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DAVID MARANISS TALKS POLITICS WITH VPR

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY KEVIN SCHOELZEL AND SUFEI WU

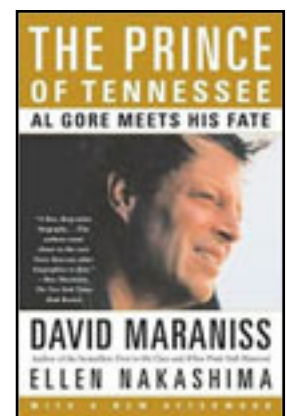
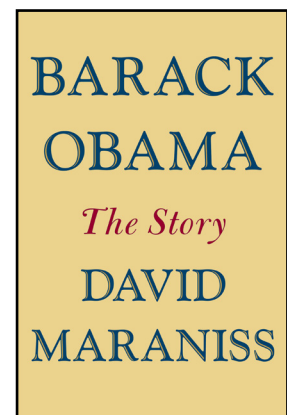
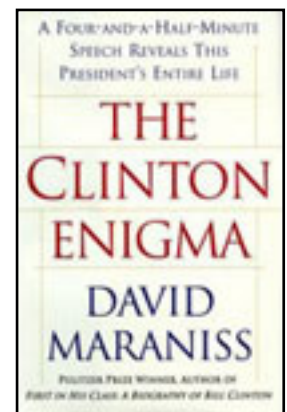
This month, VPR had the opportunity to sit down with David Maraniss, an associate editor at The Washington Post. In addition to Barack Obama: The Story, Maraniss is the author of five critically acclaimed and bestselling books. Maraniss is a three-time Pulitzer Prize finalist and won the Pulitzer for national reporting in 1993 for his newspaper coverage of then-presidential candidate Bill Clinton. He also was part of The Washington Post team that won a 2008 Pulitzer for the newspaper's coverage of the Virginia Tech shooting. He has won several other notable awards for achievements in journalism, including the George Polk Award, the Dirksen Prize for Congressional Reporting, the ASNE Laventhol Prize for Deadline Writing, the Hancock Prize for Financial Writing, the Anthony Lukas Book Prize, the Frankfort Book Prize, the Eagleton Book Prize, the Ambassador Book Prize, and Latino Book Prize. Maraniss is currently the writer-in-residence at the Martha River Ingram Commons and the College of Arts and Science. He is co-teaching Political Biographies in the Department of Political Science.

What brings you to Vanderbilt?

Several things. I am teaching two courses. One a seminar in political biography and another a seminar on Sports and Society, two broad themes that I am deeply interested in, [and that] I've have written several books about. And Vanderbilt invited me to come. I also by happenstance have a son and family here, including a two year-old granddaughter, so it was very nice to relocate for a while closer to them.

Your writing tends to focus on sports and political figures. What similarities do you see between these two arenas?

You know people often think that I move from the seriousness of sports to the triviality of politics. Like going from what's important to the toy store. I don't look at it that way at all. I think that some politics can be trivial and some sports can be sociologically important and vice-versa. So when I'm looking at whatever I'm writing about, there are sort of cultural themes that move through American life in sociology. And you can see many parallels between politics and sports. On a superficial level, they're two aspects of life where there are clear winners and losers: you win a game, you win an election. People who go into those two professions tend to have an uncommon will to succeed. You often find among the leaders of both sports and politics imbalances in their lives because of that uncommon will. And you see in both of those arenas, as I said earlier, really fascinating ways to



explore the transformations of different eras in American life, and the sort of forces that shape people and this country.

You have written biographies on Presidents, both Clinton, Obama, Vice President Al Gore, and house speaker Newt Gingrich along with countless other heavy hitters in American Democracy. You have gotten to see a lot of leaders up close, get to understand them, What common traits do you see among these politicians? As you said like in sports there are a lot of imbalances but are their any other traits you see a lot in that top echelon of national politicians?

I find two sort archetypes of politicians. Generally speaking, they go into politics with a certain amount of idealism but also a very personal... hole they need to fill in their lives. You know the need to achieve. Often in the politicians I have written about, without getting too deeply into psychobabble, or into it all. But just studying their lives, you find that they are trying to redeem fathers who either failed or were lost. [It was] certainly true with Bill Clinton, who lost his father before he was born; his stepfather was an alcoholic. With Barack Obama, whose father he never knew. Similarly with Ronald Reagan, whose father was an

alcoholic. Along with Richard Nixon, who had a strong mother, a weak father. Newt Gingrich the same way. You find that it has nothing to do with ideology; it has to do with sort an impulse to achieve. I think the other commonalities in these politicians include, as we said earlier, has to do with a certain imbalance. A will to prevail that can create some other imbalances in their lives. Whether it's in their family life, or in the way they treat other people. Often you'll find with politicians, and this is not to be completely critical of them, but you will often find they are much better at creating a sense of community out of millions of strangers than they are out of the cohorts that should be closest with them. You will find that a lot of them have what they might say are ten thousand acquaintances but no real friends. It's a common trait among politicians and the part of it that I am most fascinated by, or one aspect I am most fascinated by, is that tug-of-war in every politician between idealism and ambition. Every human being has that in them somewhere, the urge to do good and the urge to prevail. And the notion of an integrated life is to find ways to make those not to compete against one another. In politics that's very difficult, and there are different steps along the ways where you see any politicians of whatever ideology

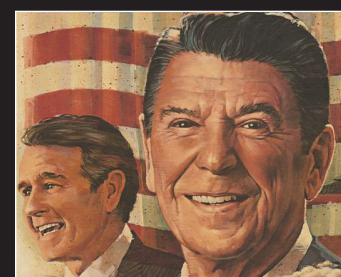
dealing with that conflict with conflict between idealism and ambition.

Do you think part of that difficulty arises from being more in the public eye and all of their actions are scrutinized?

Part of it is that you see it all more rawly. I have said of Bill Clinton that he exhibits all characteristics of humanity just in an incredibly exaggerated sense, for better and worse. I think that's true for a lot of politicians you see it more clearly. And also, they have more on the line than the average person and they have to make more of those difficult choices

Focusing on Obama, in his second term he laid out his vision in his inaugural address. Having such a close and deep understanding of the President, what do you think lies ahead for his second term? Do you anticipate anything that the general public may find a surprise?

Well the conventional wisdom on his second inaugural address was that it was a liberal manifesto, and to some degree that's true. It was a clear expression of the world as he wants it to be. I have often said that he had this training as a community organizer where the first lesson was



imagine the world as you want it to be, deal with the world as it is. And his first inaugural address was rather bleak; it was just dealing with the world as it at that moment with the financial crisis. The second inaugural he felt freer, even though the public was less excited about his reelection and his inauguration and had gone through four difficult years of promises either met or unmet, but not exactly the hope and change sensibility that he had promised. And yet, Obama himself in that second inaugural was much freer, much more hope and changy himself. Because he had gotten reelected, it was the last trap of his life, and he had gotten through the most difficult policy agenda he wanted, which was with healthcare, and had survived the economic downturn. And so, he feeling was freer. So I think that with the second term, he laid out what he wants to happen and how he envisions it. It was a very important statement in terms of equality. Obama grew up too late for the Civil Rights movement, and for political reasons, I would say that conflict between idealism and ambition, he made it sound as though he was evolving on gay rights. My presumption is it was a political evolution, but not a personal one, he was already there because his whole life had been centered around the opportunity of equality. So

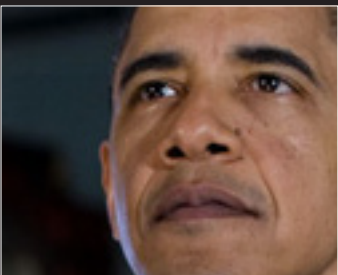
I think that was the emotional center of the speech and there will be more advancement there. I think in terms of surprises my perspective is that his governing style won't change that much, he will be more confident and more clear about what he wants, what he believes. A little tougher in his negotiations with the opposition, but that he is essentially someone who wants to find a common ground. I don't think that is going to change. So I think with a lot of those financial issues, where people are thinking that he set a marker and he isn't going to move from it, I don't think that's going to be true. I think he will.

Obama and Clinton are the two superstars in Democratic politics. Newsweek recently ran a cover proclaiming Obama “The Democrats’ Ronald Reagan” Whereas Doyle McManus in an Op-Ed for the LA Times earlier this year claimed that “Clinton is to the Democrats as Ronald Reagan is to Republicans: [in that he is] the president they’re all nostalgic for.” How do you see the two Presidents legacies playing out? Is there room for them both to have that mantle, as a Democratic icon or can there be only one?

I think there are three superstars in American politics. There are the two Clintons and Obama.

The Republicans have, if you want to use that sports analogy, they have some major leaguers, but no superstars. The Democrats actually have fewer major leaguers, but they have the three superstars. But, I think that in the most important respects, I would give it more to Obama than to Clinton. I think that Bill Clinton was an incredibly capable politician, and I think he was particularly good at certain aspects of the presidency that President Obama had more trouble with -- in terms of maneuvering and finding ways to co-opt the opposition and yet get them on board and just the sort of behind-the-scenes politics that he loved and lives for. Clinton is the shark that never stops moving in the waters of politics, and Obama would just as soon go off on land and get out of it. [Obama] wants to accomplish things, but he doesn't have that same deep love of politics. But in terms of defining eras, Clinton was more in a transitional period, and Obama really hit a more transformational period, as did Ronald Reagan. So I would compare those two more than Bill and Reagan.

The interview was conducted Thursday, January 31. The full text and a video of the interview will be available on vanderbiltpoliticalreview.com



MODERNIZING THE CAMPAIGN:

Social Media's Role in Presidential Elections

How social media is changing the way America does elections

—KATIE MILLER

For many modern college students, logging onto Facebook is a daily routine as ingrained as showering or eating breakfast. Approximately sixty-nine percent of American adults ages 18 and older use some form of social media, up substantially from thirty-seven percent in 2008 (Pew Politics + Internet/Tech 2012). Although social media has undoubtedly rewritten the concepts of “friendship” and many other social norms, its impact on other facets of society is equally significant. In particular, social media has contributed to a transformation of the modern presidential campaign, perhaps most strikingly by the extent to which it has facilitated a more personal appeal to voters by the candidates. Essentially, this personalization takes the form of the immense amount of data social media websites collect about their users in addition to social media's role as a form of self-expression for many users, both of which have allowed presidential candidates to target more specific demographics through their advertising than traditional forms of media like television could inherently offer. As a result, social media has become a vital tool for candidates to reach a wide and diverse audience and create the grassroots support necessary to

win the modern election.

