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DEAR FRIEND.....

A SAD NIGHT

 AMERICAN FLAG FERGUSON

Once again Black families woke up Tuesday morning knowing that the lives of their children are worth less than the lives of white children in America. The deep distrust of law enforcement in their own communities that so many African Americans feel just got deeper last night -- 108 days since the killing of unarmed teenager Michael Brown -- when the prosecuting attorney announced the decision not to subject the police officer who killed Brown to a trial where all the facts could be publicly known and examined. We now all have the chance to examine the evidence -- released last night -- in the grand jury's decision not to indict white police officer Darren Wilson, who fired six bullets into Michael Brown and ten bullets after the officer in pursuit left his cruiser. Mr. Brown's body was found 153 feet away suggesting that he was moving away. And all fatal shots were fired when Mr. Brown was away from the car including one on the top of his head indicating that he was either falling or leaning forward. Therefore the verdict on America's criminal justice system was already in for many Americans, especially people of color: guilty, for treating young black men differently than young white men.

According to veteran prosecutors and defense attorneys, many things were unusual about the grand jury that ultimately decided not to indict Wilson. But most unusual may have been the decision to hold the news until after dark -- as anxiety rose and hundreds gathered on the street. The decision was

reportedly in by 2 [REDACTED], so why did authorities wait seven hours to announce it? Why did they wait until people were off work and anxious young crowds had gathered outside police headquarters in Ferguson? Focus quickly turned from the grand jury's decision to the response in the streets. While most protesters remained peaceful, the media naturally focused on the very unfortunate violence.

The dad who lost his son said, *"Hurting others or destroying property is not the answer. No matter what the grand jury decides, I do not want my son's death to be in vain. I want it to lead to incredible change, positive change, change that makes the St. Louis region better for everyone."* It's time for us all to honor the wishes of Michael Brown's father and mother. Whatever the facts might have revealed in the trial that will never happen, the time is long overdue to subject our criminal justice system to the requirements of racial justice. The racialization of that system and its policing behavior toward people of color is beyond dispute. The police force in Ferguson that is completely unrepresentative of the community and whose behavior has caused such deep alienation among the people they are supposed to serve and protect has become a parable. Ferguson has become a parable in America, for how black lives are less important in the ways our laws are enforced. Ferguson is not only in Ferguson.

St. Louis can be a lovely place, but legally it can be a toxic police mixture of the Midwestern love of social order and Border State race-based severity. The city is in some ways on the most tremulous fault line in the history of race in America: The home of W.C. Handy and the blues, of Chuck Berry and rock 'n roll, of the Dred Scott court decision on runaway slaves. Not surprisingly, the Missouri state legislature has chosen repeatedly to ignore a landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision of 1985, which held that a police officer cannot use lethal force against a fleeing suspect unless the officer has reason to believe the suspect is armed and an immediate threat to public order. Instead, a police officer in Missouri can shoot a person the officer believes to be a fleeing felon. Period. Not to mention that the officer can shoot one who is moving toward him in a threatening manner. So the real complaint in Missouri on Monday night should not really be with the county prosecutor, however defensive and cloying he may have been in announcing the grand jury's failure to indict the officer who shot the teenager. Like the 'Stand Your Ground' stature in Florida, the officer had law on his side even though this teenager was also unarmed and toward the end running away....

Other large questions remain. Why did prosecutor Robert P. McCulloch never mention in his long statement last night that Michael Brown was unarmed? Why did a trained police officer decide he had no other option than to shoot more bullets into Brown after he had fled their confrontation? Why did anyone have to die? Why did a prosecutor, in his long 25 minutes of explanation of why Wilson was not indicted, sound more like a defense attorney for the police officer instead of an advocate for the unarmed teenager who was shot and killed? Why were the *"conflicting accounts"* of the confrontation between Officer Wilson and Michael Brown not subjected to a trial? The resulting decision from the grand jury was completely foreseeable in a nation where police officers are almost never indicted for the use of deadly force -- especially when it is white police officers killing black people. Monday's verdict and the increased alienation that it created made for a very sad night for the state of Missouri but more importantly it was a sadder night for America.

Obama's Executive Action Will Protect 5 Million Undocumented Immigrants



On Thursday evening, President Barack Obama announced his hotly anticipated executive action on immigration, which will keep nearly 5 million undocumented residents from being deported. Even though the sweeping measure has elicited threats of retaliation from congressional Republicans, Obama said he moved forward because comprehensive immigration reform is unlikely to go anywhere in the GOP-dominated Congress next year.

"I know some of the critics of this action call it amnesty," the president said in his speech. "Well, it's not. Amnesty is the immigration system we have today — millions of people who live here without paying their taxes or playing by the rules, while politicians use the issue to scare people and whip up votes at election time. That's the real amnesty—leaving this broken system the way it is."

A year and a half ago, a bipartisan immigration bill passed in the Senate but died in the House. The bill likely had enough Republican and Democratic votes to pass in the House, but Speaker John Boehner, catering to his tea partiers, refused to bring the measure to the floor. If signed into law, the legislation would have provided legal status to about 11 million undocumented immigrants. Here's a look at who benefits most from Obama's executive action—and who has lost out, thanks in part to GOP obstructionism.

Winners

Undocumented parents of children who are US citizens or permanent residents: "Undocumented immigrants...see little option but to remain in the shadows, or risk their families being torn apart," the president said. "It's been this way for decades. And for decades, we haven't done much about it." His executive action will offer temporary legal status to the undocumented parents of children who are US citizens or permanent residents and allow them to apply for work permits — as long as they have lived in the United States for at least five years, pass a background check, and pay taxes.

DREAMers: The president's move will broaden the 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which had temporarily protected from deportation some 1.2 million young people who were brought into the country illegally as children—as long as they entered the country before June 15, 2007. Now, children who came to the United States before January 1, 2010, will be eligible to apply for deferred-action status. The so-called DREAMers (*named after the proposed Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act*) can apply for employment visas, though there is no direct path for them to lawful permanent residence or citizenship. To the dismay of immigration activists, the executive action does not extend benefits to the hundreds of thousands of parents of DREAMers.

Families: Often US citizens and legal permanent residents are separated for long stretches of time from family members who are awaiting legal permanent resident status. The executive action will expand a waiver program that will reduce the time these families spend apart.

Noncriminal undocumented immigrants: Obama's executive action shifts all of the Department of Homeland Security's enforcement resources toward deporting undocumented immigrants who are criminals—instead of deporting undocumented immigrants who pose no such threat. *"We're going to keep focusing enforcement resources on actual threats to our security,"* Obama said. *"Felons, not families."* The president's order also guts an existing program called Secure Communities, which requires police to share arrestees' fingerprints with federal immigration officials, who can use the information to deport suspects who are here illegally, even if they turn out to be innocent. The program will be replaced with another devoted to deporting only those convicted of criminal offenses.

Highly skilled workers: Skilled workers who have had their legal permanent resident application approved often wait years to receive their visas. Obama's order will allow these people to move and change jobs more easily.

Immigrants with pending cases: As part of the president's executive action, the Justice Department will implement immigration court reforms to quickly process the massive backlog of cases.

Immigrant victims of crime: Obama is directing the Department of Labor to expand the number of visas available for victims of crimes and human trafficking.

The Border Patrol: Obama's executive action shifts resources to the border, though it doesn't specify how much more money will be flowing to Customs and Border Patrol agents and Immigration and Customs Enforcement along the southern border. (The Senate bill would have allotted some \$30 billion over 10 years to hiring at least 19,200 extra border patrol agents.)

Entrepreneurs: The executive action will make it easier for foreign entrepreneurs—who show a potential to create jobs in the United States and attract investment—to immigrate to the US, though there was no mention how the administration will achieve this.

Losers

Undocumented immigrants who have been here since 2011: The failed Senate immigration bill would have allowed immigrants without papers—and their children and spouses—to apply for provisional legal status, if they have been in the United States since the end of 2011. These immigrants could have eventually applied for citizenship.

Undocumented agricultural workers: Under the Senate bill, undocumented agricultural workers would have been eligible for legal immigrant status if they had worked at least 100 full days between 2010 and 2012. The bill would have created a path to citizenship for these farmworkers.

Ag workers with papers: The Senate bill would also have created a new temporary work visa called the W visa for farmworkers. The new program would have permitted these laborers to eventually apply for permanent resident status without an employer's sponsorship. Less-skilled non-farmworkers could have also applied for a W visa.

