the commission of felony and other offenses is out of control. The United States has the highest documented incarceration rate in the world. At year-end 2009, it was 743 adults incarcerated per 100,000 population. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), 2,266,800 adults were incarcerated in U.S. federal and state prisons, and county jails at year-end 2011 – about 0.7% of adults in the U.S. resident population. Additionally, 4,814,200 adults at year-end 2011 were on probation or on parole. In total, 6,977,700 adults were under correctional supervision (probation, parole, jail, or prison) in 2011 – about 2.9% of adults in the U.S. resident population. And for Dickens fans, although debtor's prisons no longer exist in the United States, residents of some U.S. states can still be incarcerated for debt as of 2011. As of 2010 there were also 70,792 juveniles in juvenile detention.

USA. Adult incarceration.	Number of inmates		
	2000	2009	2010
<b>Inmates in custody</b>			
Total	1,937,482	2,291,912	2,266,832
<b>Federal prisoners<sup>a</sup></b>	140,064	205,087	206,968
Prisons	133,921	196,318	198,339
Federal facilities	124,540	171,000	173,138
Privately operated facilities	9,381	25,318	25,201
Community Corrections Centers <sup>b</sup>	6,143	8,769	8,629
State prisoners	1,176,269	1,319,391	1,311,136
State facilities	1,104,424	1,224,145	1,216,771
Privately operated facilities	71,845	95,246	94,365
Local jails <sup>c</sup>	621,149	767,434	748,728
Incarceration rate <sup>d</sup>	684	743	731
Adult incarceration rate <sup>e</sup>	926	981	962



Not only in total numbers, but in comparison with other countries the United States also has the highest documented incarceration rate in the world (743 per 100,000 population), Russia has the second highest rate (577 per 100,000), followed by Rwanda (561 per 100,000). As of year-end 2009 the USA rate was 743 adults incarcerated in prisons and jails per 100,000 population. At year-end 2007 the United States had less than 5% of the world's population and 23.4% of the world's prison and jail population (adult inmates).



By comparison the incarceration rate in England and Wales in October 2011 was 155 people imprisoned per 100,000 residents; the rate for Norway in May 2010 was 71 inmates per 100,000; Netherlands in April 2010 was 94 per 100,000; Australia in June 2010 was 133 per 100,000; and New Zealand in October 2010 was 203 per 100,000.

The good news is that the number of inmates in state and federal prisons decreased by 1.7 percent, to an estimated 1,571,013 in 2012 from 1,598,783 in 2011, according to figures released by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, an arm of the Justice Department. Although the percentage decline appeared small, the fact that it followed decreases in 2011 and 2010 offers persuasive evidence of what some experts say is a “sea change” in America’s approach to criminal punishment. *“This is the beginning of the end of mass incarceration,”* said Natasha Frost, associate dean of Northeastern University’s school of criminology and criminal justice.

About half the 2012 decline — 15,035 prisoners — occurred in California, which has decreased its prison population in response to a Supreme Court order to relieve prison overcrowding. But eight other states, including New York, Florida, Virginia and North Carolina, showed substantial decreases, of more than 1,000 inmates, and more than half the states reported some drop in the number of prisoners. (Figures for three states were estimated because they had not submitted data in time for the report.) The population of federal prisons increased slightly, but at a slower rate than in previous years, the report found.

Imprisonment rates in the United States have been on an upward march since the early 1970s. From 1978, when there were 307,276 inmates in state and federal prisons, the population increased annually, reaching a peak of 1,615,487 inmates in 2009. But in recent years, tightened state budgets, plummeting crime rates, changes in sentencing laws and shifts in public opinion have combined to reverse the trend. Experts on prison policy said that the continuing decline appears to be more than a random fluctuation.

“A year or even two years is a blip and we shouldn’t jump to conclusions, but three years starts to look like a trend,” said Marc Mauer, executive director of the Sentencing Project, a nonprofit research group based in Washington. But he said that the rate of inmates incarcerated in the United States continued to be “dramatically higher” than in other countries and that the changes so far were “relatively modest compared to the scale of the problem.”

Most observers agree that the recession has played a role in shrinking prison populations. In 2011 and 2012, at least 17 states closed or were considering closing prisons partly for budgetary reasons, representing a reduction of 28,525 beds, according to a report by the Sentencing Project published last year.

The United States has less than 5 percent of the world's population. But it has almost a quarter of the world's prisoners. Indeed, the United States leads the world in producing prisoners, a reflection of a relatively recent and now entirely distinctive American approach to crime and punishment. Americans are locked up for crimes — from writing bad checks to using drugs — that would rarely produce prison sentences in other countries. And in particular they are kept incarcerated far longer than prisoners in other nations. Criminologists and legal scholars in other industrialized nations say they are mystified and appalled by the number and length of American prison sentences.

The United States has, for instance, 2.3 million criminals behind bars, more than any other nation, according to data maintained by the International Center for Prison Studies at King's College London. China, which is four times more populous than the United States, is a distant second, with 1.6 million people in prison. (That number excludes hundreds of thousands of people held in administrative detention, most of them in China's extrajudicial system of re-education through labor, which often singles out political activists who have not committed crimes.)

Changes in state and federal sentencing laws for lower-level offenses like those involving drugs have played a central role in the shift, he and others said, with many states setting up diversion programs for offenders as an alternative to prison. And some states have softened their policies on parole, no longer automatically sending people back to prison for parole violations. But changing public attitudes are also a major driver behind the declining prison numbers. Dropping crime rates over the last 20 years have reduced public fears and diminished the interest of politicians in running tough-on-crime campaigns. And public polls consistently show that Americans are now more interested in spending money on education and health care than on building more prisons. As a result the private prison business is growing at an alarming rate.

This week in *The Huffington Post* — Chris Kirkham wrote a two-part series — **PRISONERS OF PROFIT** — and much like in any other industry driven by profit, the profiteers are doing their best to grow their businesses. The result is that we are warehousing more and more of our children in the name of criminal justice and rehabilitation. What Kirkham discovered was a startling record of juvenile abuse. The two-part article focused on James F. Slattery who over the past quarter century for-profit prison enterprises have run afoul of the Justice Department and authorities in New York, Florida, Maryland, Nevada and Texas for alleged offenses ranging from condoning abuse of inmates to plying politicians with undisclosed gifts while seeking to secure state contracts.



Examples: In 2001, an 18-year-old committed to a Texas boot camp operated by one of Slattery's previous companies, Correctional Services Corp., came down with pneumonia and pleaded to see a doctor as he struggled to breathe. Guards accused the teen of faking it and forced him to do pushups in his own vomit, according to Texas law enforcement reports. After nine days of medical neglect, he died. That same year, auditors in Maryland found that staff at one of Slattery's juvenile facilities coaxed inmates to fight on Saturday mornings as a way to settle disputes from earlier in the week. In recent years, the company has failed to report riots, assaults and claims of sexual abuse at its juvenile prisons in Florida, according to a review of state records and accounts from former employees and inmates.

Despite that history, Slattery's current company, Youth Services International, has retained and even expanded its contracts to operate juvenile prisons in several states. The company has capitalized on budgetary strains across the country as governments embrace privatization in pursuit of cost savings. Nearly 40 percent of the nation's juvenile delinquents are today committed to private facilities, according to the most recent federal data from 2011, up from about 33 percent twelve years earlier. Over the past two decades, more than 40,000 boys and girls in 16 states have gone through one of Slattery's prisons, boot camps or detention centers, according to a Huffington Post analysis of juvenile facility data.

The private prison industry has long fueled its growth on the proposition that it is a boon to taxpayers, delivering better outcomes at lower costs than state facilities. But significant evidence undermines that argument: the tendency of young people to return to crime once they get out, for example, and long-term contracts that can leave states obligated to fill prison beds. The harsh conditions confronting youth inside YSI's facilities, moreover, show the serious problems that can arise when government hands over social services to private contractors and essentially walks away.

Those held at YSI facilities across the country have frequently faced beatings, neglect, sexual abuse and unsanitary food over the past two decades, according to a HuffPost investigation that included interviews with 14 former employees and a review of thousands of pages of state audits, lawsuits, local police reports and probes by state and federal agencies. Out of more than 300 institutions surveyed, a YSI detention center in Georgia had the highest rate of youth alleging sexual assaults in the country, according to a recent report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

In Florida, where private contractors have in recent years taken control of all of the state's 3,300 youth prison beds, YSI now manages more than \$100 million in contracts, about 10 percent of the system.

Its facilities have generated conspicuously large numbers of claims that guards have assaulted youth, according to a **HuffPost** compilation of state reports. A YSI facility in Palm Beach County had the highest rate of reported sexual assaults out of 36 facilities reviewed in Florida, the Bureau of Justice Statistics report found.

The state's sweeping privatization of its juvenile incarceration system has produced some of the worst re-offending rates in the nation. More than 40 percent of youth offenders sent to one of Florida's juvenile prisons wind up arrested and convicted of another crime within a year of their release, according to state data. In New York state, where historically no youth offenders have been held in private institutions, 25 percent are convicted again within that timeframe.

Florida logs reports of serious incidents that occur inside its juvenile prisons, but the state does not maintain a database that allows for the analysis of trends across the system. HuffPost obtained the documents through Florida's public records law and compiled incident reports logged between 2008 and 2012. According to the data, YSI's facilities generated a disproportionate share of reports of prison staff allegedly injuring youth offenders by using excessive force.

