

The Digest

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The Evolution of Wisconsin's Tea Party Movement

By **Tim Dake**
Grandsons of Liberty

When CNBC's Rick Santelli launched into his Feb. 19, 2009 rant against the Obama Administration's reckless spending, he also launched a movement unlike any other in American history. While there have been long term, grassroots movements in our past, none has had the broad appeal that crosses generations, economic strata and, yes, despite the claims of the mainstream media, even races that the Tea Party Movement has shown.

The roots of the Wisconsin movement are deeper and older than February 2009 although they have their basis in the same complaints—taxes and government intrusion. Taxpayer groups such as the Brown County Taxpayers Association and the Pierce County Tea Party extend back for years and even decades prior to the recent movement with their focus having been on the abuse of public spending and taxing authority. Pierce County Tea Party has been holding events named “tea parties” since long before the current trend took off.

The earliest tea parties in the current crop took place in late February 2009 immediately after Santelli's “Shout heard ‘round the world” but gathered just a few dozens or hundreds of participants in the small towns across the state. Real numbers, both in terms of attendees and tea parties, came on Tax Day of 2009. An estimated 20+ events occurred around the state with the largest being the stunner in Madison. Organizers of the event, Americans for Prosperity, predicted an attendance of 3,000 to 4,000. The final count placed the number at just above 8,300 – a mind boggling number when one considers Madison's reputation as a liberal college town.

What made these events so intriguing is the true grassroots nature of all but the Madison rally. Admittedly, Madison's AFP sponsored event involved a large statewide organization whereas the other events around Wisconsin were created by local groups formed for the express purpose of holding a tea party. Most groups did not expect to continue after Tax Day. The organizers were not political experts or activists but common people who had become tired of the attitudes of their state and federal governments in regard to fiscal responsibility. A recent survey of the over 60 Wisconsin groups found nearly half headed by women, and of them, more than half are self professed housewives. The “typical” organizer is white, around 40 years of age, middle class, often a small business owner, some college education, of no particular political affiliation, with practically no previous political activity beyond voting. Those attending events are of every economic status, at least a high school graduate but not usually a college graduate, employed but worried about their job, and more often than not, has children.

Had the Tax Day protests received the treatment by the mainstream media given any other political event, the tea parties would most likely have been a fad. The refusal of the major networks to acknowledge the occurrence of the rallies and the negative portrayal by networks such a CNN and MSNBC seem to have served to antagonize the organizers of the Tax Day protests. The perceived vilification appears to have led the organizers to redouble their efforts to gain attention and to alert Congress and the

Obama Administration to their plight.

New groups formed and promptly began holding protests as soon as the next weekend in cities such as Racine. From there, the events began to occur almost weekly with no particular significance to the dates. Over the course of the summer the level of frustration rose to the point where people would appear to protest in response to the mere rumor of a tea party.

The next target became the July 4th holiday with dozens of rallies scheduled from one end of the state to the other. The number of events had increased with the founding of new groups. These organizations remained very grassroots although the larger protests began to take on a similar feel as AFP found new partners with many of the new groups. Familiar faces made the rounds of the tea parties and crowd favorites were established based on speaking styles and topics. Pastor David King, Joe the Plumber and Rebecca Kleefisch appeared at numerous rallies along with elected officials Jim Ott and Leah Vukmir.

As the summer progressed the hot topics of the speeches and placards became more defined. At the beginning of the movement, fiscal responsibility, lesser, smaller government, and an end to bailouts and stimulus spending were dominant themes. With the August congressional recess, the emphasis shifted to an opposition to health care reform and cap and trade legislation. Underscoring all of these issues, the slate of speakers began to include more experts on the key topics and an increase of politicians and candidates that openly professed their opposition to the administration's policies. The protestors want to roll back the excessive spending and regulation of the last 40 years.

The protestors want to see the power moved to the lowest possible level of government and the federal government confined to living within the US Constitution. They want to see work and effort rewarded and the older values of past generations reclaimed. Simply, they want to have control over their lives again with minimal government intrusion at all levels. The protestors are seeking to force the discussion of the issues and then, through the political process that the Framers designed, change the government to a more constitutionally responsible system that respects individuals and promotes opportunity. They are giving the current system a chance—and using every constitutional tool possible to affect the changes.

This consolidation of opposition has led to a proliferation of websites that support the Tea Party Movement's goals and information exchange. TeaPartyPatriots and TeaPartyNation among others have sprung up to provide a clearinghouse for information on events scheduled, best practices, news and ideas. An unknown and probably uncountable number of imitators have been created from the national level down to local levels offering some version of the same information. This internet genre has forged a new distribution channel for information that bypasses the mainstream media facilitating a dedicated method of instantaneous communication between the Patriot groups and those that are watching from the sidelines.