Other types of legal immigrants: The Senate bill would have set up a new system that would grant visas to up to 250,000 foreigners a year. Foreign nationals would have accumulated points based on their skill level, education, and employment background. The new system would have cleared the current backlog of applicants for family-based or work visas.

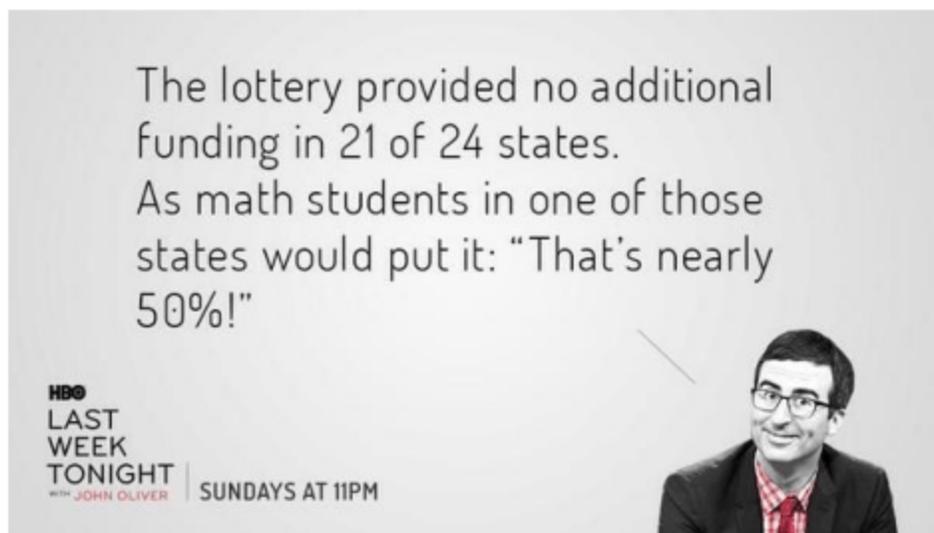
Foreigners attending American universities: More foreigners graduating from American universities in the fields of science, math, and technology would have been able to apply for permanent visas.

Immigrant detainees: If the Senate bill had okayed by the House, unaccompanied minors, mentally disabled immigrants, and other vulnerable people going through the detention and deportation process would have been granted free legal representation. The bill would have limited the use of solitary confinement in immigrant detention facilities.

Erika Eichelberger – Nov. 20, 2014 – Mother Jones

State lotteries claim to be good for education and the
general well being of citizens.

*But are they? (Spoiler alert: **No.**)*



Web Link: <http://youtu.be/9PK-netuhHA>

Anyone who's ever bought a lottery ticket needs to see John Oliver's explanation of how it all works. First, there are the remote odds of winning, described on "***Last Week Tonight***" as akin to being struck by lightning while being eaten by a shark. Secondly, there's the notion that playing the lottery can help fund education, which is supposed to make lottery players feel good about spending money on the games even when they lose. But as Oliver revealed on Sunday night, the truth about where that money goes might not leave you feeling very good at all:

In North Carolina, for example, the lottery promised to add an extra \$500 million to education every year when it was launched a decade ago. Today, the state spends less per student on education than it did when the lottery began, Oliver said. Check out the clip above for more.

And before you run out and buy five lottery tickets because the Mega Millions jackpot has hit a new record let me reiterate the cruel truth about lotteries. They are (1) regressive taxes on poor people, in that a ticket costs relatively more for a poor person than a rich person, and (2) punitive taxes on the poor and uneducated people who are the most avid buyers. The people who least can afford it are throwing away on average 47 cents on the dollar every time they buy a ticket. And the government, which relies increasingly on the lottery for funding, goes out of its way to tell them it is a good idea.

State lotteries amount to a hidden tax on the poor. They eat up about 9 percent of take-home incomes from households making less than \$13,000 a year. They siphon \$50 billion a year away from local businesses—besides stores where they're sold. And they are encouraged by state-sponsored ads suggesting everyone can win, win, win! State lotteries, which once were illegal, now exist in most states. What many people don't know about lotteries is that they prey on those who can least afford it; most people never win anything big; and 11 states raise more money from lotteries than from corporate taxes. Beyond the moral, mental health or religious debates over gambling, lotteries are another example of how society preys on the poor and the working-class.

State lotteries do far more harm than good—especially at the bottom of the economic ladder.

1. Legalized gambling is almost everywhere. Legalized gambling is available in every state except for Utah and Hawaii. This includes state lotteries, which are in 42 states, Puerto Rico and Washington DC. Lotteries were illegal for most of the 20th century, but that changed in 1964 when New Hampshire—a state without an income tax—reinstated a state lottery. The first lotteries predate the American Revolution, but those mostly privately run efforts were so corrupt they were completely prohibited by every state in 1894.

2. They suck billions out of the economy. In 2009, \$50.4 billion was spent on state lottery tickets and video kiosks. The government pocketed \$17.9 billion of this total in 2010, which breaks down to 30 percent in profits and 8 percent in administrative costs, including advertising. The rest went to prizes and commissions to stores selling the tickets. Many corner stores could not remain open without the income from lottery sales.

3. They are a tax from anti-tax politicians. Tax-averse Democrats and Republicans have increasingly been relying on state lotteries to subsidize basic public programs like schools instead of raising taxes for that purpose. In 11 states — Delaware, West Virginia, Rhode Island, Oregon, South Dakota, Georgia, Michigan, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas and Washington—the lottery raised more per person than corporate income taxes. *“The long-term shift in tax burdens from capital and corporations to individuals and their activities is perhaps best illustrated by the rise of state lotteries,”* wrote tax expert David Cay Johnston, calling lotteries *“the most heavily taxed consumer product in America.”*

4. They hit the poorest the hardest. *“Simply put, lotteries take the most from those who can least afford it,”* wrote economist Richard Wolff. *“Instead of taking those most able to pay (the principle of federal income tax in the U.S.), state leaders use lotteries to disguise a regressive tax that falls on the middle and even more on the poor.”* A 2010 study found that households with take-home incomes of less than \$13,000 spent on average \$645 a year on lottery tickets, which is about 9 percent of their income. The reason people play lotteries varies, but it mixes hopes and dreams with desperation: poorer people see it as a slim chance to radically improve their standard of living.

5. Communities of color, less-educated spend the most. Numerous academic studies have found that non-whites spend much more on lotteries than whites, with one study putting the figure at \$998 for African Americans and \$210 for whites. Household with incomes under \$25,000 spent an average of about \$600 a year, while \$100,000-plus earners spent about \$300 year. People who never graduated from college spent the most, about \$700 a year, while graduates spent under \$200.

In the words of one lottery director: *“Lotteries are different from any other gaming product. Lottery players risk a small amount of money against very long odds to win a large prize, with the net proceeds going to the public good.”* The lottery industry stands out in the gambling industry by virtue of several unique features. It is the most widespread form of gambling in the U.S.: currently, lotteries operate in 37 states and the District of Columbia. It is the only form of commercial gambling which a majority of adults report having played. It is also the only form of gambling in the U.S. that is a virtual government monopoly. State lotteries have the worst odds of any common form of gambling (a chance of approximately 1 in 12-14 million for most existing lotto games), but they also promise the greatest

potential payoff to the winner in absolute terms, with prizes regularly amounting to tens of millions of dollars.

To grasp how unlikely it was for Gloria C. MacKenzie, an 84-year-old Florida widow, to have won the \$590 million Powerball lottery in May 2013, Robert Williams, a professor who studies lotteries, offers this scenario: Head down to your local convenience store, slap \$2 on the counter, and fill out a six-numbered Powerball ticket. It will take you about 10 seconds. To get your chance of winning down to a coin toss, or 50 percent, you will need to spend 12 hours a day, every day, filling out tickets for the next 55 years. It's going to be expensive. You will have to plunk down your \$2 at least 86 million times.

Williams could have simply said the odds of winning the \$590 million jackpot were 1 in 175 million. But that wouldn't register. *"People just aren't able to grasp 1 in 175 million,"* Williams says. *"It's just beyond our experience — we have nothing in our evolutionary history that prepares us or primes us, no intellectual architecture, to try and grasp the remoteness of those odds."* And so we continue to play. And play. People in 43 states bought a total of 232 million Powerball tickets for the lottery won by MacKenzie. In fact, the lottery in the United States is so popular that it was one of the few consumer products where spending held steady and, in some states, increased, during the recent recession. That's still the case. About 57 percent of Americans reported buying tickets in the last 12 months. For the 2012 fiscal year, U.S. lottery sales totaled about \$78 billion.