In many ways, the internet revolution is a parallel to and extension of television's emergence in the 1960 presidential election. Much like John F. Kennedy won the election thanks in large part to his appearance on the first set of televised debates in history, President Obama's victory in the 2008 election marked a turning point for social media's role in the presidential campaign (Miller 2008). After 1960, television became a hallmark of the presidential campaign and began the personalization process of political information consumption; by covering the campaign on a medium once reserved for strictly entertainment, the presidential campaign instantly became more relatable to the mass public (Webley 2010). Likewise, in 2008 Barack Obama further modernized the campaign process through his strategic use of social media, which helped to spur a record-breaking grassroots movement that ultimately carried him to victory. While television was groundbreaking in its engagement of segments of the population that had previously not been involved in politics, as a medium it was and still is limited in its scope. Social media as a campaign tool, on the other hand, allowed the Obama campaign to tap into an immense amount of information about online voters that was then used to tailor the ads run and emails sent by the campaign to members of different demographics (Scherer 2012)—a considerably more targeted approach than that of televi-

sion advertisements or appearances. Essentially, then, the trend towards personalizing the campaign process through technology that was set into motion in 1960 was expanded upon and redefined in 2008 through the Obama campaign's use of social media.

While Obama's use of social media was undoubtedly superior in 2008, the election itself represents a turning point in social media's role in the

“In 2008 Barack Obama further modernized the campaign process through his strategic use of social media, which helped to spur a record-breaking grassroots movement that ultimately carried him to victory.”

campaign. Dubbed the “Facebook Election” by some, the 2008 election marked the first in history that all candidates utilized some form of social networking website in their campaigns (Fraser & Dutta 2008). For example, seven out of the sixteen candidates announced their candidacies on YouTube, and MySpace.com hosted online “town hall” meetings wherein users could submit questions to be answered by the candidates. Barack Obama, however, set the standard by hiring Facebook co-founder Chris Hughes to his online staff, reinforcing the significance of a relatable and targeted social me-

dia strategy (Takaragawa & Carty 2012).

Obama's personal appeal through social networking in the 2008 election went far beyond his utilization of Facebook, however. The Obama campaign also created its own social networking site, myBarackObama.com (MyBO), which enabled online users to show their support for and get involved in the campaign. Additionally, the Obama campaign unveiled innovative strategies like its "Be the First to Know" website, which sent a text message to subscribers when he announced his running mate, and an iPhone app called "Obama08" that organized voters' contacts according to voting district, allowing them to call friends in key battleground areas to generate support for the campaign (Takaragawa & Carty 2012). Ultimately, through its extensive data collection and personal appeal to voters through social media, the Obama campaign was able to generate a widespread grassroots movement that took the form of the highest youth vote since 1972 in addition to record-setting fundraising (Takaragawa & Carty 2012).

The more personalized social networking approach was used again in the past election cycle, a tactic that was especially crucial as the modes of information consumption continue to shift in favor of internet media. According to a recent Pew poll, the percentage of Americans who receive their news from television and print sources is steadily declining, while the rates of those who use internet sources, including social media, for news is increasing substantially. Furthermore, the same poll found that in 2012, eighty-three percent of Twitter users had seen news on the site at some point, and fifty-nine percent of surveyed participants reported that they "re-

tweeted" news (Pew 2012). With its short character limit, tweets are to the point and often much more casual than anything published in an official news outlet—and while there are certainly drawbacks to this more informal method of communication, it is effective for one primary reason: direct and personal voter engagement (Murphy 2012).

In the 2012 presidential election, both President Obama and Governor Romney took advantage of this trend in news consumption by appealing to voters through Twitter. As in 2008, however, the Obama campaign appeared once again to have the upper hand in its engagement of voters through social media outlets like Twitter. In June 2012, for example, the Obama campaign averaged twenty-nine tweets per day over the Romney campaign's one tweet per day, although this difference grew less pronounced as the campaign wore on (Cruz 2012), due perhaps in part to the Romney campaign's learning curve. In addition to his more effective voter engagement, President Obama was able to reach a wider audience through Twitter and other websites since he boasted significantly more "followers" than any other candidate (Twitter 2013). Furthermore, a study conducted by Twitter in October of 2012 revealed that the average Twitter user was 68 percent more likely than the average internet user to visit a campaign donation web page, which emphasizes social media's growing power to build tangible grassroots support for presidential candidates (How Tweets Influence Political Donations 2012).

While social media's role in the 2016 election is hard to predict, one thing is clear: technology and social networking have changed the face of the modern presidential campaign. Whether this expansion of

social media and the resulting pressure for candidates to appeal personally to voters will actually result in an electorate with stronger ties to their elected officials is difficult to surmise, however. As seen most notably in both of the Obama campaigns, while social media strategies may be more relatable to voters than a television ad, the strategies themselves are still tightly orchestrated. Perhaps more than anything else, the rise of social media in the campaign process will and already has emphasized the significance of a strong grassroots support over the backing a smaller group of political and financial elites.

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THE FUTURE OF THE GOP

The Republican Party is faced with becoming more politically viable in an increasingly liberal society

— KRISTIN VARGAS

The revelation of the Republican Party platform at the national convention this past September was greeted with criticism from the entire political spectrum. Some called the platform too conservative; others accused it of not being conservative enough. Regardless of the contentions made by an attentive public, what is undeniable is that the platform proved to be unsuccessful for Mitt Romney and the GOP during the 2012 election. In a society that is becoming less white and more socially liberal, the Republican Party must strategically regroup by reassessing some of its key policies to become more competitive with the Democratic Party. This does not require the party to abandon its principles but merely to remold them to fit society as it exists today in order to restore its status as a serious electoral contender.

The basic tenets of Republican ideology have been consistent for quite some time now. However, the consistency of the platform that historically resulted in a rise of right-wing dominance has also led to the diminished electoral influence of the GOP at present, which can be examined more closely through a brief look at the party's past. The Republican Party as it stands today materialized in the post-World War II era, championing strong militarism, supporting a smaller federal government, and upholding traditional family values

(Diamond, 1995). Exemplifying that these values have not changed, the strong militarism that first materialized in fighting Communism abroad 60 years ago can now be seen through the dedication to fighting terrorism today. Other examples are numerous but all essentially point to the fact that the basic principles of the Republican Party have not shifted over the years, but instead the issues that surround them have.

When looking at the official Republican platform from the most recent election, there are few surprises. The platform called for a smaller government, a dedication to free market economics, and a strong belief in the right to bear arms (Republican Party, 2012). As far as social policy, the party took a strong pro-life stance, while it proclaimed gay marriage to be “an assault on the foundations of our society” (Republican Party, 2012). This platform did not appeal to the American public during the election, and the reason for this is no secret. Due to the changing demographics of America, many policies that the Republicans put forth were seen as undesirable in the eyes of the growing minorities of the nation. In the year 2000, nonwhite voters composed 20% of the electorate compared to 28% of the electorate this past year (Hallowell, 2012). This growth in nonwhite voters was important to electoral outcomes, as Obama won 80% of the nonwhite vote in both 2008 and 2012, compared to Romney, who won the

vote of 59% of non-Hispanic White voters (Hallowell, 2012). Despite the fact that Romney won the White male vote by an overwhelming margin, this group of voters is diminishing over time. White males composed 46% of the electorate in 1972, dropping to 34% this past year (Hallowell, 2012). These statistics provide us with an idea of how our society is changing, which can be further emphasized when considering that in 2012, more minority babies were born than White babies (Hallowell, 2012). Although, at present, minorities make up 36% of Americans, during this century they will compose a majority of the population (Hallowell, 2012). These statistics show that America is gradually but undoubtedly in transition from being a nation that is composed primarily of White individuals to a nation that is composed primarily of minority individuals.

This shift in demographics is greatly important for the way that electoral politics will play out and the consequences this will have for specific policy areas in the future. Take for example one basic tenet of Republican ideology: the small role of government. Although 60% of White voters think that the government should have a smaller role, 58% of Hispanics and a striking 73% of African-Americans think the opposite (Hallowell, 2012). Further, the issue of immigration is hugely relevant to Hispanic-Americans, who are very much opposed

35%

Of Americans identify as Democrats

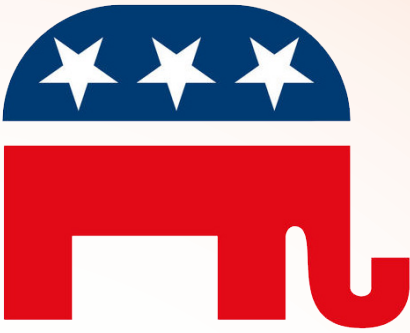
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GOP presidential popular vote victory since 1992

28%

Of Americans identify as Republican

ID quotes



"We can do a better job of selling what we stand for and explaining to people what we stand for and why what we believe in is better for them and for their hopes and dreams than what the Democrats are offering"

**Marco Rubio
(R-FL)**

"Democrats are continuing to win big with the demographic groups that are growing; Republicans are still struggling to increase support with shrinking base voter groups."

**James Carville
Democratic Strategist**

to the Republican stance on the issue. These are only a few examples of policy approaches that have diverging preferences based on racial or ethnic identification.

Aside from ethnic and racial shifts in the demographic, changing trends in marriage and divorce have led to an increased influence of single female voters. Currently, 54% of single women are Democrats compared to 36% of married women (Hallowell, 2012). Because women are now getting married later and are getting divorced more frequently, they are growing as a proportion of the electorate, up to 23% in 2012 from 19% in the previous election (Hallowell, 2012). This is an especially important piece of evidence when considering the importance of women's rights issues, namely abortion, as Republicans have a stance that opposes this increasing group of liberal leaning female voters.