By late summer and early fall, the Wisconsin Patriot groups had learned how to have high production value events and to secure recognized names for speakers. The

...evolution of Tea Party Movement

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attractiveness of the rallies began to appeal to a wider audience and the attendance grew. The September 5th event in Sheboygan drew over 4,000 people. The Sept. 19 Constitution Day Celebration in Milwaukee attracted, depending on how and on who made the count, between 10,000 and 15,000 people. As recently as Jan. 16, 2010, roughly 4,000 protestors turned out in sub-freezing weather to vent their ire against the government's policies. The groups learned how to market the events and reach the broadest possible audience through AM radio talk shows and internet bloggers.

Through fits and starts, the Wisconsin Patriot groups have found their way to exchanging information originally on events and then best practices and eventually to collaboration. In October 2009, a handful of the Wisconsin groups realized the need to leverage the skill sets and assets of each group to hold better events and to move beyond protest to activism to affect the change that they seek. The first conference of the Patriot groups, which is composed of tea parties, 912 groups, liberty and Constitution groups, and taxpayer and specific issue groups, was held in Oconomowoc in early November. A common agenda of collaborative events, election debates and forums, and a first effort at legislation was agreed upon and put into practice. The centerpiece of combined effort was the introduction and advancement of the Wisconsin Health Care Freedom Amendment to the state constitution. Of the 55 then known groups in the state, 24 took part in the three day conference.

Following this conference, few rallies were hosted by a single group as the coalition groups moved swiftly to hold collaborative events including tea parties, seminars, debates and forums, Constitution related events and townhalls. The groups began to produce videos and pamphlets. While tea parties and protest will always have a place in the movement, particularly for recruitment and information dissemination, the main thrust had begun to shift to education on the Constitution and national issues going into the winter. Many of the groups began holding health care and

climate change related seminars and townhalls in an effort to better inform the public.

The second meeting of the Patriot group coalition was held in late January and drew nearly half of the 64 then known groups in Wisconsin. With the success found after the November meeting, the coalition agenda was expanded to include discussions with the permanent, statewide conservative groups on collaboration, fighting voter fraud, creating a legislative agenda to pursue over the next two years and the formation of a "platform" in answer to the repeated questions "what do the tea parties want?" Groups from adjoining states attended to exchange ideas and plan regional activist collaboration.

Plans have been laid for a massive, multi-day Tax Day 2010 protest in Madison that would highlight the organization of the Patriot groups and the agenda forged in Oconomowoc. Outreach has been made to like-minded state and local legislators for the dual purpose of advancing the legislative agenda and to influence the 2010 elections. The activist "platform" will soon be rolled out and the response of the major political parties will dictate the direction that the fall elections will take. The national discussion as to whether the GOP will take control of the Tea Party Movement or if the tea parties will hijack the GOP is considered moot within the movement as their intent is to support those candidates that share the same political goals and philosophical beliefs as the Patriots - regardless of party affiliation. Those candidates that differ from the Patriots views will find a severe and brutal backlash in November. The groups have, as a whole, already professed that come November 3rd, they will go into a watchdog mode to carefully monitor the voting behavior of those who are backed and elected and to ratchet up the legislative activism.

The Tea Party Movement is not a short term, limited perspective phenomenon. The electorate has reached a boiling point and been forced from a complacent, apathetic slumber. They have awakened angry and vengeful. There is no quick panacea for this level of anger and frustration.

Tea anyone?

The uprising of the proletariat similar to the French revolution is taking place and the establishment is aghast.

The political establishment, those that are solely interested in the government for their own betterment, simply does not know what to do with these people. They cannot be bought off with campaign donations, pressured from the unions, or other special interest groups, but operates solely on principal.

Operating in this country behind closed doors since the beginning of the Republic many people look to the government for their largess. Often playing both sides toward the middle, buying parties, candidates, officials everywhere, spending millions on lobbying, they are the real movers and shakers in government.

When things are going pretty well Joe Sixpack, Sally Mom, and the rest of the people pay little attention to the process. But there comes a time when things start to happen that jeopardize their homes, jobs, cars and hobbies, when the "giant rises up and becomes filled with great resolve".

Thomas Jefferson predicted this when he said: "Occasionally the tree of freedom needs to be watered with the blood of patriots." Actual violence is not going to happen from this group but literal violence toward those who have shafted them is very possible. "Hell

hath no fury like a voter scorned".

The conservatives need to revolt, take their ideology and join with Reince Priebus and other Republicans that believe in the same philosophy as we do and take back the government. Then, we have to watch the government and "hold their feet to the fire." Often the newly elected officials "go native" and work with the special interests after a term or two. This happens in Madison and in DC.

Conservatism is an ideology but the Republican party is the path to power. We must find the leaders that agree with us, elect them or replace those who are anchors to the cause. We must return the state to fiscal sanity, moral leadership and aggressive growth.

Everybody can pitch in. It does little good to just sit on the sidelines and bitch. We need action. Jump in and fight. We need you.

