

The Digest

of Conservative Issues and Ideas

Free Sample Copy

Issue: 8

Cost: \$1.25

Taxpayers taken for a ride, a ride that is now ending

By Sen. Alberta Darling (R-8th District)
and Rep. Robin Vos (R-63rd District)

This past session, we spent a lot of time fixing the mess former Gov. Jim Doyle and the Democrats made when they were in power. From filling a \$3.6 billion deficit to repaying the Injured Victims Compensation Fund that he raided, we've made it our goal to protect taxpayers from the bad decisions made in years past. As the chairs of the budget-writing Joint Committee on Finance, it is our job to be responsible stewards with the generous money taxpayers provide the state.

The no-bid Talgo Inc. contract was astonishingly irresponsible, even by Doyle and the Democrats' fiscal standards. Shortly after a hastily announced jaunt to Spain, Doyle used a loophole in the law to commit Wisconsin to a no-bid boondoggle that locked in escalating costs for a train that couldn't survive without continual taxpayer support.

The more we found out, the less there was to like. The deal was sold as a \$47.1 million contract, but the actual cost was closer to \$70 million. Those trains were meant to be built for a less than high-speed rail line between Madison and Milwaukee at great taxpayer expense. Gov. Scott Walker smartly turned away one-time federal funding for a train people didn't want and couldn't afford. The federal funding wouldn't have touched the long-term costs of maintaining and operating the train that wouldn't have saved commuters any time and would cost taxpayers in perpetuity. It was a boondoggle we couldn't afford.

Since the trains wouldn't be used for the Madison-to-Milwaukee line, the trains had to go to Amtrak's Hiawatha line. Unfortunately, the trains are too small to meet ridership demands for that line, which means we would need to build even more cars that are more expensive to operate on the Hiawatha line. It's throwing good money after bad. For the sake of the taxpayers in Wisconsin, it was time to go back to the table and work on a deal that would better protect taxpayers.

We made the decision in the Joint Finance Committee like any family would—by looking at the numbers. In early December, the committee passed a motion to ask the Department of Transportation for a full analysis of the taxpayer cost of running the Talgo trains and opening a

permanent maintenance facility for 20 years vs. the cost of running the current Amtrak trains. The difference made last week's decisions an easy one for Wisconsin taxpayers.

The nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau estimated that Talgo trains would cost taxpayers \$10 million more each year for the next 20 years. We didn't believe it was wise to throw \$200 million taxpayer dollars at a bad project.

The state would be bound by contract to have a more frequent maintenance schedule than Amtrak, instantly inflating the cost of operations by 3%. These new Talgo trains have to be serviced every other day. The current Amtrak trains are maintained on a set schedule and on an as-needed basis, similar to how you maintain your own car.

The Legislative Fiscal Bureau estimates the cost to operate the new trains would be \$5.1 million higher. However, that's assuming the same number of people ride the trains. However, the Talgo trains are smaller. In addition, Illinois now helps pay for 25% of the Amtrak contract, but it wouldn't pay anything to help maintain the Talgo trains. It's not part of the Talgo agreement.

Now you have to add the required construction costs of the maintenance facility. The capital costs would add \$5 million annually to the state's bill. That brings the total cost to \$10 million each year for the next 20 years - \$200 million that can be better spent elsewhere.

For those who currently ride the Amtrak train, this decision means you will see no difference with your service. However, if we would've chosen the more expensive route, riders of the new trains could potentially see fair hikes, less seating on the train and this popular line suddenly becomes less attractive. It's a gamble we were not willing to take.

Luckily, the state has options. According to the Legislative Fiscal Bureau, if no funds were given for the Talgo maintenance facility, the "agreement can be terminated by either party." So that's where we are now. The state will go back to the table with Talgo and try to work out a better deal than the no-bid one they received in the final days of the Doyle administration.

Wisconsin taxpayers were taken for a ride by Doyle and the Democrats. We're proud to say that the ride is coming to an end.

Sen. Alberta Darling (R-River Hills) and Rep. Robin Vos (R-Rochester) are co-chairs of the Joint Finance Committee.

Walker and the Legislature had to fix liberal mess

Gov. Scott Walker and the Wisconsin Legislature were faced with some very tough decisions after being elected in 2010. Raise taxes and chase people and businesses out of state—as Jim Doyle, Wisconsin's worst governor in 100 years and as Illinois and California are doing—or to restore fiscal sanity to the budget for a generation. They figured that they were going to have to break a few eggs.

Not wanting to see massive layoffs and big class sizes, across the state, they settled on the best possible answer—making public employees pay their fair share of pensions and health costs, as the rest of the state does.

Their results were good and they are working. Some of the public employees were a little upset, with having to do with the same salary deductions as what the taxpayers are getting and so decided to completely engage in a civil war with the governor and legislature, upsetting the whole community and throwing the economy into a tailspin.

Few businesses want to work with these aggressive unions and their foul mouthed friends so they have held back and watched. The carryover from the bad decisions of the Doyle administration precluded a quick recovery, so Wisconsin continues to suffer under their obnoxious tactics.

With this recall election, Wisconsin has two distinct paths to follow for their schools: either the path of our kids under the thumb of the union thugs or the path of more freedom for the families and local communities to plan for their own kids.

Already we have seen some amazing changes.

In Brown Deer they have shown that minority students can be taught to read while in Milwaukee, still under the thumb of the union thugs, thousands more kids will leave school with minimal skills, but the teachers pensions, health and salaries will remain intact.

If a kid can't read by 4th grade, he or she is pretty much lost.

Why do you think kids are in trouble? Poor family lives, uncaring school monopoly and unable to comprehend lessons put in front of them, they act up. Thank God that CHOICE came along to give some of them hope, something that they have not had even

with this HOPE AND CHANGE program voted in nationally.

Scott Walker is a REFORM governor, sent in to clean up the mess made by Liberal Tom Ament and his leftists. They feathered their beds at the expense of the taxpayers, as have the other public employee unions around the state. Now, having to deal with the mess left by the Leftists in Mad City, Walker and the Legislature made some tough decisions. He dealt with Milwaukee County's mess and is now dealing with the mess in Mad city, and, boy, are they screaming. "When you pull all of those noses away from the trough, you sure do get a lot of oinking," Ronald Reagan said.

Unions, faced with the loss of dues that they use to pad their fat salaries and further their leftist political power, have been the worst.

Tommy Thompson showed us the way in 14 years as governor. He cut taxes, encouraged businesses, controlled spending, and kept a steady course to attract and grow businesses. Walker is following the same path, while the dimwitted left wants to make enemies of those that start from scratch, work 60 hours per week, and grow their businesses to create jobs. They need capital to do that and the more we take from them the less we get.

If you take money from productive people and give it to non-productive people, you get less production from both.

There is a reason that around 7,500 top income people have left this state and over 150,000 tax eaters have moved in and it isn't because of Conservative fiscal policy.

It might be nice to live in Mad City with the universities, hospitals, and state government there, providing stable, high salaried jobs, but the rest of the state does not have that and we need private jobs to pay the way there. While the leftists in Mad City can stroll along the lake in their birkenstocks puffing on a little pot while talking about socialism and its goals, the rest of us have to work.

**Bob and Jean Dohnal, Publishers
The Wisconsin Conservative Digest**

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About this time of the year, after the elections, is when all conservatives go to sleep, zip up their billfolds and say: "we elected them do all of the hard lifting". That is why we win battles and lose wars. The campaigns must go on, Conservatives have to keep working and keep giving. Politics is a Blood sport, you can see that in Madison the last few weeks.

Ronald Reagan said once: "When you pull all of those snouts away from the trough you are going to get a lot of oinking." That is what is happening. The left is apoplectic. They might lose 25% or more of their contributions. That can kill some of them. The left lives off the rest of us. Public employees and many public agencies depend on our money, tax money, to pay for their political activities. We Conservatives must go out and get money from hard working people. Most of the rich people have become liberals. Conservatives are the people that are out there every day busting their butts.

Please help us organize: Send us \$25 or send us a request to get 25 of the new Conservative Digests. Distribute them to libraries, coffee shops, organizations, meetings, and friends. Join our e-mail lists and

get immediate updates on what is happening in Madison and DC. Then you can help by hollering, sending letters, calling your local newspaper editors and talk shows. This is a fight for the future.

Do you want to see the future become that of the leftwing visions? Or do you want a future for our kids that includes, personal freedoms, property rights, low taxes, better jobs and salaries, homes and lives?

It is your choice: Help!!

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Time to ‘RESTORE America’

By Tommy Thompson

I’ve had the pleasure to tour Wisconsin to unveil elements of my ‘RESTORE America’ plan, and the outpouring of support I’m receiving heartens me.

To get America working again we need fundamental reforms that put the taxpayer first, protect our liberties and bolster our free market economy. Those conservative principles will be the driving force behind my initiatives to reform our nation’s entitlements, repeal Obamacare, balance the budget, simplify taxes, and overturn regulatory excess.

As part of my budget reforms, I’ve called for Senators to stop getting a paycheck until they fulfill their responsibility by adopting a budget, something Harry Reid and the current U.S. Senate majority has failed to do for nearly three years. In addition, I have outlined a plan to address excessive public sector worker benefits at the federal level—similar to what Governor Walker has done here in Wisconsin.

My tax reform plan includes a variety of initiatives that will spur economy growth and vitality including an option for a simplified flat tax, permanency of the Bush tax cuts, eliminating the tax on Social Security benefits, reducing corporate taxes, and repatriating foreign profits by U.S. companies.

I will pursue a policy of zero taxation on foreign profits repatriated to the U.S. when those profits are used for investment in plant and equipment, job training or research and development. Investing more than \$1 trillion in our economy at little or no cost to the U.S. Treasury (because those profits are generally not taxed now) is among the most powerful near-term actions we can take to restore America’s economy.

To further restore America, we must reduce our nation’s dependence on overseas oil and stimulate job creation while finding new sources of energy. I support the Keystone Pipeline, opening new resources for oil and gas exploration, and easing regulations to stimulate the development of domestic natural gas supplies. I encourage you to learn more about RESTORE America by visiting my website TommyForWisconsin.com.

The bold proposals I’m unveiling to get America working again are based in my conservative philosophy and what I know will work to empower entrepreneurs, stimulate job growth and development, and make the country competitive again globally. In essence, my plan is to get the federal government out the way and unleash the power and ingenuity of the American people.

I cannot sit by and watch the American Dream vanish for our children and grandchildren. With the rapidly growing national debt, the mortgage meltdown, and a sluggish economic recovery, the promise that each generation would have the same opportunity for success and prosperity as the current generation is slipping away. The

time for action is now.

Together, we’ve faced very tough and difficult circumstances before and we prevailed.

When I first ran for governor, a feeling of hopelessness hung over the Badger State. Jobs and businesses were leaving Wisconsin in droves, failed liberal economic and social policies trapped people in poverty and state government become a roadblock to prosperity and innovation. But we did not run from our problems...we solved them. We were successful because we implemented free market strategies to make government work for the people – not the other way around.