All of these demographic shifts result in a society with an increasingly liberal outlook, which is especially evident in light of the recent election. The legalization of recreational use of marijuana in Colorado and Washington as well as ballot initiatives in Maine and Maryland that approved gay marriage are two examples of this change (CBC, 2012). Further, younger voters tend to have a more liberal outlook on social issues, indicating that this trend will continue as younger Americans come of age.

These characteristics of the evolving American electorate have significant implications for the Republican Party,

whose policy positions are slowly shifting in the opposite direction of the status quo. For this reason, the party needs to reform its agenda in order to retain its status as a competitive electoral force. This does not mean that the party needs to abandon its long established ideological basis. Instead, the party can alter its view on social issues by retaining the basic principles of the right wing but from a slightly different perspective that is more favorable among a larger number of voters. This is not an impossible task, as it is something the party has done in the past. Many in the Republican Party of the 1960s were staunchly against Civil Rights legislation. Clearly, the party has moved away from these outdated views as society came to accept the equality of all citizens regardless of race, gender, or sexual preference. This did not come with an abandonment of fundamental right wing principles but rather with a change in perspective and an effort to conform to a society with shifting values.

The party therefore needs to change its platform on various fronts, namely its stance on immigration in order to attract Hispanic voters, its position on gay rights and abortion in order to appear more tolerant to younger voters and female voters, and its outlook on the social safety net. Overall, the platform needs to extend its appeal to a larger amount of individuals rather than the limited group to which it currently appeals (The Associated Press, 2012). It cannot be expected that the party will completely reverse its stance on these policies.

However, it is important that, at the very least, the GOP appear to be somewhat compassionate towards those individuals affected by these policies. Gaining a reputation for acceptance and tolerance would be a huge gain for a party that can be at times perceived as uncompassionate (The Associated Press, 2012).

A shift in the Republican Party platform would not be without consequences. The risk of alienating the far right is a very real one, and Democrats would undoubtedly find a way to portray a party shift in policy in a negative light. However, these costs are minor compared to the detrimental effects of leaving the platform unchanged. A diminished influence would benefit no one in the GOP. There is much more to be gained by simply being more open to a changing America. At this point there is little for the Republican Party to lose, and perhaps this electoral failure is an opportunity for a restoration of its former success and subsequent right-wing dominance. It is now up to the Party, and time itself to tell.

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PASSPORT TO SUCCESS?

The complexities of school voucher programs

RYAN HIGGINS

As education reform efforts have grown increasingly prominent, reformers have frequently cited school vouchers as a remedy to problems within the American educational system. Milton Friedman (1955) first introduced the idea, which would give students in failing districts a voucher equal to the cost of educating the student within the district for one year. This voucher would be applied like tuition to a better public school or even a private school, permitting the student the opportunity for better education. Programs typically target impoverished students in failing schools – those lacking the resources to attend private schools. This population undeniably needs support in attaining a quality education, providing motivation for the program. While school vouchers appear to be an enticing answer to the problem of educational equity, this solution proves extremely complex and contentious through its questionable constitutionality and lack of demonstrated effectiveness.

Despite vouchers' roots in the benevolent goal to provide disadvantaged students with opportunities for a better education, the most commonly mentioned supporting argument is the idea that competition between schools would result from vouchers. The theory is that by forcing schools to compete, they will have to

improve to attract and retain students just as businesses improve their offerings to attract customers. This would provide consumers with better educational options and ideally increase the performance of all American schools (Strong 2008). The best schools would be rewarded with an increased student population, and thus more revenue, creating a cycle that rewards success.

“While school vouchers appear to be an enticing answer to the problem of educational equity, this solution proves extremely complex and contentious through its questionable constitutionality and lack of demonstrated effectiveness.”

Underperforming schools would find diminished student populations and thus funding, forcing them to improve to survive. This solution is especially attractive to those who prefer limited government, as it is an entirely hands-off approach that lets the market do the work.

School vouchers have been tried in several American cities. A Harvard University study found that school vouchers raised graduation rates of African American students by 24% in New York City (Chingos and Peterson 2012). Other racial groups in the study, however, did not see gains for unexplained

reasons. Studies in Milwaukee, Charlotte, and Washington, D.C. have shown improved test scores over time for voucher students (Friedman Foundation 2008). Yet, the methodology for these studies has been accused of being flawed and the researchers accused of being biased. Still more reviews of the literature have found unchanged achievement from voucher programs (Usher and Kober 2011). These contradictory findings leave policymakers confounded and are one of the reasons that groups like the National Education Association oppose school vouchers, groups who do not want to waste money on ineffective reforms. Meanwhile, advocates argue that any policy that has a chance of helping students achieve is worth trying. Regardless of their effectiveness, school vouchers have been shown to increase parental satisfaction with their child's education (Howell, Wolf, Campbell, and Peterson 2002). Parents desire the independence that results from voucher programs, as they can personally select their child's school.

Critics frequently decry school vouchers as a “band-aid solution.” While school vouchers may benefit the students who receive them, they do nothing to solve the greater problem of inequities in education in the United States. Underperforming schools lose students, and therefore money, hindering their chances at improvement (“School Choice: Vouchers” 2013). Meanwhile, strong schools are inundated

with students seeking to enroll, often overwhelming public schools. Private schools, on the other hand, have the option to deny students entry based on academic requirements. This has led to some private schools only accepting the top students. Vouchers are often valued at less than private school tuition, for which reason many private schools will not accept voucher students without additional money (Anti-Defamation League 2005). Ultimately, school vouchers do not correct the underlying problems with underperforming schools and thus fail to reform the American educational system, making suspect their viability as a policy solution.

The use of vouchers also evokes questions of constitutionality, as vouchers redistribute money to both public and private school options. This is an issue largely because the majority of American private schools are religiously-affiliated. By giving public monies to these schools, the separation of church and state is violated, opening the door to legal battles. In fact, while the Supreme Court in *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* affirmed the Constitutionality of school vouchers, it established a rigid and narrow set of requirements for vouchers, including that they “perhaps even provid[e] incentives for non-religious education,” leaving the viability of vouchers in question (Anti-Defamation League 2005). Recently, Louisiana’s School Vouchers program was ruled unconstitutional due to its transfer of public funds to private institutions.

In Tennessee, school vouchers are receiving increased promi-

nence after Governor Haslam convened a 2012 panel to discuss the feasibility of instituting a program. This panel, made of experts from public and private institutions, put forth recommendations for such a voucher program, suggesting that it be limited to low-income students and that any private schools who accept vouchers be accountable to the state Department of Education, primarily through

“Personal ideologies play a significant role in this debate, often at the expense of research-based discourse. If vouchers are ever to be adopted as a solution to education inequities, many intricate details will need resolution.”

the administration of state standardized exams. The group also suggested that private schools should be required to accept the voucher as tuition without additional payments, if they choose to participate (Cavanagh 2012). Yet, the panel was unable to decide how much these vouchers should be worth, whether a program should be limited to failing schools, and how expansive the program should be. This indecision limits Governor Haslam and state lawmakers in moving forward with a voucher program, further illustrating how contentious vouchers really are.

This examination of school vouchers demonstrates their immense complexity. While vouchers are based on a benevolent idea, their lack of dem-

onstrated effectiveness makes their continued use subject to debate. Personal ideologies play a significant role in this debate, often at the expense of research-based discourse. If vouchers are ever to be adopted as a solution to education inequities, many intricate details will need resolution. Until then, the U.S. should continue to pursue additional educational reforms to rectify the stratified educational system and not focus exclusively on vouchers.

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AMERICA'S 51ST STATE?

Puerto Rican Path to Statehood

Referendum shows more support for U.S. statehood, but questions remain

—ALEX TORRES

On November 6th Americans across the country were glued to their TV screens watching updates of the presidential election that was taking place. But in Puerto Rico, a commonwealth of the United States, there was also an important referendum occurring, a question that had been asked many times: should Puerto Rico become a state? The results were surprising. According to the Puerto Rico election results website, 52% of voters did not want to continue with the current situation, while 61% of voters voted for statehood (El Nuevo Dia, 2012). This is a first major step towards statehood, but the path will be much longer and more difficult than this referendum.

For some the idea of Puerto Rico becoming a state might seem too far-fetched because of the cultural difference. It is true that Puerto Rico was a Spanish territory for a number of years before it was won by the U.S. in 1898 during the Spanish Ameri-

can War. However since then Puerto Rico has changed in many ways and has become more Americanized than people might think. While all native Puerto Ricans speak Spanish, many speak English, and English is now taught in schools to the same level of education as Spanish. Puerto Ricans have their own culture, but McDonalds are everywhere. The same TV programs that are aired in the U.S. are aired there, and everyone roots for the New York Yankees. Puerto Ricans are considered citizens of the U.S., and while they cannot vote for the president, they still have a non-voting representative to Congress and can vote in presidential primaries.

Puerto Rico's status with the U.S. has been constantly evolving. After winning Puerto Rico from the Spanish, the island was initially a territory, more or less completely controlled by a U.S.-imposed government. In some ways it was almost a colony. Over time the U.S. gave it its own constitution, a governor chosen by the people and even its own flag (Welcome to Puerto Rico!, 2013). Since 1950 it has maintained the status of commonwealth, a status

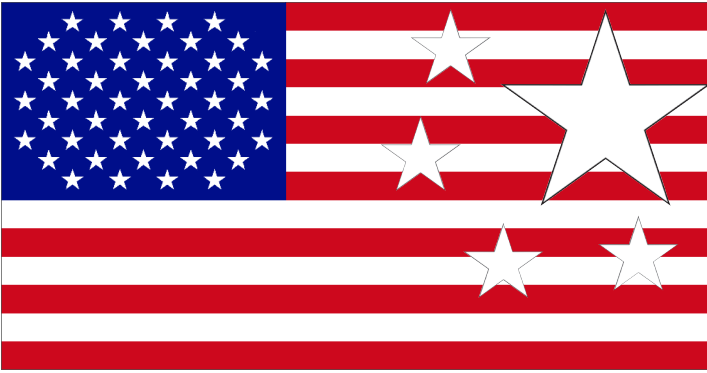
that has been accepted by many until now. For the first time since these referendums began, Puerto Rico voiced that its current status as a commonwealth was no longer a sufficient relationship. The two questions that remain are: why this change, and what do the citizens of Puerto Rico want?