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A roadmap for America's future

**By Congressman Paul Ryan
(R-1st District)**

In his State of the Union address, President Obama declared a newfound commitment to "fiscal responsibility" to cover the huge spending and debt he and congressional Democrats have run up in his first year in office. But when he submits his actual budget, I fear it will rely on gimmickry, commissions, lukewarm spending "freezes," and paper-tiger controls to create the illusion of budget discipline. Meanwhile, he and the Democratic congressional leadership will continue pursuing a relentless expansion of government and a new culture of dependency.

America needs an alternative. For that reason, I have reintroduced my plan to tackle our nation's most pressing domestic challenges—updated to reflect the dramatic decline in our economic and fiscal condition. The plan, called A Road Map for America's Future and first introduced in 2008, is a comprehensive proposal to ensure health and retirement security for all Americans, to lift the debt burdens that are mounting every day because of Washington's reckless spending, and to promote jobs and competitiveness in the 21st century global economy.

The difference between these two approaches could not be more clear. From the enactment of a \$1 trillion "stimulus" last February to the current pass-at-all costs government takeover of health care, the Democratic leadership has followed a "progressive" strategy that will take us closer to a tipping point past which most Americans receive more in government benefits than they pay in taxes—a European-style welfare state where double-digit unemployment becomes a way of life.

Americans don't have to settle for this path of decline. There's still time to choose a different future. That is what the Road Map offers. It is based on a fundamentally different vision from the one now prevailing in Washington. It focuses the government on its proper role. It restrains government spending, and hence limits the size of government itself. It rejuvenates the vibrant market economy that made America the envy of the world. And it restores an American character rooted in individual initiative, entrepreneurship and opportunity.

Here are the principal elements:

- **Health Care.** The plan ensures universal access to affordable health insurance by restructuring the tax code, allowing all Americans to secure an affordable health plan that best suits their needs, and shifting the control and ownership of health coverage away from the government and employers to individuals.

It provides a refundable tax credit—\$2,300 for individuals and \$5,700 for families—to purchase coverage (from another state if they so choose) and keep it with them if they move or

change jobs. It establishes transparency in health-care price and quality data, so this critical information is readily available before someone needs health services.

State-based high risk pools will make affordable care available to those with pre-existing conditions. In addition to the tax credit, Medicaid will provide supplemental payments to low income recipients so they too can obtain the health coverage of their choice and no longer be consigned to the stigmatized, sclerotic care that Medicaid has come to represent.

- **Medicare.** The Road Map secures Medicare for current beneficiaries, while making common-sense reforms to save this critical program. It preserves the existing Medicare program for Americans currently 55 or older so they can receive the benefits they planned for throughout their working lives.

For those under 55—as they become Medicare-eligible—it creates a Medicare payment, initially averaging \$11,000, to be used to purchase a Medicare certified plan. The payment is adjusted to reflect medical inflation, and pegged to income, with low-income individuals receiving greater support. The plan also provides risk adjustment, so those with greater medical needs receive a higher payment.

The proposal also fully funds Medical Savings Accounts (MSAs) for low-income beneficiaries, while continuing to allow all beneficiaries, regardless of income, to set up tax-free MSAs. Enacted together, these reforms will help keep Medicare solvent for generations to come.

- **Social Security.** The Road Map preserves the existing Social Security program for those 55 or older. For those under 55, the plan offers the option of investing over one-third of their current Social Security taxes into personal retirement accounts, similar to the Thrift Savings Plan available to federal employees. This proposal includes a property right, so those who own these accounts can pass on these assets to their heirs. The plan also guarantees that individuals will not lose a dollar they contribute to their accounts, even after inflation.

The plan also makes the program permanently solvent by combining a modest adjustment in the growth of initial Social Security's benefits for higher income individuals, with a gradual, modest increase in the retirement age.

- **Tax Reform.** The Road Map offers an alternative to today's needlessly complex and unfair tax code, providing the option of a simplified system that promotes work, saving and investment.

This highly simplified code fits on a postcard. It has just two rates: 10% on income up to \$100,000 for joint filers and \$50,000 for single filers, and 25% on taxable income above these amounts. It also includes a generous standard deduction and personal exemption (total-

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Tea parties rock

By Bill Kurtz

Last spring, the tea party movement burst forth with anti-tax rallies scattered around the country. As 2009 went on, supporters confronted members of Congress over issues like health care and financial bailouts, and rallied in Washington.

There's no question the movement has tapped a vein of public sentiment. But its long-term future is anyone's guess, partially because of its decentralized nature.

"We are a leaderless movement, and that's a good thing," a California activist told the San Francisco Chronicle.

Interviews with several Wisconsin tea party stalwarts would indicate three apparent characteristics of the movement's adherents.

1.) Most are political newcomers.