Although YSI oversaw only about 9 percent of the state's juvenile jail beds during the past five years, the company was responsible for nearly 15 percent of all reported cases of excessive force and injured youths.

In 2012, 23 incidents of excessive force were reported at YSI facilities. By comparison, G4S Youth Services — the state's largest private provider of youth prison beds — generated 21 such reports, despite overseeing nearly three times as many beds.

Among the other key findings from **HuffPost's** investigation:

- Staff underreport serious incidents such as major fights and staff assaults in an effort to keep the state in the dark and avoid additional scrutiny — a violation of the company's contracts as well as Department of Juvenile Justice rules requiring that contracted staff report such incidents to state authorities.
- Though state guidelines prohibit "*unnecessarily harsh or indecent treatment*," YSI guards have frequently resorted to violence in confrontations with youth, slapping and choking inmates and sometimes fracturing bones, according to police reports. Former employees told **HuffPost** that YSI often fails to document such incidents.

- Staff turnover at YSI's prisons is rampant, leaving inexperienced guards to manage a tough population.
- At YSI facilities, food is often in short supply and frequently undercooked. Youth interviewed by **HuffPost** recounted being served bloody, raw chicken and sometimes finding flies inside pre-cooked dishes. In order to get enough food, youth are allowed to gamble through card games and sports bets while trading "picks" — the right to take someone else's food at the next meal.

Former employees recall going without basic supplies such as toilet paper, deodorant and tampons — also violations of department policy. They say they lacked the funds to provide activities for the youth held in YSI's prisons.

*"We were kept like rats in a trap, in a maze,"* said Angela Phillips, a former shift supervisor at Broward Girls Academy in Pembroke Pines, northwest of Miami. "There was no outlet and no stimulation, so they would just turn on each other, and turn on staff. That's how it was day in, day out."

The company spokesman, Jesse Williams, dismissed claims that YSI fails to report incidents, saying the company always complies with state guidelines. "Our reporting process is the best in the industry," he said.

He argued that YSI's employee turnover rate and salaries are in line with the industry average. "The job is a difficult one," he said. "Despite our best efforts to assess a candidate's fitness for the position, which include employment and background screening and proper training, we don't know of their true suitability until they are well into the job."

Local public defenders and groups such as the Southern Poverty Law Center have for years forwarded concerns about YSI facilities to the state, but Florida has done little to investigate allegations of verbal and physical abuse.

In the summer of 2012, after the Broward County Public Defender's Office sent a letter to the Department of Juvenile Justice outlining issues with food and fighting at a different facility, the state inspector handed out a pro-forma questionnaire to about 20 boys there.

Last year, the state declined to renew YSI's contract for that program, a 154-bed facility called Thompson Academy where state officials over the years had documented frequent violence and failures to report serious incidents. But that decision was not due to poor performance, according to a letter the state sent to the company in August 2012. Indeed, this year, the state awarded YSI another contract to manage a facility less than a mile away.

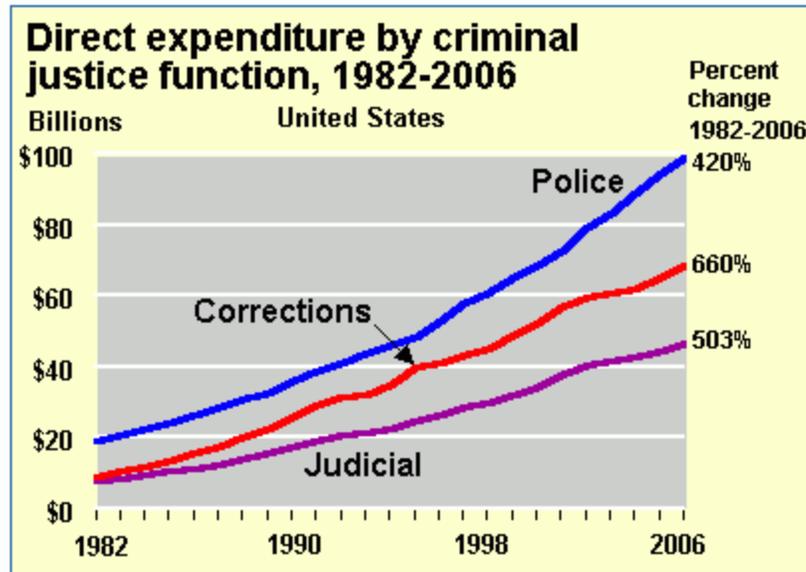
*"I always think it's ironic that you can't get a job as a janitor for the Department of Juvenile Justice — understandably so — if you have any kind of conviction on your record,"* said Marie Osborne, the chief juvenile public defender in Miami-Dade County, who has followed YSI for more than a decade. *"They're scrupulous with individual employees, but a corporation can have this corporate rap sheet, and it's no problem. They can get contracts."*

In the push to fully privatize the system and phase out state-run facilities, Florida has continued both to renew YSI's contracts and to award the company new ones. Last year, Florida opted not to extend YSI's contract to oversee Thompson Academy, the facility where Jerry Blanton had blown the whistle and lost his job eight years earlier. In a letter to YSI sent in summer 2012, the state told the company that the contract would end because the DJJ was "moving away from large institutional models" and toward smaller, community-based programs. Still, the letter added, "We strongly encourage your participation" in an upcoming bid for new contracts.

In January, the state gave YSI a \$7.3 million, five-year contract to run the new Broward Youth Treatment Center, a 28-bed program less than a mile away from Thompson. And this summer, YSI won contracts to take over two more state facilities, one in the Tampa area and another in Jacksonville. This is akin to giving Willie Sutton the keys to the front door of a bank and then wonder why money is missing. But worse. YSI and many other companies in the juvenile detention business, are in many cases crime universities, where the only thing that an inmate will learn is how to get better

at criminal activity, because instead of focusing on productive learning that increase societal skill sets they are warehouses operating on the cheap.

Although direct expenditure for prisons has grown by almost 700% over the past year the tremendous prison population has growth has led to vast over-crowding causing poorer and poorer conditions, which the non-governmental organization Human Rights Watch raised concerns with prisoner rape and medical care for inmates. In a survey of 1,788 male inmates in Midwestern prisons by Prison Journal, about 21% responded they had been coerced or pressured into sexual activity during their incarceration, and 7% that they had been raped in their current facility.



In August 2003, a Harper's article by Wil S. Hylton estimated that "somewhere between 20 and 40% of American prisoners are, at this very moment, infected with hepatitis C". Prisons may outsource medical care to private companies such as Correctional Medical Services (now Corizon) that, according to Hylton's research, try to minimize the amount of care given to prisoners in order to maximize profits.

Also identified as an issue within the prison system is gang violence, because many gang members retain their gang identity and affiliations when imprisoned. Segregation of identified gang members from the general population of inmates, with different gangs being housed in separate units often results in the imprisonment of these gang members with their friends and criminal cohorts. Some feel this has the effect of turning prisons into "institutions of higher criminal learning."



Many prisons in the United States are overcrowded. For example, California's 33 prisons have a total capacity of 100,000, but they hold 170,000 inmates. Many prisons in California and around the country are forced to turn old gymnasiums and classrooms into huge bunkhouses for inmates. They do this by placing hundreds of bunk beds next to one another, in these gyms, without any type of barriers to keep inmates separated. In California, the inadequate security engendered by this situation, coupled with insufficient staffing levels, have led to increased violence and a prison health system that causes one death a week. This situation has led the courts to order California to release of 27% of the current prison population, citing the Eighth Amendment's prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment.[81] The three-judge court considering requests by the Plata v. Schwarzenegger and Coleman v. Schwarzenegger courts found California's prisons have become criminogenic as a result of prison overcrowding.[82]

In 2005, the Supreme Court of the United States case of Cutter v. Wilkinson established that prisons that received federal funds could not deny prisoners accommodations necessary for religious practices.

According to a Supreme Court ruling issued on May 23, 2011, California — which has the highest overcrowding rate of any prison system in the country — must alleviate overcrowding in the state's prisons, reducing the prisoner population by 30,000 over the next two years.

Solitary confinement is widely used in US prisons, yet it is underreported by most states, while some don't report it at all. Isolation of prisoners has been condemned by the UN in 2011 as a form of torture. At over 80,000 at any given time, the US has more prisoners confined in isolation than any other country in the world. In Louisiana, with 843 prisoners per 100,000 citizens, there have been prisoners held for as long as forty years in isolation. As a result, in 1999, the Supreme Court of Norway refused to extradite American hash-smuggler Henry Hendricksen, as they declared that US prisons do not meet their minimum humanitarian standards.

But the real problem with America's prison system is that it doesn't work. A 2002 study survey showed that among nearly 275,000 prisoners released in 1994, 67.5% were rearrested within 3 years, and 51.8% were back in prison. However, the study found no evidence that spending more time in prison raises the recidivism rate, and found that those serving the longest time, 61 months or more, had a slightly lower re-arrest rate (54.2%) than every other category of prisoners. This is most likely explained by the older average age of those released with the longest sentences, and the study shows a strong negative correlation between recidivism and age upon release.

Every sociologist will tell you that the best investment a country can make is in early education so that children are engaged as young as possible so that they develop the educational skills and develop a

roadmap to a desired position in society. Instead our politicians are cutting funding for Head-Start programs and outsourcing the result of their failure to juvenile detention centers and privately owned prisons. The choice is obvious, so why aren't our politicians seeing the light.....?