Bold reforms and the courage to take on the establishment were the keys to our success.

We reformed Wisconsin’s education system to give parents the freedom and power to choose the best education for their child through our School Choice initiative—the first and largest school choice program in the entire country. I fought the education establishment all the way to the United States Supreme Court because religious values were not the problem, failing schools were.

We reformed Wisconsin’s tax code by slashing the income tax rate three times. I eliminated the inheritance and gift taxes, cut capital gains taxes, and delivered \$2.4 billion in property tax relief. In all, I cut taxes 91 times and saved taxpayers more than \$16 billion and the overall tax burden during my tenure as governor went down.

We reformed Wisconsin’s business climate by cutting regulations and getting government out of the way of job-creators. My reforms ushered in an era of unprecedented growth and prosperity for the people of Wisconsin and created more than 740,000 new jobs. Among those were 94,000 new manufacturing jobs for Wisconsin; this at a time when the nation as a whole experienced a net loss of 462,000 manufacturing jobs.

We reformed Wisconsin’s welfare system and created a model for the entire nation on how to reform an entitlement program. We gave people a hand up, not a hand out. And we ended a cycle of government dependency that often spanned generations.

I’m proud of the work we did to turn Wisconsin into America’s laboratory of reform. School Choice, job creation, tax and welfare reform were landmark victories for conservatives in Wisconsin and across the entire country.

My record is one of innovation, limited government, protection of life and liberty, and living within our means.

To get American working again Republicans must win here in Wisconsin to help deliver a GOP majority in the United States Senate and defeat Barack Obama. It is the only way to derail their big government agenda.

I can deliver that historic win for Republicans. And I’m ready for the challenge.

Tommy Thompson was the 42nd governor of Wisconsin and a current U.S. Senate candidate.

Promises made, promises kept under Governor Walker

By Brad Courtney
Chairman of the Republican Party of Wisconsin

After eight years under the oppressive thumb of the Doyle regime, Wisconsin is finally seeing light at the end of the tunnel.

In 2010, a resounding majority of the voters of Wisconsin spoke loud and clear at the ballot box that enough was enough. Sweeping changes were ahead for our state. Russ Feingold was replaced by Ron Johnson; the uber-left majorities in the state house and senate were turned over to those with sound fiscal ideas to get our financial house in order, and Scott Walker stepped behind the desk in the governor's office.

With his new job as Governor, Scott Walker immediately got to work keeping the promises he made during the 2010 campaign. Gov. Walker promised to address the staggering job loss during the three year before Gov. Walker took office. On his first day in office, the governor called an emergency session on jobs that curbed frivolous lawsuits, cut taxes on job creators, and eliminated the state tax on Health Savings Accounts.

During 2011, the job losses created due to Doyle's reckless spending were put to an end and a foundation for growth was firmly put in place. Due to Gov. Walker's reforms, our unemployment rate is at a three-year low of 6.9 percent and 17,800 new private sector jobs were created this year alone. Trends are looking up and companies are now looking

to Wisconsin to relocate in order to see their businesses flourish.

Gov. Walker also promised an end to the years of billion-dollar budget deficits. In his first budget, Gov. Walker was able to eliminate a \$3.6 billion dollar deficit and pay off \$800 million in IOUs left by his predecessor. Not only did he live up to this promise, but he did so without raising our taxes.

Gov. Walker also promised an end to the reckless disregard of your hard earned tax dollars and the tax-and-spend mentality that came with it. By returning the federal government's wasteful high speed rail handout, the governor not only saved us time and money today, but billions in the future for a project that without-a-doubt would have drained valuable and limit resources from state coffers. Spending money for the sake of spending money is a useless waste of taxpayer money, and with people like Gov. Walker at the helm of leadership, we are likely to not see such a waste of money again.

The governor also promised to protect our second amendment rights, and by championing and signing Wisconsin's conceal carry law and castle doctrine, he has done just that.

Gov. Walker is a man of his word, and although it may not be popular with the liberal left and their cronies in the big-government public labor unions, he is sticking by the promises he made, and making them promises kept.

Governor Walker continues to be a hero for hunting

By Bob Welch

Gov. Scott Walker continued to show why he's a hero to Wisconsin hunters this spring. On April 2, 2012, Gov. Walker signed into law the Wolf Management Act, creating Wisconsin's first wolf hunting and trapping season. This season will finally allow Wisconsin to manage its rapidly increasing gray wolf population.

Gov. Walker's signature marks the end of a long battle. We've previously reported on the years of work from the Wisconsin's Hunters Rights Coalition (HRC) and like-minded organizations fighting to get the recovery of the gray wolf recognized by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). HRC member organizations filed a formal petition seeking the delisting back in May of

2010, following shortly by a letter of intent to sue USFWS for failure to act in a timely manner. Soon after the Walker-appointed DNR administration also filed formal comments which in combination with the HRC actions led to the USFWS delisting.

We continue to anticipate out-of-state animal rights extremists will challenge the USFWS decision as they have done with previous listings.

However this time around we're confident the scientific basis for the delisting will trump the uninformed emotionalism of the opponents.

Once delisted, wolves once again moved into DNR jurisdiction. Sen. Terry Moulton

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and Rep. Scott Suder then introduced the Wolf Management Act to give the DNR the tools necessary to manage the growing population. The bill made its way quickly through the legislature and eventually to the desk of the very supportive Gov. Walker.

Wisconsin's wolf population is estimated by the DNR to be around 800 wolves. This is the most wolves ever counted in Wisconsin and far exceeds any and all population goals. Eight hundred wolves is eight times the 100 wolves set as the recovery goal in the federal Timber Wolf Recovery Plan and more than twice the Wisconsin management goal of 350. 2010 was the worst year on Wisconsin's record in terms of wolf attacks on livestock.

Most observers feel that the 800 wolf estimate is only about half of the real number.

The hunting and trapping season is a very important part of the DNR's wolf management plan and thanks to the signing of the Wolf Management Act they should now have all the necessary tools.

The bill includes many details on how the

DNR is to set up the hunting/trapping season.

- The annual season will start October 15 and run through February and be open to both residents and non-residents. License fees are set at \$50 for a resident and \$250 for a non-resident. Both will also have a processing fee of \$9.75.

- Assuming there are more applicants than licenses, the DNR must issue 50% of the licenses at random and the remaining 50% based on a cumulative preference system.

- The DNR may close a wolf harvest zone to hunting and trapping if it decides closure is necessary to effectively manage the wolf population

- A license will authorize the hunting of wolves using a firearm, bow, or crossbow. Dogs to track and trail wolves will be permitted.

Barring any lawsuits, the wolf season will be up and running this October. Although the rules are not finalized yet, it is expected that about 300-400 wolf tags will be release this first year.

Bob Welch is a former member of the Wisconsin State Assembly and Senate.

First Statewide Wisconsin LibertyVention: June 15-16, 2012

A statewide celebration of the Tea Party movement will be held June 15 – 16, 2012 at the historic Hotel Mead and Convention Center in Wisconsin Rapids, WI.

The name LibertyVention has been adopted for the event to reflect the Tea Party's true mission. The movement sprung up more than three years ago out of a desire to restore liberty and roll back government intrusion into the lives of American citizens.

Plans are in full motion to bring national and state speakers to the two-day conventionstyle gathering. Individual members of Tea Party and invited groups from across Wisconsin will be in attendance to engage, network, learn and relax during the two day event.

LibertyVention will be hosted by Northwoods Patriots, the Wisconsin 9/12 Project, the Uninfringed Liberty Group, and

Wausau Tea Party. Other Tea Party groups who would like to help sponsor the event, please contact one of the hosting groups.

"Wisconsin's history and political circumstances yield some unique challenges for liberty-minded individuals and groups here," Kirsten Lombard notes. "We wanted to gather people to network, relationship-build, and idea-share in ways that will allow them to navigate those challenges successfully."

Registration will begin May 1st. Watch for further announcements in the coming days and weeks.

For further information, contact Kim Simac (bk951@frontier.com), Kirsten Lombard (kirsten.lombard@gmail.com), Annette Olson (annette-eaf@centurytel.net) or Meg Ellefson (patriots@wausauteaparty.com).

***Listen to Jay Weber weekdays
6 to 10 a.m. on WISN 1130.***

Read the column the ‘Journal Sentinel’ requested, then refused to run

On Wednesday, April 25, 2012 the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel approached the MacIver Institute via email with a request to write an OpEd column for Sunday’s newspaper.

Would you guys like to comment on the story Craig Gilbert had this morning on jobs and Walker? I’m wondering to what extent you think Walker should be help [sic] responsible? We’d look to use the op-ed this Friday or Sunday. We’d need potentially as early as Thursday afternoon. Are you interested? Is that doable?

Thanks for considering this.

We responded that we could provide a critique, but suggested they go in a different direction if they wanted something different.

We could talk about what’s behind job creation and mention the pres and gov but if you desire a full throated political [sp] piece promoting the gov, perhaps u should keep looking.

...and later:

Just let me know by 5 p.m. today, we could get you 650 words by 5 p.m. tomorrow.

Our piece would address the following:

Job numbers-Who’s to blame? Obama? Walker? Barret?

What employers need to increase hiring?

What’s the best prescription for a robust jobs climate?

Their response?

That sounds great. I think it will dove-tail well with our editorial.

So, below is the column, which they ultimately refused to run. The paper did publish an unsolicited column by State Sen. Alberta Darling (R-River Hills) on the topic. Notable, however, is that Darling’s column does not mention any criticism of the newspaper’s coverage of the issue.

So, we publish this column (and a transcript of our exchange with the JS Editor) for two reasons. One, we put the time and effort into writing the piece, setting aside some other projects to fulfill the Journal Sentinel’s request—so we’d like to at least have this column see the light of day. Two, we’ll raise the question: Did the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel spike this piece because they cannot tolerate even the mildest form of criticism within the pages of their own paper? (Criticism, you will see, that was entirely justified.)

On the Hypocrisy and Logical Inconsistency of the Jobs Blame Game

By Brian Fraley

Anyone within a thousand yards of the Wednesday edition of the Journal Sentinel

could read the huge, screaming headline regarding the state’s job numbers. The lengthy article examining old data was filled with speculation regarding how the information reflects upon Governor Scott Walker, his policies and his political future.

You ran a much smaller article the next day that showed how the employment numbers in the Metro Milwaukee Area are the worst in the state. Yet that piece made no mention of Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, his policies or his political future. It is also notable that the unflattering article ran on the last page of the business section.

It’s also humorous that, in general, the same Big Government liberals in this state who believe George Bush is to blame for the current national jobs picture are putting all the blame for Wisconsin’s employment situation at the foot of our current governor. By their logic, President Obama needs more than 3 1/2 years to assume responsibility for the nation’s economy, yet every bit of bad news here in the last 16 months is all Governor Walker’s fault.