2.) While they have little use for Democrats, they aren't necessarily enamored of Republicans either.

3.) They have a wide range of grievances, and many are ultimately motivated by a belief that the nation has wandered far from constitutional principles.

"It's unlike anything I've seen in 30 years," says Linda Hansen, vice president of the Wisconsin Prosperity Network, which has aided organizing efforts. "It's a new breed of citizen who decided to become involved, not just take their freedom for granted."

One tea party group, the Wisconsin Grandsons of Liberty, define themselves on their website as "a group of non-partisan, like minded individuals dedicated to the restoration of the American republic to its originalist constitutional basis."

Tim Dake, a Franklin resident, is president of the Grandsons of Liberty. He organized a September rally on Milwaukee's lakefront, and a statewide conference of tea party supporters.

"Other than vote, I did nothing," Dake says, adding that "the overwhelming majority (of members) have done nothing but vote until the past year."

Kirsten Lombard, a Madison activist and blogger, says completing work on a graduate degree made it possible for her to join the movement.

"Instead of just being aware politically, it was time for me to become active politically," Lombard says.

Mark Block, Wisconsin director of Americans for Prosperity, estimates he has spoken at nearly 20 tea party events across the state within the past year. He estimates 60-70 % are political newcomers.

"What happened in 2009 was extreme overreach at all levels of government," Block says. "People really felt threatened. They were scared, and that fear turned to anger."

Block recalls a suggestion by Madison talk show host Vicki McKenna that AFP help organize an anti-tax tea party event in Madison last April 15. He said he hoped 2,000 people would attend, but more than 8,000 turned out.

"Two years earlier, we were ecstatic if 498 of our people turned out," Block says, adding that AFP's Wisconsin membership tripled in the past year, to 53,000. "I don't think this movement has peaked."

Activists interviewed cited a variety of issues that spurred them to act. Oriannah Paul, founder and president of the Sheboygan Liberty Coalition, pointed to President Obama's economic stimulus package.

"With the excess of spending, the way bills were being pushed, I couldn't morally or ethically not do something," Paul says.

For Tim Dake, "the thing that put me over the edge was the nationalization of Chrysler and General Motors. When you have an administration take over and run companies and redistribute the assets, we have gone too far. It smelled like communism."

Lombard was infuriated by the Wall Street bailout of 2008, describing it as "the government literally dipping into our pockets without permission."

Dake predicts that "there are always going to be tea parties, because they're a great way to get people away from their TVs, and to get involved." But he also sees local supporters acting on several fronts, including organizing candidate forums, and drafting legislation.

"We can no longer just wave signs," he says. "We have to wade into the political process."

Some activists are even planning their own races for the state legislature or local offices.

Dake described such campaigns as intended "to change from the inside out, the same way the socialists co-opted the Democratic Party."

Lombard is active on several Madison-area issues, including opposition to a proposed commuter rail system, and a shoreline zoning controversy.

"The best way to short-circuit much of what's coming down from the federal level is to get involved at the state and local level," she says.

Perhaps the most intriguing question about the tea party movement is supporters' relationship to the Republican Party.

"They are not doing a good job of representing my principles or my beliefs," says Paul. "The Republicans have gotten as power-greedy as the Democrats. They have swung more to the left. There are only a few I trust."

Paul praised Ronald Reagan, but said George W. Bush "did some good things, but he was more progressive than conservative."

Are there current Republicans she likes?

"I like (Rep.) Paul Ryan," she replied. "I like Sarah Palin a lot. She has strong convictions, I believe she could do a good job."

Dake praised Ryan and Sen. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.), but believes Republicans "let us down more than they represent." He was quite critical of George W. Bush.

"He shredded the Constitution pretty good," Dake said of the 43rd president. "Much of what is in the Patriot Act is not right. It sounded a lot like destroying the Vietnamese village to save it."

Palin is scheduled to speak at a Nashville gathering billed as a "national tea party convention." "It sounds to me like they're laying the groundwork for a third party," Dake said of the Nashville event. "I'm not sure what (Palin's) game plan is."

Dake praised Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas) as "one of the most patriotic Americans. He pushes issues, regardless of the cost to himself." But he fears Obama and Democrats would benefit from a split electorate if a third party emerges.

Interestingly, Dake adds that "we can't write all politicians off. I have learned there are a lot of good people at various levels of government in both par-

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The \$2.7 billion state deficit no one told you about

By Todd A. Berry
President, Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance

A week before Christmas, an important report appeared on a Wisconsin government website. There were no press releases from Madison politicians. No headline news stories.

Yet no public official, taxpayer, or citizen can afford to ignore the report's bottom line: According to its just-released financial statements, state government closed its 2008-09 books with a \$2.71 billion deficit in its general fund.

To many readers, this might come as a surprise. By law, state government is supposed to balance its budget. On paper, it does. However, for more than a decade, governors and legislators of both parties have "balanced" budgets through use of accounting maneuvers, timing delays, borrowing, and billions in one-time money.