It may seem easy to understand why people keep playing. Somebody has to win so why can't this person be me. But to really understand why hundreds of millions of people play a game they will never win, a game with serious social consequences, you have to suspend logic and consider it through an alternate set of rules — rules written by neuroscientists, social psychologists, and economists. When the odds are so small that they are difficult to conceptualize, the risk we perceive has less to do with outcomes than with how much fear or hope we are feeling when we make a decision, how we *"frame"* and organize sets of logical facts, and even how we perceive ourselves in relation to others. The lottery is a game where reason and logic are rendered obsolete, and hope and dreams are on sale. And nobody knows how to sell hope and dreams better than the Tennessee Education State Lottery Corp or in the 23 other States that claim your lottery purchases will go toward education and that you have a chance to win the big one. Remember that the selling the lottery fantasy is only possible because the probabilities of winning are so infinitesimal they become irrelevant.... Check out the clip above via the web link for a funny poignant analysis by John Oliver.....

A Super-Simple Way to Understand the Net Neutrality Debate

It's one of the most important policy disputes that will determine the future of the Internet, and now President Obama has formally weighed in so-called net neutrality. What has been a long simmering battle between telecommunications and tech lobbyists is now likely to step to the front of public debate.

For all the arcana in telecommunications law, there is a really simple way of thinking of the debate over net neutrality: Is access to the Internet more like access to electricity, or more like cable television service?

Regulated electrical utilities perform a remarkable service. Nearly every time I flip a light switch in my home, energy that was generated at some distant power plant and that flows through a complex network of transformers and power lines makes its way to the bulbs overhead, so that I can see.

I pay my local electric utility (mine is Pepco, which serves Washington) a nice fee for this service every month, tied to how much of this energy I use and its current price per kilowatt hour, with some money built in for the utility to make a comfortable profit. But beyond that, Pepco has no role in determining what

I use that electricity for.

Pepco doesn't get to offer more reliable, cheaper service if I go with Pepco's preferred brand of refrigerator, with which the utility has some financial arrangement. They do not know, let alone control, what types of light bulbs or clothes dryer I power using the electricity they sell to me.

Yes, there are some broad efforts by electric utilities to urge me and other consumers to conserve energy, especially at peak times, but those are less about Pepco having special deals and more about trying to reduce energy consumption at the times it costs them the most to generate it.

For all the technical complexity of generating electricity and distributing it to millions of people, the economic arrangement is very simple: I give them money. They give me electricity. I do with it what I will.

Things are completely different with cable service.

Comcast, my cable provider, offers me a menu of packages from which I might choose, each with a different mix of channels. It goes through long and sometimes arduous negotiations with the owners of those cable channels and has a different business arrangement with each of them. The details of those arrangements are opaque to me as the consumer; all I know is that I can get the movie package for X dollars a month or the sports package for Y dollars and so on.

Local regulators can restrict pricing for the most basic cable offerings. But more extensive cable service is considered a discretionary good, and cable companies have wide latitude to price their offerings at whatever the market will bear, and offer whatever mix of channels they think best.

The downside is that it is easy to end up paying a few hundred dollars a month for cable service. The upside is that this state of affairs has a profusion of new channels and entertainment options. Whether your preference is for high-quality literary scripted television dramas, trashy-but-amusing reality shows or live sports from every corner of the world, you have more options available than ever before, both live and on demand. That is a genuine improvement over the state of Americans' home entertainment options from just a generation ago.

All of which brings us to net neutrality and the Internet.

One theory of the case, and the one that the Obama administration embraced Monday, is that the Internet is like electricity. It is fundamental to the 21st century economy, as essential to functioning in modern society as electricity. It is a public utility. *"We cannot allow Internet service providers (ISPs) to restrict the best access or to pick winners and losers in the online marketplace for services and ideas,"* the president said in his written statement.

In the president's logic, and that of the Internet content companies that are the most aggressive supporters of net neutrality, just as your electric utility has no say in how you use the electricity they sell you, the Internet should be a reliable way to access content produced by anyone, regardless of whether they have any special business arrangement with the utility.

Those arguing against net neutrality, most significantly the cable companies, say the Internet will be a richer experience if the profit motive applies, if they can negotiate deals with major content providers (the equivalent of cable channels) so that Netflix or Hulu or other streaming services that use huge bandwidth have to pay for the privilege.

The same kind of business model that has created a boom in content for cable television customers can create a more fertile environment for an explosion of creativity on the Internet, goes this logic.

It would also give your Internet provider considerably more economic leverage. It would, in the non-net-neutrality world, be free to throttle the speed with which you could access services that don't pay up, or block sites entirely, as surely as you cannot watch a cable channel that your cable provider chooses not to offer (perhaps because of a dispute with the channel over fees).

Keep in mind, just because the Obama administration has weighed in doesn't mean this debate is over.

The decision, as the president's own statement acknowledges, belongs to the Federal Communications Commission alone. Regardless of where it comes out, what is at play is a question that cuts to the core of what role the Internet will play in our daily lives.

I support President Obama and others such as Netflix Inc., which boasts 37 million U.S. subscribers, who are leading the charge to regulate Internet service providers like utilities. Because I personally believe if net neutrality's principles hadn't been in effect for the past 20 years, many entrepreneurs might have been discouraged from developing a wide range of online services that have created millions of jobs and billions of dollars in wealth, making the U.S. the world leader. Preserving net neutrality will put more people to work and enrich more investors under this theory. If the cable companies want to increase speed, let them but I am hesitant to let them create a speed differential which they then would be able to use to diminish the quality of service to Internet-only video services such as Netflix and Hulu. The Internet has grown dramatically because it is egalitarian and cheap, so why not keep it this way because I trust government over AT&T, Comcast and Time Warner who are only interested in creating more profits for themselves.

We Are the Most Unequal Society in the Developed World... And We Don't Know It



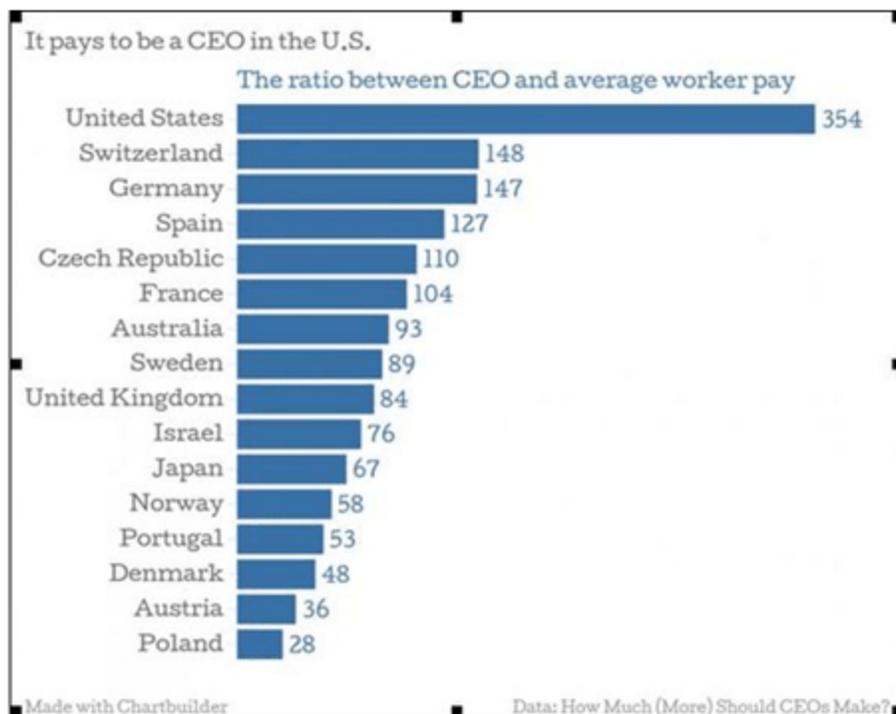
One of the biggest problems in American is the growing social and economic inequality. Yet, it seems that extreme inequality mattered little to the majority of voters who put pro-business candidates into office. After all, the Republicans, along with far too many Democrats, are certain to cater to their Wall Street/CEO donors. So why don't Americans really want to stop the ever rising gap between the super-rich and the rest of us? A recent study ("**How Much (More) Should CEOs Make? A Universal Desire for More Equal Pay**") by Sorapop Kiatpongsan and Michael I. Norton provides insight on why Americans aren't more upset about rising inequality: It shows we are clueless about how bad it really is. Their analysis of a 2009 international survey of 55,187 people from 40 countries, found that when it comes to understanding the severity of inequality, we're the most clueless of all.