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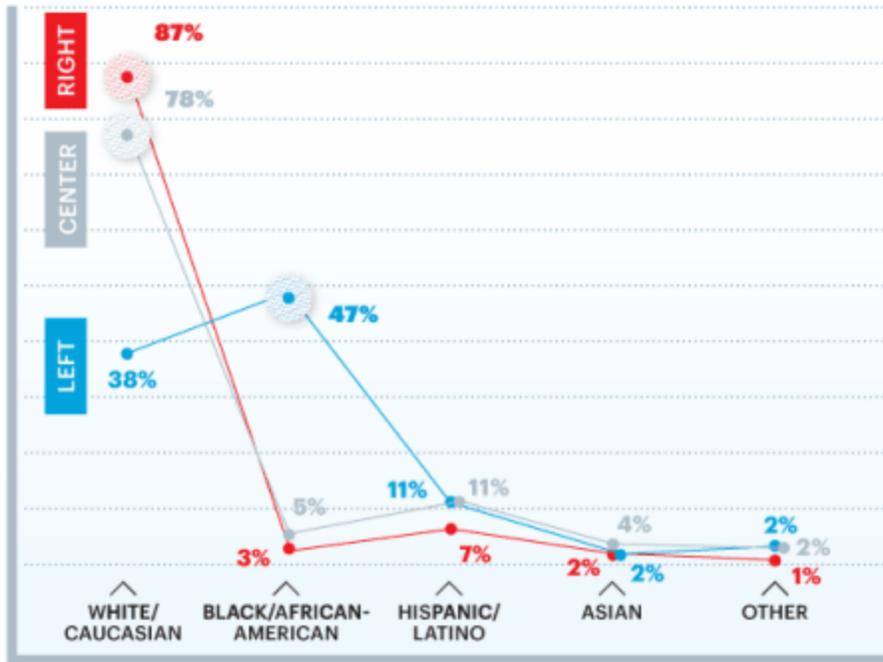
**An exclusive** Esquire-NBC News survey shows us that everything we are told about politics in America today—that there is no middle ground between left and right, blue and red, us and them—is wrong. The data, compiled by the Benenson Strategy Group (pollster for Obama for America '08 and '12) and Neil Newhouse of Public Opinion Strategies (lead pollster for Romney for President), show us there is a large group of American voters—even a majority—who make up a New American Center that is passionate, persuadable, and very real. They are merely waiting for Washington to find them. *Published in the Nov. 2013 issue*

## **1. THE CENTER IS FILLED WITH PEOPLE WHO DO NOT CONSIDER THEMSELVES THE CENTER.**

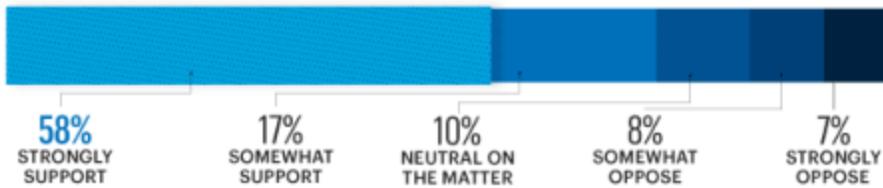
When we talk about the Center, we are not talking about some shapeless, shifting mass of voters who just can't make up their minds about where they stand. They know what they stand for—nearly half the voters we identified in the Center even say they're liberals or conservatives. (Hell, 15 percent of those in the Center say they are supporters of the Tea Party.) However, their views don't neatly correspond to traditional definitions of liberal or conservative, creating a disjunction between where they think they are on the ideological spectrum and where they actually are.

**MEANWHILE, ON THE LEFT AND RIGHT:**

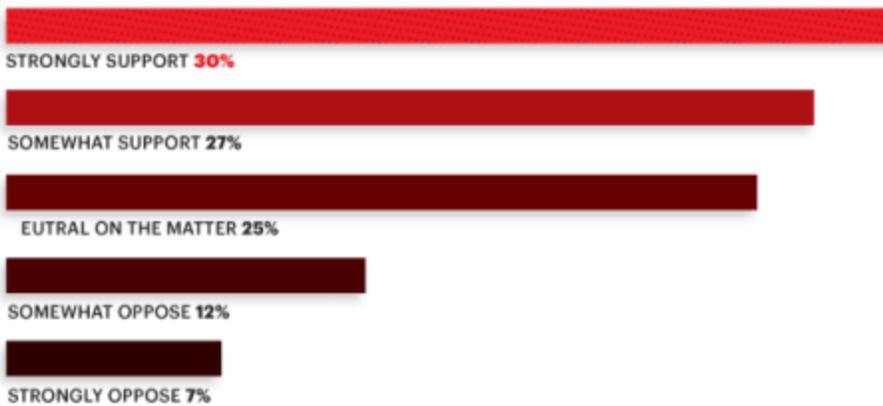
HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ETHNICITY?



DO YOU SUPPORT REQUIRING ALL REGISTERED VOTERS TO SHOW A PHOTO ID, SUCH AS A VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE, AT THE POLLING BOOTH BEFORE THEY CAN CAST A VOTE?



Do you support ending affirmative action in hiring decisions and college admissions?



DO YOU SUPPORT PROVIDING ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WITH A PATH TO CITIZENSHIP EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE BROKEN THE RULES?

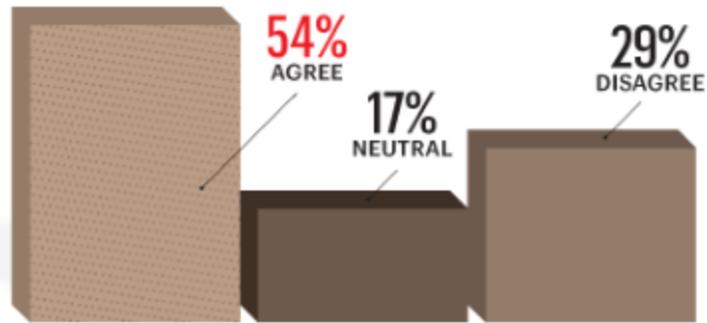
Strongly support 12%  
 Somewhat support 20%  
 Neutral on the matter 14%  
 Somewhat oppose 16%  
 Strongly oppose 38%

Among those on the Right, there is a much higher tendency to self-identify as very conservative on social issues (65%) compared with those on the Left who identify as very liberal on social issues (54%). The same numbers more or less apply on fiscal issues, with the Right more likely to describe themselves in extreme terms.

## **2. THE CENTER IS PRETTY WHITE. NOT AS WHITE AS THE FOLKS ALL THE WAY TO THE RIGHT, BUT STILL: PRETTY WHITE. AND THEY DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANY TALK OF "DIVERSITY."**

Compared with voters who make up segments further to the left on the spectrum, the Center is much less ethnically diverse. Though it's impossible to attribute any direct causation, there also happens to be a clear lack of support in the Center for issues typically related to diversity.

**AGREE OR DIS-  
AGREE: AFTER 230  
YEARS, THE CONSTI-  
TUTION CAN'T  
PROVIDE GUIDANCE  
FOR MANY OF THE  
MODERN PROBLEMS  
WE FACE NOW.**



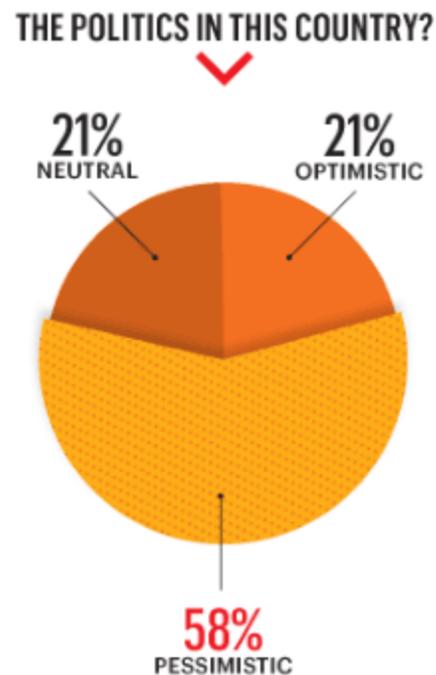
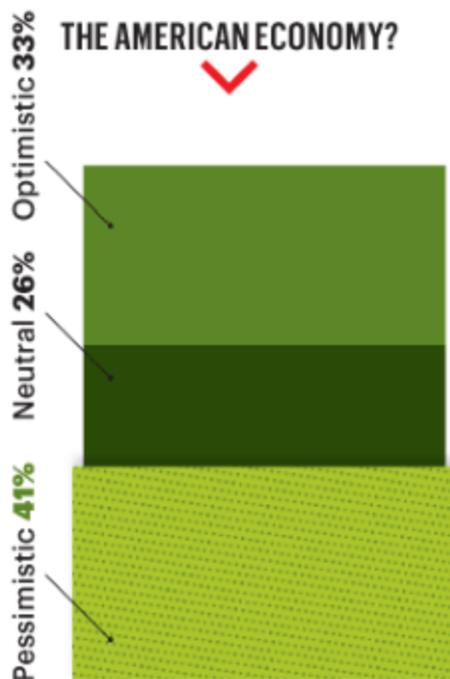
**AGREE OR DISAGREE: THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM WE HAVE IN THIS COUNTRY IS BROKEN AND OUT OF DATE AND AMERICA WOULD BE BETTER OFF IF THERE WERE MORE THAN JUST TWO PARTIES.**

Agree **49%**  
Disagree **30%**  
Neutral **21%**

**Agree or disagree: I never put any faith in politicians of either party because they always end up disappointing me.**

Agree **49%**  
Disagree **26%**  
Neutral **25%**

## THINKING ABOUT THE NEXT FEW YEARS, **HOW OPTIMISTIC OR PESSIMISTIC ARE YOU ABOUT ...**



## **MEANWHILE, ON THE LEFT AND RIGHT:**

The Right is about 90 percent white across the board, while on the Left you've got two camps side by side: the secular segment (very white) and the religious (very nonwhite), meaning it's not quite right to think of the Left as an ideological Benetton ad. There are stark racial divisions, and only when the group is unified does it become diverse. The support for affirmative action and immigration reform on the Left is soft—a bare majority supports both causes—while the opposition from the Right is very strong.