Moving beyond that ridiculousness, the fact of the matter is for Wisconsin businesses to succeed, we need economic policies that:

- 1) Encourage risk and capital investment
- 2) Appreciate and work with those who wish to bring new jobs here
- 3) Does not punish success through oppressive taxation
- 4) Invest in sound infrastructure like roads, ports and airports rather than boutique novelty trains that move too few people to too few places

There are those who support a government-driven economy who believe we need to increase the taxes on the rich and the corporations. If we do so, they argue, our government will be stronger and in a position to fund programs and projects that will lure business and jobs here.

To them, I say: Been there. Done that. Didn’t work.

The 2009-10 state budget created a new custom computer software tax; Increased taxes on combined reporting; Applied sales tax on all transactions between affiliated businesses; Eliminated tax deduction for domestic production activities; Increased taxes on “throwback sales.”

In all, that document increased overall taxes by several billion dollars.

The failed policies of the past further increased spending by 6.2% or \$3.6 billion; Increased borrowing to \$3.58 billion and left

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MATC needs accountability

By Rep. Duey Stroebel
(R-6-th District)

Recently, as a representative from my local school board, I participated in a public hearing conducted to appoint three new members from a slate of four candidates to the

Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) District Board. Over the years, this flawed process has resulted in a board dominated by special interest representation from the city of Milwaukee. For years, the board has been selected by a 20+ member committee dominated by Milwaukee educators. Below is a brief synopsis of the dysfunction that occurred at this year's meeting.

The meeting opened with the reading of a letter from one of the candidates announcing his withdrawal from consideration. The candidate indicated that his desire to withdraw was due to "outside forces looking to change MATC's governing structure". The candidate reflected upon being "impressed by how well the college appears to be serving our communities" and that he had no desire to be associated with the newly proposed board selection process.

The current selection system is guided by a confusing matrix of "representation requirements". These requirements focus on gender, minority status, geographic area, and employer/employee status. Ironically, as stated immediately after the meeting by the MATC legal

counsel in attendance, the candidate who withdrew "was probably not eligible" for the MATC District Board due to the requirements that are in place at this time. Thus, it would appear the rationale for the candidate's withdrawal letter was either disingenuous or uninformed with regard to his actual viability as a candidate. In any case, this is not the first time that after applying the "representation requirements" there was no viable outside candidate to challenge the returning incumbent.

That left three candidates for three openings. As part of the "representation requirements," one of the openings had to be filled by a school district administrator.

That opening was filled de facto by the one and only school district administrator candidate.

Now, two incumbent candidates for two openings remained. The two incumbents were asked questions that pertained to emerging trends in education. One question asked if MATC should consider merit pay, while the other question inquired if tenure was beneficial to education. Unfortunately, the answers given by both incumbents showed little or no inclination to consider those two concepts.

Lastly, each candidate was asked if given the opportunity to reopen the union contract and derive cost savings through greater employee

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this current Administration and legislature facing a \$3.6 billion hole from which to climb out.

All of that fiscal irresponsibility cost Wisconsin far more jobs than have left the state since last January. When government extracts dollars from the private sector, there is less private sector economic activity. When there is less private sector activity, there are fewer jobs created. So, although this never resulted in a 6 column above the fold headline in this paper, it is nonetheless true: In the final 3 years of the Doyle Administration, Wisconsin lost not 15,000 jobs, but rather a staggering 150,000 jobs.

Since then, the labor reforms, tax cuts, incentives and tort reform legislation enacted in Madison provided a good start toward a better direction.

However the legislation that would have given Wisconsin the single-biggest jobs boost, the mining bill, was mired in partisan politics and died an unmerciful death earlier this spring. A mine in Gogebic Range in Northern Wisconsin would have brought

thousands of good-paying family-supporting jobs for generations there. It would have helped large manufacturers here in the Milwaukee area for several years, too.

Indeed, the same agitators who are joyfully directing people to your Wednesday headline didn't care about those jobs.

Bad timing, I guess. Heaven forbid a favorable jobs-related headline in the heat of the recall, right? Not one Democratic state senator supported the mining bill.

Too many Big Government agitators were too busy rallying around the Angry Blue Fist of Big Government to raise a finger to help attract private sector mining jobs to the state.

To quote a familiar refrain from Madison, "Shame! Shame! Shame!"

A Brookfield resident, Fraley is the Communications Director of the John K. MacIver Institute for Public Policy, a free market think tank in Madison. MacIver's mini-documentary "Mine Shaft," about the failed attempt to modernize the state's mine permitting process, will be released next month.

Back to the future

Why are we embracing a 19th-century technology when all the evidence shows rail transit doesn't work? by Tom Bamberger

In July of 2007, Michael Cudahy took Mayor Tom Barrett, County Executive Scott Walker and Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce President Tim Sheehy on his private jet to Portland, Ore., to behold the future of mass transit.

Portland is the dream city for rail-lovers, with a \$3 billion system that includes 52.4 miles of light rail, 14.7 miles of heavy rail, a mile-long aerial tram and an 8-mile trolley loop. Barrett loved it.

"I believe we can replicate the great success [of] Portland here in Milwaukee," the mayor declared.

In fact, Barrett is starting with a streetcar that runs just two miles, from the Intermodal Station at 433 W. St. Paul Ave. to Burns Square just north of Juneau Park, planned for completion by 2015. It will be powered by overhead wires and run on tracks, just like the good old days. Its one major advance? These modern, low-floor streetcars make it easy to board with wheelchairs, baby strollers and bicycles.

It will cost about \$64 million to build—using largely federal dollars—and require some \$2 million of local taxes for annual operating costs to supplement the estimated \$650,000 per year earned in fares.

That's a lot of bucks for very little bang. A

15-minute streetcar ride will be a lot slower than the six-minute car trip to cover the same route. But also slower than a 10-minute bike ride. For that matter, you could take the No. 30 bus from Farwell and Ogden to Fourth and Wisconsin in 11 minutes, walk three blocks to St. Paul and still beat the trolley.

Yet much of Milwaukee's leadership hails the streetcar as a boon to the city. "It will ensure Milwaukee's position as world-class city," Cudahy insists. It will be "a catalyst for economic development of Downtown," declares Bill Bertha, president of US Bank in Wisconsin.

"There isn't a major American city that isn't developing streetcars," says Patrick Curley, Barrett's chief of staff. "Once you start, people will want it."

If you build it, they will come. That's the theory. The facts are another matter.

For all the transit Portland built in the last 20 years, the number of people driving to work has barely changed. The 2 to 3 percent increase in people taking mass transit to work was nearly matched by a decline in carpooling. With 76 miles of rail, Portlanders still drive about the same number of miles per capita as we do in Milwaukee, with no rail.

Nationally, things look even worse. From 1980 to 2005, one study noted, spending by

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participation in pension and healthcare benefits, similar to the recent MPS legislation, would they do so? Again, neither of the incumbents was interested in exploring this option.

Should we be surprised by these attitudes? Most likely not. One of the incumbent's prior career was the past president of a powerful public workers union in the City of Milwaukee; therefore, he fulfilled the "employee" requirement in the matrix. The other incumbent is employed by the City of Milwaukee Housing Authority. Because the incumbent has one part time employee reporting to her, she fulfilled the "employer" requirement in the matrix. Is this really the best we can do to fill these important positions? The problems with this system do not stop here. For all practical purposes, the City of Milwaukee is guaranteed a majority of members on the nine member board—the geographic requirements mandate four members from the City of Milwaukee and the other requirements virtually assure a minimum of five members from the City of Milwaukee.

MATC needs to focus on accountability and results in its educational mission.

As seen over the years, that has not been its track record. For this reason, SB275 was recently signed into law by Governor Walker. SB275 now requires the MATC District Board be selected by a committee consisting of the Milwaukee County Executive and the chairpersons of the Milwaukee, Ozaukee and Washington County Boards. Furthermore, the board must now consist of five of the nine members representing employers and manufacturing. As Walker spokesman, Cullen Werwie, so appropriately stated, "We must do more to foster collaboration between employers and education to create jobs in Wisconsin". SB275 represents a step in that direction.

Not surprisingly the educational establishment was not happy about SB275. It was the root cause of a protracted 33 hour session on the assembly floor. Democrats put forth over 70 amendments in an attempt to kill the bill.

Now more than ever MATC needs to provide effective services to its students and the community. Unfortunately, reforms did not occur from within MATC. It took involvement by the State Legislature in the form of SB275 to begin the process of transforming MATC to an institution that works for all.

A Wisconsin Vindication

Wall Street Journal editorial

The public employee unions and other liberals are confident that Wisconsin voters will turn out Governor Scott Walker in a recall election later this year, but not so fast. That may turn out to be as wrong as some of their other predictions as Badger State taxpayers start to see tangible benefits from Mr. Walker's reforms—such as the first decline in statewide property taxes in a dozen years.

On Monday Mr. Walker's office released new data that show the property tax bill for the median home fell by 0.4% in 2011, as reported by Wisconsin's municipalities. Property taxes, which are the state's largest revenue source and mainly fund K-12 schools, have risen every year since 1998—by 43% overall. The state budget office estimates that the typical homeowner's bill would be some \$700 higher without Mr. Walker's collective-bargaining overhaul and budget cuts.

The median home value did fall in 2011, by about 2.3%, which no doubt influenced the slight downward trend. But then values also fell in 2009 and 2010, by similar amounts, and the state's take from the average taxpayer still climbed by 2.1% and 1.5%, respectively. In absolute terms homeowners won't see large

dollar benefits year over year, but any hold-the-line tax respite is both rare and welcome in this age of ever-expanding government.

The real gains will grow as local school districts continue repairing and rationalizing their budgets using the tools Mr. Walker gave them. Those include the ability to renegotiate perk-filled teacher contracts and requiring government workers to contribute more than 0% to their pensions. A year ago amid their sit-ins and other protests, the unions said such policies would lead to the decline and fall of civilization, but the only things that are falling are tax collections.

The political lesson is that attempts to modernize government are always controversial, but support usually builds over time as the public comes to appreciate the benefits of structural change that tames the drivers of a status quo that includes ever-higher spending and taxes. The Wisconsin recall donnybrook in June will test whether voters value their own bottom lines more than the political power of unions.

A version of this article appeared April 17, 2012, on page A14 in some U.S. editions of *The Wall Street Journal*, with the headline: *A Wisconsin Vindication*.

...back to the future

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governments on rail transit rose slightly (in real dollars) from \$6 billion to \$15 billion. Yet the number of Americans taking rail transit to work plummeted, from 2 million to 1 million.

These stats are from the liberal Brookings Institution. You needn't look to conservatives for a sobering analysis on rail transit.

Rail champions prefer to not talk about its impact on driving, instead arguing it encourages development (and new transit riders) along the rail line. To test this, *The Oregonian* sent reporters to interview people living close to the Orenco MAX light rail station, an award-winning New Urbanist project 15 miles outside Portland. Hardly anyone took the train to work. This was confirmed by Lewis & Clark College professor Bruce Podobnik, who found that commuters from towns served by Orenco's station fell as a percentage of all Portland rail transit between 2002 and 2007.