Being a commonwealth makes Puerto Rico in some ways better off, but in others worse. One main example is federal taxes. Puerto Ricans for the most part do not pay an income tax, but they still must pay taxes towards Social Security and Medicare (IRS 2013; Brumbaugh). While they receive numerous federal grants, Puerto Ricans do not get the full benefits of Social Security and Medicare that citizens of states do. Even with the help they receive in grants, they are still a far cry from the economic status of states. When compared to the lowest-ranked U.S. state in terms of median income (Mississippi), Puerto Rico lags far behind at just \$17,184 compared to \$32,938 (United States Census Bureau 2005). Furthermore they lack some basic voting rights—most notably they are unable to vote for

What about the flag?

The Stars and Stripes are the hallmark of America.
How will a 51st state change this?





the president and have no representation in Congress, besides one non-voting member.

Seeing some of this evidence might make it clearer why some Puerto Ricans want change, but the election results show how divided the island still is in what direction to take. While 61% of those who answered the question opted for statehood, this number does not give the full picture. If you look at the overall results 45% of voters voted for statehood, 25% percent left the question blank, and 24.5% elected for a hybrid form of statehood (El Nuevo Dia. 2012).

The next step is deciding where to go from here. Legally speaking, statehood is not a complex issue. With a majority vote in both houses and a presidential signature, Article IV of the U.S. Constitution allows the creation of more states. Many of the more recently established states also had to be added through an Enabling Act. The greater difficulty is the political issue. Puerto Ricans are considered by many, especially Republicans, to lean left. Therefore a Republican controlled House would have little incentive to admit a new state that will consistently vote blue in their eyes. Furthermore it seems that Puerto Rico does not have as much encouragement from the other side either. President Obama stated that he was “firmly committed to the principle that the question of

political status is a matter of self-determination for the people of Puerto Rico” (U.S. News & World Report. 2012.). Presidents speaking in direct support of statehood for Puerto Rico is not uncommon, so for President Obama to be so lackluster in his support must have been disappointing for those considering statehood (United States Council for Puerto Rico Statehood).

“This is a major step towards statehood, but the path will be much longer and more difficult than this referendum.”

It does not seem likely that we will see Puerto Rico becoming a state in the near future. In order for statehood to happen, two major changes must take place. First Puerto Ricans as a whole must agree on what status they want. It is now clear that they want change, but they must make it clear if it is statehood or independence they desire. Second, and just as difficult to achieve, is that more support from Congress and the President is required to make statehood a potential reality. Republicans should not be as worried of Puerto Ricans leaning left. They are not concerned with immigration (an issue that is often the decision

between left or right for Hispanics), are fairly religious, and have voted both for governors that lean right and left. If a large group of people who all carry U.S. passports are considering statehood or some type of increased representation, Congress needs to listen. While you might not have to worry quite yet about purchasing a new fifty-one star flag, Puerto Rico has taken its first step on what is sure to be a long road to statehood.

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SENATOR MCCONNELL MOLDS HISTORY WITH CLAY

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH SENATE MINORITY LEADER MITCH MCCONNELL

JULIE BABBAGE

In the heart of Lexington, Kentucky, somewhat hidden amid a sea of giant ash trees, rests the historical Henry Clay property: the Ashland Estate. In neighboring city Louisville lives another Kentucky leader; this house too is tucked away in a quiet neighborhood— simple, and inconspicuous. Inside, the owner, Republican Senate Leader Mitch McConnell, answers the door himself, greeting me by name. Although he is dressed in jeans and a soft button-down, his profoundly dignified manner clearly comes through. He moves to take a seat in a wooden, cushioned rocking chair and, showing me to a spot across from him, begins to answer my questions.

If we learn anything in our school career about American history, let it be that it often repeats itself.

Compromise of 1850, meet the compromise of 2013.

What is the compromise of 2013, you ask? At this moment, it can be considered the McConnell-Biden resolution that saved America from stumbling over the fiscal cliff.

How do vastly differing deals in dramatically different eras relate? For starters, the reaction to the 1850 proposal was “mixed at best,” (Heidler & Heidler, 2010, 464) leaving both sides of the 31st Congress feeling unsatisfied, even cheated as they “sourly agreed to compromise.” Sound familiar? Add that two ideological opposites, Henry Clay and Thomas Ritchie, came together as old friends—childhood buddies, in fact—and reasoned through compromise (Heidler & Heidler, 2010, 466). McConnell and

Vice President Joe Biden appear to fit the bill. Both last-minute agreements were quick fixes to a bigger problem: a looming civil war then, an economic catastrophe now.

But instead of considering the deal, let’s examine the dealmakers themselves. How does Mitch McConnell resemble the legendary Henry Clay? Aside from attributes and experiences these men overcame a divided Congress to avoid national crisis. Given policymakers’ doctrinaire declarations and a “moderate” population that is practically extinct, finding common ground is quite a feat. Clay’s biography says he found the inflexibility of the president exasperating, and remarked he had “never before seen such an administration’ that outright refused to consult with Congress” (Heidler & Heidler, 2010, 469). During the interview, McConnell conveyed similar disappointment at the resistance of President Barak Obama and his staff.

Why was reaching a solution so arduous a task for both the Republican Leader and The Great Compromiser when it so obviously—desperately—needed to be done?

A Broken System?

A popular target of this year’s media criticism was lawmakers’ stubborn immobility, awakening memories of Truman’s notorious “do-nothing” Congress. Some blame filibusters for gridlock and idleness. A master of this tactic, McConnell has used filibusters throughout his career. Should they be banned to speed up the process?



McConnell sits down with Julie Babbage for an exclusive interview.

Provided by Julia Babbage

“There isn’t anything wrong with the rules of the Senate,” asserted Leader McConnell. “They’ve been the same for a long time.”

And they have changed slightly when necessary. He referenced Woodrow Wilson’s term, which made it possible to end filibusters with cloture, later changed from two-thirds to three-fifths in the 1970s. “What that means,” said McConnell, “is unless one side has a really, really big margin... [they] have to deal with the other side. So the Senate has tended to force things to the political center because unless you have a really dominant position, you can’t get your own way, you have to compromise with others.”

That is exactly the situation Congress found itself in this December. A Democratic Senate and President forced to reason with a Republican House. Only, these differences didn’t meet in the political center. Polarized and extreme, compromise appeared out of reach for the 112th Congress.

Enter Leader McConnell. When asked in the interview if it was up to him to solve the problem, he replied, “Well, I was the only one left.”

Save the Last Dance

It takes two to tango, but Leader McConnell found himself in a solo act. After the Plan B blunder, a defeated Speaker John Boehner tossed responsibility to the Senate, saying he would be happy to take a look at whatever they could create. “So I went back to Washington December 27th, which is a Thursday... I remember all of this very well,” recalled Leader McConnell.

In a White House conference with President Obama, Vice President Biden, Speaker Boehner, Nancy Pelosi, Harry Reid, and Leader McConnell, the President recommended that McConnell and Reid team up to try and reach a decision.

After 24 hours, it was clear to McConnell that talks with Reid were going nowhere. “And that’s when I went to the floor on Sunday afternoon and said, “I’m looking for a dance partner,” said McConnell. He and Biden, having been successful in past negotiations, started talking Sunday afternoon and reached an agreement in the wee hours of the morning... or so he thought. At 6:30 a.m., the dancing duo had “a snag” (McConnell, personal interview, 2013) that was finally resolved late New Year’s Eve. At 2:00 a.m. on New Year’s Day, the Senate voted to pass the measure.

Had McConnell and Biden not succeeded in their efforts, “the President would successfully blame us for taking everybody right off the cliff,” said McConnell. Although imperfect, McConnell acknowledged portions of the deal that marked significant GOP success, like making 90% of the Bush tax cuts permanent. Unable to do this with a Republican-controlled House, Senate and the White House, McConnell says that achieving tax cut permanency is certainly “nothing to be apologetic about.”

You would think after such a grueling week, especially during a holiday “break,” the Senator would rest up. Wrong. A University of Louisville alumnus, he left the following day for the Sugar Bowl to watch his beloved Cardinal football team upset Florida to win the Sugar Bowl. This ultimate display of fanhood from a senator is worthy of its own ESPN “This is Sportscenter” commercial.

From passing breakthrough legislation to witnessing an epic athletic match, McConnell’s extreme devotion to do what needs to be done, even when it is unpleasant or inconvenient, is one just one of many attributes that have made him so successful. Someone else who possessed this same “do-whatever-it-takes” mentality was Senator Henry Clay.

An Undeniable Connection

Greatness is understood by studying the greats— how they made decisions, how they survived adversity, how they prevailed.

Leader McConnell, whose immense admiration for Henry Clay is no secret, has studied The Great Compromiser, the topic of his undergraduate thesis and the theme in several speeches throughout his political career. In 1999, McConnell secured passage of a resolution to perpetually reserve Clay’s desk in the Senate Chamber for future senior Kentucky senators (Congressional Record Volume 145, Issue 59. April 28, 1999).

Perhaps his latest tribute to Clay is the fiscal cliff negotiation. “Both men were more intent on putting doctrine before philosophy to get the job done,” said McConnell’s biographer John David Dyche in a telephone interview, who discovered McConnell to be “more a reflection of the Republican Party than a philosophical conservative.”

Similarities between Leader McConnell and Henry Clay are abundant. Neither are Kentucky natives; Clay was born in Virginia, McConnell in Alabama, and both moved to Kentucky at the age of 14.

They share law degrees and brief law practice, political ambition from an early age, a rise to international prominence, and long-lasting political careers. Henry Clay completed decades of service at the federal level, just one year shy of a half a century. Mitch McConnell, elected to the Senate in 1985, is rapidly approaching his 30-year congressional anniversary.

Diverging Traits

Parallels aside, there are several ways in which the Republican Leader and The Great Compromiser diverge. Clay is remembered as a spellbind-

ing speaker, verbose and passionate, who never used notes.

