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**Subject:** Greg Brown's Weekend Reading and Other Things.... 09/29/2013

**Date:** Sun, 29 Sep 2013 10:03:49 +0000

**Attachments:** Can\_Rouhani\_or\_Obama\_deliver\_on\_any\_deal\_Faharad\_Zaharia\_TWP\_September\_25,\_2013.docx;  
Eugene\_Robinson,\_Obama's\_reality\_check\_Eu\_gene\_Robinson\_TWP\_September\_27,\_2013.docx; Exposing\_the\_Pay\_Gap\_NYT\_Editorial\_Board\_September\_24,\_2013.docx;  
Lasting\_Damage\_From\_the\_Budget\_Fight\_NYT\_Editorial\_Board\_September\_25,\_2013.docx;  
How\_Conservatives\_Cooked\_A\_Blue\_Meth\_GOP\_Howard\_Fineman\_Huff\_Post\_September\_25,\_2013.docx;  
Obama\_Announces\_That\_He\_Spoke\_With\_Iranian\_President\_Hassan\_Rouhani\_By\_Phone\_Luke\_Johnson\_Huff\_Post\_09\_27\_2013.docx;  
Obamacare,\_It's\_Better\_Than\_You\_Think\_Deon\_Baker\_Huff\_Post\_09\_23\_2013.docx;  
Speedy\_Trains\_Transform\_China\_NYT\_September\_23,\_2013.docx;  
The\_Biggest\_Obamacare\_Change\_Won't\_Affect\_Most\_Americans'\_Insurance\_Jeffrey\_Young\_Huff\_Post\_September\_29,\_2013.docx;  
The\_Embarrassment\_of\_Senator\_Ted\_Cruz\_NYT\_Editorial\_Board\_September\_24,\_2013.docx;  
Hispanics\_Grow\_Cool\_to\_G.O.P.,\_Poll\_Finds\_Laurie\_Goodstein\_NYT\_September\_27,\_2013.docx; Bobby\_Womack\_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

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## Dear Friends....

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We are truly experiencing a new golden age in television today in America, and there is no better example of this is **HBO's** political dramatic series ***The Newsroom*** created and principally written by (Emmy Award-winning political drama ***The West Wing***) Aaron Sorkin, which premiered on June 24, 2012 and now is in its third season. The series chronicles the behind-the-scenes events at the fictional Atlantis Cable News (ACN) channel. It features an ensemble cast including Jeff Daniels as anchor Will McAvoy, who, together with his staff, sets out to put on a news show "*in the face of corporate and commercial obstacles and their own personal entanglements*". Other cast members include Emily Mortimer, John Gallagher, Jr., Alison Pill, Thomas Sadoski, Dev Patel, Olivia Munn Sam Waterston and Jane Fonda.



Over the past two weeks, in a two-part presentation titled ***Election Night***, the story line was based on the Presidential election night of November 6, 2012. When Romney press adviser *Taylor Warren* challenges ACN anchor *Will McAvo* credentials as a Republican (RINO or Republican In Name Only) and he responds with the following.

*I call myself a Republican because I am one. I believe in market solutions and I believe in common sense realities and the necessity to defend themselves against a dangerous world and that's about it. The problem is now I have to be homophobic. I have to count how many times that people go to church. I have to deny facts and think that scientific research is a long-con. I have to think that poor people are getting a sweet ride and I have to have such a stunning inferiority complex that I fear education and intellect in the twenty-first century. But most of all, the biggest new requirement really and only is that I have to hate Democrats and I have to hate Chris Christie for not spitting on the President when he got off Air Force One. The two party system is crucial to the whole operation. There is honor to being the loyal opposition and I am a Republican for the same reason that you are, so I hope that your voice gets louder in the next four years.*

I chose to start this week's offerings with this as a way to figure out why there is so much hatred in the country. When you take a look at political discussions from the late 1940's through the late 1970's you generally find a high degree of civility. And though we always have had partisan politics the discussions were more polite, and the differences not as great as today. When you look back at the discussions involving folks such as Hugh Scott, Jake Javits, Everett Dirksen, Nelson Rockefeller, Barry Goldwater and Margaret Chase Smith on the Republican side and Hubert Humphrey, Frank Church, Henry Jackson, Sam Ervin, Stuart Symington and Warren Magnuson on the Democratic side you see well-articulated positions on issues and negotiated compromise. The same was true during the 1980s when Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neal famously negotiate a number of compromises while being ideological opposites. Obviously, one can blame a lot of it on 7x24 "hate" radio/TV/Internet, right wing religion and over the top capitalism of win at any cost and little win/win. But why is there some much hatred in America and why is it so political.

We have to find our way back to celebrating commonality. We have to be much more tolerant. Most of all we have to have empathy for others, as well as take responsibility for those who are less fortunate. Finally, we have to understand that inequality breeds contempt and contempt breeds hatred and until we reverse this trend, the hatred and resulting poverty, violence and dysfunctionality will continue and eventually destroy us. This we have to change and we need to change it immediately. Compromise can't be a dirty word in a country needing team work. And when Republicans are checking other Republican's credentials what chance is for them to compromise with Democrats or with anyone who doesn't exactly agree with them. Ideological arrogance should not be tolerated in any democracy, especially here in the melting pot of American which thrived on its diversity and can only continue if we honor everyone's point of view in search of commonality.

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This week the country witnessed one of the most egregious examples of arrogance during freshman Texas Senator, Ted Cruz's 21 hour and 19 minute personal filibuster (against Obamacare) to stop the Senate from moving forward on a budget resolution vote to avoid a government shutdown, which passed unanimously, 100 to zero. More importantly we should interpret his actions not as legislation but as performance, as the result of his faux filibuster was always a foregone conclusion, especially when Cruz voted along with his other 99 colleagues and many of the highlights of what he said, were so silly that *Saturday Night Live* won't have been able to spoof them. Ted Cruz's fake filibuster is the latest skirmish in what Russ Limbaugh called, "*the fight for the soul of the Republican Party.*" And the fact that both partisan and mainstream media, Republican Party leaders and a small but vocal percentage of Republican voters are taking him seriously is feeding the dysfunctionality in Washington. And although Mr. Cruz would like us to see him as a young Jimmy Stuart in ***Mr. Smith Goes To Washington***, the reality is he is not, especially after voting along with his other 99 colleagues in support of the bill he had filibustered against. And like his filibuster he is a fraud, a carnival barker with political ambition seeking attention with nothing to offer but fear, innuendo, distortion, condemnation, divisiveness, intolerance, hatred and lies. He is the worse kind of politician, as he matter who he hurts, as long as it advances his personal ambition. One could understand his actions if he offered solutions, but he has none, thus he is a fraud, a hypocrite and like Senator Joe McCarthy of the 1940s and 50s, all that he offers is fear.



To better understand and appreciate the absurdity of Ted Cruz's marathon speech please see Stephen Colbert's critique (VIDEO) website: <http://www.hulu.com/watch/537750>

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## The Embarrassment of Senator Ted Cruz

By THE NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL BOARD

Ted Cruz of Texas, the public face of the aimless and self-destructive Tea Party strategy to stop health care reform, began an endless floor [speech on Tuesday](#) with the theme of "make D.C. listen." But even his Republican colleagues had long since stopped paying attention to his corrosive bombast, tired of his pious insults to his own party and unimpressed with his eagerness to shut down the government in pursuit of an ideological dream.

Like hard-liners in the far right corner of the House, Mr. Cruz has grabbed for every possible lever in his campaign against President Obama's health law, fully aware that he will not succeed but eager for the accolades and donations that will inevitably follow from the Tea Party's misguided faithful. In the process, he has demonstrated how little he understands Senate rules and, more important, how little he appreciates the public's desire for a collaborative Congress.

Mr. Cruz's campaign to defund health reform consists largely of an absurd plan to filibuster the very House bill that kept the government from closing and defunded the health law, a notion that was rejected by the Senate minority leader, Mitch McConnell, and [most Senate Republicans](#). After he lost their support, he began an extended tirade anyway, a stunt that might resemble a filibuster but in fact will have to end Wednesday morning before a prescheduled vote on the House bill takes place.

In just the first hour of his speech, Mr. Cruz said his fellow senators were no more sincere than professional wrestlers and that accepting the health law was like appeasing the Nazis. His own goal of tearing down the law, he said, was a dream on par with President John F. Kennedy's promise to put a man on the moon. This combination of grandiosity and pure nastiness helps explain why the senator has become the least popular man in Washington.

But it also shows why the Tea Party's plans will inevitably fail. Americans may remain confused about the health law, but they aren't interested in a government shutdown or credit default to get rid of it. Mr. Cruz may love the spotlight, but, when it fades, he will find he was only speaking to himself.

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# Lasting Damage From the Budget Fight

By [THE EDITORIAL BOARD](#)

The budget crisis manufactured by Congressional Republicans will never succeed at halting health care reform, but it has already caused long-lasting harm. It will preserve the deeply damaging spending cuts, known as the sequester, that are costing jobs and hurting the lives of millions.

Most of the attention given to the House's temporary spending resolution has focused on the provision in it to defund President Obama's health law. The Senate plans to drop that wording, and, if the House doesn't agree, the government will shut down on Tuesday. But even without the provision, the resolution itself is pernicious because it preserves through mid-December all the blunt and arbitrary sequester cuts that began in March, making it much less likely those cuts will be replaced with more sensible cuts and revenue increases for the rest of the 2014 fiscal year.

The only other change to the resolution that Senate Democrats will try to make is to limit the duration of the stopgap resolution to mid-November, hoping to use the next six weeks to negotiate a more responsible budget. Although many Democrats in both chambers would prefer a resolution that repudiates the sequester cuts now, they are resigned to what is known as a "clean C.R.," a continuing resolution that simply continues the abysmally low spending levels of 2013 into the first weeks or months of fiscal 2014, which begins on Tuesday.

To insist on a fight would mean Democrats would have to bear partial responsibility for a government shutdown if a continuing resolution is not approved in time — a burden now borne entirely by Republicans obsessed with stopping health reform. But any hope that Congress will use the stopgap period to negotiate a better budget is slim. It has already been six months since the Senate passed a realistic budget to replace the sequester with cuts of \$975 billion, mostly from agriculture supports and efficiencies in medical spending. It also raises \$1 trillion in revenue by removing tax breaks enjoyed by corporations and wealthy individuals.

The House has yet to respond to the Senate budget. Its Republican leaders have refused even to sit down with Democrats if revenue increases are on the agenda. Manipulated by a Tea Party wing that wants cuts even deeper than the sequester, the leaders are no more likely to budge now. They know that once low levels of discretionary spending are enshrined in law, the reduced budgets become the new baseline from which the right wing will demand further cuts each year.

That means the country will be stuck with the sequester-level cuts for the foreseeable future. It means more than 57,000 students will not get their Head Start seats back, and 140,000 low-income families who lost their federal housing assistance will be stuck in unaffordable or substandard homes. Thousands of scientists have been laid off and vital medical research projects have stalled. More than 85 chief Federal District Court judges signed a letter last month saying their cuts have been so deep that public safety is now at risk.