## **3. THE CENTER DOESN'T MUCH LIKE HOW THINGS ARE GOING.**

They're not sure how well the Constitution is aging. They don't much like the two-party system. And they don't care for politicians. What else you got, Washington?

## **4. THE CENTER TRUSTS DEMOCRATS (AND OPRAH) MORE THAN REPUBLICANS.**

Eighteen percent of those in the Center name a Democratic figure as the person they trust most, including 9 percent who pick the president. By comparison, 13 percent name a Republican leader, and there are no active GOP politicians who receive more than 1 percent, save one: Chris Christie. This could reflect the absence of a unifying national leader in the Republican party. Or, you know, could be something else.

 Inline image 31

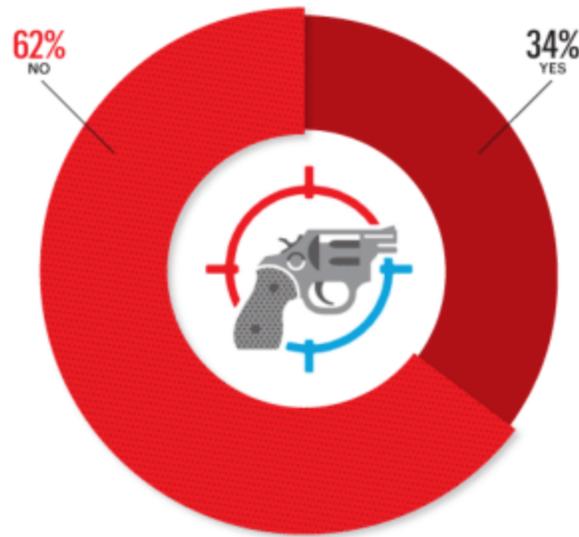
## **MEANWHILE, ON THE LEFT AND RIGHT:**

On the Left, it's Obama by a mile—not even the Clintons come close. But among the Right, Billy Graham (at 7 percent) outpolls everyone on the list, with the next three highest tied at 4 percent: the pope, Bill O'Reilly, and George W. Bush. (Among active politicians, the Right likes Rand Paul best.)

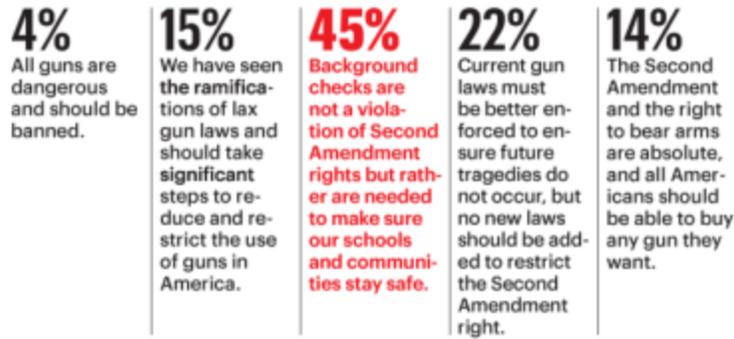
## **5. PLEASE DON'T TALK TO THE CENTER ABOUT GOD AND GUNS.**

Religion is not a major part of the Center's life, and it firmly believes that religion has no place in the public sphere. Meanwhile: Even though about a third of those in the Center own guns, an overwhelming plurality have no problem with background checks.

DO YOU OWN A GUN OR DOES SOMEONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD OWN A GUN?



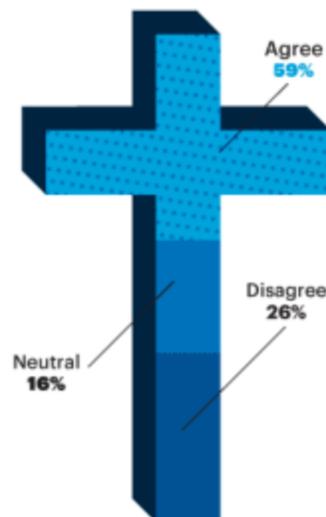
WHICH STATEMENT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR VIEW ON THE ISSUE OF GUN CONTROL?



Agree or disagree: Religion is important to me and I regularly make time to attend services and pray.

Agree 29%  
Disagree 55%  
Neutral 16%

AGREE OR DISAGREE: CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD HAVE NO ROLE IN POLITICS.



## **MEANWHILE, ON THE LEFT AND RIGHT:**

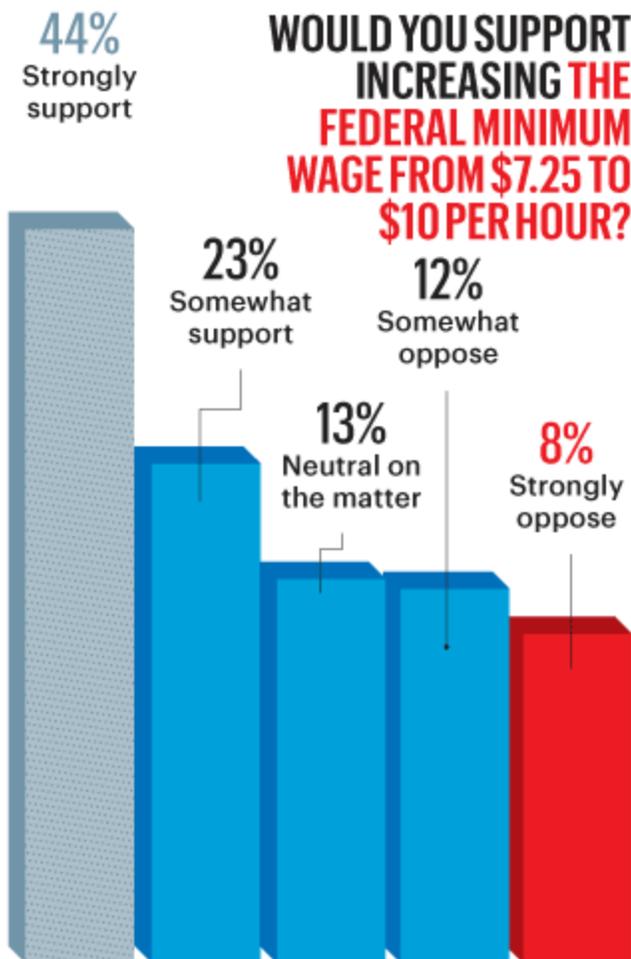
The Center is less religious than the Right, and—surprise!—it's less religious than the Left, too, and here's why: Members of the Gospel Left (the ones who broke 99 to 1 for Obama in 2012) are second only to the Righteous Right for how important religion is to them. Unlike their fellow believers on the Right, though, more than half of the Gospel Left feels that religion should not play a role in public life.

## **6. THE CENTER BELIEVES THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD HELP ONLY THOSE WHO REALLY NEED HELP.**

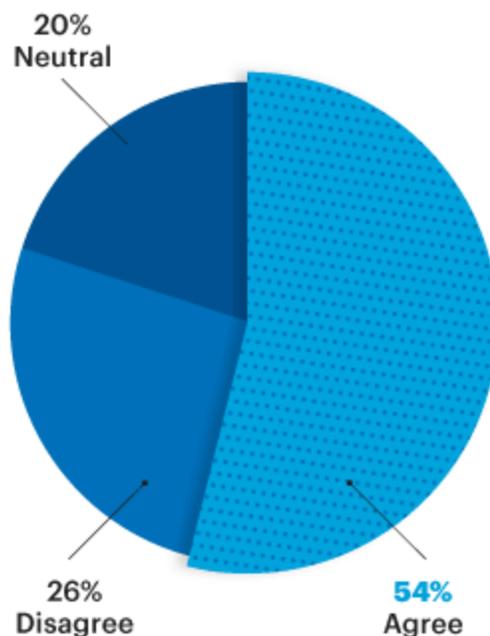
The Center strongly favors government intervention that ensures everyone has their basic needs met (such as food and health care) and has a fair shot at earning a decent living.

**Agree or disagree: Government should guarantee that people get equal pay for equal work, regardless of their gender or race.**

Agree **73%**  
Disagree **15%**  
Neutral **12%**



**AGREE OR DISAGREE: WE NEED THE GOVERNMENT TO MAINTAIN PROGRAMS LIKE FOOD STAMPS, WELFARE, AND MEDICAID SO THAT PEOPLE WHO HIT HARD TIMES DON'T FALL THROUGH THE CRACKS.**



### MEANWHILE, ON THE LEFT AND RIGHT:

On the Left, there is intense and broad support for these issues, but there are huge divisions on the Right. The religious segment overwhelmingly supports all of these issues, while the Talk Radio Heads oppose all but equal pay, and between the two, the Right nets out to soft opposition to raising the minimum wage (with 49 percent against, 39 percent for) and safety-net programs (43 percent against, 40 percent for).