When the state controller, a CPA, prepares the state's official financial statements, he must follow generally accepted accounting principles, or GAAP. That means he must reverse the budget gimmicks and accurately represent the state's true financial condition. When he does this, the budget's black ink turns red.

What does this mean in everyday terms? Suppose you use your credit card to buy a new living room set. You take it home; the kids, their friends, and your pets make active use of it.

Credit card or no credit card, according to the state controller—who must follow accounting rules—you spent money. However, that is not the way the folks under Madison's Capitol dome see it. The living room furniture might be well used, but they don't budget the money until the credit card bill has to be paid.

Now, some state officials who have practiced politics full-time will try to reassure us by saying: "There's no real problem; it's just the recession."

True, this year's deficit is the largest ever reported. But it is the fifth consecutive year that the GAAP shortfall exceeded \$2 billion and the ninth that it has topped \$1 billion.

We have not had a recession every year since the late 1990s.

This recession didn't really get underway until early 2008.

Even more troubling than the size of the deficit is its trend. Since 1999, the shortfall has grown in every year except one: \$830 million in fiscal 1999, \$1.21 billion in 2000, \$1.48 billion in 2001, \$2.24 billion in 2002, \$1.93 billion in 2004, \$2.12 billion in 2005, \$2.15 billion in 2006, \$2.44 billion in 2007, \$2.50 billion in 2008, and now, \$2.71 billion in 2008-09.

"No need to worry. Other states are in worse shape," career legislators will tell us.

Hmmm. We don't yet know how other states' 2008-09 deficits will compare with our \$2.71 billion hole. But we do know what states reported in 2007-08. Wisconsin had a deficit of \$2.50 billion. Three other states were in the red, according to their statements: California (\$4.17 billion), Illinois (\$3.93 billion), and Maine (\$0.24 billion).

The problem with this comparison is that it ignores the relative size of states. California has 36.8 million people; Illinois, 12.9 million. Wisconsin has only 5.6 million residents. When 2007-08 deficits are compared on a per capita basis, the Badger State had the largest GAAP deficit in the nation (\$445 per person), followed by Illinois (\$305), Maine (\$181), and California (\$113).

Figures like these led the Pew Trusts recently to name Wisconsin one of ten states most in "fiscal peril." The news made headlines around the state. Of the states listed, however, only California, Illinois, and Wisconsin reported GAAP deficits last year. Pew said California "was in a league of its own." Yet it is worth noting that Wisconsin's deficit per capita was four times larger than California's.

Todd A. Berry, Ph.D., has been president of the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WISTAX) since 1994. Founded in 1932, WISTAX is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy research organization dedicated to teaching and informing Wisconsin citizens, public officials, and the press about our government.

...Tea parties rock

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ties." He specifically complimented two Democrats: State Rep. Bob Ziegelbauer (D-Manitowoc) and Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke, who spoke at the Milwaukee tea party.

Kirsten Lombard had mixed opinions about Ron Paul, and said she "liked Sarah Palin a lot. I'm not sure she's ready to take the reins, but she's a remarkably strong voice."

As for George W. Bush, "I'm very grateful to him for the job he did keeping our country safe," but Lombard was disappointed with his stand on immigration, and the financial bailout. She characterized the latter as "in order to save the free market, we needed to compromise the free market. That's patently ridiculous."

Lombard seems open to a third party, but predicts that if one emerges, it would happen three to five years down the road. She describes the Republicans as "a ship without a leader, and the people who pop

up and try to become leaders aren't very good at it. I look at a lot of the leadership in Congress and shake my head."

A New York Times article on the tea party movement quoted Eric Odom, a Chicago blogger, as advising that "if you want to have revenge against the Republican Party for using you for so many years...turn around and use the Republican Party to your advantage. Move in and take it over."

Block predicts big Republican gains this fall, adding that "it's my professional opinion that a third party is not the answer. What I fear is that we have a wholesale change of elected officials in 2010, and everybody says, 'now we can go home.' The more difficult challenge is holding accountable the people who get elected as fiscally responsible candidates. We've never done that in the past. In 1994, the Republicans took control of Congress, and we went home."

Bill Kurtz is a communications associate at Carthage College.

Obama's reckless approach to jobs, jobs, jobs

**By Congressman Tom Petri
(R-6th District)**

After spending a year fighting to make a mess of America's health care, President Obama says he wants to put the issue of jobs on the front burner. Here are some concerns he might want to address:

- **Spending:** The \$1.4 trillion budget deficit for the fiscal year just passed and the \$12 trillion accumulated federal debt mean job-killing higher taxes, tight credit markets and the potential for rapid inflation. Clearly, this is not all President Obama's fault, but it's his responsibility now, along with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. The President especially has talked the talk about spending restraint, but so far has run in the wrong direction.