A continued sequester will force unnecessary and damaging furloughs of all F.B.I. employees, and of 650,000 civilian employees of the Defense Department. And it means the economy will continue to sputter. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that ending the sequester could create up to 1.6 million jobs.

The worst thing about governing by a stopgap measure, however, is that it eliminates real debates about priorities, new investments or tax reform, which are impossible when the threat of a shutdown is constantly looming. Every day that lawmakers argue about preventing a government shutdown is a day they are not discussing what government should be doing for the country's benefit.

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# What is the Most Screwed Up Thing About Your State? Check This Chart

Chris Miles: 09/22/2013

For all the U-S-A, rah rah that goes around, the United States can be a shameful place.

The below map lays out some of the statistically worst things about each state. It covers everything from health to crime to travel to drug use. Some states don't have it so bad (Ohio, the "nerdiest") but others really kind of suck (Mississippi has the highest rate of obesity at 35.3% of total population ... and ranks poorly in the most number of categories. These include highest rate of child poverty at 31.9%, highest rate of infant mortality at 10.3% lowest median household income at \$35,078, highest teen birth rate at 71.9 per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19 and highest overall rate of STDs. Phew.)

It's not 100% science proof ... some of the metrics are taken from purely qualitative rankings (i.e. North Dakota).

It's supposed to be a bit tongue-in-cheek, but some of the stats will really shock you.

## The United States of Shame What is your state the worst at?



Rationale and statistics:

Most stats taken from [America's Health Rankings](#) and the [U.S. Census](#) unless otherwise noted. (Note - data varies and is not based on 2013 numbers)

1. Alabama: highest rate of stroke (3.8%) (tied with Oklahoma)
2. Alaska: highest suicide rate (23.6 suicides per 100,000 people in 2004)
3. Arizona: highest rate of alcoholism
4. Arkansas: worst average credit score (636) [Source](#).
5. California: most air pollution (15.2 micrograms per cubic meter)
6. Colorado: highest rate of cocaine use per capita (3.9% total population)
7. Connecticut: highest rate of breast cancer [Source](#).
8. Delaware: highest abortion rate (27 per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44)
9. Florida: highest rate of identity theft (122.3 reports per 100,000 people)
10. Georgia: sickly based on highest rate of influenza
11. Hawaii –highest cost of living (tied with California) [Source](#).
12. Idaho – lowest level of Congressional clout [Source](#).
13. Illinois: highest rate of robbery (284.7 incidences per 100,000 people)
14. Indiana: rated the most environmentally unfriendly by NMI solutions [Source](#).
15. Iowa: highest percentage of people age 85 and older (1.8 percent) (tied with three other states) [Source](#).
16. Kansas: poorest health based on highest average number of limited activity days per month (3.5 days) [Source](#).
17. Kentucky: most cancer deaths (227 per 100,000 people) (BONUS fact: Kentucky also has the highest rate of tobacco smokers – 25.6%)
18. Louisiana: highest rate of gonorrhea (264.4 reported cases per 100,000 people) [Source](#).
19. Maine: dumbest state claim based on lowest average SAT score (1389) [Source](#).
20. Maryland: highest rate of AIDS diagnosis (27.6 people per 100,000 people) [Source](#).
21. Massachusetts: worst drivers claim based on highest rate of auto accidents [Source](#).
22. Michigan: highest unemployment rate (13.6%)
23. Minnesota: highest number of reported tornadoes (123 in 2010) [Source](#).
24. Mississippi: highest rate of obesity (35.3% of total population)  
**BONUS facts:** Mississippi ranks poorly in the most number of categories. These include highest rate of child poverty (31.9%), highest rate of infant mortality (10.3%) lowest median household income (\$35,078), highest teen birth rate (71.9 per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19) and highest overall rate of STDs.
25. Missouri: highest rate of bankruptcy (700 out of every 100,000 people) [Source](#).
26. Montana: highest rate of drunk driving deaths (1.12 deaths per 100 million miles driven) [Source](#).
27. Nebraska: highest rate of women murdered annually
28. Nevada: highest rate violent crime (702.2 offenses per 100,000 people). BONUS fact: Nevada also has the highest rate of foreclosure (one in 99 houses).
29. New Hampshire: highest rate of corporate taxes [Source](#).

30. New Jersey: highest rate of citizen taxation (11.8%) [Source](#).
31. New Mexico: antisocial claim based on lowest ranking in social health policies [Source](#).
32. New York: longest average daily commute (30.6 minutes) [Source](#).
33. North Carolina: lowest average teacher salary [Source](#).
34. North Dakota: ranked last in ugliest residents report as chosen by *The Daily Beast*. [Source](#).
35. Ohio: nerdiest state claim based on highest number of library visits per capita (6.9) [Source](#).
36. Oklahoma: highest rate of female incarceration
37. Oregon: highest rate of long-term homeless people
38. Pennsylvania: highest rate of arson deaths (55.56 annually) [Source](#).
39. Rhode Island: highest rate of illicit drug use (12.5% of population) [Source](#).
40. South Carolina: highest percentage of mobile homes (18.8%) [Source](#).
41. South Dakota: highest rate of forcible rape 76.5 per 100,000
42. Tennessee: chosen most corrupt state by *The Daily Beast*. [Source](#).
43. Texas: lowest high school graduation rate (78.3%) [Source](#).
44. Utah: highest rate of of online porn subscriptions [Source](#).
45. Vermont: infertility claim based on lowest birth rate of any state (10.6 births per 1,000) (tied with Maine) [Source](#).
46. Virginia: highest number of alcohol-related motorcycle deaths [Source](#).
47. Washington: most cases of bestiality (4 reported in 2010) [Source](#).
48. West Virginia: highest rate of heart attack (6.5 percent of population)
49. Wisconsin: highest rate of binge drinking (23.2 percent of population)
50. Wyoming: highest rate of deadly car crashes (24.6 deaths per 100,000) [Source](#).

**Website:**

<http://www.policymic.com/articles/64665/what-is-the-most-screwed-up-thing-about-your-state-check-this-chart>

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Two incredible and serendipitous things recently happened; the unexpected proposal from the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin that could rid Syria of its chemical weapons and stop the march to war by America, which was quickly accepted by Syrian President Assad and sort of embraced by the Obama administration. And the sober, candid and politically astute interview that Iran's new President Hassan Rouhani where he suggested the possibility of forging an agreement over their nuclear program and overtures designed to ease a generation worth of animosity between with the US as well as an olive branch to Israel by condemning the Nazis and acknowledging the Holocaust, to show that he did not support the views of his predecessor the religious hardliner and former Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. As evidence of things going in the right direction, on Friday the U.N. Security Council unanimously approved a resolution that could rid Syria of its chemical weapons and should dial down the hostilities in the country. Bravo....

With Putin seizing on a comment made by Vice President Biden suggesting that that the US attack on Syria could be halted if Assad would turnover his chemical arsenal and Iran's leaders, seizing on perceived flexibility in a private letter from President Obama, have decided to gamble on forging a swift agreement over their nuclear program with the goal of ending crippling sanctions. The Iranian positive reaction to the letter provides critical insight into a decisive and unexpected shift in strategy by the moderate new president as Iran struggles to restore vitality to the economy of his country and undo years of hostile relations with most of the world under the former president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Then on Thursday the United Nations' five big powers reached agreement Thursday on a legally binding U.N. Security Council resolution that would require Syria to dismantle its once-secret chemical weapons program or face the threat of unspecified measures, according to senior U.S. and Russian officials. The deal reached by Britain, France, the United States, Russia and China followed several days of high-level talks in New York. The talks culminated Thursday afternoon with a face-to-face meeting between Secretary of State John F. Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

Also on Thursday, Secretary of State John Kerry, along with fellow diplomats, met briefly with his Iranian counterpart, marking the highest-level meeting between the two countries since the Iranian revolution of 1979. EU foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton, later described the talks as "*substantial*" and said they had set the stage for a new round of negotiations over Iran's nuclear program Oct. 15-16 in Geneva. Speaking to reporters later, Kerry warned there was still "*a lot of work to be done*" but added he welcomed the "*change in tone.*" And Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif said he was "*satisfied with this first step.*"

These two events this week have definitely open a window of opportunity for the US, Russia, Syria, Iran and Israel to ease generations of animosity between the countries and avoiding further bloodshed in the Middle East. After decades of hostility between the above parties relations it will take years and possibly decades before relations are close to normalization. But the fact that a month ago, President Obama was petitioning Congress for its approval to attack Syria and John McCain was suggesting that Iran was next, we should all be encouraged by this week's events and that these adversaries are trying to settle their differences with diplomacy instead of bombs and bullets.

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The White House released the above photo of Obama on the phone with Rouhani

Web Link: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/27/obama-rouhani-phone\\_n\\_4005063.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/27/obama-rouhani-phone_n_4005063.html)

President Barack Obama said Friday that he spoke by telephone with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, in what was the first communication between the leaders of the two countries since the Iranian Revolution in 1979. The call came after U.S. officials said earlier this week that the two would not meet at the U.N. General Assembly. The officials said that a meeting would be too "complicated" for the Iranians given the country's internal politics. *"The two of us discussed our ongoing efforts to reach an agreement over Iran's nuclear program,"* said Obama. *"I reiterated to President Rouhani what I said in New York: while there were surely be important obstacles to moving forward and success is by no means guaranteed, I believe we can reach a comprehensive solution."* *"Resolving this issue could serve as a major step forward in a new relationship between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect,"* he said.

A senior Obama administration official told reporters later Friday that the call was initiated by Rouhani's team, and that the Iranian president had expressed a desire to speak with Obama before he boarded a flight home to Tehran Friday afternoon.

The request came as a surprise, the White House said, especially after Iran had declined the U.S.' invitation to meet at the General Assembly. Nonetheless, the invitation to connect directly with Obama had remained "open." The fifteen minute call took place around 2:30PM, said the official, who spoke on background in order to discuss ongoing negotiations. Rouhani speaks fluent English, but the two leaders spoke through an interpreter, as is common practice for high-level diplomatic calls. The official said that leaders in Congress were notified that the call would take place ahead of time, as was the government of Israel, a longtime U.S. ally that has hostile relations with Iran. Obama opened the call by congratulating Rouhani on his election victory earlier this year.

Both leaders went on to express their determination to resolve the issue of Iran's nuclear program peacefully and expeditiously, said the official. Overall, *"the call was quite cordial in tone."* But some contentious issues were raised, including the whereabouts of three American citizens: Amir Hekmati and Saeed Abedini, both of whom are currently in Iranian custody, and Robert Levinson, who went missing in Iran in 2007. Obama urged Rouhani and the Iranian government to help the Americans get

home to their families. Going forward, the official said, it's unlikely that Obama and Rouhani will maintain regular phone contact, because the substance of any nuclear negotiations must occur within the international framework known as the P5+1. *"There's a lot of technical discussion that needs to take place."* Both Rouhani and Obama have delegated future nuclear talks to their foreign ministers: Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry.