McConnell is not known for his oratory skills. As Dyche puts it, “McConnell’s political style is not poetry... although he has given some very eloquent speeches... The better metaphor for his method may be that of the bullet-point memorandum or executive summary. He uses a few memorable phrases, perfect for relentless repetition, to drive his message home in a manner that makes the core concept automatic and unforgettable” (Dyche, 7).

Clay was undeniably charismatic. So much in fact that even John C. Calhoun, one of his biggest rivals said, “I don’t like Henry Clay. He is a bad man, an imposter, a creator of wicked schemes. I wouldn’t speak to him, but, by God, I love him” (Cheney, 2004).

Rather than magnetic, McConnell’s personality could be described as serious and concentrated. During the interview, he spoke in a precise, thoughtful manner, more instructive than entertaining. “Part of the reason his career has enjoyed longevity [is the] overwhelming respect for McConnell as someone who is totally confident and going to make smart decisions on facts and circumstances,” remarked former McConnell Chief of Staff Billy Piper in a telephone interview.

Both Clay and McConnell were witty men and feared foes. If you insult Leader McConnell, you’d better do so carefully. His breadth of knowledge and steadfast beliefs enable him to retaliate effectively without hesitation. One of his mottos is, “If someone flicks a pebble at you, you hurl a boulder back” (Dyche, 113).

The same could be said of Clay. The difference is, McConnell keeps his cool in tense moments, whereas Clay was prone to outbreaks of emotion; think tennis stars Roger Federer versus Rafael Nadal.

While Clay possessed a rare combi-

nation of attributes, he lacked several traits that make Leader McConnell a congressional powerhouse. The most striking is their approach to learning. Clay was intelligent, but was “more a reader of men than a reader of books (McConnell, 2012).

Leader McConnell is an avid scholar. He voraciously consumes newspapers, books, and any other information available to him, making him an authority on several important issues. “When you come to D.C., you vote on many issues but you can only be an expert on a few things... Senator McConnell has prioritized campaign finance reform, reform in Burma, voting rights, [along with] the rules, Senate procedure and how it operates,” said a McConnell senior staffer in a telephone interview.

McConnell’s sense of timing is another essential piece missing from Clay’s repertoire. He possesses an incredible “political antenna,” an awareness of all that is happening around him. The senior staff member likened this “political antenna” to a football quarterback’s instinct. “An average quarterback drops back to pass and sees clutter... but a good one will see the one opening that others don’t see.” McConnell navigates the chaos, finds the right opening and timing to strike, and acts accordingly. In the case of the fiscal cliff, that meant waiting until it was appropriate for him to become involved and take the lead. “He couldn’t have pulled it off earlier,” observed the senior staff member.

In contrast, Clay’s poor timing caused him several political missteps and a 0-and-4 record in his attempt to gain the Presidency.

Ultimately, the Republican Leader’s edge boils down to two things: “focus and tenacity” – qualities McConnell has openly identified as keys to success in life, says the senior staff member. Leaders often show one but not the other. McConnell has mastered both.

What Lies Ahead

Leader McConnell listed three approaching leverage points for the minority party. One is the sequester: “An effective but mindless reduction of spending that was established after the 2011 Supercommittee failed,” says McConnell. Another is the request to raise the debt ceiling. The last is “the continuing resolution – in other words, the government is funded through the end of March and that needs to be done again,” McConnell explained. However, “the single biggest issue, confronting the country in my opinion,” said McConnell, “is the amount of debt we’re leaving behind for people like you.”

Republicans are not hiding their agenda. “I can tell you quite frankly what we want,” said McConnell as he described in detail the need for substantial in federal entitlement programs, namely Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. “We’re not advocating doing this because we think it’s popular, we’re advocating doing this because if you don’t you’re going to tank the country.” And often times, these changes are not so revolutionary as the public believes. For instance, McConnell spoke of the Reagan-O’Neill decision to raise retirement from 65 to 67 in a series of phases. “I was running for Senate the next year and nobody ever asked me about it... they raised the age of social security and nobody asked me about it!”

McConnell noted the continued, fruitless efforts of Republicans to engage with the Democrats on entitlement alterations. Only one person can loosen resistance: President Obama. The most influential Democrat in the country, “he’s the only person who can deliver members of his party to vote for it,” states McConnell simply.

Consider the death tax provision of the McConnell-Biden deal that provides a \$5 million exemption per

person. “The Democrats hated that, just hated it. But it was something I got in the negotiation with Biden,” said McConnell. House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi begged McConnell to nix it, claiming it would cost Democrat votes. However, when the President decided to do the deal, only 16 House Democrats and three Senate Democrats voted against it.

Thus, even if it is a decision they are not in favor of, Democrats will do what the President agrees to, such as increasing the age for Medicare, something McConnell supports wholeheartedly. “If the President makes the deal,” he said, “the Democrats will fall in line.”

So if entitlement money is slowly destroying our economy, why isn't everyone rushing to address the problem?

“It's very difficult to do... unless you do it on a bipartisan basis,” McConnell explained.

Lessons Learned in Bipartisanship

Mitch McConnell and Henry Clay teach us that the root of bipartisanship is partisanship, literally and figuratively. They were not living in no-man's-party land.

“Having the reputation of being ‘partisan’ can be an advantage... when Leader McConnell signs on something, it often gets the Republican support” said the senior staffer. However, “there are only so many times he can make a deal like this,” he cautioned. Landmark, last-second deals can't happen on a regular basis.

Compromise is like a tie ballgame. No one is happy.

Back at home there is constant and hot, even mounting, criticism of McConnell.

Most notably, splinter groups of Tea Party Republicans are promising a “true Conservative” opponent for McConnell's 2014 Primary. Remark-



McConnell shows his third grade portrait in which he proudly sports an “I like Ike” button.

Provided by Julie Babbage

ably, some Democrats have said they would help fund this insurgency, proving vividly that politics always makes the strangest of bedfellows.

It is normally unthinkable that long-time incumbents have Primary challengers,

but now this is increasingly becoming the new model in many states. For their purposes, Democrats have encouraged popular actress Ashley Judd, who says she is thinking about seeking the nomination. Judd's family is deeply rooted in Kentucky, but she does not live in the state.

Major newspapers in Lexington and Louisville regularly rail at McConnell, a practice

covering his entire time in office, but the drumbeat is as loud as if the election were

days away. Thus, while it may seem like an ideal solution, the aftermath of compromise can be brutal. Wounded egos seek retribution; careers are put in jeopardy.

In his eulogy of Clay, Abraham Lincoln called Clay his “ideal of a man” understanding the contribution and sacrifice of the statesman. Compromise is not random chance but a deeply calculated decision. It is

also a courageous act of raw humility. Henry Clay once said, “Let him who elevates himself above humanity... say, if he pleases, ‘I will never compromise,’ but let no one who is not above the frailties of our common nature disdain compromise.”

Employing the tested art of compromise as reflected two centuries ago, Leader McConnell borrows from the past to shape the future, molding history with Henry Clay.

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MARIJUANA BATTLE: *Headed to Washington?*

Government responses to the issue of legality

ALAK MEHTA

In landmark moves on Election Day 2012, voters in Washington and Colorado passed referendums legalizing recreational marijuana use for adults over the age of 21. Although Washington's Initiative 502 and Colorado's Proposition 64 legalized the use of marijuana, its sale will still be banned until the states codify the rights and create systems for licensing, regulating, and taxing commercial retailers who will distribute the substance, a process that is expected to take almost a year.

The passing of these referendums will inevitably lead to a clash between the federal government and state authorities, as marijuana is still a Schedule I controlled substance under the Controlled Substances Act. Colorado governor John Hickenlooper described this situation with a bit of levity in a statement after the passage of Proposition 64: "The voters have spoken and we have to respect their will ... That said, federal law still says marijuana is an illegal drug so don't break out the Cheetos or Goldfish too quickly" (ABC News, 2012).

To fully understand the federal government's quandary, it is important to keep a few key issues in mind. Does the sort of federalism displayed by Washington and Colorado undermine the authority of the federal government? Will the effects of marijuana legalization within these states spill over into other states and interfere with Congress' regulation of interstate

commerce? Should Congress remove some federal funding from these states to enforce compliance with federal law? Should the Justice Department and Drug Enforcement Agency enforce federal law (read: arrest users) in these states or not? Is recreational marijuana legalization good or bad public policy?

As of now, the Justice Department has not taken a stand against either state, but it has stated that the department will continue to enforce federal law even in Colorado and Washington. Obama, however, has stated that the federal government would not enforce marijuana laws, at least against recreational users: "It would not make sense

"...it is simply too difficult to reconcile the criminalization of marijuana with the legality of tobacco and alcohol."

for us to see a top priority as going after recreational users in states that have determined that it's legal ... We've got bigger fish to fry" (Washington Post, 2012). Consequently, there seem to be three options that the federal government could take in response to this issue.

The first would be for Congress to amend the Controlled Substances Act and legalize recreational marijuana. Proponents of this response perceive the referendums as a sign that public opinion toward legalizing recreational marijuana is changing and on the rise, and believe that the current drug policy is outdated, overly stringent, and detrimental to society. In a recent

poll conducted by CBS News, 47% of Americans stated that they think marijuana use should be legalized, a slight rise from 45% a year before (CBS News, 2012). Moreover, while a majority of voters over the age of 65 oppose legalization, a majority of voters under 45 support legalization—a sign that the trend of increasing public support for legalization will only continue (CBS News, 2012).

Advocates of legalization advance a variety of arguments. Foremost among these is the fact that medically speaking, marijuana is a relatively benign drug that, unlike tobacco and alcohol, does not kill under ordinary circumstances; indeed, it is used as a pain reliever for cancer patients, and some research has even found that it can slow the onset of Alzheimer's and help fight depression (International Business Times, 2012). Additionally, marijuana, unlike tobacco and alcohol, may not be physically addictive (merely psychologically addictive).