As the Brookings report concluded, "Studies have yet to show that after their construction transit systems have had a significant effect on employment or land use close to stations ... [or] greatly exceed the benefits from commercial development that would have occurred elsewhere in the absence of rail con-

struction."

Another liberal, Peter Rogoff, head of the Federal Transit Administration and an appointee of President Obama, offered a brutal assessment: "Supporters of public transit must be willing to share some simple truths that folks don't want to hear. ... Paint is cheap, rails systems are extremely expensive. ... You can entice even die-hard rail riders onto a bus, if you call it a 'special' bus and just paint it a different color. ... [Then] paint a designated bus lane on the street. ... Throw in signal pre-emption, and you can move a lot of people at very little cost compared to rail."

This is a country that always innovated its way to the future. Yet city after city has been embracing a 19th-century technology, adding some form of transit. The electric trolley was perfected in Richmond, Va., in 1887 and started declining after 1920, when only 40 percent of households had cars.

The future will not be about fixed rail but about electric cars, micro-cars, stackable cars and other innovations that will reduce the auto's carbon and physical footprint. The only good news about Milwaukee's streetcar is that it has come so late, leaving this city's landscape uniquely rail-free for when the real revolution comes.

Do we need a John Doe for the John Doe?

By Tom Wolff
Editor of Freedom Weekly

Last week, former Waukesha County District Attorney Paul Bucher formally requested an investigation into the John Doe proceedings in Milwaukee County. In a letter to Attorney General VanHollen, Bucher asked that the Department of Justice investigate the DA's office in Milwaukee and its handling of its current probe into the staff and associates of Governor Walker. He further requested that the DOJ take over the investigation, or at least play an oversight role due to the growing problems within the County DA's office.

It's no secret that the John Doe proceedings have been going on for two years now, and the confidential process has been anything but confidential. Leaks have been regular occurrences from within the DA's office, and have been strategically timed to have political impact. The leaks have usually been directed to the Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett and his staff, and Democratic political operatives.

But a bombshell was released last week, when Media Trackers staff released the names of 43 current Milwaukee County DA staff that had signed recall petitions against Governor Walker. Though DA John Chisholm quickly responded that no actual prosecutor working on the Walker John Doe had signed petitions, there were 19 Assistant DA's and one of Chisholm's five Deputy DA's among the signers. According to Bucher's letter, one of the signers was "the personal secretary to the chief investigator himself – a person with unrestricted access to all information and correspondence pertaining to the John Doe".

And perhaps most damning of all was that a DA staff member circulated a recall petition that contained ten different DA staff members, all of them signing on either Friday November 18th, or Monday November 21st. If these petitions were circulated at the DA's office—it would be the same type of offense that the John Doe is investigating and attempting to prosecute. Media Trackers also reported on a number of DA staff members who had posted disparaging comments about Walker or joined anti-Walker groups on various social media sites.

One more thing was uncovered in the Media Trackers investigation. They reported that an analysis of Milwaukee County DA employee campaign contributions revealed a 4:1 ratio of support for Democratic candidates. Wisconsin Democracy Campaign figures also showed exclusive support for Democratic and liberal candidates by District Attorney John Chisholm.

And Asst. DA David Feiss, a member of the Public Integrity Unit which is conducting the John Doe, donated twice to Sandy Pasch's campaign in the recall election against Sen. Alberta

Darling. After the WI GAB determined that Pasch's campaign provided illegal benefits to entice voters, the Public Integrity Unit conducted their own investigation and determined nothing was wrong.

Individuals have every right to contribute to the campaigns of their choice and to support any candidate that they so desire. But when the actions clearly show a strong bias – and they are allowed to conduct investigations into their allies and opponents, the "public integrity" is clearly compromised.

The evidence is mounting that the Walker John Doe is nothing more than a fishing expedition, hoping to find "anything" connected to Walker that can be used for political gain. Rumors of a "surprise indictment" have circulated for months, trying to fan the flames against the Governor or members of his staff.

And all of this comes on the heels of what can only be described as selective prosecution. The Milwaukee DA's office has consistently ignored calls for investigations into public employees when it involves Democratic operatives. The case of Jeff Fleming consulting for the Mayor's Office and then being hired "temporarily" during Barrett's final campaign push is a great example of the DA's "nothing there" mantra.

The Milwaukee media conveniently forgets that County Executive Walker asked for the investigation in the first place, to determine the whereabouts of funds missing from a County related account. But John Doe investigations can take on a life of their own, as prosecutors have great leeway in determining the direction and eventual targets of an original inquiry. They also determine the length of time that is necessary, and can continue the query until they find something they can prosecute.

The leaks coming from the John Doe team are more egregious, when one considers that the confidential nature prevents those interviewed or potentially targeted from speaking a word. By even being interviewed, Governor Walker was skewered by the Milwaukee press. And John Doe rules prohibit him from saying anything about the investigation or the potential targets. The leaks allow the rumors to swirl and damage to be done without anyone being able to offer a defense. And that is one of Paul Bucher's biggest concerns.

In his DOJ request, he argues that the integrity of the judicial system and the rights of individuals is at stake. By taking over the investigation, the Justice Department can "de-politicize the investigation, whose objectivity and fairness has clearly been called into question". Hopefully, as the DOJ did years ago when they took over the Caucus scandal investigation, they can bring some justice back into the two year inquest.

A bright future for Wisconsin

**By Rep. Jim Ott
(R-23rd District)**

The last several months have been stressful for Republicans in Wisconsin, with an unprecedented level of hostility from Democrats and liberals, and now some very important recall elections looming in the immediate future. Many are questioning why they should have their elected representatives facing unjustified recalls for simply doing the job they were elected to do.

Such reactions are understandable and can lead to election fatigue and pessimism just when we need the opposite attitude. My opinion is this is a time to be energized and optimistic. The progress we've made in the last 16 months in getting Wisconsin back on track to fiscal solvency and common sense policies has been nothing short of remarkable.

First there was the budget deficit of \$3.6 billion. Under Governor Walker's leadership Republicans in the Legislature passed a budget that eliminated the deficit without raising taxes or raiding other state funds. And the State did not have to lay off any public sector workers, and neither did school districts that took advantage of the tools provided in the budget.

Then there is the major tort reform included in a number of bills passed into law. It is now more difficult to commence frivolous lawsuits in our state, and the law passed by the Democrats in 2010 that allowed excessive punitive damages in employment discrimination cases was repealed.

Other measures were passed into law that had been on our Republican "to do" list for years, such as

Concealed Carry, the Castle Doctrine and Photo I.D. for voting. The Photo I.D. law is currently tied up in court, but we are hopeful of prevailing when the case is finally heard.

We even passed a bill that will change the way the Milwaukee Area Technical College Board is chosen, ensuring that the Board members will be more in touch with the needs of businesses who look to MATC graduates as a source of employees.

All of this progress was only possible because of the leadership of Governor Walker and the willingness of the Republican majorities in the Assembly and Senate to take the necessary steps to head Wisconsin in the right direction. The fact that Democrats resorted to importing out of control demonstrators into the state while the Democrat Senators fled to Illinois illustrates how opposed they are to our common sense agenda and clearly shows what kind of a state they envision for our future.

Is there more to accomplish? You bet there is. That's why it's so important that Republicans put every ounce of energy into winning the recall elections and keeping Governor Walker and Lieutenant Governor Kleefisch in office. It's also critical to maintain our majorities in the State Assembly and Senate, which means winning the Senate recall elections and then turning our focus to the November elections.

Wisconsin is in a much better place now than we were just 16 months ago because of Republican leadership and hard work. There were some hard-fought battles but we won, and it was well worth it. I'm optimistic that we will keep on winning and in the process will ensure a very bright future for our state.

Education improving Part 2: Competition of health insurance

From Gov. Scott Walker's office

Madison—Last month Gov. Walker's office released a breakdown of the school districts that saved money by changing or restructuring their health insurance plan.

"Fundamental fiscal reform was needed to free the next generation from mountains of economically crippling debt," said Governor Walker. "Competition among health insurance providers helped save millions of dollars all across Wisconsin. Now that we have put the power back in the hands of the taxpayers, the deals struck in the past by big government union bosses are being revisited. As a result taxpayers are saving millions."

The school districts that decided to utilize the cost-savings of the free-market system and take competitive bids on their health insurance provider and modify their health insurance program, saved on average \$220 per pupil. Statewide, if all school districts used similar approaches and had similar results, savings would exceed \$190 million.

Data from 52 school districts show roughly \$30 million in savings due to competition in health

providers and design changes.

The savings being realized throughout Wisconsin mirror estimates made by the Governor prior to passage of 2011 Wisconsin Act 10. Those estimates were made by research organizations, one of which claimed \$100 million could be saved annually due to competition in school health providers and another estimating between \$68 and \$143 million in savings due to health provider competition.

Not only do these savings bode well for taxpayers, but these positive reforms free up more dollars for teacher wages and classroom development. Prior to 2011 Wisconsin Act 10 health insurance costs were increasingly absorbing school budgets. From 2002 to 2011, average school district family plan health premiums had risen by 65% to a level \$6,700 higher than the average health insurance plan in Wisconsin.

"For years taxpayers across the state were getting a raw deal. Collective bargaining stymied competition for benefits in the health insurance market, and instead directed property tax revenue to those affiliated with big government union bosses," said Gov. Walker.

These savings are above and beyond changes to employee health insurance contributions.

The GOP budget and America's future

By Congressman Paul Ryan
Wall Street Journal

Less than a year ago, the House of Representatives passed a budget that took on our generation's greatest domestic challenge: reforming and modernizing government to prevent an explosion of debt from crippling our nation and robbing our children of their future.

Absent reform, government programs designed in the middle of the 20th century cannot fulfill their promises in the 21st century. It is a mathematical and demographic impossibility. And we said so.

We assumed there would be some who would distort for political gain our efforts to preserve programs like Medicare. Having been featured in an attack ad literally throwing an elderly woman off a cliff, I can confirm that those assumptions were on the mark.

But one year later, we can say with some confidence that the attacks have failed. Courageous Democrats have joined our efforts. And bipartisan opposition to the path of broken promises is growing.

And so Tuesday, House Republicans are introducing a new Path to Prosperity budget that builds on what we've achieved.

Like last year, our budget delivers real spending discipline. It does this not through indiscriminate cuts that endanger our military, but by ending the epidemic of crony politics and government overreach that has weakened confidence in the nation's institutions and its economy. And it strengthens the safety net by returning power to the states, which are in the best position to tailor assistance to their specific populations.

More important, it tackles the drivers of our debt and averts the fiscal crisis ahead. This year, our nation's publicly held debt is projected to reach 73% of the economy—a dangerously high level that, according to leading economists, puts the nation at risk of a panicked run on its finances.