- **Health Care:** By pushing for a comprehensive, big government approach to health care, President Obama has sought to tear up the rules governing 1/6th of America's economy in order to institute radical changes. Republicans, along with the American people, realize the dangers involved and have resisted the Democrats' plans, but for the past year the President and his allies, led by Pelosi and Reid, have arrogantly pushed on.

We have had a year of Democratic wrangling, secret meetings and sweetheart deals to get health care reform passed, whether by hook or by crook. Through all this, American businesses have had to anticipate major changes in the costs of hiring and keeping employees.

What would these changes be? Who would have to provide health care for employees? What would happen if you didn't? How much would it cost? Would reform really restrain costs, or would it accelerate health care inflation? These are all troubling uncertainties surrounding a major cost per employee. It causes employers to say, "I don't know if we can afford more workers. Let's do the best we can with the ones we already have."

- **Environment:** We all need a healthy environment, but changes have to be affordable if they are to be sustained. Despite the recession, however, President Obama and Speaker Pelosi succeeded in pushing ruinous cap and trade legislation through the House in an effort to reduce CO2 emissions.

Because it's so revealing, Charlie Sykes at WTMJ radio likes to play a sound bite of then-Senator Obama chatting about CO2 regulations in a public forum. In it, the future president

breezily admits that his cap and trade proposals would "necessarily" cause utility rates to "skyrocket" by making it considerably more costly to use fossil fuels.

Wisconsin relies heavily on coal-generated power, and the national economy is sensitive to the price of hydrocarbons. Threatening homeowners and businesses with sharply higher government-mandated energy price increases is hardly the way to build business confidence.

Add to this the Environmental Protection Agency's recent announcement that CO2, the gas that people exhale, is a hazardous substance which threatens human health and must be regulated, potentially at great cost. We may have concerns about putting too much of it in the atmosphere, but we can be sure that the legislators who created the EPA would have been shocked by the notion that they were laying the groundwork for CO2 regulation.

- **Regulations:** And speaking of regulations, it should be clear to the business community that the Obama administration and the majority in Congress are regulators at heart.

Clearly, there is a real need for regulations to keep business practices honest and safe for consumers. But regulations impose real costs. If we want economic growth and jobs, jobs, jobs, we need to avoid the uncertainties caused by legislators who are eager to tell owners and managers how to run their businesses. The Washington in-crowd doesn't understand this.

- **Banks:** Socking it to the banks may be a crafty political ploy, but President Obama's proposal to tax the banking industry - purportedly to make banks repay the cost of the bank bailout - will inevitably make lending more expensive at the very time the business community is suffering from a severe credit crunch.

The President is right to advocate updating banking regulations to prevent a repeat of the 2008 financial meltdown, but too much micro-managing will chill lending. It requires a delicate balance, and this Administration may not be up to it.

- **Government Motors:** Last but not least, government ownership of General Motors and Chrysler as well as mortgage lenders Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac gives Washington an unprecedented role in auto manufacturing and housing. Without a clear path to disentangling Uncle Sam from these two vital industries, private investors will continue to be discouraged from investing in them.

Volunteers: give a hundred, distribute a hundred

We need your help to awaken the people of this state to the problems of liberal government. The formerly powerful newspapers in this state have withered away to a meaningless group, unable or unwilling to alert the people of the problems in D.C. and Madison.

They do not pass on the message, of too powerful of a government, sucking up all of the resources to pass out to their friends. The last budgets in Madison and in Washington have done just that.

Your property taxes going out to pay for numerous schemes of redistribution of wealth from those that work to those that spend.

If you can send us a hundred dollars and/or distribute a hundred Digests, we can all give them hell during the budgets and during elections. It does not take a lot of people, but it does take dedicated people.

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more. "Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their county".

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A bad bill by any name

**By Rep. Jim Ott
(23rd Assembly District)**

After a lengthy delay, Gov. Doyle's Global Warming Bill has finally been introduced in the Wisconsin Legislature, although you may have trouble recognizing it. That's because it's being marketed as the "Clean Energy Jobs Act." Make no mistake; the bill is based on the recommendations of Governor Doyle's Global Warming Task Force and that's what the bill is really all about: Fighting Global Warming.

So why misname it? Perhaps one reason is that there hasn't been much global warming to fight lately. Temperatures have not gone up in over a decade, and have shown a downward trend in the last few years. All of the recent weather headlines in Wisconsin as well as much of the Northern Hemisphere have been about the cold and snow.

Of course this brings into question the reliability of the high-tech computer models that just ten years ago predicted it would be much warmer now. If the models can't predict the climate a decade ahead, why should we risk dam-

aging our economy based on predictions made several decades into the future?

There may be another reason the authors of this bill are misnaming it, and that concerns the questionable science and poor research techniques used by some of the most prominent climate scientist. These scientists have been caught manipulating data, making large errors, interfering with the peer review process and deleting colder weather stations from the data making the average temperatures appear warmer.