Moreover, legalization would be a boom for business; economists have estimated that the marijuana business could expand into a \$100 billion industry, a huge boost to an American economy still recovering from the Great Recession (International Business Times, 2012). Legalization would also generate significant tax revenues and savings for the federal government. Jeffrey Miron, a Harvard economist, has estimated that legalizing marijuana would reduce government expenditure by \$5.3 billion at the state and local level and \$2.4 billion at the federal level (i.e. police, legal, and corrections budgets due to marijuana), while gen-

erating \$6.2 billion in tax revenue if marijuana were taxed at rates comparable to those on alcohol and tobacco (Miron 2005). Billions of federal tax dollars used to finance an unsuccessful experiment to deter marijuana use could instead be put to more productive uses, like paying down the deficit.

Legalization would also relieve the penal system and law enforcement of the significant burdens of enforcing marijuana laws. Annually, more people are arrested on marijuana charges than all violent crime arrests combined (Huffington Post, 2013). Competent, non-violent marijuana users will no longer be treated like criminals, making society more prosperous on the whole. Additionally, the Drug Enforcement Agency could focus on fighting more dangerous drugs like cocaine and heroin. Marijuana legalization could even save many lives in the Mexican Drug War---which has claimed more than 50,000 lives and is spilling over into the United States---since almost half of the cartels' income comes from marijuana (Beaubien 2010). As with alcohol prohibition, the war on marijuana has not destroyed the demand for the drug but has handed over its supply to gangs in the black market.

Despite all these potential benefits, Congress and President Obama are unconvinced, and national legalization is unlikely. Fortunately, there is a second, more moderate option. The Justice Department could turn a blind eye for now to activity in states where marijuana has been legalized, while Congress delays legalizing marijuana until a majority of states have approved referendums like those in Washington and Colorado. In fact, 64% of Americans believe that the federal government should not enforce marijuana laws in states where marijuana is legal, a significant portion of whom do not support federal legalization of marijuana (Newport, 2012). This option would be more democratic than the first, as

it respects states whose citizens do not support marijuana legalization, such as Oregon where a similar legalization referendum failed to receive approval this past election. This response is in harmony with the ideals of federalism and popular sovereignty; when a majority of states legalize marijuana, the federal government would finally submit to the will of the people and legalize marijuana. However, there is a drawback to this approach---namely the fact that legalization in certain states will inevitably affect other states and their attempt to uphold federal law as access to marijuana becomes much easier. Additionally, this is a dangerous position by the federal government because it would consciously not be enforcing federal law in certain states.

The last and most stringent possible response would be for the federal government to continue enforcing federal law and crack down on Colorado and Washington's attempts to undermine federal policy. In fact, this is the current position of the Justice Department and DEA. Other advocates of this approach state that the federal government should not let states set a precedent for undermining federal policy, as, according to the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution, federal laws always take precedence over state laws. Furthermore, advocates of this position state that legalizing recreational marijuana is a slippery slope toward the legalization of all drugs and will thus have a negative effect on the welfare of the nation.

It is also possible that this conflict will end up at the Supreme Court. In the reigning precedent of *Gonzalez v. Raich* (2005), the Supreme Court held that Congress can criminalize the production and use of homegrown cannabis for medical reasons even in states where medical marijuana has been legalized. The Court expressed the concern that homegrown cannabis would affect interstate markets and thus infringe on Congress' power to

regulate interstate commerce (Oyez 2004). Similarly, it is likely that marijuana legalization within Colorado and Washington would affect interstate commerce, so the courts may simply strike down the new propositions, rendering moot any action by the federal government.

The likely and most practical response by the federal government is the second option: to condone legalization in Colorado and Washington while enforcing marijuana laws elsewhere. The transition period will be tricky, especially with the nature of marijuana commerce to traverse state lines and the federal government's lack of enforcement of its own laws. Nevertheless, this dualistic approach upsets the least number of people because it combines some preservation of federal drug policy with respect for the rights of states. It is clear, however, that this will only be a bandaid fix as growing numbers of states challenge marijuana prohibition. In the long run, legalization is inevitable; it is simply too difficult to reconcile the criminalization of marijuana with the legality of tobacco and alcohol.

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CHINA'S EIGHTEENTH PARTY CONGRESS

What does China's new leadership mean for the nation and the world?

SUFEI LI WU

For one week in November, security was especially tight in Beijing, particularly around the capital city's Great Hall of the People. More than 2,200 delegates of the Chinese Communist Party Congress met to select the 205-member 18th Central Committee, the largest part of the Russian Doll that is a Chinese political organization. This Central Committee, considered in charge of policy, in turn appointed a 25-person Politburo, or executive committee of the Communist Party. Finally, seven members of the Politburo are selected to the Politburo Standing Committee, which is effectively the supreme council of the Communist Party and dictates economic and foreign policy (Chen 2012). A change in leadership happens only once every ten years while the party congress is held about once every five years. However turnovers, especially to the Standing Committee, have the potential to significantly alter Chinese foreign and domestic policy. Given China's marked advancements over the last decade, ranging from military developments to economic growth, this transfer of power sets the tone of foreign diplomatic relations for the next ten years. While there have been calls for

reform due to recent scandals, including the disgrace of Bo Xilai, so far the 17th and 18th Party Congresses have delivered only encouraging rhetoric, and both the background of the new Standing Committee and recent military advancements suggest a divergence between language and actual intent that belies the possibility of real reform.

Some have noticed the rhetoric of the Standing Committee soften to include various references to change, particularly in President Hu Jintao's final state-of-the-nation address. He called for serious political and economic reforms, emphasizing heavily the threat of corruption to the party and nation as a whole, referring to the promotion of political integrity as "...a major political issue of great concern to the people [and]...a clear-cut and long-term political commitment of the party" (Hu 2012). Both the dangers of corruption and the need to reform were recurring themes in statements given

Many Chinese elites have criticized Hu Jintao for what they consider to be a decade of stagnant modernization in both economic and political systems while under his rule, despite China's rapid GDP growth. Perhaps recognizing these critics, Hu declared in his final address that "global cooperation is expanding at multiple levels and on all fronts. Emerging market economies and developing countries are gaining in overall strength, tipping the balance of international forces in favor of the maintenance of world peace" (Hu 2012). Hu's recognition of globalization and China's international presence stands in stark contrast from his report to the 17th National Congress in 2007 that focused much more on centralization, describing the theme of the congress "to hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics" (Hu 2007).

Hu's sentiments of world peace and global cooperation were somewhat undermined by the formal unveiling

"The discrepancy between noble-sounding statements and shrewd realities is the hallmark of this once-in-a-decade transfer of power."

by both Hu and newly appointed General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman of the Central Military Commission Xi Jinping, who is also expected to replace outgoing President Hu Jintao (Wong 2012).

of China's first aircraft carrier just a week or so earlier. Although the US, Japanese, and British navies have included aircraft carriers for nearly a century, China's "first generation multi-purpose carrier-borne fighter jet," (CNN Wire Staff 2012) or J-15



Hu and Xi discuss policy in the Chinese congress

Forbes.house.gov

serves a far greater symbolic purpose. In an assessment of Chinese military capability done by the US military, it was determined that the carrier is still a few years away from combat capabilities. Regardless, as an Economist correspondent noted, “after all, what are carriers for if not to project power?” (M.J.S. 2012) While the U.S. still enjoys its status as the only navy with more than one aircraft carrier, such advancement does nothing to ease the tension with Japan over the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyutai islands in the East China Sea and certainly does not promote “global cooperation.”

Xi comes to power in the face of these mounting pressures, and much of his background seems to indicate a more progressive future for the 18th Party Congress. Although Xi is described as a “princeling” by some because his father was a very well respected top party leader, Xi seems to embrace parts of Western culture that the more parochial Hu did not. Xi is a fan of World War II movies, is well-travelled, and has a daughter who attends Harvard (Higgins 2012). Critics of Hu continue to encourage Xi to aggressively pursue a more transparent political and economic status quo, and

there are some indications that this would be possible due to the broader range of support enjoyed by Xi. Even so, much of Xi’s experience and intellectual thought can be traced back to his time spent in the rural villages of the Shaanxi Province, where he was sent at age 15, a common form of re-education used during the years following the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which was a ten year campaign by Chairman Mao Zedong to prevent what he viewed to be China’s move away from socialism to capitalism that stressed a politicized education of youth that emphasized ideological purity. Xi admitted these roots of his “pragmatic thinking” in an essay published in 2003, which are among the reasons many in the west are skeptical of his intentions. However, he is still very much a creature of the party, having used his family’s extensive political connections to attend the prestigious Tsinghua University (Branigan 2012).

The discrepancy between noble-sounding statements and shrewd realities is the hallmark of this once-in-a-decade transfer of power. Perhaps nothing quite so aptly sums China’s real intentions for the future than the reported \$6

million China spent on broadcast news channels in English, Russian, and Arabic. Al-Jazeera goes as far to call this push of China’s image abroad as its “greatest export” (Chan 2012). While both Hu and Xi have recognized and called upon the damage corruption has caused the state, and have appeared to make rhetorical strides towards increased globalization and cooperation, their actions point to a different narrative altogether. From a showy flexing of military power to glorified ad buys, dreams of a reformed China will have to wait. China remains, above all else, committed to its rise as a global power, and the new faces of the 18th Congress will not change the old ambitions that precede it.

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AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

The Future of American Healthcare

How will Obamacare impact healthcare professionals?

HARRISON DEVRIES EBELING

Americans spend an incredible amount yearly on healthcare--\$8,233 on each individual, more than two-and-a-half times that of most developed countries (Kane 2012). What's more, the U.S. healthcare system eats up 17.6 % of the GDP, about eight percentage points more than the average of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2012). Clearly something must be done to reduce the cost of healthcare in America. The federal government, led by President Obama, enacted the Affordable Care Act in March 2010 in an attempt to correct America's healthcare system. Liberals have hailed this attempt as a significant reform of a faltering health care system. Conservatives have denounced it as the rise of socialized medicine in America. Some Americans view this change to be too long-awaited, or too rapid—and unconstitutional. From a medical perspective, the act will fall in between the greatest fears of conservatives and the greatest hopes of liberals. Politicians can bicker about and politicize the law, but all can agree that this act will dramatically alter the landscape of American medicine in years to come. The act will significantly affect how doctors practice medicine, how patients are treated, and how providers

function. Especially for doctors, the ACA will lead to decreased freedom and increased governmental interference in private practices as well as the discontent of many patients who enjoy a system of care driven by the consumer.