At first glance Americans are virtually blind to the growing gap between CEO pay and the pay of the average worker. As the chart below shows that gap has increased dramatically. In 1965, for every dollar earned by the average worker, CEOs earned 20 dollars. By 2012, that gap mushroomed to 354 to one. But, when asked in the survey, Americans grossly underestimated this gap. Instead of 354 to 1, the Americans in representative survey think it is only 30 to 1. When asked what the ideal pay gap should be, Americans say that a fair gap would be about 7 to 1. More amazing still, the survey results, combined for all countries, show that the misconception of inequality doesn't significantly vary by age, gender, income, political leanings or education.

Why are we so blind to inequality?

Most of us have no idea that our golden land of opportunity is the runaway leader among developed nations when it comes to inequality, (see chart below.) This dubious distinction runs counter to American Dream that we've been indoctrinated with since birth. As a result, we reflexively think that America is epitome of democracy -- the fairest most just and most upwardly mobile country in history. That makes it hard for us to account for why we are more unequal than all these other countries. So, I suspect many of us just tune out the data. It's too jarring to the deep-seated doctrines that comprise our national identity.

Our misreading of inequality also may be a legacy of the post-WWII economic boom. During that time, our working class had the highest global standard of living with ever increasing yearly real wages. (Please see my last post.) In the heat of the Cold War, it was American policy to boost jobs and incomes to make sure our workers and middle class were the envy of the world. If you add in the late New Deal and WWII into the mix, we're looking at more than a half century of rising prosperity for working people. Also during this period income taxes on the wealthy were extremely high, more than 90% on the highest bracket during WWII. As a result the top one-tenth of 1% while living extremely well, saw their share of total U.S. wealth decline, (see chart below.)



Little wonder, that the massive baby boomer generation grew up both with the idea of relatively equality and the reality of it. Of course, there were wealthy people all over America, but life was getting better and better for the vast majority of Americans. We may still be living with this cultural hangover and operating from a societal self-image from yesteryear. We are likely to cling to it for quite a while, in part, because it's comforting as new economic insecurities take hold. As workers from other nations pass us by, we look in the mirror and still hope we are the fairest of them all.

Both political parties refuse to address inequality

Perhaps the biggest reason we are so misinformed stems from the failure of both parties, especially the Democrats, to address rising inequality in a meaningful way. Yes, the Democrats tend to support modest rises in the minimum wage that indeed make a difference to those stuck in the lowest-paying jobs. But they won't go near the revolutionary idea of placing a legal limit on what the CEO/worker pay gap should be -- let's say at 12 to 1 which the Strong Republicans and the well-educated favor. The reason is obvious: Politicians live in fear of a different revolution -- a massive revolt from their corporate donors, who wouldn't dream of earning so little. In fact, the entire elite establishment -- in finance, in the corporate world, in the higher levels of government, academia and the media have no intention of limiting their incomes, no matter what the public believes to be just and fair. Here lies the very essence of class struggle between the 99 percent and 1 percent, and both parties want no part of it.

What will it take wake us up to inequality?

The good news is that Americans of all genders, shades, incomes, education and politics think on average that the wage gap should be about 7 to 1, not 354 to one. That's a heck of a good place to start says Les Leopold in his recent article in the **Huffington Post** – ***We Are the Most Unequal Society in the Developed World... And We Don't Know It.*** But imagine if the only real economic debate was between the Strong Democrats who thought a fair wage gap should be 5 to 1 versus the Strong Republicans who thought it should be 12 to 1. Progressives should be able to build upon this shared sense of basic fairness, one that is miles apart from what elites expect and feel is their due.

For about six months Occupy Wall Street touched this nerve and put inequality on the agenda. "*We are the 99 percent*" became our national anthem. For the first time in a generation the country was talking about the gap between super-rich financiers and the rest of us. Roughly at the same time, the Tea Party emerged with a different message. They also sensed that something was profoundly wrong. For them the problem is government. They're not concerned with inequality. If they see it at all, they follow Ayn Rand and blame it on those at the bottom for not working hard enough. They, and their political allies, revel in talk about "*takers and makers*" to explain away the growing and glaring economic disparities.

Occupy disappeared. We no longer have 900 encampments around the world to remind everyone that inequality is our new way of life. But something still is stirring at the bottom. Minimum wage campaigns are succeeding even in Red states. The quest for \$15 per hour pay for low-wage workers is growing. And most importantly, each day millions more face the stark reality of trying to lead a decent life on low-pay and porous benefits with blatant inequality all around. Elites and their academic acolytes will counter by blaming inequality on advanced technology and the lack of education. The poor can make it if only more elite colleges admitted them, if only charter schools replaced tenure-saddled public schools, if only the teachers unions disappeared. Only then will inequality be reduced as those at bottom get more degrees and advanced skills.

To be sure, the "*help-thyself*" message has resonance, and access to more education is a good in itself. But it leaves in place the powerful structures of elite economic domination, (the subject of future blogs.) It will take a different kind of education to reduce the wage gap. We will need to learn the skills of building a mass movement, that starts by providing education on the realities of growing

inequality. Only then can we break through the faulty self-image of America that is crippling us. Spreading the word can really make a real difference. It's something we all can do. We are the most unequal society in the developed world, and it doesn't have to be that way. ***And this is my rant of the week....***

WEEK'S READINGS

Five Reasons Climate Deniers Are Dead Wrong



As I reported in my weekly offerings early this month, a new [REDACTED] Climate Change report sees dangerous risks of irreversible damage. Delegates from more than 100 governments and top scientists met in Copenhagen on Oct 27-31 to edit the report, meant as the main guide for nations working on a [REDACTED] deal to fight climate change at a summit in Paris in late 2015. And the report was published/released on November 2, 2014. As a result, the European Union leaders also agreed to cut emissions by 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, in a shift from fossil fuels towards renewable energies, and urged other major emitters led by China and the United States to follow.

"The report will be a guide for us," Peruvian Environment Minister Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, who will host a [REDACTED] meeting of environment ministers in Lima in late 2014 to lay the groundwork for the Paris summit, told Reuters. He said the synthesis report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), drawing on three mammoth scientific reports published since September 2013, would show the need for urgent and ambitious action in coming years. In a paragraph summing up the risks, the report said that a continued rise in world greenhouse gas emissions is "*increasing the likelihood of severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts for people and ecosystems.*" And if this isn't enough of a warning..... ***Nothing Is!!!***

So here are five common refrains you'll hear from climate naysayers... and why they're dead wrong.

Myth #1: It's only a few degrees

What the naysayers claim: "A few degrees of extra warming? How bad could that be? We shouldn't bother with reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

The reality: Even a global temperature rise of 2 degrees Celsius will disrupt our lives and threaten our economies.

The world has warmed about 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit since 1880 (that's 0.8 degrees Celsius). That may not sound like much, but only a few degrees is all that has separated us from the unfavorably cold global conditions that the Earth experienced during the last ice age thousands of years ago. Now that we're changing things in the opposite direction, we're already starting to see what a warmer world could have in store for us. For example, California's record drought, which is consistent with scientific studies showing increasingly drier and hotter conditions in the American Southwest, has cost the state's agricultural sector about \$1.5 billion and up to 17,100 jobs. And as the saying goes, "*No farms, no food.*" Struggling farmers have already begun adapting by switching production away from water-intensive crops like oranges and almonds, which means more costly and less available produce for the rest of us.

Around the world, intense rainstorms, severe droughts and heat waves are becoming more frequent. Rising seas are damaging homes near the water. Some populations of animals are starting to die out. And that's just 1.5 degrees!

Now consider what could happen if we do nothing to limit the pollution that's causing global warming. The best available estimates say the Earth will warm another 3 to 7 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100 (roughly 2 to 4 degrees Celsius). In other words, the more we pollute, the worse things will get.

Myth 2: It's freaking cold today

What they say: "Did you hear about the record cold snap? It's not even warm out, so let's not waste time and resources on climate change."