Investigations are still going on and new revelations of shoddy, incomplete or just plain dishonest science among man-made global warming proponents have been coming out on a regular basis.

Since the Governor told his Task Force to consider man-made global warming basically a done deal, shouldn't this new information raise a red flag to anyone who wants us to act to fight global warming? Apparently not Democrats, who are intent on forging ahead with this 174

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The state of our economy

By Scott Walker
Milwaukee County Executive

On Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2010 I delivered a "State of the Economy" address, calling on Governor Doyle and the Democratic controlled Assembly and Senate to repeal job killing proposals and lower the tax burden on Wisconsin residents. There, I was joined by over 40 members of the State Legislature in the Capitol Rotunda in Madison, ready to move the state in a new direction to spur job growth and ease the strain of family budgets.

My State of the Economy address is below:

Tonight, Gov. Jim Doyle will give his State of the State address. There is no doubt that much of his speech will focus on a few of the successes in Wisconsin.

I am pleased that some of our citizens are doing well. However, the truth is that the majority of people I talk with across this great state are scared about the economy—and their jobs, their homes and their families. These are the true faces of Wisconsin today. These are the people who reflect the true State of our State.

The effects of Wisconsin's faltering economy are all around us.

We see it in places like Janesville, Wausau, Racine or Green Bay as we look at closed down plants, once thriving mills, or empty Main Street storefronts. We hear it in conversations with our neighbors who lost their jobs or their retirement savings. We feel it at the kitchen table as we go over the monthly bills, wondering what's left to cut this month.

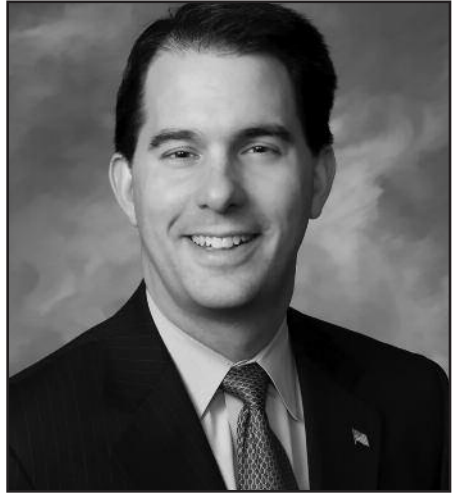
Wisconsin lost 163,000 good paying jobs last year. Today, nearly 1 in 10 people in Wisconsin are out of work. Thousands more are underemployed or have given up on finding family supporting jobs.

By almost any measure, Wisconsin is no longer considered a good place to do business, and unless we take immediate and significant action to turn our economy around, Wisconsin will continue to lag near the bottom in rankings for job growth. State government under Gov. Doyle has contributed greatly to this decline.

And last year when families and employers across Wisconsin were tightening their budgets to make ends meet, Gov. Doyle and the Democrat-controlled Legislature were increasing state spending by 6% and raising taxes by more than \$3 billion to pay for it.

They raised our income taxes, property taxes, capital gains taxes, businesses taxes, and taxes on hospital and phones service. They even raised the garbage tax. By the time their tax and spending spree was over, the average Wisconsin family was stuck with \$2,400 in higher taxes.

And changes Gov. Doyle made to combined reporting last year cost millions and threatened jobs at companies like Harley-Davidson in Milwaukee, Kimberly Clark in the Fox Valley, Briggs and Stratton in Jefferson and Wauwatosa,



Milwaukee County Executive and gubernatorial candidate Scott Walker

Murphy Oil in Superior and CenturyTel in La Crosse.

We must act now to get our state back on track and to put our people back to work.

Gov. Doyle and the Democratic controlled legislature should start by repealing the job killing combined reporting tax, so Wisconsin companies can keep good paying jobs here.

Even as high taxes are driving jobs and people from our state, Gov. Doyle is proposing global warming legislation that would mandate billions of dollars in new spending to produce the exact same energy we use today. The governor proclaims this legislation will create jobs but what he leaves out is the price that Wisconsin families will pay today for these costly new regulations—in higher utility bills and more job losses from existing employers.

In fact, a study by the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute predicts the loss of over 43,000 more Wisconsin jobs if these expensive policies and regulations are adopted. Another study says the bill could increase the cost of gasoline in Wisconsin by 61 cents per gallon.

We call on Gov. Doyle and the legislature to put the brakes on this and all legislation that will increase the cost of living and doing business in Wisconsin. Our families and employers can't afford it.

Through their ingenuity, hard work and determination, the people of Wisconsin have made our state a great place to live, work and raise a family. Our companies are recognized as world leaders in everything from manufacturing motorcycles to making a better bovine. Our people are famous for their Midwestern work ethic, and Wisconsin once led the nation in reform, from changing welfare to providing hope to low income families through educational choice and

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...state of our economy

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charter schools.