Lets congratulate and support the sober minds who chose to dial down the level of fear and condescension and instead chose reaching out to solve the issues that have us teetering on the edge of war through diplomacy. *Bravo....*

## THIS WEEK'S READINGS

With House Republicans voting a bill to fund the government without funding the **Affordable Healthcare Act**, better known as **Obamacare**, this week in **The Huffington Post**, Jeffrey Young wrote – ***The Biggest Obamacare Change Won't Affect Most Americans' Insurance*** – to add clarity to this spurious and phony issue. As I said time and again, even supporters of Obamacare will concede that it isn't perfect, but it is definitely better than doing nothing. But then hardliners in the Republican Right philosophy believe in smaller government, therefore any legislation that has the appearance of government intrusion is poison to them, even when it can add protection to those in need. Lost in this fight are the actual facts of how the Affordable Healthcare Act works, its benefits and disadvantages, to which Jeffrey Young article tries to address.



The biggest part of President Barack Obama's health care overhaul is just days away from its debut, and the American public remains confused. For many consumers, the most important question is personal: What do I have to do? If you're one of the roughly 80 percent of Americans who already has health insurance through an employer or is enrolled in a government program like Medicare, the answer is: probably nothing. On Oct. 1, new health insurance websites will debut in each state. Some will be run by the state, and others will be run by the federal government. These sites, called health insurance exchanges or marketplaces, are designed to serve those without insurance and those who buy insurance on their own. Seven million people will purchase private health insurance on the exchanges for 2014, the Congressional Budget Office projects. An additional 9 million will use the exchanges to enroll in Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program, two joint federal-state health programs for low-income people. The number of uninsured will drop by 14 million next year, the budget agency projects.

For nearly everyone else -- the 170.9 million people covered by employers and the 101.5 million enrolled in government health programs -- the ballyhooed launch of the Obamacare exchanges will mean little, according to health care, consumer and business experts. "If you have employer coverage now, do not worry," said Lynn Quincy, a senior policy analyst at Consumers Union in Washington who specializes in health care issues. "If you're on Medicare now, please don't worry," she said. Still, a lot of people are worried over the introduction of a new way to buy health insurance and the health care law's "individual mandate" that nearly every legal U.S. resident obtain health coverage or face a tax penalty.

People who don't get health insurance will have to pay \$95 dollars or 1 percent of their annual income - - whichever is higher. That amount will rise each year until it hits \$695 or 2.5 percent by 2016. The mandate has numerous exemptions, including for financial hardship. Most company health plans already meet the health care reform law's standards for benefits and affordability, as do government health programs like Medicare, Medicaid and military benefits. "For the vast majority of the population, the individual mandate will be a non-event," said Larry Levitt, the co-executive director of the Program for the Study of Health Reform and Private Insurance at the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation in Menlo Park, Calif. The open enrollment period for 2014 health plans bought on the exchanges begins Oct. 1 and runs through the end of March. People will use the exchanges in their home states to compare the price and benefits of various insurance plans. The exchanges also are the only way to get the financial assistance available to those who earn less than four times the federal poverty level, which amounts to \$45,960 for a single person this year.

# Who Will Use Obama's Health Insurance Exchanges?

The opening of the Obamacare health insurance exchanges on Oct. 1 is the most significant change to health coverage market in decades. But they mainly will be used by a small sliver of Americans: the uninsured and people who buy health insurance directly.



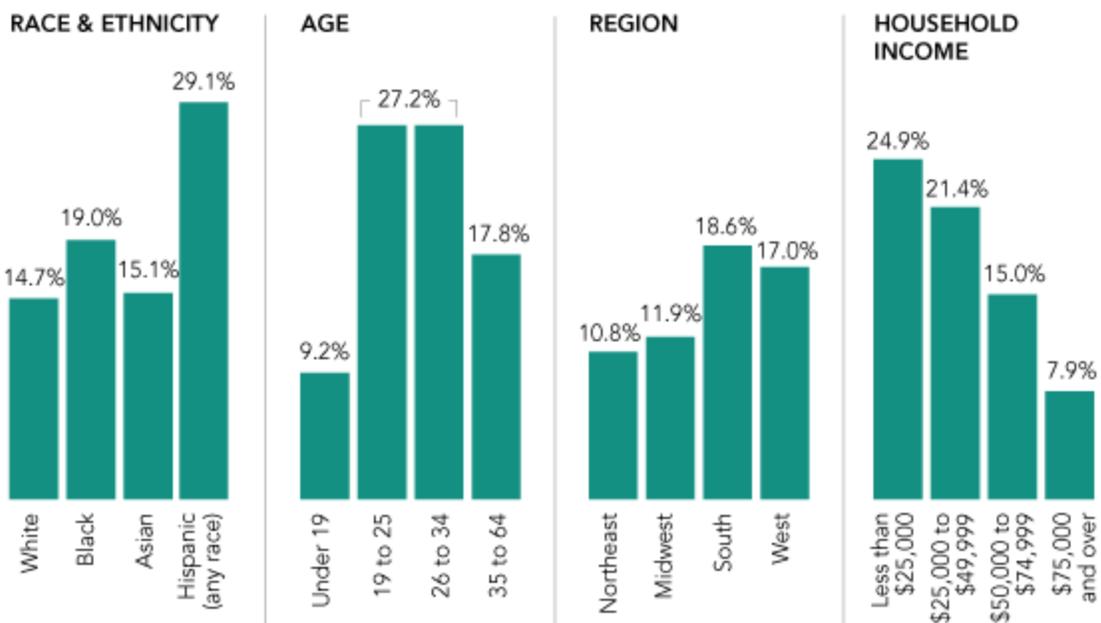
## Where do Americans get health coverage?

The main sources of health coverage are employer-provided plans and public programs like Medicare. People who have these types of coverage most likely will keep them.



## Who are the uninsured?

The uninsured rate varies by many factors. Hispanics, young adults, Southerners, and the poor disproportionately lack health insurance.



Notes: The estimates by type of coverage are mutually exclusive; people did not have any other type of health insurance during the year.  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

THE HUFFINGTON POST

Those shopping on the marketplaces will see changes. People who currently buy their own insurance will find that some cheap, skimpy plans sold to individuals today won't be available, and some younger, healthier people may see higher sticker prices -- especially if they don't qualify for tax credit subsidies. Others will gain access to coverage they didn't have and get help paying for it. Survey after survey shows the public to be confused, anxious and misinformed about what health care reform does and how it will affect them. Fewer than half of Americans think they know enough about the law to understand how it affects them, according to poll findings the Kaiser Family Foundation published last month. More than a third believe they'll be worse off, 23 percent think they'll be better off and 37 percent say it won't make much difference. When Congress wrote the law known as the Affordable Care Act, their idea was to maintain Americans' current health coverage as much as possible, to boost consumer protections in the health insurance market for individuals, and to cover the uninsured. That doesn't mean all workers will keep what they have. The Congressional Budget Office predicts that 7 million fewer people will get their health insurance through work by 2023, although jobs will remain the most common source of health coverage for Americans. People who work part-time, have low-wage jobs or are employed by smaller companies are most likely to lose their job-based benefits and to use the exchanges instead. There's already been a steady drumbeat of news stories about companies changing health benefits, like Trader Joe's and Home Depot dropping part-time workers from their health plans. While this phenomenon is real and disruptive to those workers, the outliers shouldn't be cause for concern for most people who have job-based health benefits, said Helen Darling, the president and CEO of the National Business Group on Health, a Washington-based association of large employers.

A survey of U.S. employers found that 93.5 percent of companies definitely or very likely will continue to offer health benefits to workers, compared to 1 percent that definitely won't or are very likely not to, according to a report the International Federation of Health Benefit Plans, a London-based trade group, issued in May. Employers provide health benefits both as a means of attracting and retaining employees and because they aren't taxed like wages (so they're cheaper than raises). "No one is going to say, 'Whoops, we just decided that we're not going to give you health benefits because we don't think they're that important.' It just isn't going to happen," Darling said. And experts don't expect large employers to make more changes or raise premiums much more than if the health law hadn't been enacted, she said.

But anecdotes about individual companies are causing some worry among workers -- worry fomented by Obamacare opponents and the media, Darling said. "It's more the press that is drumming up attention in a negative way, much of it being driven by people who want to make it a negative experience," Darling said. Likewise, the debate over whether Obamacare will cause health insurance premiums to soar on the exchanges -- so-called rate shock -- needlessly confuses people who have coverage from work, Levitt said. "They see these headlines that premiums may skyrocket and they think that's them," he said. It's not; it's about insurance people buy directly. In fact, a survey of employers the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Health Research and Educational Trust published last month showed job-based health insurance prices rose an average of just 5 percent for single people this year. "There's no reason to think that's going to change dramatically," Levitt said.

On the individual market for health insurance, some people, especially those who are younger and healthier, may see higher premiums, not counting the available tax credits. Others will pay less than today. That's largely due to new rules, such as requiring better benefits than commonly available on the individual market today, guaranteeing coverage to people with pre-existing conditions and limiting how much more older people can be charged than younger consumers. Medicare beneficiaries have even less cause for concern, Quincy said, even though a Kaiser Family Foundation poll found that older Americans disapprove of the Affordable Care Act at higher rates than younger people. Express Scripts, which manages prescription drug benefits for health insurance plans, surveyed Medicare enrollees and discovered many misperceptions -- including 17 percent who think they have to buy coverage on the exchanges. In reality, it's illegal for a health insurer to sell a plan through the exchange to someone on Medicare. People on Medicare don't need to do anything different this year than they have in the past, Quincy said. *"The main message is: Nothing has changed for you. You're good to go."*

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Next week the main part of Obamacare will begin to kick in. This is the state level exchanges that will allow the uninsured to be covered. Beginning on October 1, people will be able to sign up to get insurance in their state regardless of their health. Most people signing up on the exchanges will qualify for subsidies based on their income and family size. This means that the cost of insurance will be less than the advertised price. This is good news. It means that tens of millions of people who are uninsured now will likely be insured in the next year or two as a result of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). However, this is actually the less important aspect of the program. The more important part is that those of us who now have insurance will have real health care insurance for the first time.

Most of the insured get covered through their job. This creates an obvious problem. If they develop a chronic illness, they may be unable to keep their job. Once they are no longer employed, workers will be left trying to buy insurance in the individual market. Insurers don't want to insure people who are sick. If a person with a chronic health condition applies for insurance in the individual market, they would be facing premiums of tens of thousands of dollars a year, making it unaffordable for all but the very wealthy. This situation will end with the start of the exchanges. Workers who lose their job because of an illness will still be able to find affordable insurance. This will provide a huge element of security that is currently lacking. In effect, most workers will have true health insurance for the first time.