The Affordable Care Act will drive healthcare providers away from their current consumer-driven system. For instance, if a citizen wants an expensive and perhaps needless scan for a brain tumor, a physician will order the scan if the patient insists on it. If the patient is a Medicare patient, for instance, the expense is billed to the taxpayer with little out-of-pocket cost for the patient. After 2014 the healthcare system will move away from this consumer-driven system to a more efficient system of controlled, less costly care driven by Accountable Care Organizations. These ideally provide “groups of doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers, who come together voluntarily to give coordinated high quality care to the Medicare patients they serve” (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services 2012). Essentially, ACOs are groups of hospitals, physicians, post-acute care facilities, and similar providers who communicate and work together to eliminate unnecessary care and improve health outcomes beyond the initial medical operation.

However, ACOs have a fatal flaw: the motivation of revenue. If healthcare providers like hospitals “achieve better outcomes, they divvy up money saved with the health plans” with the government through the Medicare

system (Japsen 2012). Such a system sounds intelligent and profitable, but it may also motivate hospitals to increase revenue by caring for their patients on a minimalistic basis. Indeed, it may encourage hospitals to spend less on patients for simply financial reasons, as “a Health Affairs report wasn't able to show statistically significant results” (McNickle 2012) to conclude that ACOs may improve the quality of care for patients and drive down costs for providers.

Such a view paints an intensely negative view of ACOs that are only just getting off the ground. Certainly, the idea of the coordination of medical care to provide patients with better care at reasonable costs is an extremely attractive proposition that providers will improve upon and refine continually. Indeed, a collaborative accountable care model showed “favorable trends in the total medical costs and quality of care” (McNickle 2012). Providers can certainly find ways to adapt and become more efficient, but such efficiency can only exist with a dramatic change to the system of medical practice—for both doctors and patients—that many doctors and especially older patients may find displeasing and coercing.

The organization of medical care will dramatically change the landscape of medical practice as doctors will lose a good deal of their autonomy. The implementation of the ACA will “not allow doctors to be necessarily independent” (Cosgrove 2012). Doctors will be forced to develop relationships with hospitals and other providers.

Since hospitals will coordinate and consolidate their operations, they will want to employ many more doctors (Cosgrove 2012). Thus, fewer physicians will remain in private practice or start their own practices as young doctors. In essence, the role of doctors may change drastically due to the loss of some control over patient care. Whereas once a doctor could take charge of a patient's treatment in private practice, if employed by a hospital, a doctor would be constricted by the hospital's decisions on how to treat the patient.

Ideally, though, this system will reduce the costs of healthcare as providers become more efficient at providing care and cut out patients' excessive medical demands. The added financial benefit for the success of ACOs certainly provides motivation to organize and consolidate "on a much bigger scale, across the country" (Cosgrove 2012). Like a nation-wide supermarket, the idea is that connectedness and organization on a national level can reduce costs. This outcome is not assured, however. The Cleveland Clinic, for instance, has consolidated all of their operations, yet that has not translated to any lower price for private insurers (Cosgrove 2012).

In fact, hospitals' motivation for unifying divisions stems from the fact that "we know that the payer is going to pay us less [in the future], so we're getting ready" (Cosgrove 2012). The fear is that the government will pay less for Medicare and Medicaid in the future, leading to greater financial issues for struggling hospitals. These hospitals have reason to be concerned; Congress has been prolonging its judgment on the Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate, which was enacted by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, since 2003. Essentially, the MSGR will unfairly cut the physician

payment rate by 26% to save federal funds. However, Congress has bypassed the sustainable growth rate to ensure that these cuts do not go into effect (Herman 2012). With the MSGR looming over the heads of physicians and healthcare providers, providers must attempt to reduce their costs.

Perhaps the most important change from the ACA is the effect on insurance now provided through one's employer. Many healthcare providers fear that businesses will no longer insure their employees, driving many people to government health insurance exchanges and decreasing competition between private health insurance companies and government-run exchanges. Cleveland Clinic CEO Delos Cosgrove sees that, increasingly, "people think that in 10 years you're going to have 75% of the health-care costs paid by the federal government" (Cosgrove 2012). Small businesses will most likely be the first to drop their coverage, but "the first time some big player does that, it's going to fall like dominoes. What that does is drive everybody to the exchanges" (Cosgrove 2012).

With so many Americans previously insured privately, then insured through the government, the state of healthcare will simply change. With so many government-run healthcare plans, healthcare providers will become driven toward high-volume patient care, devoting less time to each patient. At the same time, they will use less qualified medical workers like nurse practitioners and physician assistants, instead of doctors, for basic responsibilities in an effort to reduce their operating costs. As regulatory pressures increase on physicians, more will turn to hospitals to employ them, leading to serious healthcare changes. ACOs and hospital administrators will take away some of

the decision-making abilities that formerly rested in the hands of physicians and patients in an effort to reduce costs. This will lead to more responsible, cost-effective spending on patients—to the dismay of some who demand aggressive, excessive medical care.

Certainly, America needs to reform its healthcare system, which eats up 17.6 percent of the GDP (Kane 2012). However, the current Affordable Care Act will constrict doctors and patients too much. Coercing doctors into joining the ranks of larger health care providers and burdening them with regulations will not solve America's healthcare problems. America suffers from medical issues that cannot be solved by providers alone. For instance, 21% of the beneficiaries of Medicare have five or more chronic conditions, such as diabetes and heart disease, and caring for them consumes 79% of Medicare spending (Wessel 2012). More efficient care cannot hope to solve such lifestyle and health crises; that requires cultural education and change. Altering the U.S. healthcare system could lead to great benefits to a generally failing system, but it should not happen at the cost of doctors' and medical providers' freedom and success.

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THE PREDATORY JUSTICE OF *America's Sex Offender Laws*

Are America's current sex offender laws adequate?

————— MICHAEL ZOROB

Congress mandates and all state legislatures require the public registration of sex offenders, a sanction imposed on an estimated 750,000 Americans (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children 2012). Registration usually entails public notification and a variety of restrictions on residency, employment, and mobility. Legislators enact these policies to protect children from sexual predators, constrain recidivism, and punish offenders (Letourneau 2010; Lester 2006). Through reviewing the scholarly literature, I find that sex offender laws fail in the first two goals, though registration does have substantial—and excessive—punitive effects. These results justify narrowing the scope and breadth of sex offender laws to ameliorate their deleterious effects without compromising public safety.

Sex offender laws emerged before any research testified to their efficacy; subsequent to their implementation, however, many studies have analyzed their effect on sex crime incidence (Levenson & Tewksbury 2009; Letourneau 2010). For example, one study (Walker 2005) looked at the efficacy of registration in ten states, finding that three states experienced significant declines in rape. However, California experienced a significant increase, and the remaining six states showed no changes. Another study (Agan 2011) examined sex offender poli-

cies in all fifty states and did not find significant reductions in sex crime. A meta-analysis of sex offender registries and notification laws showed that they have not reduced sex crime incidence (Levenson & Tewksbury 2009).

Research is inconclusive, but sex offender policies may increase recidivism by hindering offenders' reintegration into society (Prescott & Rockoff 2011). The contingencies of sex offender status, including relationship problems, insecure housing, unemployment, and social isolation correlate with recidivism (Levenson & Tewksbury 2009). In the 1990s, states that required registration had slightly higher sex offender recidivism than other states (Agan 2011). That sex offender laws have neither constrained overall sex crime incidence or recidivism provides a *prima facie* case for reform.

Meanwhile, the laws' harmful effects are well-documented. Neighbors often assault, rob, or even murder registered sex offenders (Yoder 2011). Forty-seven percent of offenders report being harassed, 27% report being vandalized, and 16% report being assaulted (Tewksbury 2005). A majority of offenders experience depression, anxiety, and hopelessness due to their sex offender status (Brannon 2005). Relationship loss and consequent distress were also pervasive (Tewksbury 2005).

Nine states and numerous municipalities explicitly restrict where sex offenders work on such bases as proximity to schools, daycares, and playgrounds (Lester 2006). These laws make obtaining employment diffi-

cult, particularly for jobs that require mobility. Sex offenders are commonly fired or not hired because an employer learns their status (Tewksbury 2005). This may be antithetical to public safety as stably employed sex offenders were 37% less likely to recidivate following their release from prison (Kruttschnitt, Uggen, & Shelton 2000).

Thirty states restrict sex offenders from being near schools, daycares, and parks (Meloy, Miller, & Curtis, 2008). These restrictions limit where registered sex offenders and their families can live; in Miami, for example, 95% of living spaces are within 1,000 feet of schools, parks, daycares, and bus stops (Zandbergen & Hart, 2006). Additionally, 20-40% of registered sex offenders report having been evicted after landlords learned their status (Levenson & Tewksbury 2009, 3). Consequently, homelessness among registered sex offenders is high. A California task force observed a 750 percent increase in homelessness among the state's offenders following new residency restrictions (Yoder 2011).

Most states subject minors convicted of sex crimes to the same registration, notification, and restrictions as adults. In fact, the federal Walsh Act mandates offenders as young as 14 to register, though offenders as young as ten have been required to do so (Human Rights Watch 2007). Teens have become sex offenders after convictions of sexting, public urination, and consensual sex with other teens (Human Rights Watch 2007). Juvenile offenders often experience emotional problems, difficulty securing employment, social ostracization, and difficulties at school

(Geer 2008). Teens have been barred from attending school due to their sex offender status (Feyerick 2009).

Sex offender laws also unjustifiably harm relatives of sex offenders. Many family members report that they suffer from social, economic, and residential disruption (Levinson and Tewksbury 2009). The majority offenders' children reported isolation, harassment, and ridicule by their peers because of a parent's status, frequently resulting in depression, anxiety, and suicidal tendencies (Levinson and Tewksbury 2009). The deleterious impact on youth is chilling given lawmakers' intent to protect children.