Reality: Even with climate change, it still gets cold sometimes. But hot days are happening more often, and the consequences are serious.

Since 1950, hot days have become more common and cold days have become less common around the world. In the U.S., we're seeing record-high temperatures set more than twice as often as record-cold temperatures. But the bottom line is this: "Less cold" never means "never cold." Cold days will happen less often as the world warms, but they won't go away.

Myth 3: Carbon limits will harm the economy

What naysayers claim: “Cutting carbon emissions will cut growth, cut the GDP and destroy our modern civilization.”

Reality: The worst thing we can do for our economy is sit back and do nothing about climate change.

If we don't do anything about climate change, we'll have serious economic problems on our hands. Top economist, Nicolas Stern, estimated that each ton of carbon pollution we put in the air costs society at least \$85. Seeing as humans put about 35 billion tons of carbon pollution into the atmosphere every year, the math is pretty simple—and it doesn't look good.

Here's the good news: A shift to a low-carbon economy could add \$2.5 trillion to the world economy annually. A recent study showed that in Australia, the solar industry was creating jobs while at the same time reducing electricity costs.

The world is already making the transition. That's why we need to stop with all the arguing, and start pressuring world leaders to make strong commitments to reducing carbon pollution and other greenhouse gas emissions.. The momentum's already building—we just need to act before it's too late.

Myth 4: It's too late

What they say: “Even if we stopped burning coal and oil today, the world would continue to warm. It's too late to do anything about it. Why bother?”

Reality: Climate change is already happening today. How much the climate warms in the future is up to us.

We're already feeling the effects of climate change. But that's precisely why we need to both prepare for the climate change impacts we can't avoid and act quickly to curb the carbon pollution and other greenhouse gases that are causing the problem in the first place. It's not an “either/or” decision—we need to do both. The longer we wait to make the transition to clean energy, the worse this problem will get for our children and future generations. It's our choice.

Myth 5: It's too hard to shift to clean energy.

What they say: “Shifting over to clean energy would require changing our way of life and shutting down our economy, and it wouldn’t even solve the problem.”

Reality: Is it too hard to go to the moon, eradicate smallpox or end apartheid? Is it too hard to build a computer that fits in your pocket? No? Then it’s not too hard to build a clean-energy future, either.

When was the last time we accepted “*It’s too hard*” as an excuse? Is that what they said in the U.S. when President John Kennedy wanted to go to the moon? Is that what they said before the Iron Curtain fell in Eastern Europe? Or before smallpox was eradicated from the face of the earth?

No.

In just the same way, we can’t accept “it’s too hard” as a reason not to tackle the climate crisis. And the fact is, the solutions are here, right in front of our eyes. Between 2007–2012, electricity generation from both wind and solar grew by over 300 percent in the U.S, and are set to continue growing rapidly over the next two decades. China is already the world’s biggest investor in low-carbon energy, already has the most renewable energy installed capacity in the world and is expected to invest an additional \$294 billion through 2015, to counter climate change. Further, the country recently announced it will ban coal use in the dense, smoggy capital of Beijing by 2020. The transition to clean energy won’t happen overnight, but it will happen sooner than we think.

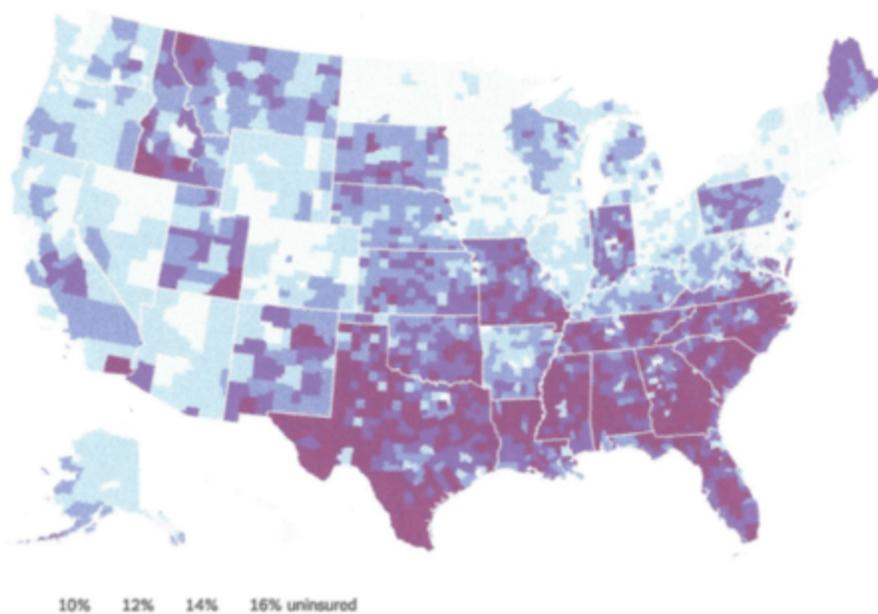
What’s Next?

Look, there will always be naysayers. But we can’t let them force the rest of us to give up hope. Doing so would prevent the entire world from making progress. We’re on the right track, and if we act soon, we can still achieve a sustainable future where our prosperity is powered by clean energy. What we do today matters more than ever, so it’s your choice: will you give up on solving the most pressing issue of our time? Or will you help us create a better tomorrow for generations to come.

Lauren Meling, *The Climate Reality Project*: August 21, 2014

Who Would Have Health Insurance if Medicaid Expansion Weren't Optional

Who remains uninsured in 2014



A new data set suggests that more than three million people would have gained health insurance across 24 states if the Supreme Court had ruled differently. In 2012, the Supreme Court ruled that a cornerstone of the Affordable Care Act — its expansion of Medicaid to low-income people around the country — must be optional for states. But what if it had ruled differently? More than three million people, many of them across the South, would now have health insurance through Medicaid, according to an Upshot analysis of data from Enroll America and Civis Analytics. The uninsured rate would be two percentage points lower.

Today, the odds of having health insurance are much lower for people living in Tennessee than in neighboring Kentucky, for example, and lower in Texas than in Arkansas. Sharp differences are seen outside the South, too. Maine, which didn't expand Medicaid, has many more residents without insurance than neighboring New Hampshire. In a hypothetical world with a different Supreme Court ruling, those differences would be smoothed out. And that was the idea behind the Affordable Care Act. Before the law passed in 2010, the country had a highly regional approach to health policy and widely disparate results in both health insurance status and measures of public health. One of the main goals of the law was to provide some national standards and reduce those inequities by using federal dollars to buy coverage for low-income people in every state.

In many ways, as the Enroll/Civis data highlights, the law has succeeded in bringing health insurance to the disadvantaged populations who have historically lacked it. Its model shows that the biggest beneficiaries of the law have been the very groups that tend to suffer in today's economy: blacks and Hispanics; young adults; people living in rural areas; women; and those earning the lowest incomes. (For a detailed look at who was covered by the law this year, read our article on the most salient trends.)

But the uneven Medicaid expansion, largely a result of Republican politicians' dislike of the program and their concern that their states might get stuck with the costs, has limited the law's ability to cover

poor Americans living in many of the poorest states in the country. Currently, 26 states and the District of Columbia have expanded their programs. In the country's two poorest states, Mississippi and Louisiana, more than 15 percent of the population between 18 and 65 remains uninsured in 2014, the data show.

Consider New Mexico and Texas, two states with among the highest rates of the uninsured in 2013. The gray arrow shows how much the uninsured rate has declined in the last year, according to the Enroll/Civis data. In reality, New Mexico expanded its program while Texas did not. But the green arrow shows our estimate for how much more Texas' rate might have declined if it had expanded, too.

Nearly all the states at the bottom of the list were those that did not expand. That's because many started with high percentages of uninsured people and made smaller reductions than states that did expand. But if every state had expanded, many states now near the bottom of the list would have moved up.

Medicaid has some disadvantages when compared with employer-based insurance; in many states, people covered under the plan can have trouble finding doctors who will treat them. But surveys have shown that the program is popular among the people who use it. And it can protect low-income people from financial calamity if they have an accident or serious illness that brings large hospital bills.