## 7. ...BUT THE CENTER WOULD REALLY PREFER THAT THE GOVERNMENT LEAVE

# **THE REST OF US ALONE.**

Especially when it comes to our personal lives, though that live-and-let-live mind-set has limits. Though a clear majority of the Center is strongly in favor of marriage equality, half also registers concerns about changing the definition of marriage. There is also support for abortion—but mostly during the first three months.



## ABORTION?

- Should be prohibited in all circumstances. **3%**
- Should be legal only to save the life of the mother. **4%**
- Should be legal only in cases of rape or incest, or to save the life of the mother. **29%**
- Should be legal for any reason, but not after the first three months of pregnancy. **36%**
- Should be legal for any reason, but not after the first six months of pregnancy. **15%**
- Should be allowed at any time during the woman's pregnancy for any reason. **12%**



## LEGALIZE MARIJUANA?

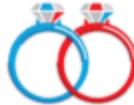
- STRONGLY SUPPORT 34%**
- SOMEWHAT SUPPORT 18%**
- NEUTRAL ON THE MATTER 15%**
- SOMEWHAT OPPOSE 13%**
- STRONGLY OPPOSE 20%**

### AGREE OR DISAGREE: GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT LEGISLATE HOW AMERICANS CAN BEHAVE IN THEIR PERSONAL LIVES, SUCH AS OWNING GUNS, ABORTION, MARRIAGE, AND MARIJUANA.

**54%**  
AGREE

**18%**  
NEUTRAL

**28%**  
DISAGREE



### WHICH STATEMENT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR VIEW ON THE ISSUE OF GAY MARRIAGE?

Marriage is between two people who love each other and are committed to each other, regardless of whether they are men or women.

**44%**

Gay marriage is a civil-rights issue. Preventing gay people from getting married is discrimination.

**11%**

Marriage is an issue for each state to decide, and if some states want to recognize gay marriage or other states

want to prohibit it, then that is their right.

**9%**

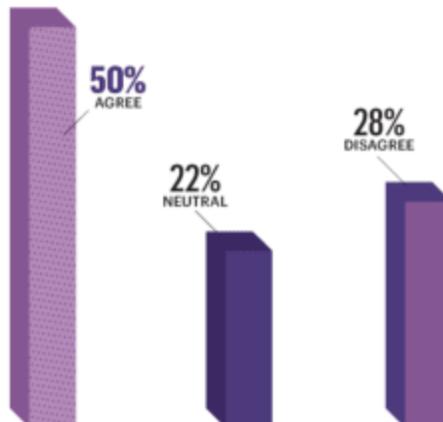
Marriage is between a man and a woman, but there is no reason same-sex partners cannot have civil unions that give them the same legal rights as married couples.

**23%**

Marriage has always been between a man and a woman, and that definition should not be changed.

**13%**

### AGREE OR DISAGREE: MARRIAGE AND FAMILY ARE IMPORTANT INSTITUTIONS THAT SHAPE OUR CULTURE AND OUR COUNTRY AND WE NEED TO BE CAREFUL BEFORE WE CHANGE THE DEFINITION.



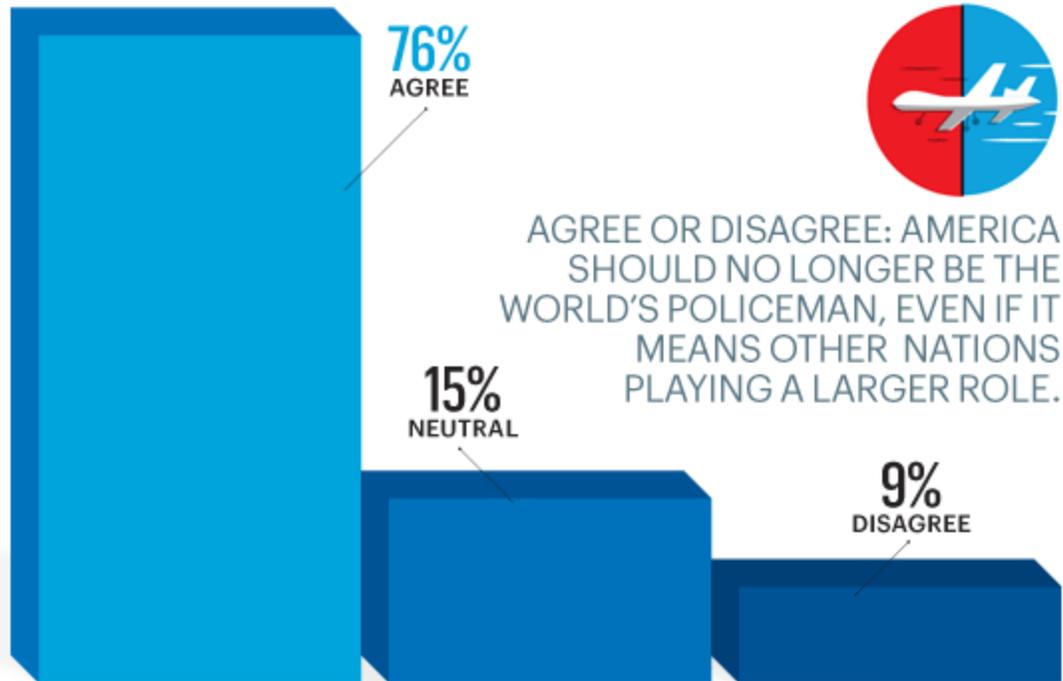
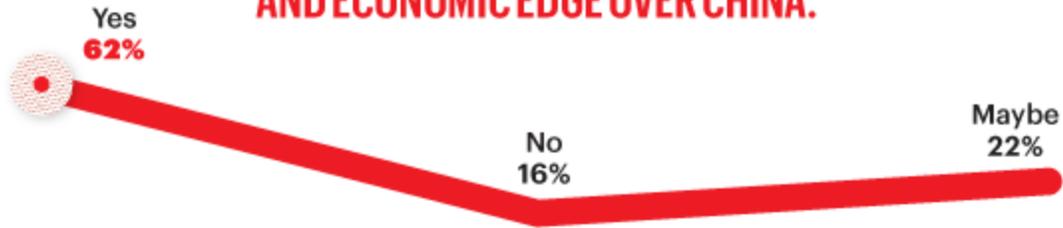
## **MEANWHILE, ON THE LEFT AND RIGHT:**

There are moderating forces within both camps: The relatively conservative social views of the Gospel Left balance out the Bleeding Hearts' strong progressive views, while the Talk Radio Heads, most of whom don't want the government involved in our personal lives, balance out the intense pro-life, anti-gay-marriage positions of the Righteous Right.

## **8. THE CENTER HAS HAD IT WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD.**

... And doesn't much want to use American resources to fix things overseas when we have problems at home. However: ix-nay on bringing up ina-Chay.

**AGREE OR DISAGREE: AMERICA'S SECURITY  
WILL BE AT RISK IF WE'RE NOT ABLE TO MAINTAIN A MILITARY  
AND ECONOMIC EDGE OVER CHINA.**



**Agree or disagree: We can't afford to spend money on foreign aid and building up other nations when we need to build our own country.**

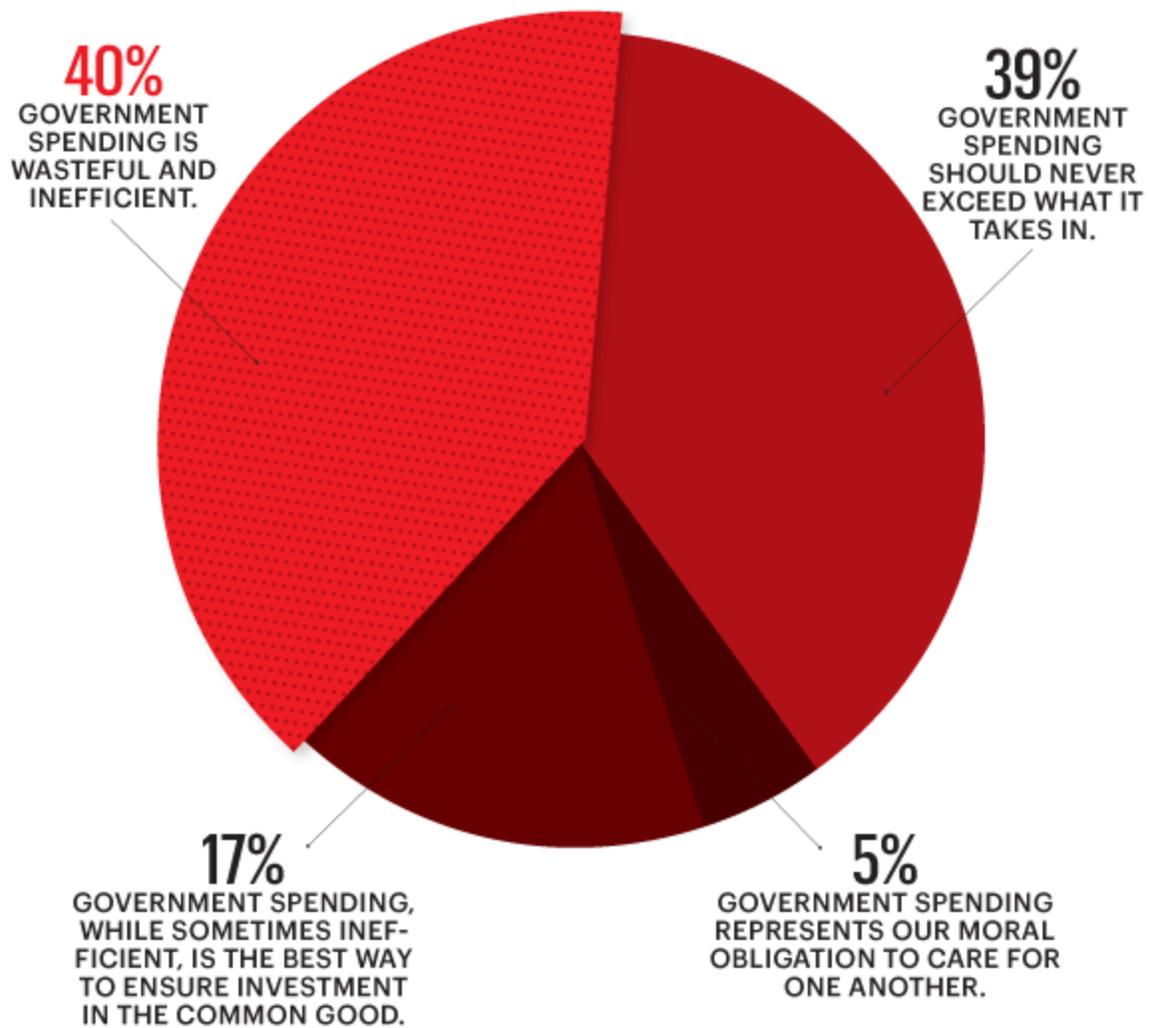
Agree **81%**  
Neutral **12%**  
Disagree **7%**