As shown in the nearby chart, our budget tackles this crisis head-on by cutting debt as a share of the economy by roughly 15% over the next decade, putting the nation's finances on a path to balance, and paying off the debt. By contrast, the president's budget pushes debt as a share of the economy even higher. In his budget's own words, it allows the government's fiscal position to "gradually deteriorate" after 2022.

On the critical issues of health security and tax reform, our budget draws a clear distinction between serious reformers and those who stand in the way of the growing bipartisan consensus for principled solu-

tions.

Our budget's Medicare reforms make no changes for those in or near retirement. For those who will retire a decade from now, our plan provides guaranteed coverage options financed by a premium-support payment. And this year, our budget adds even more choices for seniors, including a traditional fee-for-service Medicare option.

We also introduce a competitive-bidding process to determine the growth of government's financial contribution to Medicare. Forcing health plans to compete against each other is the best way to achieve high-quality coverage at the lowest cost, and implementing these reforms in Medicare can have the effect of lowering health-care costs for everyone. This is the key to increasing access and affordability while preventing government debt from threatening the health security of seniors and the economic security of all Americans.

Our budget also spurs economic growth with bold tax reform—eliminating complexity for individuals and families and boosting competitiveness for American job creators. Led by House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp, our budget consolidates the current six individual income tax brackets into just two brackets of 10% and 25%.

We propose to reduce the corporate tax rate of 35%, which will soon be the highest rate in the developed world, to a much more competitive 25%. Our budget also shifts to a "territorial" tax system to end the practice of hitting businesses with extra taxes when they invest profits earned abroad in jobs and factories here at home.

We reject calls to raise taxes, but revenue nevertheless remains steady under our budget because we close special-interest loopholes. More important, our reforms will grow the economy—and the faster the economy grows, the more revenue the government will have to meet its priorities and start paying down the debt.

These patient-centered Medicare reforms and pro-growth tax reforms have a long history of bipartisan support. Medicare reforms based on choice and competition have their roots in the Clinton administration's bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare. And in recent years, I've worked with Democrats to advance these reforms.

Tax reforms based on lowering tax rates and closing loopholes go back to the Reagan administration, when Democrats served as the congressional co-sponsors of the landmark 1986 tax reform law. More recently,

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Act 10: We have only just begun

**By Rep. Dan Knodl
(R-24th District)**

Last month, we learned that the budget reforms enacted over the past year have saved Wisconsin taxpayers more than \$1 billion. School districts have saved hundreds of dollars per pupil as health insurers competed for contracts. State agencies have saved millions by ending overtime abuse. The savings enjoyed by Wisconsin taxpayers are real, and for the first time in more than a decade, property taxes for the typical homeowner have gone down.

Reformers across Greater Milwaukee are taking advantage of the budget tools we have made available. School districts in the 24th Assembly District alone have saved more than \$7 million. And they have done so while protecting essential services. The Department of Public Instruction recently reported that three of the four school districts in the 24th Assembly District actually added staff, as public managers finally have the flexibility they need to deliver cost-effective, high-quality service.

Brown Deer Superintendent of Schools Deborah Kerr and Richfield Village Administrator Joshua Schoemann have proven especially adept managers. They are part of a new generation of administrators who understand that real leadership requires imagination, the ability to improvise, and the willingness to make tough choices.

Act 10 was a watershed moment in Wisconsin's political history, and my hope is that it is only the beginning of a series of reforms that will save the taxpayers money and improve the quality of our public workforce. Taxpayers deserve a system where managers, not union bosses, determine the staffing needs of their department. Public employees deserve a workplace where merit, not longevity, determines compensation.

Voters expect a government where public employees serve the public, and not the other way around. Wisconsin deserves a lean, high-quality government that is built for the 21st century.

Act 10 was a big first step, but I can assure you—we have only just begun.

...the GOP budget

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the chairmen of President Obama's bipartisan fiscal commission put forward a plan for lower rates and a broader base.

It makes sense that these ideas have attracted leaders in both parties. The premium support model offers the only guarantee that Medicare can keep its promise to seniors for generations to come. And pro-growth tax reform, by lowering rates for all Americans while closing loopholes that primarily benefit the well off, can eliminate unfairness in the tax code and ensure a level playing field for all.

While these ideas have enjoyed growing bipartisan support, President Obama has doubled down on policies that have drawn growing bipartisan opposition.

With regard to Medicare, his latest budget calls for giving "additional tools" to the Independent Payment Advisory Board, an unaccountable board of 15 unelected bureaucrats empowered by the new health-care law to cut Medicare in ways that will lead to denied care for seniors. Just this month, Democrats and Republicans alike voted for a measure to repeal this board.

And with regard to tax reform, the president's latest budget calls for taking more from American families and businesses by

raising rates and adding complexity to the tax code—precisely at odds with the bipartisan consensus for tax reform.

It is rare in American politics to arrive at a moment in which the debate revolves around the fundamental nature of American democracy and the social contract. But that is where we are. And no two documents illustrate this choice of two futures better than the president's budget and the one put forward by House Republicans.

The president's budget gives more power to unelected bureaucrats, takes more from hard-working taxpayers to fuel the expansion of government, and commits our nation to a future of debt and decline.

The contrast with our budget couldn't be clearer: We put our trust in citizens, not government. Our budget returns power to individuals, families and communities. It draws inspiration from the Founders' belief that all people are born with an unalienable right to the pursuit of happiness. Protecting this right means trusting citizens, not nameless government officials, to decide what is in their best interests and make the right choice about our nation's future.

Ryan serves as chairman of the House Budget Committee.

Act 10, one year later

MacIver News Service

Even after the labor reforms ushered in by Act 10, Wisconsin taxpayers pay more than surrounding states to provide insurance to state employees, according to a new study released today.

The analysis by HCTrends found that even after increasing the state employee premium contribution and making plan changes to reduce costs, Wisconsin taxpayers also continue to pay significantly more to provide these benefits than most private-sector employers in the greater Milwaukee area.

The study did find that increasing state employee premium contributions and out-of-pocket costs did reduce Wisconsin's health plan costs, which made the state more competitive with surrounding states.

However, state employees here have far more coverage options than their peers in the Midwest.

"Wisconsin offers its state employees more health plan options than any of the other states analyzed," the report states. "Employees choose among 26 insurance plans that provide coverage based on a statewide uniform benefits plan."

HCTrends analyzed 2012 state employee health plan benefits in four neighboring states (Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa and Michigan) and compared them with the benefits offered to state employees in Wisconsin. The analysis also compared Wisconsin state employee benefits to those offered to private-sector employees in southeastern Wisconsin.

The study's findings:

- Wisconsin taxpayers will pay \$13,972 to provide health insurance to a state employee, which is 9 percent (\$1,207) more than taxpayers will pay in Michigan, the next most expensive state, and 21 percent more (\$2,433) than

the average per-employee cost for taxpayers in the five states analyzed

- Wisconsin taxpayers will also pay \$3,762 more per employee than large private-sector companies with union workforces and \$5,565 more than large non-union employers

- In Michigan, the employee contribution also depends on the length of time the employee has worked for the state. Employees hired before April 2010 contribute 7.2 percent of premium, while employees hired after April 1, 2010 pay 15.4 percent. The newer hires also have slightly less generous health benefits

- In Illinois, premium contribution is based on both the employee's income and the plan selected. An employee earning \$30,200 per year pays \$564 per year for single coverage for the state's primary plan, while an employee earning \$75,901 pays \$714. State employees pay an additional \$110 to \$226 per month, depending on the plan they select, for family coverage

- State employees in Minnesota pay a fixed rate (\$0 single/\$1,562 family), but their cost-sharing is determined by the provider group they select. Deductibles vary by as much as \$550 for single coverage and \$1,100 for family coverage depending on the provider group selected

- Iowa has both the least expensive and the most generous health plan among the five states analyzed. The plan, which costs the state an estimated \$9,686 per employee per year, is offered to state employees free of charge. The plan does have an out-of-pocket maximum for state employee plans (\$750 single/\$1,500 family), but it is unlikely that many employees reach the threshold given the plan's minimal co-insurance rate and low copays

The complete report including a comparison of benefit design and health plan costs is available at HCTrends.com

Kids? Forget the kids! It's all about the union members

By David Blaska
Wisconsin In Business blogger

Someday, when I update JFK's book Profiles in Courage, I'll add these names: Tommy Thompson, Paul Ryan, Scott Walker, and Jeff Waksman.

Jeff who?

Jeff Waksman. This young man is the brave mastermind behind the unveiling of a new billboard tomorrow (Friday) on the Beltline Highway on the south side of Madison at Rimrock Road.

Its message is a hard slap of Mennen's After Shave against the most powerful special

interest in Wisconsin, the statewide teachers union, aka the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC).

Picturing a young girl student, the big poster quotes iconic national teachers union boss Albert Shanker. "When schoolchildren start paying union dues, I'll start representing schoolchildren."

This strong dose of reality goes up just in time for Tuesday's Madison School Board election in which insurgents Mary Burke and Nichelle Nichols are hoping to unseat the teachers union's handpicked candidates. But

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Obamacare's costs are soaring

By Sen. Ron Johnson
Wall Street Journal

One year after the passage of ObamaCare, this paper published an op-ed I wrote ("ObamaCare and Carey's Heart") about how America's health-care system saved my daughter's life, and describing how implementing this law will limit innovation, lead to rationing, and lower the quality of care. Now, two years out, I would like to focus on the budgetary disaster.

As a candidate, Barack Obama repeatedly claimed that his health-care plan would lower annual family health-insurance premiums by

\$2,500 before the end of his first term as president. But the Kaiser Family Foundation recently reported that the average family premium has increased \$2,200 since the start of this administration.

Then there is the higher cost to taxpayers. The CBO's initial estimate in March 2010 of ObamaCare's budget impact showed it saving money, reducing the federal deficit by \$143 billion in the first 10 years. But that positive estimate was largely the product of gimmicks inserted into the bill by Democratic leaders to hide the

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...all about the union

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the \$3,500 billboard buy is independent of any candidate or political party. It is the work of an organization called Reforming Education and Demanding Exceptional Results in Wisconsin (READER-WI).

Its website, recallweac.com recently went live.

I'm on the steering committee along with economist Larry Kaufmann. But Jeff is president of the group and the real brains of the outfit. His guts, his glory.

Jeff attended the public schools back East. At Columbia University, he took a bachelor's degree in applied physics, which he explained to me was something like interpretive dance. He minored in economics. He came to UW-Madison to pick up two master's degrees, one in nuclear engineering, the other in physics. He is finishing up his doctoral work in the latter.

Jeff says he came by his interest in education reform while experiencing the "perverse incentives" of public high school. "Nobody seemed too concerned with helping struggling students catch up, or helping advanced students push their education further. It was a one-size-fits-all system that treated students as interchangeable widgets on an assembly line. Each year, education spending goes up, and yet education results never improve...It's time to try something new."

Feckless politicians + recalcitrant unions = failure...