Our what-if map is, of course, a kind of thought experiment; it should not be read as a perfect prediction. The Enroll/Civis model is devised to estimate who had health insurance in 2013 and who has it now, based on interviews with thousands of adults along with commercial and government data. At The Upshot's request, Civis reran its calculations assuming every state had expanded Medicaid. Several factors beyond a mere decision to expand would have influenced each state's enrollment in Medicaid, including how easy officials made it to sign up and how hard they worked to get the word out. Those sorts of state differences aren't captured by this type of estimation, which is based on data on enrollment in the states that did expand. But though our numbers are estimates, they still give us an approximate picture of what the country might have looked like today without the court decision.

Because some states that have not expanded Medicaid may do so later, the data also gives us a glimpse of the possible future in some states. Take Pennsylvania: Its governor, a Republican, recently reached an agreement with the federal government, and Medicaid coverage will be expanded in January. In the current situation, Pennsylvania stands out as a rare mid-Atlantic state with a modest rise in the percentage of residents with health insurance. Our hypothetical map shows what the situation may be there next year. Another state worth looking at is Maine. In that state, the legislature voted five times to expand the program, but Gov. Paul LePage vetoed the bill each time.

Mr. LePage is up for re-election Tuesday, in what looks to be a tight race. If beaten by his Democratic challenger, Mike Michaud, then Maine, too, might begin to look more as it does in our hypothetical map.

By KEVIN QUEALY and MARGOT SANGER-KATZ – NOV. 3, 2014 – NEW YORK TIMES

And as I pointed out last week if you notice in the above graphic/map (with the exception of a few) the states that have the most numbers of uninsured (**darker**) are states that have Republican governors

who have rejected Obamacare/ACA without offering anything in return to the millions of Americans in need in their states. Need one say more.....

It's Economic Insecurity, Stupid



The post-mortem of the midterm elections is widely held to show that people are more concerned about economic stagnation than about any of the specific policies Democrats promote, such as climate control, immigration reform, and Internet neutrality. My interviews with middle-class Americans reveal that many are even more concerned with losing what they have than with gaining more of the same. True, they are bitter that their real income has not increased for years on end, and they sense that they will be unable to provide a better life for their children than they had. However, they are even more concerned about the fact that they are no longer sure that the job they have will be there tomorrow; that Social Security will be there when they retire; and that their pension fund will not be retroactively diluted and is properly funded. They are even more alarmed about the future of Medicare, which they are told will go broke in the near future, and they are not at all sure that they can afford the "affordable" Obamacare, which does not cap the costs of the health insurance access that it provides. They read about millions who have been kicked out of their homes in recent years. In short, they feel insecure, and for good reason.

Psychological studies support the impressions I gained from my interviews that people care more about insecurity than stagnation. One of the most robust findings of these studies is that people are highly "loss averse." In plain English, they are much more concerned about losing a \$1,000 they have than with gaining another \$1,000, although many an economist will tell them that both thousands have the same purchasing power, the same value. Finally, many people seem to not believe that the policies Democrats tout -- such as increasing the minimum wage and investing in education and infrastructure -- will return the economy to a high-growth pathway and lift most people's wages in the foreseeable future, and neither do I. Democrats should hence add to their efforts to find more effective ways to restore higher economic growth an economic security agenda that would combine refurbished and reframed existing policies with some new ones. The main elements should include:

- Job security. Any person seeking a job should be able to find one. If none is available in the private sector, jobs should be provided through public works, as they were during the Depression.

- Basic income security. Negative income tax, which in effect provides a floor underneath which the income of many millions of American may not fall, is for some reason unknown to many Americans and not flogged by Democrats. It should be expanded and reissued as a basic income security plan.
- Retirement security. Democrats should call for applying the Social Security tax to all incomes (under 2015 rules, only income below \$118,500 is taxed!), and show that this change alone will suffice to make Social Security safe for generations to come. They should also favor stronger pension fund insurance.
- Health care insurance. Democrats should call more attention to the fact that Medicare is doing much better than many feared, as the rise in healthcare costs has slowed down over the last few years. And they should add a public option to the array of options offered under Obamacare, to ensure that there will be an affordable option and one that does not have astronomical deductibles.

Of course, I realize that the Republicans will not buy any of this. However, this opposition will not prevent economic security from becoming a powerful agenda for the next election that will speak to what I believe concerns the majority of Americans even more than increases in wages.

Amitai Etzioni – November 19, 2014 – The Huffington Post

The Da Vinci Tower



Skyscraper with Rotating Floors ... a modern marvel of architectural design.

Web Link: [\[REDACTED\]](#)

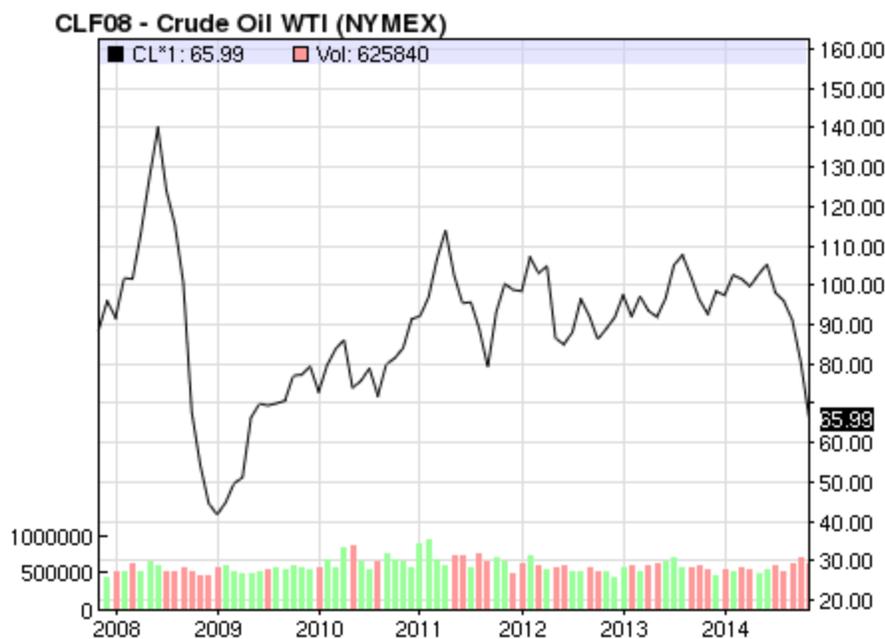
The Da Vinci Tower (also known as Dynamic Architecture Building) is a proposed 313 m (1,027 ft), 68-floor tower in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The tower is expected to be architecturally innovative. Uniquely, each floor will be able to rotate independently. This will result in a constantly changing shape for the tower. Each floor will rotate a maximum of one full rotation in 90 minutes. The entire tower will be powered by wind turbines and solar panels that will also provide electricity to five other buildings in the vicinity. The turbines will be located between each of the rotating floors and could generate up to 1,200,000 kilowatt-hours of energy.

It will also be the world's first prefabricated skyscraper. 90% of the tower will be built in a factory and shipped to the construction site. This will allow the entire building to be built in only 18 months. The only part of the tower that will be built at the construction site will be the core. Part of this prefabrication will be the decrease in cost and number of workers. The total cost will be 23% less than a normal skyscraper of the same size, while only 90 people will work on the construction site. The majority of the workers will be in factories, where it will be much safer. Architect: David Fisher. For more please see the video via the about Web Link.



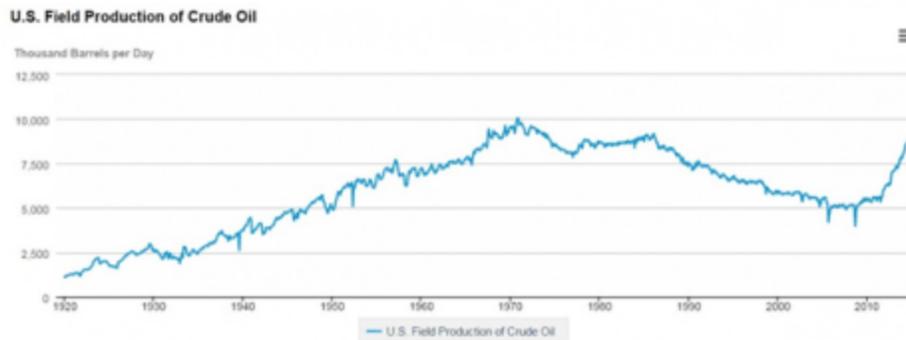
If you have been filling up the gas in your car recently you have had a pleasant surprise as the prices have been falling every week since June, with the average cost of regular gas falling below \$2.80 a gallon across the nation. Now here in L.A. we haven't seen this price as the price for regular is close to \$3 a gallon, but it definitely an improvement motorist being that the price was a dollar more a gallon just a month ago.... So what happened? To answer this question, this week in **The Washington Post**, Chris Mooney wrote – ***A simple guide to the sudden collapse in oil prices.***

The news in the markets is dramatic: Prices for West Texas Intermediate crude oil -- often used as a benchmark of U.S. prices -- dropped below \$70 per barrel for the first time since 2010. This continues a dramatic price slump for oil, which cost over \$100 per barrel as recently as June. And as a result this shift has markedly reduced average U.S. gasoline prices (which are now well below \$3 per gallon) and may bolster the U.S. economy heading into the Christmas spending season -- by putting considerably more money in consumers' wallets. But what's driving this slump -- which is quickly becoming the single most important economic story of 2014 (and maybe 2015)? There's one short-term reason and three longer-term reasons.