Legally stigmatizing sex offenders has unleashed a plethora of harms. However, registries have not mitigated sex crimes. Hence, policymakers should consider reforms which might forego the harmful effects of these laws but not public safety. I propose three policy reforms to this end. First, in light of the well-documented harms of public registration and the apparent absence of crime reduction, law enforcement—and not the general public—should have access to offenders' residence information. Second, employment, residency, and mobility restrictions should apply only when they rationally relate to the crime; for example, restrictions on proximity to schools should apply only to crimes against school-aged individuals (Lester 2006). Third, registration should be limited to the most serious sexual offenses, such as child molestation or forcible rape; in particular, registering those convicted of indecent exposure and juveniles convicted of sexting or consensual sex is unwarranted and inefficient (Human Rights Watch 2007).

Additionally, more careful application of these policies may benefit public safety. Limiting registration to a smaller group may enable law

enforcement to focus on the most likely reoffenders rather than thin their attention on a larger pool of lower-risk individuals (Agan 2011; Zevitz 2000). Granting offenders greater opportunity to find employment, housing, and social support may facilitate reintegration into society and thus reduce the recidivism rate (Prescott & Rockoff 2011). However, as “the lobby for sex offenders is neither large nor vocal” (Lester 2006), the probability of such reforms in the near future is quite small.

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THE CURRENT SITUATION

“... sex offender policies may increase recidivism by hindering offenders' reintegration into society”

750,000

THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF REGISTERED SEX OFFENDERS

“Legally stigmatizing sex offenders has unleashed a plethora of harms”

47

PERCENT OF SEX OFFENDERS WHO HAVE REPORTED BEING HARASSED

30

The number of states that restrict sex offenders from being near schools, day-cares, and parks

“...sex offender policies may increase recidivism by hindering offenders' reintegration into society”

750

The percent increase in homelessness among California's sex offenders after new residency restrictions

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AFRICA RISING

RYAN HIGGINS

As the rest of the world is still trying to resurrect itself from economic crisis, a new economic player is starting to emerge. Africa is beginning to prove itself on an international stage, becoming an increasingly important force in the world economy. Its growing economic significance will have a sizable impact on the status quo, but only if this growth can be maintained.

In 2011, six of the ten fastest growing economies in the world were in Africa. Inflation has fallen from an average of 15 percent in 2000 to eight percent today (Pflanz 2012). The economies of many African countries appear to be expanding, which is more than can be said of many industrialized nations. As Stephen Jennings of Renaissance Capital said, Africa “is the only region in the world where growth is accelerating” (Freeland 2012). GDP growth has averaged 4.9 percent from 2000 to 2008, a substantial margin, especially for a continent where many countries have been stagnant for years. There is even some speculation that Africa will be the new Asia, as development could lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty.

The comparison to Asia is particularly poignant. Japan aside, many now-dominant Asian economies were barely

beginning to emerge thirty years ago. In reducing child mortality, increasing levels of education, and strengthening infrastructure, Asian countries experienced rapid development, becoming important economic players today. For example, Asia features 2-3 of the BRIC nations, the new leading economies of the world.

African nations have apparently learned from the example of Asia in targeting resources towards development. Many have, however, also been dependent on Asian nations to finance this growth – China in particular. The Chinese are notorious for investing heavily in African infrastructure development projects, especially in Western Africa. The motives behind these acts of assistance are somewhat questionable, yet they have definitely contributed to the facilitation of African growth.

Similarly contributing to this newfound growth is the recent reversal in the notorious African Brain Drain. Educated Africans are increasingly seeking employment and innovation opportunities in their homelands, and thus the exodus of the educated to Europe and the USA has diminished significantly (Pflanz 2012). This retention of brainpower gives African nations a better platform from which to develop their economies.

While all these indicators are very promising, further investigation suggests there is room for

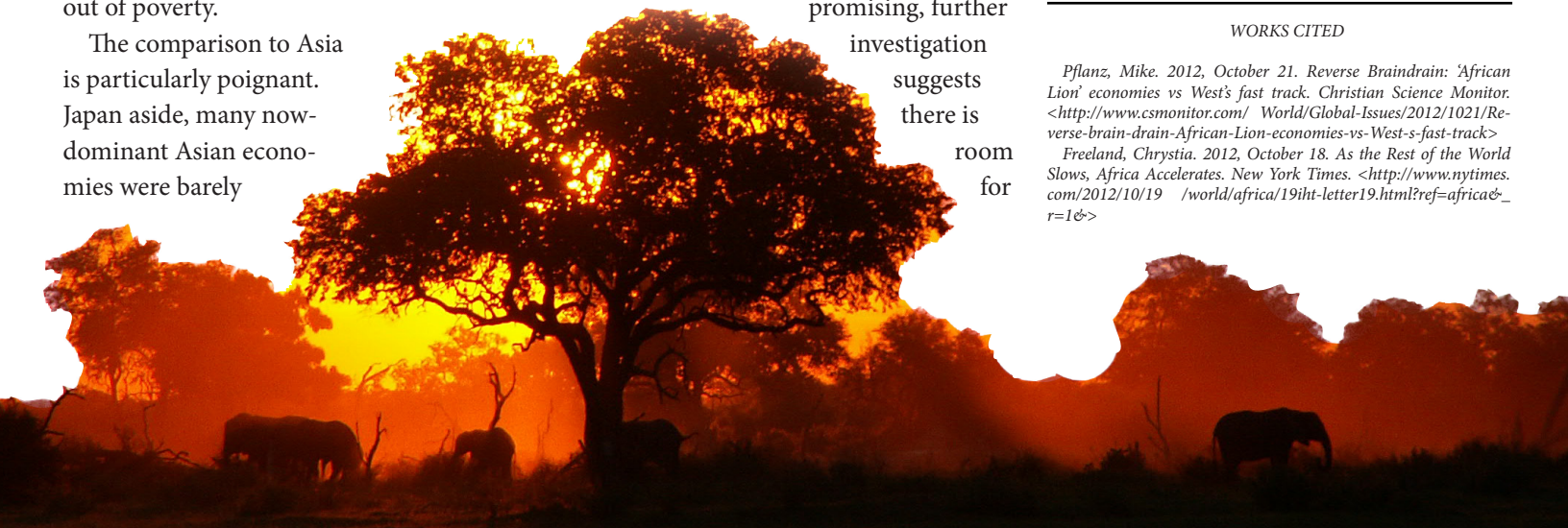
skepticism. African economic development has fared extremely well in recent years, but the continent still faces extreme developmental inequality. Nigeria, for example, has experienced incredible growth, while nations such as Ethiopia have struggled through great famines. It is for this inequality that the generalization of continental economic growth is unwarranted. Just as the economies of Germany, Italy, Spain, and Sweden are entirely different, so are those of Botswana, Senegal, Somalia, and Tunisia. Instead of examining these nations as a continent, a regional analysis of growth would better represent the struggles and triumphs African nations are experiencing today.

Continued growth will not come easily. Even though some researchers feel that the continent is poised to continue this trajectory, a simple fall in commodity prices could yield disaster for many countries. Similarly, as developed nations continue to come out of financial disasters, African commodities and exports will face increased competition as the cost of imports will rise. Ultimately, overcoming poverty on the African continent is going to take much more than a few years of growth. It will require governmental and societal change, something that has been slow-coming in Africa.

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ROE REVISITED

KATIE MILLER

On January 25, 2013—just days after the fortieth anniversary of the Supreme Court's landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision—abortion opponents came out in waves for the March for Life rally in Washington, D.C. While thousands attended the Washington rally, including Republican Tennessee Representative Diane Black and former Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum (Parker 2013) the results of a recent NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll revealed that Americans are far from one-sided on the issue. In fact, out of those polled, seventy percent of Americans opposed overturning the decision—the highest opposition rate the question since 1989 (Murray 2013).

However, while the same NBC/WSJ poll reveal that a majority of Americans favor abortion in all or most circumstances, this is not the whole story. A full 44 percent of those surveyed were opposed with or without exceptions, which reveals that significant dissonance that still exists. Much like how public opinion towards gay marriage is largely split along partisan and religious lines, so too is public opinion regarding abortion. In the wake of such a clear split, the case that has spurred such controversy even forty years later should be revisited.

While *Roe v. Wade* does strike at the core of long-held moral and religious beliefs involving the definition of personhood, the case itself can be interpreted from a less-charged perspective. The Court's 7-2 ruling found that laws restricting abortion infringed upon a woman's constitutional right to privacy (Wilson 2013). *Roe* came on the heels of a strong Supreme Court trend towards expanding the right to privacy and can be interpreted as a follow-up of the 1965 *Griswold v.*



<http://www.toomey.senate.gov/?p=newsletters&id=637>

Connecticut decision, which protected married couples' right to privacy. The right to privacy remains at the core of the Court's decision and is an especially relevant issue today.

In an age of increasing globalization and technological advancement, the boundaries that once defined privacy have become blurred. Because of this, it is difficult to determine if the standards that defined privacy in the 1970s still apply. Many of those who favor upholding *Roe* argue that the federal government should not have a say in a decision as personal as abortion. Similarly, those who favor gay marriage favor the freedom to choose a marriage partner without governmental intervention. If the prevailing public opinion is shifting in favor of greater privacy, one question remains: how is privacy to be interpreted in an era that is inarguably less private than ever before?

Roe v. Wade embodies the idea that Americans should have a constitutional right to privacy from the government. A modern-day distinction should be made, however, between privacy from the government and personal privacy. With the explosion of social media, in particular, Americans are considerably more open about the personal details of their lives than in the 1970s. As personal privacy continues to disintegrate the Supreme Court is left to interpret a concept that is

not the same as it was in the *Roe* era.

While the controversy surrounding *Roe v. Wade* likely will not fade any time soon, one must wonder what the Court's decision would have been had the case been decided today. Because the debate about what it means to be a person and the morality of abortion is undoubtedly less black-and-white than issues of constitutional privacy, there seems to be a plausible possibility that *Roe* would not be passed today. While the majority of Americans oppose overturning the decision, many Americans still question the historic ruling. Such discord will likely grow in the future as both states and the federal government grapple with balancing Americans' expectations of privacy from the government, the decay of personal privacy standards, and the continuing debate about the ethicality of abortion.

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