The Shanker quote can be found in a cover story for the June 2011 edition of The Atlantic magazine. Under the heading, "The Failure of American Schools," Joel Klein, the eight-year chancellor of New York City Schools, berates "... feckless politicians, recalcitrant unions, mediocre teachers, and other enduring obstacles to school reform."

"Teachers unions consistently rank among the top spenders on politics," Klein writes,

with the result that "firing a public school teacher for non-performance is virtually impossible." Just for props, Klein is no one's coat holder. In his previous life as a prosecutor, he sued Microsoft, Inc.

Klein relates the familiar litany of failure: our nation's high schools graduate only seven of every 10 students. We rank 48th among nations in math and science education, according to the World Economic Forum, even though the U.S. has doubled spending (in inflation-adjusted dollars) on K-12 public education in the last 30 years.

Klein is just one of a growing list of Democrats and liberals who have embraced school reform. Others include the late Steve Jobs; Davis Guggenheim, producer of the searing *Waiting for Superman* documentary film; Obama Education Secretary Arne Duncan; educator Geoffrey Canada; Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel; Madison Urban League president Kaleem Caire; former Milwaukee Schools Supt. Howard Fuller; and Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett.

All Jeff Waksman and his confederates are doing is putting their message right where Madison can see it. Will we hear from the goon squads?

Public Sector unions ARE the Democrat(ic) Party...

If you don't get *Imprimus*, the publication of libertarian Hillsdale College in Michigan, mailed to you free of charge, you can fix that here. In a recent *Imprimus*, William McGurn of the Wall Street Journal writes:

"... public sector unions have become a vanguard movement within liberalism. ... As public employees unionize, their dues—often collected for the unions by the government—fund a permanent interest constantly lobbying for bigger government. To pay for this bigger and more expensive government, they advocate for higher taxes on those in the private sector."

'The path to prosperity' and defense spending

By Christopher J. Schaefer,
George Washington University

Representative Paul Ryan's (R-WI) seminal fiscal year 2013 budget proposal, "The Path To Prosperity: A Blueprint for American Renewal," is best known for its proposed reforms to America's dilapidated entitlement programs. Scant attention, however, has been devoted to its defense spending recommendations. The Path to Prosperity provides \$554 billion for national defense spending for fiscal year 2013, and eschews the titanic across-the-board cuts proposed by President Obama. In this article, the author analyzes the impact that Representative Paul Ryan's budget proposal has on defense spending, and outlines the core precepts of a proposal he devised to ensure that America retains its status as the world's lone superpower.

Sequestration and the current state of defense spending...

Prior to inaugurating a discussion about Representative Ryan's defense spending recommendations, and articulating the core precepts of his proposal, the author intends to provide an epigrammatic overview of the sequestration cuts to defense spending. As a result of the Budget Control Act of 2011, defense spending will be reduced by **\$56 billion** in January 2013. Additionally, President Obama's budget proposal—which failed to receive a single vote in the senate—cuts \$487 billion from the defense budget in fiscal year 2013. While every other government agency enjoys generous net increases in their spending allowances under President Obama's budget proposal, the Department of Defense is being forced to dramatically reduce its expenditures (Ryan, 2012). Drastic spending reductions during a time of global unrest and tumult are calamitous and irresponsible. Rather than reducing defense spending, President Obama and Congressional leaders should work assiduously to ensure that it is restored to Cold War levels (twenty-five percent of federal expenditures). If the United States intends to remain the global hegemon, it is imperative that defense spending is exponentially increased; American military personnel are afforded with first-rate weapons and the abstemious spending reductions proposed by President Obama and the Bowles-Simpson Deficit Reduction Commission are repudiated.

'The Path to Prosperity,' a conservative alternative...

Representative Paul Ryan's budget proposal, as aforementioned, provides \$554 billion in defense spending for fiscal year 2013. Foreign Policy Initiative Directors Arthur Brooks, Edwin Feulner and William Kristol, in a recent Wall Street Journal Op-Ed, wrote of Representative Ryan's defense spending proposal, "Even within

the framework of a plan to reduce outlays by \$6.2 trillion over the next decade, Mr. Ryan has found a way to replace \$214 billion of the \$487 billion in military spending reductions that are found in President Obama's budget." The spending reductions, to which Feulner, Brooks and Kristol are referring, came about as a result of sequestration—annual, automatic cuts agreed upon last summer by House Republicans and President Obama—that will eviscerate the United States military and bring an abrupt end to American global hegemony.

In addition to providing **\$554 billion** in defense spending for fiscal year 2013, The Path to Prosperity restores half of the funding cut by President Obama's budget proposal ensures that the defense spending exponentially increases in the near-time; provides adequate funding to maintain a robust end-strength; and supplies American military personnel with state-of-the-art of weapons. As the reader can discern, The Path to Prosperity provides innumerable recommendations for fiscal year 2013 defense spending. With that said, however, the author posits that the proposal does not go far enough in protecting American global hegemony. In the remainder of this article, the author delineates his proposal for naval expansion and weapons modernization.

Protecting American hegemony: Defense spending for the twenty-first century...

With the world in tumult and American hegemony on the decline, it is imperative that lawmakers put forward a defense budget that exponentially increases the size of America's naval fleet, restores spending to Cold War levels (twenty-five percent of federal expenditures), and supplies American military personnel with cutting-edge weapons. If America intends to remain the world's solitary hegemon, it is imperative that lawmakers implement the myriad recommendations outlined in this proposal. The author projects that his defense spending proposal—the focus of the second half of this article—will exceed **\$750 billion** for the upcoming fiscal year. The remainder of this article addresses the author's proposal and the impact it will have on American hegemony.

Bolstering the American Navy...

At this writing, the United States has the largest Navy in the world, with 282 combat ships, eleven Aircraft Carriers, seventy-one submarines, 323,733 active duty personnel, and a battle-fleet tonnage that is greater than that of the next thirteen largest navies combined. With that said, however, American maritime hegemony is being threatened by the Chinese (China's defense spending for fiscal year 2012 was \$106.4 billion, an

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eleven percent increase from 2011); and President Obama has proposed drastic reductions to the Navy’s budget for fiscal year 2013. The president’s budget slashes \$1.4 billion from the Navy’s budget for fiscal year 2013. The Navy Department requested a budget of just \$155.9 billion for fiscal year 2013, a marked decrease from 2012. The author’s proposal for bolstering the American Navy is as follows:

- Increase the number of Aircraft Carriers from eleven to twenty within the next decade. China’s increased spending on its naval fleet make this national security imperative. Chinese recently launched its first Aircraft Carrier and has fifty-two attack submarines in its arsenal. Former Secretary of Defense Bob Gates maintained that for the United States to remain the world’s most powerful navy, it must increase the number of aircraft carriers in its arsenal. Thus, the author recommends that the United States Navy increase the number of Aircraft Carriers in its arsenal from eleven to twenty in the next decade.

- Adhere to the Navy’s request to expand the total number of combat ships from 282 to 313. In a 2011 report, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus posited that continued naval supremacy is incumbent on the development of more combat ships. In fact, Mabus found that the United States Navy needs to increase its combat ship arsenal from 282 to 313 if it intends to retain its maritime supremacy. The author asserts that lawmakers should make American naval fleet expansion a foremost priority at the onset of the next legislative session.

- Long-term active duty personnel expansion. Currently, the United States Navy has 323,723 active duty personnel. Conversely, the Chinese Navy is comprised of more than 200,000 active duty soldiers. The author concurs with foreign policy scholar Dr. Andrew Krepinevich, Jr., that within the next twenty years, the United States Navy should work assiduously to increase its active duty personnel to 500,000.

In so doing, the navy can sustain its maritime supremacy, and expand play a pivotal role in world affairs

As the reader can discern, American naval expansion is a focal point of this author’s defense budget proposal. If it intends to retain global naval supremacy, and prevent the Chinese from controlling the Pacific Ocean, it is essential that lawmakers make naval expansion a foremost priority in the 2013 legislative session.

Restore American defense spending to Cold War levels...

Thirty years ago, at the onset of Ronald Reagan’s presidency and the waning days of the Cold War, American defense spending exceeded twenty-five percent of federal expenditures. Today, under the auspices of President Obama and liberal Democrats, national defense accounts for

just twenty percent of federal expenditures. Despite consisting of just twenty percent of federal spending, national defense will bear fifty percent of the spending cuts in fiscal year 2013, as a result of sequestration (Ryan, 2012). What is more, since President Obama assumed the presidency in January 2009, defense spending has decreased from 7.5 to a paltry 4.5 percent of GDP. The aforementioned spending reductions pose a calamitous threat to American global hegemony. Thus, the author proposes restoring defense spending as a share of GDP to 7.5 percent for fiscal year 2013 and ten percent by the end of the decade. Subsequently, this proposal restores defense spending to its Cold War level of twenty-five percent of federal expenditures, and increases the 2013 defense budget from \$525 billion (as proposed by President Obama), to **\$750 billion**. Cuts to American defense spending during a time of global unrest are nonsensical and annihilatory.

Perhaps the most important question one must pose as it relates to this proposal is: where is the additional two hundred billion coming from? Rather than increasing the federal budget deficit, or raising taxes—both of which would be fiscally irresponsible and undermine economic recovery—the author recommends making drastic cuts to agency budgets and nondefense discretionary spending. In so doing, the federal government will be able to begin paying off its colossal deficit, while simultaneously increasing defense spending. While some conservatives will ultimately oppose this author’s recommendation to increase defense spending by two hundred billion dollars for fiscal year 2013, he assures them that this spending is warranted, as the money comes from cuts to nondefense discretionary spending and agency budgets, not “thin air.”

Weapons modernization...

While navy expansion and increased defense spending will have a profound impact on American hegemony, they pale in comparison to weapons modernization. Great powers are unable to maintain their hegemony if they are devoid superior weapons systems. The author’s proposal advocates for increased spending on weapons and equipment modernization for the United States military. Currently, members of the American armed forces are fighting with innumerable outmoded, Cold War-era weapons (the V-22, F-18 aircraft, and the Navy’s Virginia-class submarine, to name a few). Rather than eliminating these weapons systems, as many on the left and the Libertarian Cato Institute suggest, the Defense Department should work assiduously to modernize, update, and expand America’s weapons arsenal. The author recommends that Congress appropriate \$400 billion for military modernization in the 2013 defense budget. In so doing, the United States can replace antiquated Cold War-era weapons with newfangled armaments that will

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revolutionize warfare. Military modernization, as the reader can discern, is of paramount importance in the decades ahead.

Concluding remarks...

“The Path to Prosperity: A Blueprint for American Renewal,” Representative Paul Ryan’s budget proposal, replaces \$214 billion of the \$487 billion in military spending reductions proposed by President Obama, without increasing taxes. Paul Ryan’s defense spending proposal, despite saving taxpayers billions of dollars, and ensuring that the United States remains the world’s lone superpower, is devoid of specifics. As such, the author outlined a three pronged national defense

budget that increases the size of America’s navy, returns defense spending to pre-Cold War levels, and modernizes American weapons systems.