The most immediate reason is that the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries -- a group of 12 nations including Saudi Arabia, Iran and Venezuela that holds enormous power over global energy markets, producing 40 percent of global oil supply -- decided on Thursday not to cut production at their meeting in Vienna. The meeting was the most important in years, because it came amid a pre-existing slump in prices. Everybody wanted to know if OPEC would take any action to halt the decline. It didn't -- presumably because its members decided it was wiser to weather the current storm -- and crude oil prices immediately tanked. The long term reasons include booming U.S. and world oil production, little demand in Europe and Japan, and improving automobile fuel efficiency standards.

1) Booming U.S. and world oil production. Even as OPEC kept production steady, it has been growing elsewhere. The United States, most of all, has seen a major growth in oil production, thanks to the shale oil revolution, in which new technologies like horizontal drilling have allowed access to hydrocarbons deep beneath the Earth's surface. The figures from the Energy Information Administration are truly dramatic: Almost twice as many barrels a day of crude oil are being produced now in the U.S., versus the mid-2000s:

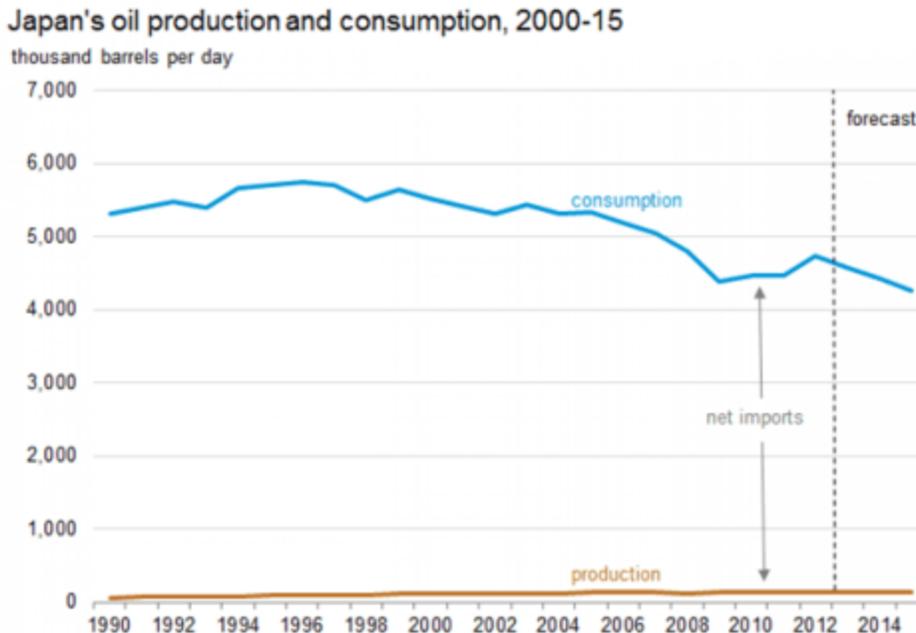


Production of oil has also been up in many other countries. Canada increased its crude oil production from just over 2.5 million barrels per day in 2009 to over 3.3 million in 2013, and Russia increased from about 9.5 million barrels per day in 2009 to over 10 million barrels per day over the same time period. Libya, meanwhile, is bouncing back after production tanked in 2011 due to the country's civil war. In sum, there's just more oil out there for people to buy, which is having a predictable effect on prices, pushing them downward.

2. Little demand in many regions including Japan and Europe. There's also the fact that while the U.S. has recovered steadily from the Great Recession, many other countries have not. They're struggling, and that is dampening oil demand.

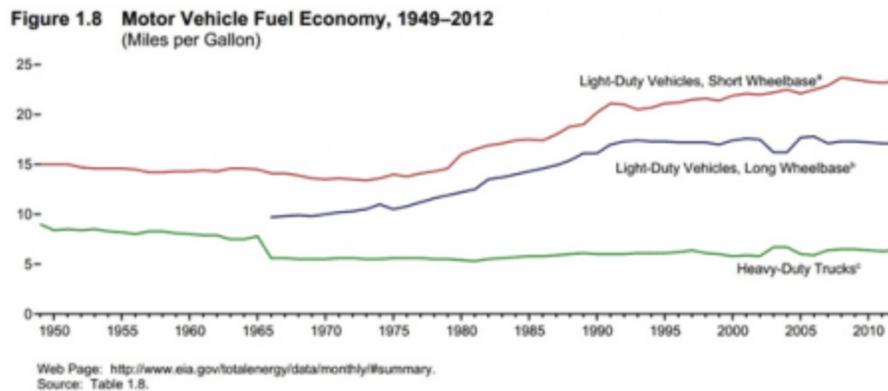
In Europe, for instance, while total petroleum consumption averaged over 15.3 million barrels per day in 2009, it was under 14.3 million in 2013, and has dropped further since.

There's a similar story to be told about Japan:



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, International Energy Statistics and Short Term Energy Outlook, June 2014

3. Strides in vehicle fuel efficiency. In the U.S., we're also using less fuel in our cars because those cars are more efficient. The sales-weighted fuel economy of vehicles in the U.S. increased from 20.8 miles per gallon in 2008 to 25.3 miles per gallon in 2014. Here's a figure from the Energy Information Administration that captures the trend:



So in sum, it would seem that the trend in oil prices is due to that most basic of economic factors: Supply and demand.

So what happens next?

Does the slump continue, or is it possible we've already overshoot and are due for a reversal in oil prices? We can't be sure, but there are some reasons to think a bounceback could be possible, especially if there's a European economic recovery. And in the long term, overall fuel consumption is definitely projected to increase, not decline, out towards 2040 -- driven largely by demand in developing nations. But until this happens I am going to enjoy the cheap prices....

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE

calories

(noun)

Tiny creatures that live in
your closet and sew your
clothes a little tighter
every night.

BEST VIDEO OF THE WEEK

John Oliver Learns That State Legislatures Are The Shadow Governments You've Always Feared.

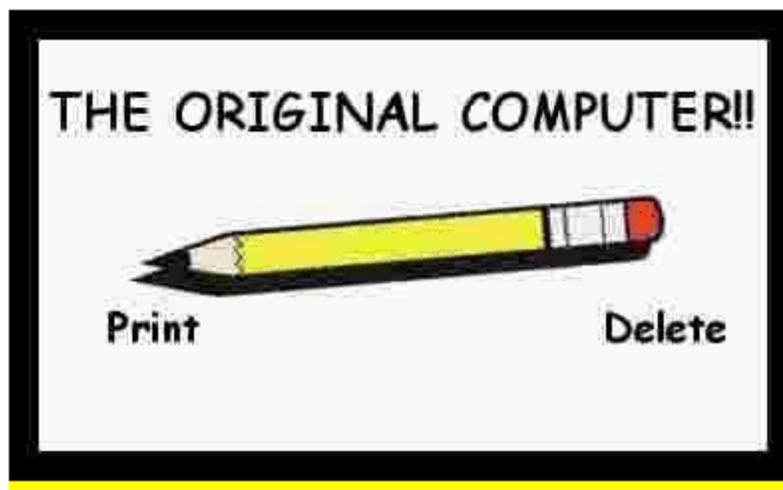


Web Link: <http://youtu.be/aIMgfbZrrZ8?list=UU3XTzVzaHQEd30rQbuvCtTQ>

While most of the focus of the midterm election was on control of the U.S. Senate, John Oliver looked at the real places where most laws are really made these days. And it's not in gridlocked Washington -- it's in the state legislature. As Oliver pointed out on "**Last Week Tonight**", no one really pays much attention to state legislatures despite the fact that they're regularly passing laws on abortion, the environment, guns and more. *"All those conspiracy theories about a shadow government are actually true,"* Oliver said. *"Only, it's not a group of billionaires meeting in a mountain lair in Zurich. It's a bunch of pasty bureaucrats meeting in a windowless committee room in Lansing, Michigan."*

Even after the midterm election the media coverage was largely focused on the Congress, while the more vital (*and often bizarre*) midterm elections on state races went almost unexamined. State legislators pass a lot of bills, (*24,000 verses 185 passed by the US Congress over the past two years*) and some of that efficiency is thanks to a group called ALEC that writes legislation for them. And as Oliver says it is as shady as it sounds! Check out the clip above, and you just might start paying more attention to your own local lawmakers because as Oliver points out, *"it's very hard to get angry with people whose names you don't know."* And as he also points out that if you wait until the election it may be too late as an estimated 25% of state legislators ran unopposed in this most recent election including a number of *wackjobs* as there were more than a 1000 races where the incumbent ran unopposed.