**MEANWHILE, ON THE LEFT AND RIGHT:**

This is the one thing that the Left, the Right, and the Center agree on, with one exception: The Center is even less likely than either the Left or the Right to believe that America has a responsibility to maintain peace in the world.

**9. THE CENTER WANTS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO SPEND LESS, GO EASY ON REGULATION.**

**WHICH STATEMENT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR VIEW ON THE ISSUE OF GOVERNMENT SPENDING?**



**SHOULD AMERICANS AMEND THE CONSTITUTION TO REQUIRE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO BALANCE ITS BUDGET EACH YEAR?**

Strongly support **50%**  
Somewhat support **27%**  
Neutral on the matter **11%**  
Somewhat oppose **7%**  
Strongly oppose **4%**

**Which statement best describes your view on the issue of Wall Street reform?**

Financial markets left unregulated will wreck the American economy. **35%**  
Financial reform should be used only to curb abuses, and shouldn't restrict banks' and investors' ability to make profits. **42%**  
Financial reform undermines free-market capitalism and prevents growth and prosperity. **12%**  
Financial reform is another indicator of government overreach into activity it has no right to regulate. **11%**

## **MEANWHILE, ON THE LEFT AND RIGHT:**

There is significant tension on the Left regarding a balanced-budget amendment, with the secular Left split on an amendment while the religious strongly support it. Similarly, there is tension on the Right when it comes to financial regulation, with the religious Right taking a slightly dimmer view of financial markets than the secular.

## **10. THE CENTER IS PRETTY OKAY WITH RAISING TAXES ON THE RICH AND ON POLLUTERS.**

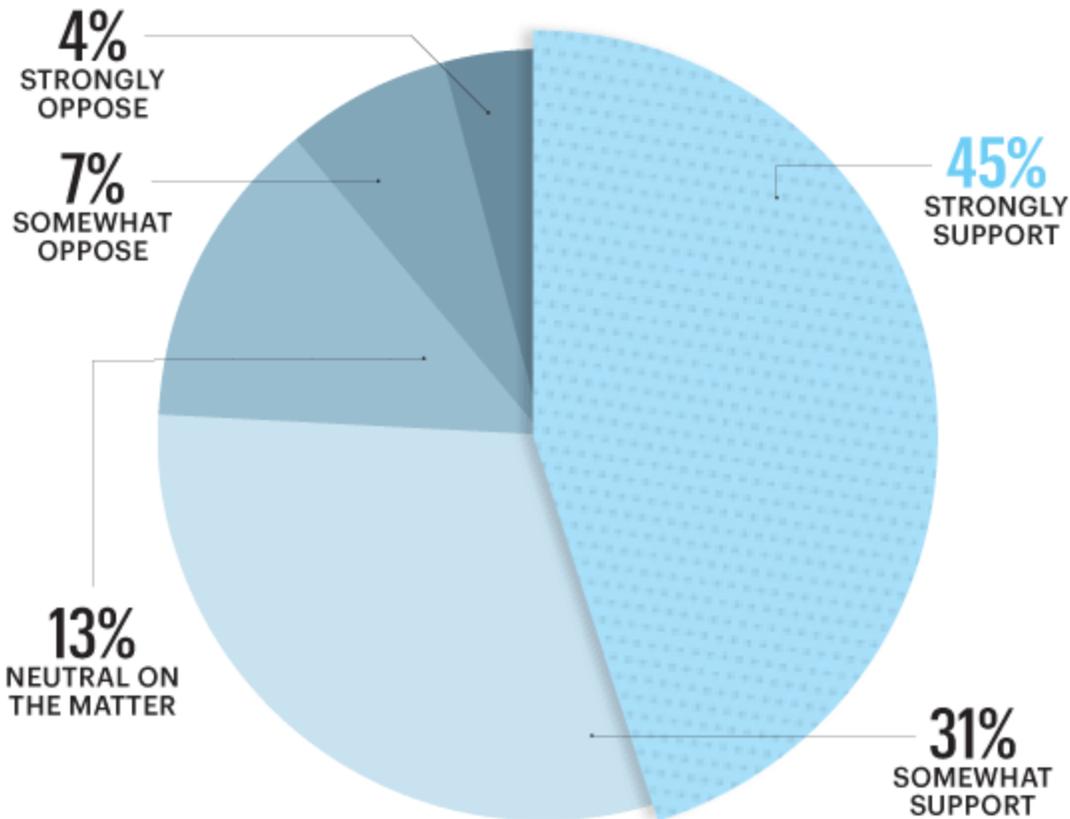
The Center wants a tax system and an economy that ensures the wealthy pay their fair share and polluters pay for their mess, and they want the revenue that generates to be spent fairly and wisely—not just handed out to people who aren't accountable or funneled to wasteful projects.



**DO YOU SUPPORT RAISING TAXES ON AMERICANS WHO MAKE MORE THAN \$1 MILLION A YEAR?**

Strongly support **59%**  
Somewhat support **19%**  
Neutral on the matter **7%**  
Somewhat oppose **7%**  
Strongly oppose **8%**

**SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT TAX INDUSTRIES THAT PRODUCE CARBON EMISSIONS TO HELP REDUCE POLLUTION?**



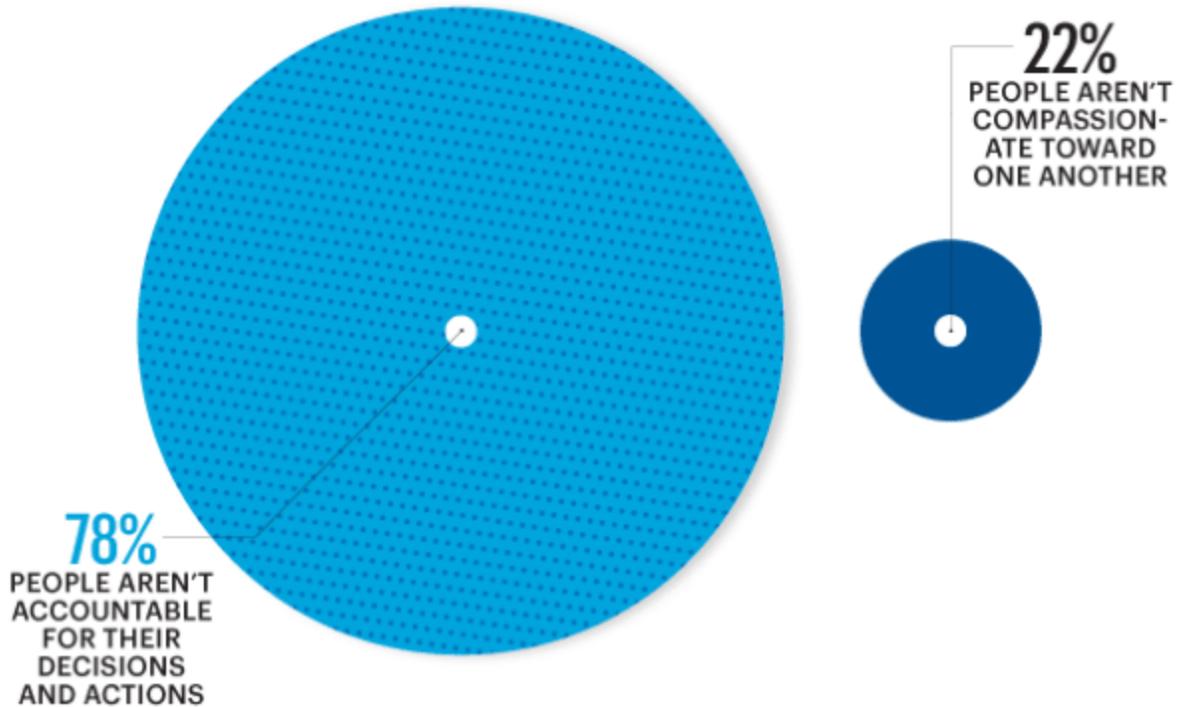
**MEANWHILE, ON THE LEFT AND RIGHT:**

Contrary to what you might have heard, the Right as a whole supports raising taxes on millionaires and taxing polluters, but just barely, and owing to the split between the Righteous Right (who overwhelmingly support the measures) and the Talk Radio Heads (who oppose). The Left is very intense in its support of both.