Akin to “The Path to Prosperity,” the author’s proposal cuts money for nondefense discretionary spending in order to provide ample funding for national defense. With the economy dwindling on the precipice of collapse, it is imperative that Congress and President Obama drastically reduce nondefense discretionary spending so as to increase defense spending. National defense is the federal government’s chief responsibility. As such, national defense and the military must take precedent over discretionary spending, health care, Alaskan Caribou, and the motley assortment of programs and projects found in the federal budget.

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law’s true cost.

Sure enough, the administration last October announced it would not implement one of those gimmicks, a long-term care program called the Class Act, because it was financially unworkable. The loss of the premiums that would be collected to finance the Class Act wiped out \$70 billion of the supposed deficit reduction projected by CBO. And last month the administration’s proposed fiscal 2013 budget included \$111 billion in additional spending for the premium subsidies in the health law’s insurance exchanges—further eroding any confidence in the original ObamaCare projections.

This would not be the first time a government program exceeded its projected cost. When Medicare was passed in 1965, for example, the federal government estimated it would cost \$12 billion in 1990. Medicare actually cost \$110 billion in 1990.

In the case of ObamaCare, one of the principal sources of the lowball estimate used to justify the law is related to the insurance exchanges. The CBO originally estimated that one million Americans would lose their employer-sponsored care and be forced into the exchanges.

But a McKinsey & Co. study in June 2011 showed that 30%-50% of employers plan to stop offering health insurance to their employees once the health law is implemented in 2014. Last week the CBO breezily dismissed this and other studies on the ground that “it is doubtful that any survey conducted today could provide very accurate predictions of employers’ future decisions.”

As someone who purchased group health insurance for over 31 years, I fully understand why the McKinsey study is more credible than the CBO.

Why? Because the decision employers face under ObamaCare is straightforward: Do they pay \$20,000 per year for family coverage, or do

they pay the \$2,000 penalty to the government?

It is not as if dropping health coverage will expose their employees to financial risk. They will thereby make employees eligible for huge subsidies in the health-care exchanges—\$10,000 if their household income is \$64,000 per year. In a competitive environment, ObamaCare provides the incentive for employers to drop coverage.

According to the CBO, 154 million Americans are covered under employer-sponsored plans. What would be the cost to taxpayers if 50% of those individuals lost their coverage and became eligible for subsidies? The answer is difficult to calculate, but CBO’s answer is basically: Don’t worry, revenues will increase automatically to cover those costs (for example, employees’ taxable incomes will increase when they lose employer-provided coverage).

In reality, as government assumes a greater share of health-care costs, pressure to cut payments to providers will be enormous. Reduced government reimbursements to providers will cause massive cost-shifting to those remaining in the private health-insurance market. More employees will lose coverage. Before long, we will have what the left has long sought—a single payer health-care system modeled after Medicaid.

In recent testimony before the Senate Appropriations Committee, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius told me that America’s health insurance system is in a “death spiral.” She failed to acknowledge that implementation of ObamaCare will be the cause of that death spiral, and American taxpayers will be left to pick up the tab.

In a June 2009 speech to the American Medical Association, Mr. Obama promised: “If you like your health-care plan, you’ll be able to keep your health-care plan. Period. No one will take it away, no matter what.” I’m not sure what you would call that statement, but whatever you call it, it was a doozy.

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett embraces failed Illinois policies

From Gov. Scott Walker's Office

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett hosted a campaign fundraiser with Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel in March. In response to the joint appearance, the Friends of Scott Walker campaign is highlighting the stark differences between Wisconsin's and Illinois' economies.

"By inviting the mayor of Illinois' largest city to Wisconsin, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett is illustrating exactly the path he would take the Badger State down if elected governor," said Ciara Matthews, Walker campaign communications director. "Under the leadership of Gov. Walker, Wisconsin's economy has seen drastic improvement over the last year. In Illinois, the story could not be any different."

Among other things, Matthews points to differences in each state's budget, tax rates, unemployment rate and pension systems as evidence that the decisions Gov. Walker has made have created economic growth in Wisconsin, while the decisions of Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn are having a disastrous effect on that state's economy.

Wisconsin—Eliminated \$3.6 billion

deficit without raising taxes; cut taxes on businesses that invest in Wisconsin; budget called "credit positive" by Moody's; public employee retirement system fully funded; unemployment rate at 3-year low of 6.9%.

Illinois—\$8.5 billion in unpaid bills and raised income taxes by 66%; increased corporate tax rate by 46%; bond rating downgraded to lowest in nation by Moody's; \$83 billion shortfall for public employee retirement system; unemployment rate higher than the national average of 9.1%.

"These horrifying numbers are a result of the failed liberal policies that got Wisconsin into trouble in the first place and the Mayor Tom Barrett is embracing by bringing Illinois politicians to Milwaukee to help him raise money," Matthews explained.

Mayor Barrett remains undecided on whether he will run for governor in the coming recall election, but Matthews says that should he get in, he will face the same fate he did in 2010.

"We are confident that a majority of voters will reaffirm the decision they made in November 2010 and stand with Gov. Walker against this baseless recall."

Property taxes go down for first time in 12 years statewide

From Gov. Scott Walker's Office

Last month, Gov. Walker announced that statewide property taxes for the typical homeowner have gone down for the first time in 12 years. The tax bill for the median value home is \$39 per homeowner lower than originally estimated by the Legislative Fiscal Bureau when the 2011-2013 budget was passed.

"Our reforms have reversed a decade of property tax increases from previous

administrations," said Gov. Walker. "For the first time in over ten years, the average property taxpayer will have more money in his or her pocket than the year before."

Since 1998, property taxes paid by homeowners have risen 43 percent. This year property taxes paid by the typical homeowner went down 4 percent. Without the Governor's reforms the average homeowner would have paid an additional \$700 over the biennium.

Obama's oil flimflam

By Charles Krauthammer
Washington Post

Yes, of course, presidents have no direct control over gas prices. But the American people know something about this president and his disdain for oil. The “fuel of the past,” he contemptuously calls it. To the American worker who doesn't commute by government motorcade and is getting fleeced every week at the pump, oil seems very much a fuel of the present—and of the foreseeable future.

President Obama incessantly claims energy open-mindedness, insisting that his policy is “all of the above.” Except, of course, for drilling:

- off the Mid-Atlantic coast (as Virginia, for example, wants);
- off the Florida Gulf Coast (instead, the Castro brothers will drill near there
- in the broader Gulf of Mexico (where drilling in 2012 is expected to drop 30 percent below pre-moratorium forecasts);
- in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (more than half the size of England, the drilling footprint being the size of Dulles International Airport);
- on federal lands in the Rockies (where leases are down 70 percent since Obama took office).

But the event that drove home the extent of Obama's antipathy to nearby, abundant, available oil was his veto of the Keystone pipeline, after the most extensive environmental vetting of any pipeline in U.S. history. It gave the game away because the case for Keystone is so obvious and overwhelming. Vetoing it gratuitously prolongs our dependence on outside powers, kills thousands of shovel-ready jobs, forfeits a major strategic resource to China, damages relations with our closest ally, and sends billions of oil dollars to Hugo Chavez, Vladimir Putin and already obscenely wealthy sheiks.

Obama boasts that, on his watch, production is up and imports down. True, but truly deceptive. These increases have occurred in spite of his restrictive policies. They are the result of Clinton- and Bush-era permitting. This has been accompanied by a gold rush of natural gas production resulting from new fracking technology that has nothing at all to do

with Obama.

“The American people aren't stupid,” Obama said (Feb. 23), mocking “Drill, baby, drill.” The “only solution,” he averred in yet another major energy speech last week, is that “we start using less—that lowers the demand, prices come down.” Yet five paragraphs later he claimed that regardless of “how much oil we produce at home . . . that's not going to set the price of gas worldwide.”

So: Decreasing U.S. demand will lower oil prices, but increasing U.S. supply will not? This is ridiculous. Either both do or neither does. Does Obama read his own speeches?

Obama says of drilling: “That's not a plan.” Of course it's a plan. We import nearly half of our oil, thereby exporting enormous amounts of U.S. wealth. Almost 60 percent of our trade deficit — \$332 billion out of \$560 billion — is shipped overseas to buy crude.

Drill here and you stanch the hemorrhage. You keep those dollars within the U.S. economy, repatriating not just wealth but jobs and denying them to foreign unfriendlies. Drilling is the single most important thing we can do to spur growth at home while strengthening our hand abroad.

Instead, Obama offers what he fancies to be the fuels of the future. You would think that he'd be a tad more modest today about his powers of divination after the Solyndra bankruptcy, the collapse of government-subsidized Ener1 (past makers of the batteries of the future) and GM's suspension of production — for lack of demand — of another federally dictated confection, the flammable Chevy Volt.

Deterred? Hardly. Our undaunted seer of the energy future has come up with his own miracle fuel: algae.

Why, explained Obama, “we can grow it right here in the United States.” (Sounds like a miraculous local find — except that it grows just about everywhere on earth.) Accordingly, yet another \$14 million of taxpayer money will be sprinkled on algae research by Steven Chu's Energy Department.

This is the very same Dr. Chu who

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The moral core of capitalism

By John Stossel

Now that Mitt Romney is likely to be the Republican nominee, we can expect new attacks on his "vulture capitalism." That's how Rick Perry characterized his private equity work. Newt Gingrich's supporters ran an ad about Romney's firm, Bain Capital, that said, "Their greed was only matched by their willingness to do anything to make millions in profits."

Give me a break.

"Greed" means you want more for yourself. Fine. If you obtain it legally, without force or privilege — say, by buying a business and making it more efficient, or shifting resources to where consumers prefer them — that is a good thing. "Creative destruction" makes America richer.

Shifting resources does mean some people lose their jobs. That is sad for those who are fired.

But on balance, it's a good thing. Intuition tells us that it would be better if no one ever lost a job and that capitalists who close businesses are evil. But America would not be better off today if elevator operators and factory workers who made typewriters had their jobs preserved by a "compassionate" government.

America is richer today because those workers lost their jobs, because money once paid them is put to better use. In addition, most of those workers found new jobs where their skills better served consumers. Some even say they were glad that they were fired, because now they are more productive, and being productive makes people happy.

But we in the media almost never tell that story. That's because we only report what we see.

We can see, and interview, the sad people who get fired. We take pictures as they leave their jobs on that last day when the factory closes. We interview them about the hardship to their families. It's a sad and moving story. We tell it well.

But we never tell the flip side, the creative part of creative destruction. That's because we don't see it. We don't see the better things that are done with capital that once went into the factory. We don't see what many of the workers do next.

None of us covered the first few weeks of Apple or Google or Staples or Domino's

Pizza. We had no clue that those companies were about to produce cool new things, thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in value. Staples and Domino's, by the way, were funded by Bain Capital.