Workers of all ages will benefit from this transformation of the insurance market, but it will be especially important for older workers in poor health. There are a large number of older workers who struggle to stay employed despite bad health, because this is the only way that they will be able to afford insurance until they are old enough to qualify for Medicare. Many of these people will now find insurance to be affordable with the subsidies on the exchanges even if they do not work. Some critics of Obamacare have argued that it will undermine incentives to work. In the case of older workers in poor health they are right, and this will be good.

There is much real basis for criticism of the ACA. Private insurers are the sole providers of insurance. Not only are we not getting universal Medicare, we did not even get a public option, the right to purchase a Medicare-type plan that would compete with private insurers. The drug companies and medical equipment suppliers both end up as winners under Obamacare. They will be able to secure even greater profits from their government-provided patent monopolies since the ACA does little to rein in costs. As a result, we will still be paying close to twice as much for drugs and medical devices as people in other wealthy countries. This is a guaranteed recipe for bad health care since the enormous profits provided by these patent monopolies give drug companies an incentive to push their drugs even when they may be harmful. And we will still be paying twice as much for our doctors as people in other wealthy countries. These failures on cost controls will add hundreds of billions of dollars to the cost of health care each year.

The fact that so many states refused to go along with the expansion of Medicaid will leave millions of working poor uncovered. Undocumented workers were explicitly prohibited from being covered through the exchanges. And the plan will effectively penalize many workers who get insurance through union-sponsored plans, since they will not be eligible for subsidies through the exchanges. These are serious complaints about the inadequacy of Obamacare that will have to be addressed in the years ahead. But none of these problems changes the fact that the ACA is an enormous step forward. Most of the country will now have real security in their access to health care. The agenda now has to be to extend this security to the rest of the country and to squeeze the parasites out of the health care system. Please feel free to see the attached **Huffington Post** article – ***Obamacare: It's Better Than You Think*** – by Dean Baker.

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## Lies And Distortions Of The Health Care Reform Debate

Healthcare In America Is Already *'The Best In The World'*

One of the more positive sounding admonitions from health care reform opponents was that the United States had *"the best health care in the world,"* so why would you mess with it? Well, it's true that if you want the experience the pinnacle of medical care, you come to the United States. And if you

want the pinnacle of haute cuisine, you go to Per Se. If you want the pinnacle of commercial air travel, you get a first class seat on British Airways. Now, naturally, you wouldn't let just anyone mess with someone's tasting menu or state-of-the-art air-beds. But like anything that's "*the best*," the best health care in the world isn't for everybody. The costs are prohibitively high, the access is prohibitively exclusive, and the resources are prohibitively scarce.

## Death Panels

The only thing that perhaps matched the vastness of the spread or the depth of the traction of the "*death panel*" lie was the predictability that such a lie would come to be told in the first place. After all, this was a Democratic president trying to sell a new health care reform plan with the intention of opening access and reducing cost to millions of Americans who had gone without for so long.

Opponents counter the Affordable Health Care Act by repeating the lie that it would lead to more death as a result of mythical "Death Panels."

## The Affordable Care Act Is A "*Jobs-Killer*"

Naturally, the GOP greeted anything that the Obama White House did -- from regulating pollution to flossing after meals -- as something that would "*kill jobs*." The Affordable Care Act was no different. As you might recall, Republicans' first attempt at repeal came in the form of an inartfully named law called the "Repealing the Job-Killing Health Care Law Act." This claim has no justification," said Micah Weinberg, a senior research fellow at the centrist New America Foundation's Health Policy Program. Ince the law contains dual mandates that most individuals must obtain health insurance coverage and most employers must offer it by 2014, "the effect on employment is probably zero or close to it," said Amitabh Chandra, a professor of public policy at Harvard University.

## The Affordable Care Act Would Add To The Deficit

The only thing more important than painting the Affordable Care Act as a certain killer of jobs was to paint it as a certain murderer of America's fiscal future. Surely this big government program was going to push indebtedness to such a height that our servitude to our future Chinese overlords was a fait accompli. As Ryan Grim reported in May of 2010, the CBO disagreed. Comprehensive health care reform will cost the federal government \$940 billion over a ten-year period, but will increase revenue and cut other costs by a greater amount, leading to a reduction of \$138 billion in the federal deficit over the same period, according to an analysis by the Congressional Budget Office, a Democratic source tells HuffPost. It will cut the deficit by \$1.2 trillion over the second ten year period. The source said it also extends Medicare's solvency by at least nine years and reduces the rate of its growth by 1.4 percent, while closing the doughnut hole for seniors, meaning there will no longer be a gap in coverage of medication.

## The Affordable Care Act \$500 Billion Cut From Medicare

Normally, if you tell Republicans that you're going to cut \$500 billion from Medicare, they will respond by saying, "*Hooray, but could we make it \$700 billion?*" But the moment they got it into their heads that the Affordable Care Act would make that cut from Medicare, suddenly everyone from the party of ending Medicare As We Know It, Forever got all hot with concern about what would happen to these longstanding recipients of government health care. The truth is what Republicans characterized as cuts are projected savings over ten years. Whatever you want to call them, it's a \$500 billion reduction in the growth of future spending over 10 years, not a slashing of the current Medicare budget or benefits.

## The Affordable Care Act Provides Free Health Care For Undocumented Immigrants

This lie was launched to prominence with the help of a false accuser, South Carolina Rep. Joe Wilson, who famously heckled President Barack Obama during an address to a Joint Session of Congress by yelling "You lie!" after the president had mentioned that undocumented immigrants would not be eligible for the credits for the bill's proposed health care exchanges. As the AP points out...there are about 7 million unauthorized immigrants who will be prohibited from buying insurance on the newly

created exchanges, even if they pay out of their own pocket. And the exclusion of this group from health reform -- along with other restrictions that affect fully legal immigrants as well -- could create a massive coverage gap that puts a strain on the rest of the health system as well.

## Republicans, And Their Ideas, Were Left Out Of The Bill And The Process

Were health care policies dear to Republicans left out of the health care reform bill? Totally! Unless we're counting the following:

- Deficit-neutral bill
- Longterm cost reduction
- Interstate competition that allows consumers to purchase insurance across state lines
- Medical malpractice reform
- High-risk pools
- An extension of the time young people were allowed to remain on their parents' policies
- No public money for abortion
- Small business exemptions/tax credits
- Job wellness programs
- Delivery system reform

In fact, the Democrats were eager to get GOP input and enthusiastic about including many of their desired components in the bill. Finally, the Affordable Care Act was modeled on a reform designed and implemented by a former Republican governor and presidential candidate, Mitt Romney and the individual mandate that was used in Romneycare to ensure "*no free riders*" was originally dreamed up by the Heritage Foundation. As a result the DNA of the Affordable Care Act was borrowed from the Senate GOP alternative to the Clinton plan in the 1990s and the 2009 Bipartisan Policy Committee plan, which was endorsed by Tom Daschle, Howard Baker, and Bob Dole.

## The Affordable Care Act Would Create A Mad Army of IRS Agents

In this case, the individual mandate -- which requires people to purchase insurance or incur a tax penalty -- provided the fertile soil for this deception to spread. This wildly inaccurate claim by Republican opponents who claimed that 16,500 new IRS employees (costing \$10 billion) might be required to administer the new law. The IRS' main job under the new law isn't to enforce penalties. Its first task is to inform many small-business owners of a new tax credit that the new law grants them -- starting this year -- which will pay up to 35 percent of the employer's contribution toward their workers' health insurance. And in 2014 the IRS will also be administering additional subsidies -- in the form of refundable tax credits -- to help millions of low- and middle-income individuals buy health insurance.

## Affordable Care Act Bill Is Way Too Long And Impossible To Read!

Without a doubt the Affordable Care Act is a humdinger of a long bill. And long bills are bad because length implies complication and complication requires study and study implies some form of "*work*."

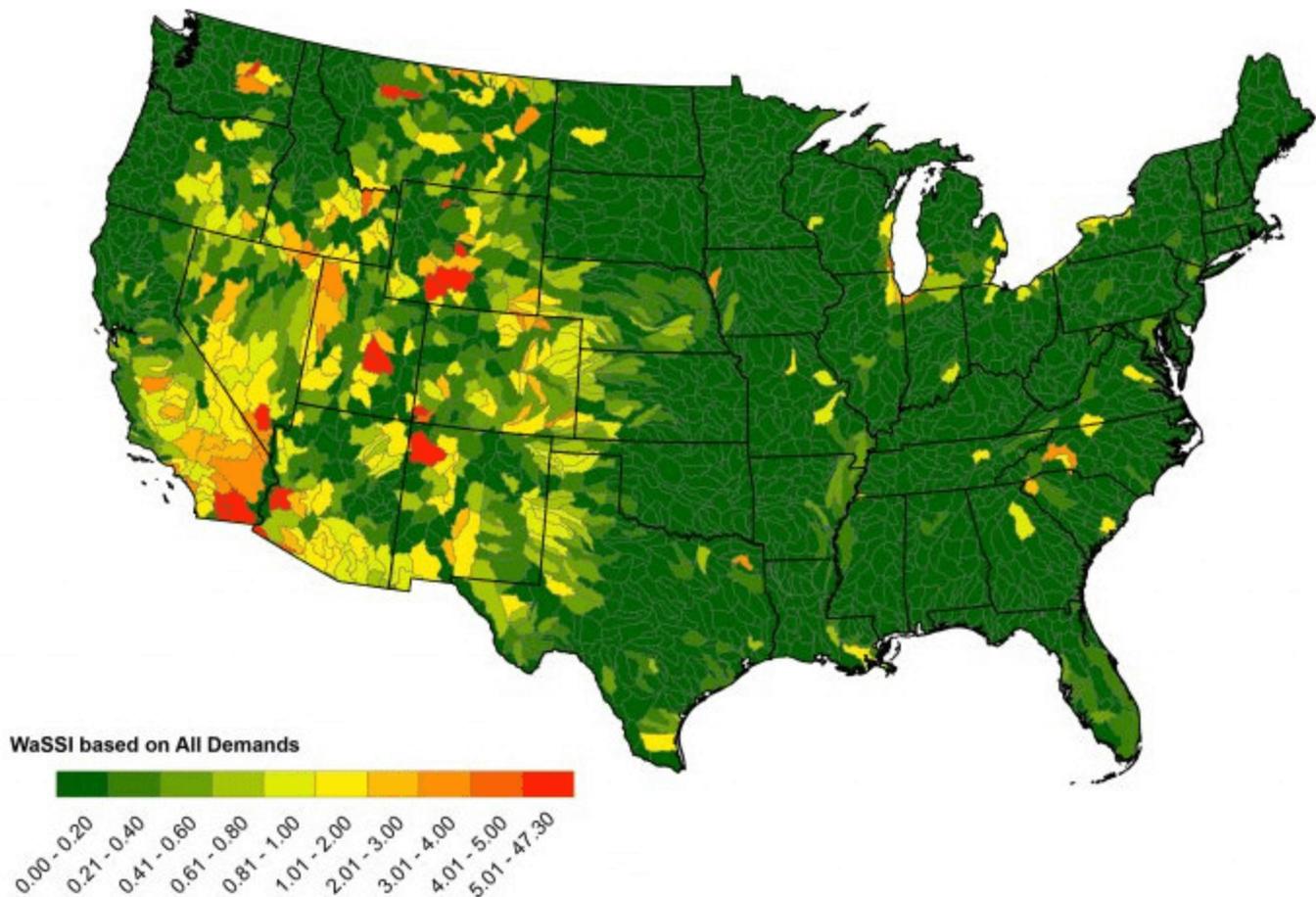
Actually, reading the bill is not that hard, despite the complaints. As the folks at Computational Legal Studies were able to divine: Those versed in the typesetting practices of the United States Congress know that the printed version of a bill contains a significant amount of whitespace including non-trivial space between lines, large headers and margins, an embedded table of contents, and large font. For example, consider page 12 of the printed version of H.R. 3962. This page contains fewer than 150 substantive words. A simple page count vastly overstates the actual length of bill. Rather than use page counts, count the number of words contained in the bill and compared these counts to the number of words in the existing United States Code. In addition, consider the number of text blocks in the bill -- where a text block is a unit of text under a section, subsection, clause, or sub-clause.