FUNNY... FUNNY... FUNNY.... and so TRUE



THIS WEEK'S MUSIC

The Voice



One of my guilty pleasures is American television and with hundreds of channels on cable, almost every day feels like Christmas. And although I like to tell my friend that my mind is not going to rot because I watch **FRONTLINE**, **NOVA**, **60 Minutes** and the Sunday morning news shows, the reality is that I spend much of my television time watching **Law & Order**, **Homeland**, **Broadcast News**, **Scandal**, **Madam Secretary**, **Judge Judy** and **Cheaters**, as well as whenever boxing it's on. Another of my favorites is **The Voice** which is an American reality television singing competition broadcast on **NBC**. Based on the original **The Voice of Holland**, the concept of the series is to find new singing talent (*solo or duets*) contested by aspiring singers, age 15 or over, drawn from public auditions. The winner is determined by television viewers voting by telephone, Internet, SMS text, and iTunes Store purchases of the audio-recorded artists' vocal performances. They receive US\$100,000 and a "record deal" with Universal Music Group for winning the competition. There have been six winners of the show to date: Javier Colon, Jermaine Paul, Cassadee Pope, Danielle Bradbery, Tessanne Chin, and Josh Kaufman.

The Voice began airing on April 26, 2011, as a spring TV season program. The show proved to be a hit for NBC and was subsequently expanded into the fall cycle when season three premiered on September 10, 2012. The series employs a panel of four coaches who critique the artists' performances. Each coach guides their teams of selected artists through the remainder of the season. They also compete to ensure that their act wins the competition, thus making them the winning coach. The original coaching panel consisted of Adam Levine, Blake Shelton, Christina Aguilera and CeeLo Green. Shakira and Usher took the places of Aguilera and Green in seasons four and six. Pharrell Williams and Gwen Stefani replaced Shakira and Usher in Season 7, which may have the best/strongest group of talent ever.

Concept

An adaption of The Voice of Holland, NBC announced the show under the name The Voice of America in December 2010; its name was soon shortened to The Voice. In each season, the winner receives \$100,000 and a record deal with Universal Republic Records (seasons 1 & 2), Universal Music Group (season 3-). After the show the Top Twelve tour the country as a musical review.

On September 22, 2014 The Voice returned for a 7th season with the strongest vocalists from across the country invited to compete in NBC's blockbuster vocal competition show. Celebrity musician coaches (Alan Levine, Blake Sheldon, Shakira and Pharrell Williams) return along with Carson Daly as host. The show's innovative format features four stages of competition: the first begins with the blind audition, then the battle round, the brand new knockouts and finally, the live performance shows.

The Blind Auditions: During the blind auditions, the decisions from the musician coaches are based solely on voice and not on looks. The coaches hear the artists perform, but they don't get to see them -- thanks to rotating chairs. If a coach is impressed by the artist's voice, he/she pushes a button to select the artist for his/her team. At this point, the coach's chair will swivel so that he/she can face the artist he/she has selected. If more than one coach pushes their button, the power then shifts to the artist to choose which coach they want to work with. If no coach pushes their button, the artist is eliminated from the competition.

The Battles: Once the teams are set, the battle is on. Coaches will dedicate themselves to developing their team of artists, giving them advice, and sharing the secrets of their success along with the help from their celebrity advisers. During the battle rounds the coaches will pit two of their own team members against each other to sing the same song together in front of a studio audience. After the vocal battle, the coach must choose which of his/her singers will advance to the next round of competition, while the losing artist is available to be stolen by another coach. Each coach has two steals during the battle rounds.

The Knockouts: At the end of the battles, only the strongest members of each coach's roster remain and proceed to the new knockout rounds. The artists will be paired again with a member of their team, but this time they find out only minutes before performing who they are being compared against. The artists each select their own song to perform individually, while their direct competitor watches and waits. They are vying for their coach's confidence and decision to take them to the live shows. Their coach will choose the winner and the artist not selected will be sent home.

The Live Shows: In the final live performance phase of the competition, the top artists from each team will compete each week against each other during a live broadcast. The television audience will vote to save their favorite artists and the two artists with the lowest number of votes will be sent home each week. In the end, one will be named "**The Voice**" and receives the grand prize of a recording contract and the \$100,000.

With this said, this week's music comes from **The Voice** and I invite you to watch the videos below as it is a sampling of some of the best music that I have ever seen on television. So with no further ado..... Welcome to **The Voice** as here are some of my favorites Also included is a wonderful non-Voice performance by Jesse Campbell in a club and an equally wonderful American Idol performance by Jacob Lust.....

The voice of Holland Blind Audition – Steffen Morrison: "**A Song For You**" -- <http://youtu.be/WaUEbBmFhEI>

The Voice Season 2 Battle Round – (JESSE) Anthony Evans vs. Jesse Campbell: "**If I Ain't Got You**" -- <http://youtu.be/tgrlTJ4sZ94>

The Voice Season 6 Battle Round – Biff Gore vs. Sisaundra Lewis: "**It's a Man's Man's Man's World**" -- http://youtu.be/TDUj_xM3rb8

The Voice Season 6 Live Show – Sisaundra Lewis: "**Natural Woman**" -- <http://youtu.be/zG54shuWIZk>

The Voice Season 6 Live Show – Sisaundra Lewis: "**Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me**" -- http://youtu.be/brTwXSw5b_s

The Voice Season 7 Top 12 – Anita Antoinette: "**Redemption Song**" -- <http://youtu.be/7qCdFjOUxol>

The Voice Season 7 Knockouts Round – Craig Wayne Boyd: "**Can't You See**" -- <http://youtu.be/xfcpg-sGzE8>

The Voice Season 7 Battle Round – Blessing Offor vs. Katriz Trinidad: "**Do I Do**" -- <http://youtu.be/8QOGzs88olg>

The Voice 2014 Live Playoffs - Taylor Phelan: "**Cool Kids**" -- http://youtu.be/55pblycg18E?list=FLxBfOZmJW0NmHNVEV8cDI_w

The Voice UK 2013 BBC One Battle Rounds 1 – Matt Henry Vs Jordan Lee Davies: "**Do I Do**" -- <http://youtu.be/vydSqlhFnaQ>

The Voice UK 2013 BBC One The Live Final – Jessie J and Matt Duet: "**Never Too Much**" -- <http://youtu.be/ASiQBYJFPaw>

The Voice UK 2013 BBC One Blind Auditions – Matt Henry: "**Trouble**" -- <http://youtu.be/gODwKkro33g>

The Voice Season 6 Blind Auditions – Ryan Innes: "**Gravity**" -- <http://youtu.be/AIKGHEZzuC0>

The Voice Season 7 Blind Auditions – Chris Jamison: "**Gravity**" -- <http://youtu.be/tbmNwftjQyU>

The Voice Season 7 Live Playoff – 15 year-old Reagan James: **"Try"** -- <http://youtu.be/n1ty5iqVK-Y>

Club Performance in March 2014 – Jesse Campbell: **"A Song For You"** --
<http://youtu.be/gygj9cq1Jv4>

American Idol 2011 Hollywood Week – Jacob Lusk: **"God Bless the Child"** --
<http://youtu.be/eUnMd5Zt3MY>

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

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

--

Gregory Brown
Chairman & CEO
GlobalCast Partners, LLC