Not all bankers and private equity firms create wealth, because some make bad decisions. But if government does not bestow privileges, those that don't create wealth go out of business, and those that fund good ideas grow.

Some may call that "vulture capitalism" and sneer at "hostile" takeovers, but if the takeover is not enabled by government force, it is likely to be a good thing. It makes America more prosperous.

Michael Moore says, "Capitalism has no moral core."

Is that right? Since the word "capitalism" is ambiguous, the answer depends on what we mean. If it's crony capitalism—well, yeah. It stinks. Handouts to Solyndra and special deals for Goldman Sachs and GM are not capitalism. That's "crapitalism."

Many people hate banks, private-equity firms, and mortgage brokers. In light of the last few years, this isn't totally unjustified. I resent the bankers who got rich by taking foolish risks and then, when they failed, got bailed out with our tax money.

I guess I shouldn't blame bankers. I should blame the politicians. They gave our tax money away. If someone offered me money to cover my losses, I'd take it, too.

The real evil bankers are the government cronies, like those at Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. They took our money by force, our taxes, then paid themselves fat salaries and promised us that none of our money was at risk. And then they squandered more than \$100 billion, betting that housing prices would always rise and few people would default.

I resent them and their backers in government.

But in a real free market—no government privileges or barriers to competition—capitalism is great. It's the only system with a moral core because it's based on freedom, not force.

John Stossel is host of "Stossel" on the Fox Business Network. He's the author of "Give Me a Break" and of "Myth, Lies, and Downright Stupidity."

The problem with wind turbines

By **Sen. Frank Lasee**
(R-1st District)

In today's world, we are always looking for new, innovative ways to solve problems because that is what Americans do. We see a problem and we start working on a solution.

It's not always an easy process; Thomas Edison had to try over 1400 times before inventing a workable light bulb.

As a society we need great ideas and people who can turn them into great inventions and often be richly rewarded for their efforts. Some ideas sound really great but don't pan out in reality. Wind energy for generating regular electricity falls into this category.

Industrial Wind Turbines (IWT's) are towering 500 foot structures, nearly twice as tall as the State Capitol. IWT's have been a hotly contested issue in my district. Here's why.

Wind energy is a solution to a nonexistent problem. Wisconsin is capable of generating 35% more electricity than we use.

In Wisconsin 63% of all our power is generated from coal, 21% from nuclear, 9.4 from natural gas, 2.4% from hydropower, .9% from "other" and just 2.9% from renewables, wind energy accounts for just 1.5% of our total energy production.

How can so many windmills generate so little electricity? Because windmills are extremely inefficient and costly.

Some people claim these 500 foot windmills claim to generate 1.5 megawatts per hour. That is assuming that the wind blows all day and night. That's just silly, in fact they only make electricity about 5 hours out of 24 on good days. It takes nearly four windmills to make the power that is supposed to be generated by one turbine.

How can these even be profitable? They aren't. Without electric users supporting them with higher rates and higher electric bills, direct tax subsidies, huge tax write offs and mandates requiring them, they wouldn't exist. They are a very costly way to make electricity.

The Shirley Wind Farm, one of the wind farms in my district has 8 turbines. Those turbines cost \$3million each, taxpayers paid \$1.6 million for each turbine, about \$13 million in total.

Wind power even manages to make other forms of electricity generation less efficient, more environmentally damaging and more costly!

Wind systems require backup energy sources (which are run by fossil fuels) because they only make electricity part time. The wind doesn't blow all the time, but peo-

ple always need consistent electricity.

Power plants are a lot like your car, they operate most efficiently when they are able to run at a constant speed or generate at a constant rate. Wind turbines only generate power 1 out of 5 hours, when the wind blows, coal and natural gas plants slow down production, this burns more fossil fuel than if they ran at a steady rate. Then when the wind stops, the plants have to speed back up, burning more fossil fuels and creating more CO2.

It's like the difference between driving on the highway on cruise control or driving in town.

IWT's wouldn't even be so bad if it was just about money, but they have caused serious health problems for people in my district, and people's health, and their children's health is something you can't put a price on.

Have you ever had trouble sleeping? Maybe there was loud traffic going past your house that night, or maybe your neighbors were throwing a party. These things usually only happen once in a while. What if you had a noise keeping you awake every single night?

Wind turbines make low frequency sound waves which cause a pulsating that cause headaches, ear pain, nausea, blurred vision, anxiety, memory loss, and an overall unsettledness in some people. Long term exposure to this very low frequency noise can thicken arteries and cause organ damage.

As a result, multiple families in my district have abandoned the homes where they raised their children, looking for relief, some are now paying mortgagees on two homes.

These are not isolated incidences, in fact in just the last 18 months, we've gathered a one-foot thick stack of comprehensive peer reviewed studies that positively link the pollution of IWTs (low frequency noise and stray voltage) to adverse health effects in people. Something must be done.

The rest of the world is rejecting these turbines, as our elected officials refused to take action to help people by supporting an economically unsustainable source of energy, costing everyone more and driving people from their homes.

The Netherlands, a nation known for its windmills, has decided to call it quits and are ending the large scale subsidies that were the only reason the industry could stay afloat in the first place. Denmark and Spain are following suit.

Wind energy may seem like a great idea in theory, because the wind is free! The problem is, wind energy isn't.

Abortion stops a beating heart, violates the U.S. Constitution

By Dr. Waldo Werning

An aborted baby was on a thirty-six week internal journey from embryo to fetus, and then designed for an expected external 80 to 100 years of personhood and livelihood on planet earth. "Baby" doctors do not have a pregnant woman with an appendage or vestigial organ to be discarded by her, but he has two patients—the second one being a developing fetus with a beating heart.

After conception, the embryo, meaning "growing within," has a DNA that instructs the development to be a fetus in three weeks, and then to begin building all of the body systems of a human being in thirty-six inner weeks, ready to be born for an external life. So the doctor does not face a woman and a "choice," but two human patients—the mother and the developing baby. This is science, not a personal or political opinion.

"Fetus" is from the Latin, "offspring...bringing forth...hatching of the young...come into being...developing mammal." The beating heart, which begins in the embryo already at the end of the third week, beats 55 million times before birth. The body, encased in the placenta which is an organ with DNA with the umbilical cord that connects the developing fetus to the uterus wall for feeding and survival. The placenta is an organ, not of the mother, but for the developing fetus. It is not a tumor or vestigial organ to be surgically excised, but a living being capable of feeling with the adaptability for external life. This is not only a scientific fact, but also the decision between a "choice" and a developing fetus—a baby that presents ethical, moral and spiritual values.

Naming and treating this developing body that awaits an expected entrance into the external world is called a "choice" by abortionists, and is arbitrarily named a "viability" by the U.S. Supreme Court. When those who stop beating hearts call this a "reproductive choice" with "reproductive rights and reproductive health," apply it to the choice of the mother with the doctor's approval, this takes away the inalienable

right for life of an unborn human being in her uterus. The mother had a "reproductive choice" before there was conception. They fail and refuse to tell that all systems in that body are stopped that causes death to "something," that is not a part or appendage of the woman's body.

The abortionists fail to inform pregnant women that the choice is between the life or the death of a living body with a beating heart other than that of the mother. The Declaration of Independence gives protection to a baby's body systems and life is a self-evident truth: "That all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among them are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." The Courts have shown that the growing body, "fetus," has rights when a pregnant woman is killed in a car wreck. The guilty person has destroyed two lives. The Supreme Court simply disregards these court decisions when it allows abortions.

There is much that is wrong, irrational, ugly and evil about the 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision by the Supreme Court. Few people know and understand the legal and arbitrary abstractions and dialectics in the bickering and squabbling arguments of the January 22, 1973, Supreme Court decision in which the government treated abortion only as a medical and surgical decision for the protection of a pregnant woman—using the medical excuse of "protecting the health of the mother." The court's decision was totally subjective without objective facts in defining the basic questions about when life begins and the "viability" of survival outside and separate from the mother. The Court's "viability" argument can be used as easily and strongly in the case of the aged or those patients with terminal cancer and arterial conditions or are on life support. The Supreme Court's precedent in legalizing "viability," which is strictly a guess for the medical decision by a

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physician that is open to arguments by ambitious attorneys.

The Court asserted that the government has two competing interests—protecting the mother’s health and protecting the “potentiality of human life.” The Court never described the constitutional legality of a fetus having a “potentiality of human life,” and presented no constitutional reasons, but declared that it was an “arbitrary” decision.

The Court explicitly rejected the “right to life” argument for the developing body, “fetus” to continue living or to survive. Judge Blackmun wrote the majority decision and stated, “You will observe that I have concluded that the end of the first trimester is critical. This is arbitrary, (emphasis ours), and perhaps any other selected point, such as quickening or viability, is equally arbitrary?” Recognize that the 1973 Supreme Court decision is declared “arbitrary” by the court majority—which makes this an arbitrary law! The Court’s decision actually asks whether selecting any other point of time is equally arbitrary. Citizens must recognize that the Court’s decision was not constitutional, but arbitrary, which the Court admits that it does not know when meaningful and actual life begins.

Justices White and Rehnquist offered emphatic and rational dissenting opinions that show that the majority decision has no relation to our Constitution. William Rehnquist elaborated on several

of White’s points, and asserted that the Court’s analysis and decision was flawed and unconstitutional.

Think of this: While mothers with unborn babies are legally responsible and liable for the life and health of the baby after birth, they can stop the beating heart of that baby anytime during its 36-week internal life. It’s time for citizens to request the Supreme Court to explain their 1973 decision how legally they give the decision of complete ownership to a pregnant woman, which is a special form of slavery, to treat this fetus as the woman wants, including death for the baby. The mother with a doctor can decide that her pregnancy and the living “something” in her uterus is a virus or disease that needs to be treated and needs to be exposed of.

It is time for citizens to act on the Declaration’s assertion, “*That when any Form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government...*” The government to be changed includes the legislators or the judges who make unconstitutional decisions. In this case, it would be for the legislators in the Congress and the Senate to right the wrong and to overrule the Supreme Court if it does not change its 1973 decision or to have a national vote to abolish all abortion.

Werning, an author, is the director of the Discipling/Stewardship Center, Healthy Church Initiative of Waukesha.

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famously said in 2008 that he wanted U.S. gas prices to rise to European levels of \$8-\$10 a gallon — and who on Tuesday, eight months before Election Day, publicly recanted before Congress, Galileo-style.

Who do they think they’re fooling? An oil crisis looms, prices are spiking — and our president is extolling algae. After Solyndra, Keystone and promises of seaweed in their gas tanks, Americans sense

a president so ideologically antipathetic to fossil fuels — which we possess in staggering abundance — that he is utterly unserious about the real world of oil in which the rest of us live.

High gasoline prices are a major political problem for Obama. They are not just a pain at the pump, however. They are a constant reminder of three years of a rigid, fatuous, fantasy-driven energy policy that has rendered us scandalously dependent and excessively vulnerable.