As **HuffPost** noted in March of 2010, "the total number of words in the House Health Reform Bill are 363,086," and when you throw out the words in the titles and tables of contents and whatnot, leaving only words that "impact substantive law," the word count drops to 234,812. "**Harry Potter And the Order Of The Phoenix**," a popular book read by small children, is 257,000 words long. The truth is that one of the reason why this and other legislation are so big is due to the accommodation of special interest's carve outs and inclusions, and the Affordable Healthcare Act is no different.

Obviously, I tried to include as many of these types of lies and distortions as possible, but there was no way to include them all.

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As Matt Ferner wrote this week in the **Huffington Post**, nearly one in 10 watersheds in the United States is "stressed," with demand for water exceeding natural supply -- a trend that appears likely to become the new normal, according to a recent CIRES study. "*By midcentury, we expect to see less reliable surface water supplies in several regions of the United States,*" said Kristen Averyt, associate director for science at the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences at the University of Colorado-Boulder and one of the authors of the study. "*This is likely to create growing challenges for agriculture, electrical suppliers and municipalities, as there may be more demand for water and less to go around.*"



According to the research of Averyt and her colleagues, 193 of the 2,103 watersheds examined are already stressed -- meaning demand for water is higher than natural supply. The researchers found that most of the water stress is in the Western United States, where there are fewer surface water resources, compared with the East. Averyt and her colleagues write: *On the water supply side, surface and ground water resources have been declining in much of the U.S. Aquifers underlying the Central Valley in California and the Ogallala, which spans the area between Nebraska and Texas, are being drawn down more rapidly than they are being recharged. Approximately 23% of annual*

*freshwater demands rely on groundwater resources, yet the volume of groundwater remaining is unclear.*

*Average surface water supplies are decreasing, and are expected to continue declining, particularly in the southwestern U.S. Also in the southwest, water availability is defined as much by legal regimes as by physical processes. Water rights define how much and when water may be withdrawn from surface water sources irrespective of how much water may or may not be flowing in a given year. Water quality, including temperature and sediment concentration, can also constrain availability for certain users.*

The researchers found agriculture requires the most water and contributes the most to regional water stress overall; the U.S. West is particularly vulnerable to water stress; and in some areas of the country, the water needs of electric power plants represent the biggest demand on water -- so much so that a single power plant *"has the potential to stress surface supplies in a local area."* In some densely populated regions like Southern California, cities are the greatest stress on the surface water system. CIRES produced a map illustrating all of the stressed watersheds in the continental United States, with colors from light green to red indicating increasing levels of stress.

The researchers found that although there are trends that point toward some stability in the water demand nationally as increased efficiency of use offsets increased population, it remains clear that that climate change is likely to increase water demands as well as diminish water supplies across the nation -- especially in already vulnerable areas like the U.S. West, which relies heavily on water from already-stressed watersheds like the Colorado River. The Colorado River system has long provided the American West with water -- 7 states in all that are home to almost 40 million people. But demands on the river are often cited as unsustainable, due to predicted population increases and climate change. A recent report from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation predicts a water supply and demand gap in the Colorado River of about 3.2 million-acre feet by 2060 -- roughly five times the amount of water that Los Angeles uses in a year. Some recent estimates say that up to 20 percent of the Colorado River could dry up by 2050. However, as **The Washington Post** notes, just how sharply annual water flows will drop and just how large the future population will grow are very difficult to predict.

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Having traveled around Europe on high-speed trains that go in excess of 200 miles per hour in comfort, an article this past week in the New York Times on how high-speed rail has transformed China. Just five years after China's high-speed rail system opened, it is carrying nearly twice as many

passengers each month as the country's domestic airline industry. Practically every train is sold out, with traffic growing 28 percent a year for the last several years, China's high-speed rail network will handle more passengers by early next year than the 54 million people a month who board domestic flights in the United States. Train trips that use to take all day are now two plus hours, enabling city workers to visit their parents and relatives hundreds of miles away back home in their ancestral villages.

China's high-speed rail system has emerged as an unexpected success story. Economists and transportation experts cite it as one reason for China's continued economic growth when other emerging economies are faltering. But it has not been without costs — high debt, many people relocated and a deadly accident. The corruption trials this summer of two former senior rail ministry officials have cast an unfavorable light on the bidding process for the rail lines.

The high-speed rail lines have, without a doubt, transformed China, often in unexpected ways. For example, Chinese workers are now more productive. A paper for the World Bank by three consultants this year found that Chinese cities connected to the high-speed rail network, as more than 100 are already, are likely to experience broad growth in worker productivity. The productivity gains occur when companies find themselves within a couple of hours' train ride of tens of millions of potential customers, employees and rivals. Productivity gains to the economy appear to be of the same order as the combined economic gains from the usual arguments given for high-speed trains, including time savings for travelers, reduced noise, less air pollution and fuel savings, the World Bank consultants calculated.

Companies are opening research and development centers in more glamorous cities like Beijing and Shenzhen with abundant supplies of young, highly educated workers, and having them take frequent day trips to factories in cities with lower wages and land costs, like Tianjin and Changsha. Businesses are also customizing their products more through frequent meetings with clients in other cities, part of a broader move up the ladder toward higher value-added products. China relocated large numbers of families whose homes lay in the path of the tracks and quickly built new residential and commercial districts around high-speed train stations.

China's success may not be easily reproduced in the West, and not just because few places can match China's pace of urbanization. China has four times the population of the United States, and the great bulk of its people live in the eastern third of the country, an area similar in size to the United States east of the Mississippi. "Except for Boston to Washington, D.C., we don't have the corridors" of high population density that China has, said C. William Ibbs, a professor of civil engineering at the University of California, Berkeley. China's high-speed rail program has been married to the world's most ambitious subway construction program, as more than half the world's large tunneling machines chisel away underneath big Chinese cities. That has meant easy access to high-speed rail stations for huge numbers of people — although the subway line to Changsha's high-speed train station has been delayed after a deadly tunnel accident, a possible side effect of China's haste.

New subway lines, rail lines and urban districts are part of China's heavy dependence on investment-led growth. Despite repeated calls by Chinese leaders for a shift to more consumer-led growth, it shows little sign of changing. China's new prime minister, Li Keqiang, publicly endorsed further expansion of the 5,900-mile high-speed rail network this summer. He said the country would invest \$100 billion a year in its train system for years to come, mainly on high-speed rail. The Chinese government is already struggling with nearly \$500 billion in overall rail debt. Most of it was incurred for the high-speed rail system and financed with bank loans that must be rolled over as often as once a year. Using short-term loans made the financing look less risky on the balance sheets of the state-controlled banking system and held down borrowing costs. But the reliance on short-term credit has left the system vulnerable to any increase in interest rates.

Another impact: air travel. Train ridership has soared partly because China has set fares on high-speed rail lines at a little less than half of comparable airfares and then refrained from raising them. On routes that are four or five years old, prices have stayed the same as blue-collar wages have more than doubled. That has resulted in many workers, as well as business executives, switching to high-speed trains. Airlines have largely halted service on routes of less than 300 miles when high-speed rail links open. They have reduced service on routes of 300 to 470 miles.

The double-digit annual wage increases give the Chinese enough disposable income that domestic airline traffic has still been growing 10 percent a year. That is the second-fastest growth among the world's 10 largest domestic aviation markets, after India, which now faces a slowdown as the fall of the rupee has made aviation fuel exorbitantly expensive for air carriers there. High-speed trains are not only allowing business managers from deep inside China to reach bigger markets. They are also prompting foreign executives to look deeper in China for suppliers as wages surge along the coast. The only drawback: *"The high-speed trains are getting very crowded these days."*

So why can't we do the same thing here in the United States, where compared to China's high-speed trains, Japan's Bullet Trains and France's TVR, Amtrack in the US more akin to the horse and buggy? The fact that we don't have high-speed trains network between, Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Washington DC or San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego is ridiculous, in the richest and most technological advanced country in the world.

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## Exposing the Pay Gap

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Of all the provisions in the vast and complex Dodd-Frank financial reform law, one of the most far-reaching is also the most direct and easily understood. It requires public companies to compute and disclose the ratio of a chief executive's pay to that of a typical employee.

For more than three years, however, corporate America has resisted the mandate, warning that following the law would be a logistical nightmare, unduly complex and ultimately meaningless. The complaints never rang true. Companies already disclose executive pay and surely know how much they pay their employees. From there, computing the "pay ratio" is not rocket science.

Even so, these arguments have long prevailed at the Securities and Exchange Commission, delaying regulations to put the pay-ratio provision into effect. No longer. [Last week](#), the S.E.C. proposed a strong, common-sense rule that basically tells the companies to follow the law. The proposal addresses concerns about complexity by giving corporations clear guidance and sufficient flexibility to compute the ratio, but without undermining the law's intent, which is to give the public a clear picture of the gaps between pay at the top and pay at the median.

The information is vital. It would allow investors to more accurately judge the effect of pay structures on company performance. It would inform investors' votes on executive pay, because it would be a benchmark for determining whether executive pay is excessive. It would help regulators and policy makers detect bubbles and impending crashes, because those often correlate to widening pay gaps. It would help alert consumers and taxpayers to companies where work forces are underpaid, even as executive pay soars, a circumstance that often requires taxpayer dollars be spent on assistance to low-wage workers.

Disclosing the pay ratio is not the only way to confront those issues, but it will be enormously helpful. In recent decades, changing corporate norms have allowed C.E.O. compensation over all to balloon to nearly 300 times what typical employees make. Company-specific data on pay gaps will force chief executives and their boards to justify just how out of kilter pay scales have become.

For the next 60 days, the S.E.C. will gather public comment on its pay ratio proposal. Count us in favor.