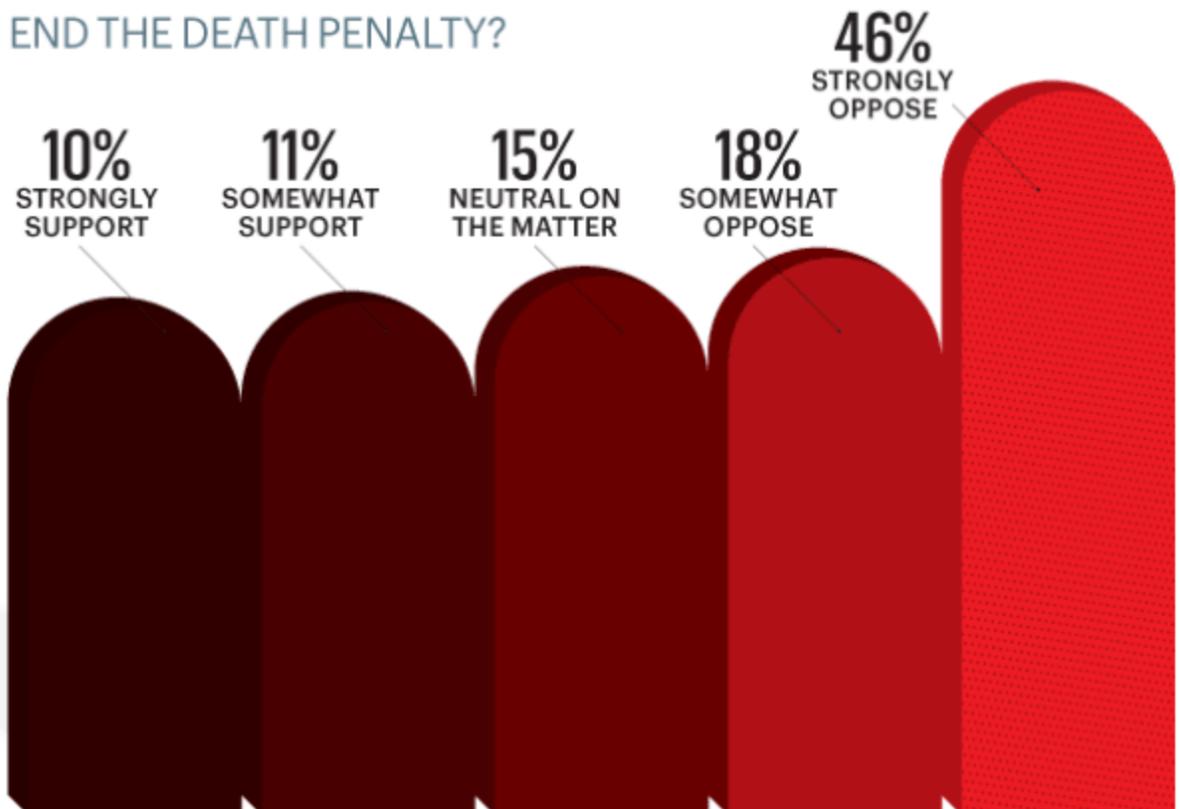
**11. DRILL, KILL, AND STOP COMPLAINING:  
THE CENTER IS NOT SOFT.**

## Should the government expand exploration of U.S.-based oil and gas reserves to lessen dependence on foreign oil?

Strongly support **54%**  
Somewhat support **26%**  
Neutral on the matter **10%**  
Somewhat oppose **7%**  
Strongly oppose **3%**



## END THE DEATH PENALTY?



# **12. THE CENTER NEEDS A DRINK—PROBABLY A BEER. AND THEY RECYCLE!**

**Which of the following alcoholic drinks are you most likely to drink when you go out?**

- Wine **21%**
- Beer **31%**
- Clear spirits such as vodka or gin **15%**
- Dark spirits such as bourbon or whiskey **7%**
- I do not drink alcohol. **26%**

**Which of the following sports do you most enjoy watching on television?**

- Major league baseball **26%**
- Pro football **46%**
- College football **19%**
- Pro basketball **10%**
- College basketball **8%**
- Hockey **9%**
- Nascar **9%**
- Golf **6%**
- Tennis **3%**
- MLS soccer **1%**
- International soccer **3%**
- I do not watch sports on television. **21%**



**HEY, CENTER: [REDACTED] YOU DO LAST WEEKEND?**

Watched TV shows or movies live on TV. **86%**

Used social media such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. **67%**

Read a magazine or newspaper. **65%**

Watched TV or a movie using TiVo, DVR, Netflix, et al. **56%**

Played a game online or on a phone or tablet. **55%**

Dined at a restaurant. **54%**

Read blogs or Web sites. **54%**

Read a book. **47%**

Shopped at Walmart or Costco. **44%**

Played sports, exercised. **35%**

Went shopping for fun. **34%**

Had sex. **34%**

Played video games. **31%**

Traveled out of town. **25%**

Went to church. **17%**

Had a fight with a spouse or family member. **12%**



**WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES THE RECYCLING YOU DO AT HOME?**

I RECYCLE AT HOME BECAUSE IT IS REQUIRED. **5%**

I RECYCLE AT HOME OUT OF HABIT. **11%**

I RECYCLE AT HOME BECAUSE I DON'T LIKE TO WASTE. **22%**

I RECYCLE AT HOME BECAUSE I FEEL LIKE I AM DOING SOMETHING GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT. **47%**

I DO NOT RECYCLE AT HOME. **15%**

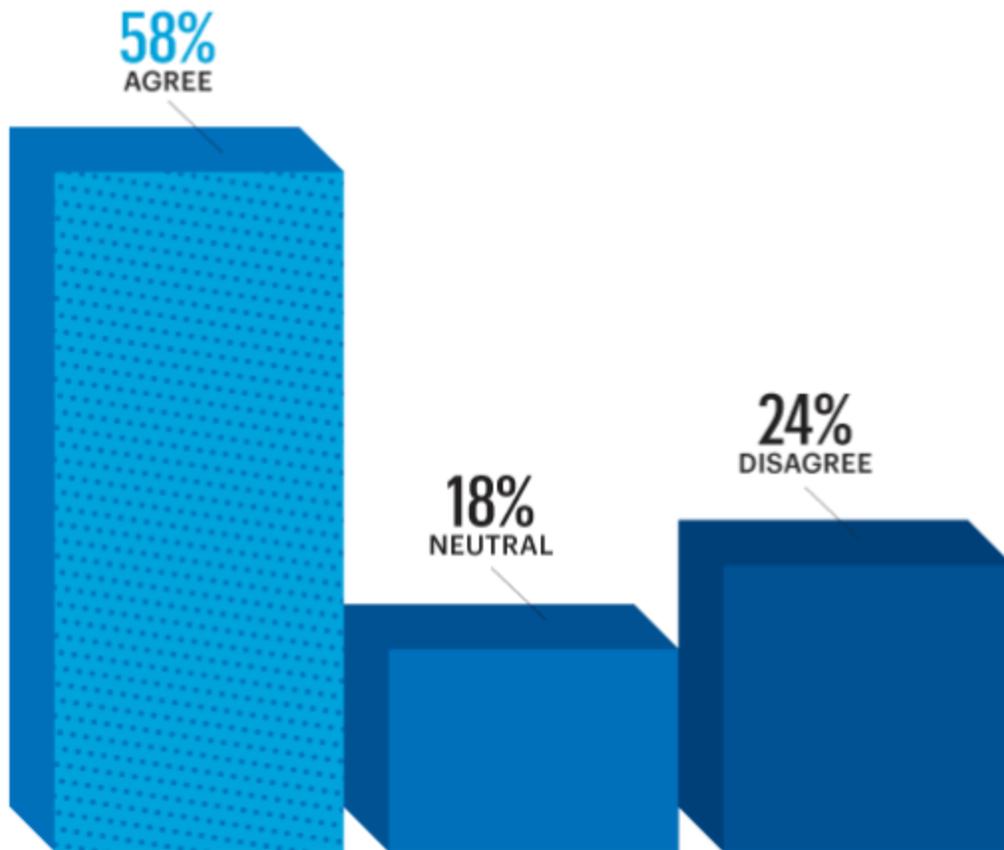
## **MEANWHILE, ON THE LEFT AND RIGHT:**

If you are on the Left, you are less likely to have had sex, or read a book, than if you are on the Right.