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Last week marked both the fifth anniversary of the fiscal meltdown that almost tanked the world economy and the second anniversary of Occupy Wall Street, the movement that sparked heightened public awareness of income inequality. Yet the crisis is worse than ever – in the first three years of the recovery, 95-percent of the economic gains have gone only to the top one-percent of Americans. And the share of working people in the U.S. who define themselves as lower class is at its highest level in four decades. And as many of you know, I am a huge fan of Bill Moyers whose show last week, ***Inequality for All*** was an interview with Robert Reich, former Secretary Labor under President Bill Clinton.

When presented with the question how does one constrain capitalism from doing stupid things that are not in the public interest? Reich replied that you have a democracy that is sufficiently well-functioning. That laws and rules limit what can be done. If the democracy is corrupted itself by that capitalist excess, then the first thing you've got to do is get big money out of politics. Before that the Carter administration. Of all developed nations the United States has the most unequal distribution of income and we're surging toward even greater inequality. 1928 and 2007 become the peak years for income concentration, it looks like a suspension bridge. Woman last year made \$36,000, while men made \$50,000 a year, sometimes working 70 hours a week. And under these numbers the middle class is struggling. In the decades after World War II, the economy boomed yet we had very low inequality. We had low deficits and taxes on the rich hovered around 50%. And incomes grew for almost everyone. On this issue of widening inequality there's so much confusion, because people in the right-wing often blame the poor, while those in the left-wing blame the rich.

There's a lot of blame going around. But people are not looking at the actual structure of the economy as it's evolving. They're not looking at how we need to change the organization of the economy. And why we are the most unequal of all advanced societies and economies in the world. There is a popular misconception that the economy is kind of out there, it's kind of natural forces that can't be changed. They're immutable. And we all sort of work for this economy. But in reality, the economy is a set of rules. There's no economy in the state of nature. They're rules. There are rules about property and liability and anti-trust and bankruptcy and subsidies for certain things and taxes for certain things. These rules really are the rules of the game. They determine economic outcomes. If we don't like them, we can change the rules. And if we had a democracy that was working as a democracy should be working, we could adapt the rules so that, for example, the gains of economic growth were more widely distributed without a sacrifice of efficiency or innovation.

Of all developed nations today, the United States has the most unequal distribution of income and wealth by far. And we're surging towards even greater inequality. One way of looking at and measuring inequality is to look at the earnings of people at the top versus the earnings of the typical worker in the middle. The typical male worker in 1978 was making around \$48,000, adjusting for inflation, while the average person in the top one percent earned \$390,000. Now fast forward. By 2010, the typical male worker earned even less than he did then. But at person the top got more than twice as much as before. Today, the richest 400 Americans have more wealth than the bottom 150 million of us put together. Think about it -- Four hundred people have more wealth than half the population of the United States. And their wealth is increasing.

Last week researchers said that in the year 2012 inequality reached a new peak in the United States. The previous peak, we thought was the peak, that is 2007 actually has been superseded by this new peak of inequality, concentrated income in 2012 that almost all the gains of economic growth have been going to a very small number of people at the very top. Since the bottom of the recession in 2009 brought on by the financial collapse in 2008, the top one percent of Americans took home 95 percent of the income gains. Whereas, between 1946 and 1978, as the economy grew, everybody benefited. It was very wide -- the benefits were very widely dispersed. During that period the entire country enjoyed shared prosperity. It wasn't socialism as Eisenhower and Nixon and Ford were presidents through most of that period. And we didn't consider it abnormal. We considered it normal. As the economy grows, we should all get something. And during those years, the economy doubled in size and everybody's income doubled. Even if you were in the bottom fifth of the income earners you did actually better.

But something happened in the late 1970s, early 1980s, to change the historic relationship between economic growth and the growth in productivity on the one hand and wages. Beginning in the late '70s and really to a greater and greater degree over the last three decades, all the wealth, or most of the wealth, most of the new wealth in society went right to the top. Income gains went right to the top and people in the middle, the median worker, the median wage, stagnated. In fact since the year 2000, if you adjust for inflation, you have to adjust for inflation, the actual median wage has been dropping. It's now five percent below what it was then. Something is fundamentally wrong. And to the average American, the game feels rigged somehow. And I think that's the conclusion that many people are coming to regardless of whether you are, consider yourself, on the left or the right. Many Tea Partiers

are angry at the system because there seems to be so much collusion between government and big business and Wall Street. That's where the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street movements came from.

Both about what looked like a fundamentally unfair subsidy going from everybody, taxpayers, to mostly the top one percent, that is the people on Wall Street who had blown it. Who had basically treated the economy as a casino for much of their own benefit. And leaving many of the rest of us underwater in terms of being able to pay our mortgages, with our savings depleted because the stock market had basically reversed itself, and jobless. Five years after Lehman Brothers collapsed and Wall Street went south, the big banks are still at it, still gambling. We don't even have a Volcker Rule and the Dodd-Frank Act that was supposed to clean up all of this, was kind of a watered-down Glass-Steagall. Glass-Steagall was the old 1930s rule that said you had to split your commercial banking operations from your, basically your casino, betting operations.

Today, more than ever we've got a huge, powerful, Wall Street lobbying machine, a lot of money coming from Wall Street that influenced politicians, even Democrat politicians. This is not a matter of partisan politics. Everybody is guilty. And the money is still determining what the rules of the game are going to be. And these are the people who are taking in most of the income produced by the recovery. And not only they taking in most of the income produced by the recovery, they're enjoying almost all of the economic gains and they are using their privileged position with regard to political power to entrench themselves in terms of their economic gains of the future and their political influence in the future.

Contrary to popular mythology, globalization and technology haven't really reduced the number of jobs available to Americans. These transformations have reduced their pay. It is not just that wages are stagnated. But when you take into consideration rising costs. The rising cost of rent or homes, dramatically-increasing costs of healthcare, the rising costs of childcare and also the rising costs of higher education, rising much faster than inflation, take all of these into consideration, and you find that it's much worse than just stagnating wages. It's basically middle-class families, often with two wage earners, working harder and harder and harder and getting nowhere. They are not seeing their incomes increase if you adjust for inflation. In terms of repurchasing power many of them are seeing their incomes drop. They also are having less and less, enjoying less and less economic security. Because at any time they can be fired. You have two incomes they depend on.

So the chance of something happening, like a firing or a company basically leaving town or one of them getting very sick and not being able to pull in that kind of income. All of those negative possibilities are themselves increasing, meanwhile upward mobility is fading. We used to have in this country the notion that anybody with enough guts and gumption could make it. So even if you have wide inequality, it was okay because you could make it. You could feast at the same table if you stuck to it and if you really tried hard. That's disappearing. Forty-two percent of children who were born into poverty, for example, in the United States, will be in poverty as adults and at a higher percentage than any other advanced country. Even great Britain, with a history of class – we think about Britain, we think of a class or rigid class structure. Yet, only 30 percent of the kids who were born into poverty remain in poverty as adults. Because upward mobility is more of a reality in the UK and in many other countries than it is now in present-day America.

One of the other major problems is corporate behavior. Today, the major corporations in the U.S. are sitting on record profits, which are not being used to create more jobs. Yet, Conservatives argue that corporations should be taxed at a lower level so they can create jobs. Or that money -- that the rich shouldn't be taxed because they're *job creators*. Whereas the truth is that when the middle class and everybody aspiring to join middle class don't have enough money with their wages declining, benefits almost non-existent and worried about the next paycheck. As a result they cannot turn around and buy what the economy is capable of producing. And understand, in this country 70 percent of the economy is consumer spending.

Yes, we have a giant middle class and tens of millions wanting to join it. But the reality is that they don't have the purchasing power any longer to sustain its growth, as most of the benefits of the economy are going to the very top, and the top are the ones who are saving, with these savings going around the world, wherever they can get the highest return on those savings. The result is less demand in the economy to make it worthwhile for companies to hire more people and expand. At the same

time Wall Street is saying to them, "don't plan for the long-term future. Give us the highest return we can possibly get." Hence, the average CEO says "even though I have the best, people aren't buying as much as they use to. So the easiest way of showing big returns is to shrink my payrolls, to get lean and mean, outsource, maybe automate – do whatever I have to do to get the cost down." And the fact of the matter is that the entire system is designed in such a way that everybody is acting rationally, given what the rules of the game are. But the rules of the game themselves are irrational, and irrational socially. And they are not generating the kind of prosperous society that we need to maintain an economy and also to maintain a democracy.

With trillions of dollars stashed abroad, companies like Microsoft and Cisco are going on international buying sprees to acquiring companies where they then domicile operations that enable them to avoid paying US taxes on this money and future profits from these international divisions. As a result many companies and analyst believe that it's more profitable to buy a company abroad than it is to bring profits that they've earned at home and overseas, instead of paying taxes on the profits. And it's logical within the system. But the big rub is that at the same time these same companies demand that the US government protect their intellectual property, market and resource access.

But getting back to the issue of growing inequality, there are many who believe that it is okay and some even celebrate it. When former Senator Rick Santorum was running for the Republican nomination for president last year, he made a speech at the **Detroit Economic Club**. "President Obama is all about equality of results. I'm about equality of opportunity. I'm not about equality of result when it comes to income inequality. There is income inequality in America. There always has been and hopefully, and I do say that, there always will be. Why? Because people rise to different levels of success based on what they contribute to society and to the marketplace and that's as it should be."

Like Santorum, I believe that nobody should expect nor do I advocate equality of outcome. But the real problem is that we don't have equality of opportunity. Example Number one; the schools available to poor and lower middle class and many middle class families and their kids are not nearly as good as the schools available to the wealthy. Example two; the tax laws are weighted increasingly in favor of the wealthy. Therefore a lot of middle class and poor people actually are paying, particularly through social security and income taxes which nobody talks about a much larger share of their income. And the laws governing almost everything that can be imagine are tilted toward shareholders away from those whose major asset is their house. As a result, there is not equality of opportunity. And this is the problem. If we really had equality of opportunity we wouldn't even be having this discussion. It's important to bear in mind that some inequality is necessary if we're going to have a capitalist system that creates incentives for people to work hard and to invent and to try very hard. But when the system is rigged like it is today, inequality will persist and grow.

Today, inequality is at a tipping point to the degree that it is now threatening the economy, society and our democracy. One reason why the recovery has been so anemic is that we don't have enough purchasing power in our society because almost all of the gains are going to a very small number at the top. Fact of the matter is, most Americans now are losing faith in our democracy. Which to me is our most precious gift, the most precious legacy that we have to hand down to our future generation

According to "**Forbes**" magazine, the 400 richest Americans are now worth a combined two trillion dollars, while new figures from the census bureau show that the typical middle class family makes less than it did in 1989. The two Americas are growing further and further apart.