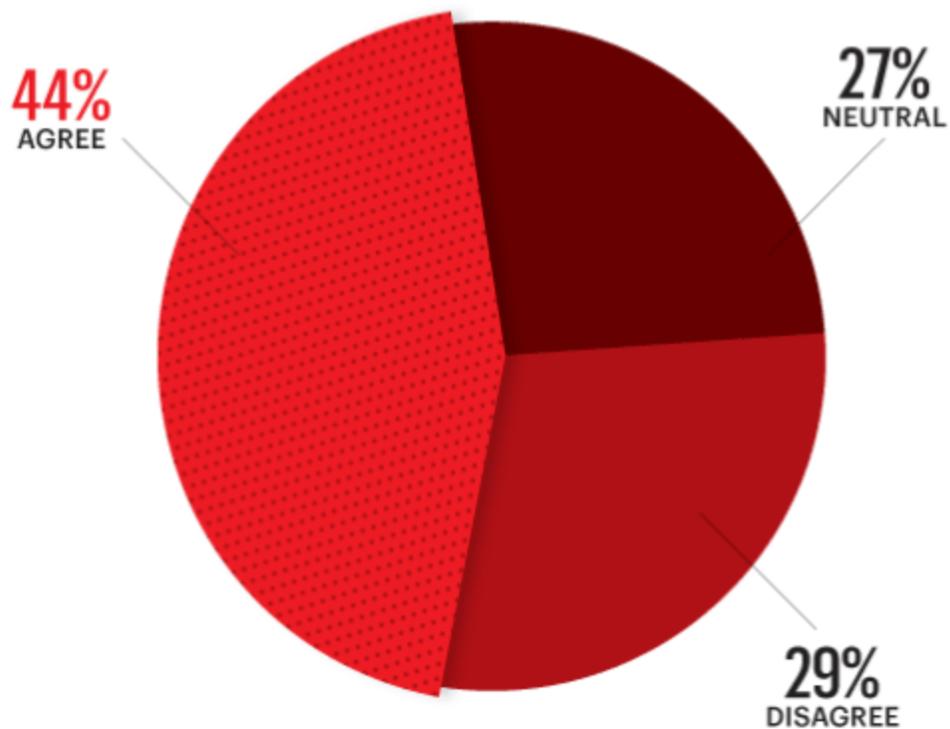
## **13. THE CENTER IS UP FOR GRABS.**

Nearly two thirds of the Center agree that when it comes to politics, they often agree with some ideas that Democrats have and some ideas that Republicans have. There is not a strong consensus as to whether the Republicans or Democrats "get it wrong most of the time" or that their ideas rarely represent the Center's view, with 44 percent agreeing (just 24 percent strongly agree) and 29 percent disagreeing. What's more, more than one in three in the Center don't feel like there is anybody in Washington expressing for them. They are waiting to be found.

**AGREE OR DISAGREE: WHEN IT COMES TO POLITICS, I OFTEN AGREE WITH SOME IDEAS THAT DEMOCRATS HAVE AND SOME IDEAS THAT REPUBLICANS HAVE.**



**AGREE OR DISAGREE: WHEN IT COMES TO POLITICS, BOTH DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS GET IT WRONG MOST OF THE TIME, AND I RARELY AGREE WITH THE IDEAS EITHER PARTY HAS.**



## MEANWHILE, ON THE LEFT AND RIGHT:

Those on the Left are the most confident that someone in Washington is expressing their viewpoints, while among the Right (the Righteous Right in particular), more than half feel no one is speaking up for them. The Right, too, seems up for grabs.

# 14. Are You In the New American Center?

## METHODOLOGY

The Benenson Strategy Group and Public Opinion Strategies conducted a nationwide survey from August 5 through 11, 2013, with 2,410 registered voters. They applied a k-means clustering technique to group respondents into "segments" based on attitudinal and demographic commonalities and like-mindedness. They conducted eight iterations of the clustering to optimize the differentiating variables that feed into the segmentation methodology. The segments were formed based on commonalities across their demographics; psychographics; political, social, and economic values; and lifestyles. The pollsters selected the segmentation solution that yielded the most unique and differentiated clusters.

***EDITOR'S NOTE:** Based on respondents' answers to our survey, the statisticians and analysts identified eight distinct ideological segments within the U. S. population, each with its own defining values, beliefs, and lifestyles. Among those eight segments, there are four that occupy what the survey has determined is the center of the ideological spectrum. Unless otherwise indicated, each of the answers to the survey questions reflects the general consensus position of the center. For clarity, some questions have been adjusted and some answers aggregated from the original survey.*

## THIS WEEK'S QUOTE

**As President Obama said about immigration this week in urging Congress to work together, "not only is this the right thing to do, it is also the smart thing to do." The same is true about affordable healthcare.**

**Greg Brown**

## COMIC RELIEF

For those of you who need or would like a bit of comic relief..... *please enjoy this video.....*

**Click here:** [http://www.youtube.com/watch\\_popup?feature=player\\_embedded&v=VIOxISOr3\\_M](http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?feature=player_embedded&v=VIOxISOr3_M)

## THIS WEEK'S MUSIC

Being a Baby-boomer who came of age in the 1960s, I gravitated to the counter-culture of Greenwich Village in New York City, whose coffee houses and jazz clubs played and hosted the music of Phil Spector, Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger and Peter, Paul and Mary, as well as Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, Archie Shepp and Lee Morgan. Further cementing this counter-culture was the literary works of Kérouac, [Burroughs](#), Corso and [Ginsberg](#), as well as the art of Pollack, [Rauschenberg](#), Nevelson, Johns, Newman and Warhol and the performance pieces of Merce Cunningham, Robert Joffrey and Alvin Ailey, as well as musicians Phillip Glass, John Cage and Iggy Pop. And although my cultural pallet varied from the edgy Ornette Coleman to the Velvet Underground and from James Brown to the commercially success, Buffalo Springfield whose signature song, "For What It's Worth" mirrored the conscience of my generation and the times. And one of my favorite troubadours of the era and a person of mine and many others of my generation was Gordon Lightfoot.



Gordon Meredith Lightfoot, Jr. (born November 17, 1938) is a Canadian singer-songwriter who achieved international success in folk, folk-rock, and country music, and has been credited for helping define the folk-pop sound of the 1960s and 1970s. He has been referred to as Canada's greatest songwriter and internationally as a folk-rock legend. Lightfoot's songs, including "For Lovin' Me", "Early Morning Rain", "Steel Rail Blues", "Ribbon of Darkness"—a number one hit on the U.S. country charts with Marty Robbins' cover in 1965— and the 1967 Detroit riot-generated "Black Day In July" brought him international recognition in the 1960s. He experienced chart success in Canada with his own recordings, beginning in 1962 with the Number 3 hit "(Remember Me) I'm the One". Lightfoot's recordings then made an impact on the international music charts as well in the 1970s, with songs such as "If You Could Read My Mind" (1970) (Number 5 on the US charts), "Sundown" (1974), "Carefree Highway" (1974), "Rainy Day People" (1975), all reaching number 1, and "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald" (1976) (reaching number 2).

Some of Lightfoot's albums have achieved gold and multi-platinum status internationally. His songs have been recorded by some of the world's most renowned recording artists, including Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Hank Williams Jr., The Kingston Trio, Marty Robbins, George Hamilton IV, Jerry Lee Lewis, Bob Dylan, Judy Collins, Barbra Streisand, Johnny Mathis, Viola Wills, Richie Havens, The Replacements, Harry Belafonte, Tony Rice, Sandy Denny (with Fotheringay), The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem, Scott Walker, Sarah McLachlan, John Mellencamp, Toby Keith, Peter, Paul and Mary, Glen Campbell, Anne Murray, The Irish Rovers and Olivia Newton-John.

Robbie Robertson of The Band declared that Lightfoot was one of his "favourite Canadian songwriters and is absolutely a national treasure." Bob Dylan, also a Lightfoot fan, called him one of his favourite songwriters, and in an often-quoted tribute to his fellow songwriter, Dylan once observed that when he heard a Gordon Lightfoot song he wished "it would last forever." Lightfoot was a featured musical performer at the opening ceremonies of the 1988 Winter Olympic Games in Calgary, Alberta. He received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree (arts) in 1979 and the Companion of the Order of Canada—Canada's highest civilian honor—in 2003. On February 6, 2012, Lightfoot was presented with the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. In June of that same year he was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame. With this, I invite you to enjoy the music of Mr. Gordon Lightfoot.

- Gordon Lightfoot – *If I Could Read Your Mind* -- <http://youtu.be/bAedY3NucEs>
- Gordon Lightfoot – *The First Time I Ever Saw Your Face* -- <http://youtu.be/T5X8cn4zzA8>
- Gordon Lightfoot – *Sundown* -- <http://youtu.be/MOOS-MqDOI0>
- Gordon Lightfoot – *Rainy Day People* -- <http://youtu.be/8qZvSqESv3Q>
- Gordon Lightfoot – *Affair on Eight Avenue* -- [http://youtu.be/KTu\\_UuoTgTQ](http://youtu.be/KTu_UuoTgTQ)
- Gordon Lightfoot – *Softly* -- <http://youtu.be/MRsIDopt6ew>
- Gordon Lightfoot – *Talking in Your Sleep* -- <http://youtu.be/VDfyWrwNtQE>
- Gordon Lightfoot – *Song For a Winter Night* -- [http://youtu.be/\\_yQc-wGeYvk](http://youtu.be/_yQc-wGeYvk)
- Gordon Lightfoot – *The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald* -- <http://youtu.be/QoDqPSF2fy0>
- Gordon Lightfoot – *Carefree Highway* -- <http://youtu.be/Wa9XVvMtBVk>
- Gordon Lightfoot – *Summer Side of Life* -- <http://youtu.be/7Gs98fVoHVI>
- Gordon Lightfoot – *Beautiful* -- <http://youtu.be/JEJILYrtCp8>

***I hope that you have enjoyed this week's offerings and wish you a wonderful week.***

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

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Gregory Brown  
Chairman & CEO  
GlobalCast Partners, LLC

US:  
Tel:  
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Skyp