There are a lot of people, including Warren Buffet who made a lot of money that believe that this widening economic inequality is both bad for the economy and for them. And although the solution is portrayed as taking money from the rich and we're giving it to the poor. I believe that there is no one solution with the exception that we have to stop blaming the poor for being poor and have to find ways of addressing the inequality of opportunity because without opportunity there is no American Dream. I invite you to see ***Inequality of All*** with Bill Moyers: <http://billmoyers.com/episode/full-show-inequality-for-all/>

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The most engaging political article that I read this week was Howard Fineman's – ***How Conservatives Cooked A Blue Meth GOP*** in **The Huffington Post**, as it echoes the sentiment

of Jeff Daniel's character *Will McAvoy* in **The Network's Election Night** episode as Fineman lamented that the Republican Party used to be dull and relatively reasonable. It stood for spending restraint, free markets (for big companies) and gentle regulation of business. But it also stood for, or accepted, federal public works and scientific research, a foreign policy that was neither isolationist nor war-mongering, the use of federal power in the name of racial justice, progressive taxation, and a public piety of the most anodyne, "*In God We Trust*" kind.

Fineman continues; the party of Dwight Eisenhower -- of Scotch and soda and sotto voce -- is all but extinct. What's left of it is barricaded in the U.S. Senate, under fire in a deadly turf war with Blue Meth Republicanism, a movement at times so angry, reductionist, apocalyptic, God-invoking, fear-mongering and obsessed with purity that it seems to have been concocted in the sub-basement of "**Breaking Bad.**" One of its younger, more aggressive leaders, Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, just delivered a grandstanding faux filibuster against Obamacare. Insiders and "*mainstream*" media weren't impressed, but then they weren't his audience. The Blue Meth Crew was, and they will be back. So where did this potent and, to its critics, self-destructive new formula come from?



I invite you all to read the attached full article by Howard Fineman who chronicles the history of the move to the right by the Conservative takeover of the Republican Party since Sept. 11, 1960, acolytes of conservative writer and editor William F. Buckley gather at his Connecticut home and issue the founding document of modern conservatism. **The Sharon Statement** is a terse libertarian credo, extolling individual freedom, minimalist government and a market economy. The proto-tea party, anti-federal movement is born -- a brief look at how, over the decades, the Grand Old Party of grandfatherly Ike cooked itself into the anti-government Party of the Temper Tantrum.

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In light of the recent diplomatic events this week, both Eugene Robinson and Fareed Zakaria wrote several interesting op-ed articles in **The Washington Post**. In Robinson's op-ed -- **Eugene Robinson: Obama's reality check** -- he says, "*If President Obama ever was a foreign-policy idealist, he's not one now. The address he delivered Tuesday at the United Nations amounted to a realist manifesto for defending U.S. 'core interests' -- using force, when necessary -- without trying to impose American values on unready or unwilling societies. The speech laid out an Obama Doctrine for confronting a rapidly changing world full of dangers new and old. 'I believe America is exceptional,' the president said, citing the nation's historic willingness to offer 'the sacrifice of blood and treasure . . . for the interest of all.'*" But his updated vision of U.S. leadership, although sweetly phrased, was tightly focused and unsentimental.

In the Mideast, Obama said, the United States will use military action if necessary to secure "*our core interests.*" He identified these as defending allies against aggression, ensuring the free flow of oil from the region, dismantling terrorist networks and preventing "*the development or use of weapons of mass destruction.*" He specifically relegated democracy, human rights and free markets to a lower tier. We will continue to promote these ideals, he said, but with the knowledge that "*we can rarely achieve these objectives through unilateral American action*" and that "*democracy cannot simply be imposed by force.*" Obama went beyond rejecting the "*freedom agenda*" that George W. Bush pursued with such martial zeal. The president specifically declared that "*the United States will at times work*

*with governments that do not meet, at least in our view, the highest international expectations but who work with us on our core interests.*” Great to see an American leader who is rationale.

He cited Egypt as an example, saying that he will maintain a “*constructive relationship*” with the new government as long as it respects the peace agreement with Israel and cooperates in the fight against terrorism. In other words, Obama has no intention of calling the coup that deposed Mohamed Morsi’s government by its proper name, which would trigger a cutoff of U.S. aid. Likewise, the White House can be expected to continue its silence about the ongoing repression of the Muslim Brotherhood, whose leaders are now jailed or in exile. Implicit throughout Obama’s speech was that the early promise of the Arab Spring — an unstoppable wave of democracy spreading throughout the region, fueled by nonviolent “*people power*” — has been replaced by alarm at the eruption of Islamic extremism and sectarian violence.

The president committed U.S. power and prestige to two long-shot initiatives. Trying to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict looks, to me, pretty much like an impossibility at this point — but not a waste of time, since it is better to have some sort of peace process under way than not. Negotiating an end to the threat posed by Iran’s nuclear program, on the other hand, is clearly the right idea at the right time. By all accounts, the stranglehold sanctions on the Iranian regime are causing real pain. The new moderate leadership seems to have been given unprecedented freedom to negotiate a loosening of the vise. President Hassan Rouhani may not have the will or the latitude to reach a settlement in the next three months, as he claims, but it would be a tragic mistake not to find out. At the same time — and I think this has to be a factor in the president’s thinking, underpinning the entire Obama Doctrine — the Syria experience showed how reluctant Americans are to contemplate another Mideast war.

Fareed Zakaria op-ed — ***Can Rouhani or Obama deliver on any deal?*** — pointed out that Iran’s new President Hassan Rouhani presented himself in striking contrast with his predecessor (Mahmoud Ahmadinejad) last week in New York at the **Opening of the UN General Assembly**. Example: For the past several years, Ahmadinejad held a breakfast meeting with a small group of journalists during the opening of the U.N. General Assembly. In recent years, the event had become a depressing routine — dressed in his trademark shabby suit — would saunter in, ramble and rant about the dangers of U.S. hegemony, deny the Holocaust and taunt his invited guests. Rouhani, by contrast, arrived punctually, elegantly attired in flowing clerical robes, and spoke intelligently and precisely about every topic discussed. His only peroration was against “*Iranophobia*”; he implored the media to visit Iran and on their own, present the “*real*” picture of his country to the world.

“The nuclear issue can be resolved in a very short time,” Rouhani said, showing a surprising degree of optimism about an issue that has proved extremely difficult. “*The world wants to be assured that our program is peaceful, and we want to help them gain that confidence.*” (The meeting was off the record, but he allowed a few of his answers to be made public.) The economic sanctions against Iran have taken a heavy toll. Rouhani spoke forcefully about the damage to ordinary Iranians — denying people food and medicine. He suggested that both the United States and Iran have made miscalculations but said that was in the past. He was hopeful about better relations.

Zakaria said that he came away willing to believe that Rouhani is a pragmatist. And that (“Moderate” is a misleading term for the head of a quasi-theocratic regime.) He wants to end his country’s isolation. But it remains unclear whether he has the authority to act on behalf of his government. Consider what happened Tuesday, when the Iranians turned down a White House offer of a brief meeting with President Obama. Rouhani explained that he had no problem “in principle” with the handshake but said that this was a “sensitive issue” and that it would have been the first such meeting in 35 years, so steps have to be taken with proper preparation. One has to wonder: If Rouhani does not have the freedom to shake Obama’s hand, does he have the freedom to negotiate a nuclear deal?

Zakaria again: The Tehran government has another side, made up of the Revolutionary Guard Corps, the special force whose political influence has grown over the past decade. These people are hawkish on all foreign-policy issues. They also profit from the sanctions because their businesses have become the only path for trade and smuggling. Perhaps the most encouraging news from Iran in the past two weeks was that its supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, publicly addressed the Guard and said its role was in national defense, not “policy.”

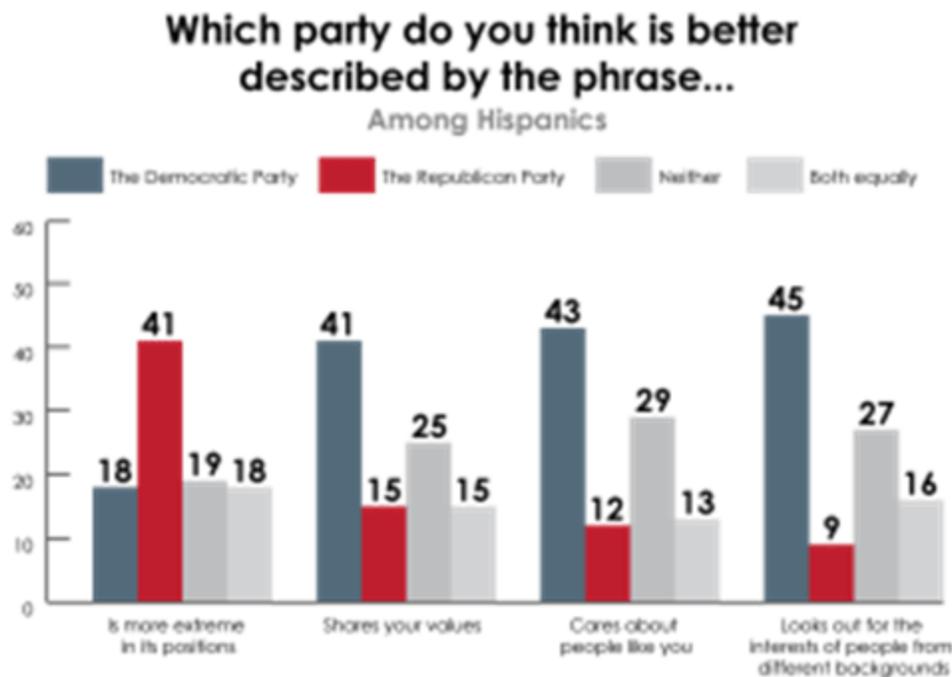
And that U.S. doubts about Rouhani's power can be addressed only over time and through Iranian actions. And given the partisanship in Washington, Iranians probably also have doubts — about Obama's power. Still, the new Iranian president appears willing to cooperate on the nuclear issue in return for a relaxing of the sanctions crippling his country. But can Obama provide any such relief?

Iran has dozens of layers of sanctions arrayed against it. Some are based on U.N. Security Council resolutions, others are decisions by the European Union, others are acts of Congress and still others are executive orders by the U.S. president. Obama can unilaterally lift only the last, which are the least burdensome. The most onerous by far are the sanctions passed through acts of Congress, and those will be the most difficult to lift. In theory, it's possible to devise a rational process that requires concrete actions from Iran, verifiable checks by inspectors and then a reciprocal easing of sanctions by the United States. But this would require Congress to behave in a rational manner — which is a fantasy today. The most likely scenario is that any agreement with Iran — almost regardless of its content — would instantly be denounced by Republicans as selling out. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) has already gathered 10 other senators who insist that, unless Iran dismantles most of its civilian nuclear program and becomes a liberal democracy, none of the sanctions can be eased.

Zakaria points out that the Obama administration is conscious of the other side of American government. And that much of the macho rhetoric emanating from the administration about Iran has seemed designed to inoculate it from charges of being soft. Zakaria concludes that the reality is that it remains unclear whether Iran can say yes to a nuclear deal — and equally unclear whether the United States can either. But the fact that the leaders spoke to each other this week for the first time in more than three decades is a positive and encouraging step in the right direction.

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In an article in the **New York Times** this week, reporter Lurie Goodstein — **Hispanics Grow Cool to [REDACTED], Poll Finds** — A new survey shows that Hispanics, the nation's largest minority group, have grown increasingly negative toward the Republican Party during the political battle over changing immigration law and lean surprisingly liberal on social issues like gay marriage — a combination of factors that presents a steep challenge for Republicans in trying to win back Hispanic voters.



More than 6 in 10 Hispanic respondents said they felt closer to the Democratic Party than they had in the past, while only 3 in 10 said they felt closer to the Republican Party. When Hispanics were asked to offer descriptions of the parties, 48 percent of the responses about the Republicans were negative associations like “intolerant” and “out of touch,” while 22 percent of the responses for the Democrats were negative.

The outlook for Republicans has grown increasingly negative since 2004, when President George W. Bush won re-election with 44 percent of the Hispanic vote. The survey, released Friday by the Public Religion Research Institute, a nonprofit research group in Washington, found that 56 percent of registered Hispanic voters identified with the Democrats, while 19 percent said they identified with Republicans, and 19 percent as independents.

The religious identities of Hispanics are also changing, with 69 percent saying they grew up Catholic, but only 53 percent saying they identify as Catholic now. Those saying they are evangelical Protestants have increased by six percentage points to 13 percent. But Hispanics, like Americans as a whole, are increasingly claiming no religion at all: 7 percent of Hispanics say they were raised in a faith but now have no religious affiliation, bringing the total percentage of Hispanics with no religion to 12 percent.

Robert P. Jones, the chief executive of the institute, said in an interview: "If these trends continue, what we'll see is a growing polarization among Hispanics, anchored on one end by evangelicals, who tend to be conservative, and on the other end by religiously unaffiliated Hispanics. The unaffiliated voted for Obama by 80 percent, so you see really different political profiles."

Conservatives have often claimed that Hispanics are a natural constituency for the Republican Party because they care about what the party considers family values. This holds true on abortion, with 52 percent saying abortion should be illegal in all or most cases, and 47 percent saying it should be legal. But on same-sex marriage, 55 percent of Hispanics favor allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry, compared with 43 percent who are opposed.

And Hispanics in the poll said they were far more likely to vote for candidates based on their stances on immigration than on their stance on abortion or gay marriage.

The parties' handling of immigration has been a major factor swaying Hispanics' allegiances. In the survey, 42 percent of Hispanics said that Democrats were better able to deal with immigration, while 16 percent said Republicans would do better.

But in a finding that could be tantalizing for both parties, 21 percent of Hispanics polled said neither party is best able to handle immigration, and 17 percent said both parties are equally able to deal with immigration. About one in five registered Hispanic voters and more than one-third of Hispanic citizens who are not registered to vote said they were independents, suggesting they might be up for grabs between the parties.

Latinos named health care as one of their primary concerns, and they were sharply divided on President Obama's health care law. Nearly half, 48 percent, said they would support repealing the law, while 47 percent opposed repeal, a finding that could be promising for Republicans battling that law.

Hispanics in the poll had strong ideas about resolving illegal immigration. Sixty-seven percent of Latinos surveyed said unauthorized immigrants in the country should be allowed to become American citizens if they meet certain requirements. Only 17 percent said they should be allowed to become legal permanent residents but not citizens. An even smaller number, 10 percent, said they should be deported.

In June, the Senate passed a broad immigration bill that includes a path to citizenship for all of an estimated 11.7 million immigrants here illegally. Republican leaders in the House said they would not take up that measure but that they could act on smaller bills that would strengthen enforcement and make other fixes to the system. Some Republicans have said they would consider legal status for illegal immigrants, but without any path to citizenship.

Half of Hispanic adults are immigrants born outside the United States. But in contrast to widespread perceptions that many Latinos are here illegally and do not speak English well, the report cites census data showing that two-thirds of Hispanic adults are United States citizens and about two-thirds either speak English primarily or are bilingual.

The poll was conducted between Aug. 23 and Sept. 3 and was released at a conference of religion news writers in Austin. Online interviews were conducted in English and Spanish with 1,563 Hispanic adults, citizens and noncitizens, who were part of the GfK KnowledgePanel, a nationally representative probability sample of Americans, and the margin of sampling error is plus or minus four percentage points.

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## Something to muse

# Auto Acronyms

What car names really stand for:

**AUDI:** Accelerates Under Demonic Influence

**BMW:** BigMoney Works

**CHEVROLET:** Cheap, Hardly Efficient, Virtually  
Runs On Luck Every Time

**DODGE:** Drips Oil, Drops Grease Everywhere

**FIAT:** Fix It All the Time

**FORD:** Fast Only Rolling Downhill

**GMC:** Garage Man's Companion

**HONDA:** Had One, Never Did Again

**HYUNDAI:** Hope You Understand Nothing is  
Drivable and Inexpensive

**SAAB:** Swedish Automobiles Always Breakdown

**TOYOTA:** Too Often Yankees Overprice This Auto

**VOLVO:** Very Odd-Looking Vehicular Object

**JEEP:** Just Expect Essential Parts

**MG:** Might be Good

**PONTIAC:** Poor Old Nut Thinks It's A Cadillac

## THIS WEEK'S QUOTE/RANT

Twelve years after 9/11 and debating bombing another Muslim country America must stop asking the question why do they hate us. Forget the Syria debate, we need a debate on why we are always debating on whether or not to bomb someone because we are starting to look not some much as the world's policeman but more like George Zimmerman..... inching to use force and then pretending because we had no choice. Now I am against chemical weapons and I don't care who knows it and I understand the appeal on putting the world on notice that if you use poison gas the United States of America will personally, personally fuck you up. We will seek out the council and support of the entire nation of families and no matter what they say we will go ahead..... and fuck you up. But however valid that argument may be, it is I believe outweigh by the fact that we have to stop bombing Muslim countries if we ever want to feel safe from terrorism in our own..... The chemical weapons treaty is important but to the jihadi on the street it just looks like we are always looking for a new reason to bomb them. Even worse, bombing seems to be our answer to everything. Since 1945 when Jesus granted America air superiority.... We have bombed Korea, Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia, Lebanon, Granada, Panama, Iraq, Serbia, Somalia, Bosnia, The Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya and Yeman..... How did we inherit this moral obligation to bring justice to the world via death from above? Are we Zeus? It doesn't make any sense. Our schools are crumbling and yet we want to teach everyone else a lesson. I am no fan of Assad.... I think that he is a sociopath... But we are the only country in the world that muses out loud about who we might bomb.... Iran.... Yeah we might bomb you... Yeah we are thinking about it maybe, depends on the mood. We did this with Iraq after 9/11 even though they had nothing to do with 9/11. We do it with Iran every day. And now it is Syria's turn. We are like a schoolyard bully who's got every kid in the class nervous that they are going to be next. And I don't know if anybody should have that power. Can you imagine going to work and sitting at the lunch table with ten different people in front of you and saying, hey.... You think that we should kill Bob.... Well it would send a message to Steve..... Who acts like this? People in other countries don't talk like this.... Probably because if they did..... We would bomb them.... And we are the only nation as we have seen in this Syrian fiasco that threatens to drop bombs on you while telling you we don't want to get involved. We are just bombing.... No boots on the ground..... A little light bombing and we will be out of your hair in a moment. I remember being on the Howard Stern show twelve years ago, right after 9/11 and Howard said that in retaliation for 9/11 America should bomb a Muslim country, any Muslim

country, it didn't matter which one.... And yet, I was the one on trial for talking crazy. And I remember thinking to myself.... Really bomb any Muslim country..... That's the policy.... Get a map of the Middle East and just throw a dart at it.... Apparently George W. Bush was listening because that's exactly what we did.....

Bill Maher (September 13, 2013)

## THIS WEEK'S MUSIC



This week I am feeling **Bobby Womack**..... again. Robert Dwayne "Bobby" Womack born March 4, 1944) is an American singer-songwriter and musician. An active recording artist since the early 1960s where he started his career as the lead singer of his family musical group *The Valentinos* and as Sam Cooke's backing guitarist, Womack's career has spanned more than 50 years and has spanned a repertoire in the styles of R&B, soul, rock and roll, doo-wop, gospel, and country. Womack wrote and originally recorded The Rolling Stones' first UK No. 1 hit, "*It's All Over Now*" and New Birth's "*I Can Understand It*" among other songs. As a singer he is most notable for the hits "*Lookin' For a Love*", "*That's The Way I Feel About Cha*", "*Woman's Gotta Have It*", "*Harry Hippie*", "*Across 110th Street*" and his 1980s hit "*If You Think You're Lonely Now*". In 2009, Womack was inducted into the **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame**.

Bobby Womack -- *That's The Way I Feel About Cha* -- <http://youtu.be/BPMJFqws6E> & <http://youtu.be/JdIGkpmc4jU>

Bobby Womack -- *If You Think You're Lonely Now* -- <http://youtu.be/vHTmtqIIRRG0> & <http://youtu.be/ERu7Y365CIA>

Bobby Womack -- *I Wish He Didn't Trust Me So Much* -- <http://youtu.be/lKp3f9ZXIGw>

Bobby Womack & Patty Labelle -- <http://youtu.be/DaYW-4ttPco>

Bobby Womack -- ***Nobody Wants You When You're Down In Out*** -- [http://youtu.be/\\_ICBh17uIIs](http://youtu.be/_ICBh17uIIs)

Bobby Womack -- ***Across 110th Street*** -- <http://youtu.be/Js6r-1BerrA>

Bobby Womack -- ***Lookin' for a Love*** -- <http://youtu.be/tNjSBkGUOTU>

Bobby Womack -- ***No Matter How High I Get*** -- <http://youtu.be/rIAt089DFQ8>

Luther Barnes & Bobby Womack -- <http://youtu.be/TIFARzF4xNw>

Bobby Womack -- ***Gypsy Woman*** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXvjRxurNLQ&feature=share&list=RD02tNjSBkGUOTU>

Bobby Womack -- ***The Preacher / More Than I Can*** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIP9rBU9U-s&feature=share&list=RD02tNjSBkGUOTU>

Bobby Womack -- ***California Dreamin*** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXDIMXee9t8&feature=share&list=RD02tNjSBkGUOTU>

Bobby Womack -- ***All Along The Watch Tower*** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkhrEAXlq2A&feature=share&list=RD02tNjSBkGUOTU>

Bobby Womack -- ***Caught In The Middle*** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pvrlWqHC9g&feature=share&list=RD02tNjSBkGUOTU>

Bobby Womack -- ***Fire & Rain*** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWTppmwChBg&feature=share&list=RD02tNjSBkGUOTU>

Bobby Womack -- ***A Change Gonna Come*** -- <http://youtu.be/jNe2rRBJ5j4>

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

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

--

Gregory Brown  
Chairman & CEO  
GlobalCast Partners, LLC

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