But in recent years, state government has grown beyond the taxpayers' ability to pay. And overzealous regulators (who once played the role of facilitator, helping employers prepare and safely implement their business plans) are now standing in the way of their progress.

It's time for us to take our government back and to move our state in a new direction. A direction founded on the principles of limited government, economic opportunity, and personal freedom.

It is time to change the way Madison thinks and the way government does business. Unfortunately, the state of Wisconsin's economy is weak.

Fortunately, the determination of our people is strong—very strong.

Recently I met a woman working at a McDonald's near my home in Wauwatosa. Sharon had been laid off from a previous high paying job, had lost her family's home, and had been struggling for months to make ends meet. But what stuck with me from our conversation was

not that she was full of despair. What I took from our conversation was thanks and hope. She was thankful to have a job when so many other people she knew couldn't even find part-time work. And she was hopeful that she would be back on her feet again soon. And she was working hard to get there.

It's her type of work ethic that will get Wisconsin back on track, and on behalf of Sharon and others in similar situations I will do everything in my power to change Wisconsin's business climate to bring jobs back to our state.

Moving forward our top priority must be to make Wisconsin the most attractive place in a competitive world to start or grow a business. To do that we must remove the barriers to economic growth by lowering taxes, reducing runaway government spending, improving education, and putting an end to excessive regulation.

When we succeed, that economic growth will help put people like Sharon back to work.

Working together, we can put government back on the side of the people and build a Wisconsin we can believe in again.

...bad bill by any name

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page bill.

If the Nobel Prize Committee wants to award people who incorrectly said Hurricane Katrina was caused by global warming or who file error filled reports like the International Panel on Climate Change that's their business. Wisconsin shouldn't put its economic future in jeopardy based on the multi-decade predictions of scientists who cannot tell us what the climate will be like just ten years from now or seem to have trouble conducting honest and accurate research.

The fact is the mandates of this bill will cause energy prices to skyrocket in Wisconsin. If wind and solar were more economical the utilities would be voluntarily turning to them. A spokesman for the Wisconsin Industrial Energy Group was quoted as saying the current 10% renewable mandate is already putting upward pressure on electric rates in Wisconsin. A spokesman for WE Energies estimates that the \$413 million cost of the Glacier Hills wind farm would be included in rates beginning in 2012. And it will cost \$250 million to convert the power plant on the UW campus to biomass. Think of what the 25% renewable mandate included in this bill will do to electric rates.

Of course the Global Warming Task Force didn't have to worry about that, since the directive from the Governor was to not bother doing a cost/benefit analysis.

As far as this bill being a jobs act, how will implementing California emission standards produce jobs in Wisconsin? How will prohibiting truck drivers from idling their engines for more than five minutes create jobs? How will prohibiting the sale of television sets that draw more than three watts of power on standby create jobs? And how will creating a "Climate Change Coordinating Council" produce anything other than taxpayer supported DNR jobs?

And finally, what if the Beacon Hill Institute is correct, and the passage of this legislation causes Wisconsin to lose thousands of jobs? Any legislator who is willing to vote for this bill better be ready to explain that to their unemployed constituents.

The fact is if the state is going to mandate dramatically higher energy prices for manufacturers they will either have to raise their prices, or absorb the increased costs by cutting jobs. Any "green jobs" created by the mandates in this bill will be more than offset by the thousands of jobs lost in the private sector.

If the Legislature is interested in creating jobs and keeping energy affordable a good start would be to repeal the nuclear moratorium, make our state's tax structure more business friendly and develop a sensible energy policy that will carry us into the future.

Wisconsin residents must let their legislators know this bill must be stopped!

Fiscal challenges await local governments due to state budget practices

By Dan Vrakas
Waukesha County Executive

The 2009-11 state budget...

When Gov. Jim Doyle signed the 2009-11 State Budget in July 2009, he not only signed a \$65 billion state budget, but also set up a tough road ahead for local governments, and in particular, potential property tax increases for already cash-strapped taxpayers. Indeed, researchers at the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance recently estimated that total net property taxes statewide will increase about 4.2%.

While the governor utilized some of the same budget maneuvers (such as raiding the transportation fund) that he has used in the past to balance the budget, Gov. Doyle took it a few steps further in the 2009-11 budget.

For example, the governor's budget:

- Shifted even more costs and responsibilities (underfunded mandates) from the state to counties.
- Expanded Economic Assistance Programs while decreasing the funding for their administration.
- Decreased shared revenue.
- Decreased Circuit Court funding.
- Used one time money (federal stimulus) to fund ongoing state operations. This sets up a tougher budget for the 2011-13, when the stimulus money will be unavailable to fill the funding gap.
- Eliminated the Qualified Economic Offer, or QEO. Under the state's school funding structure, the QEO allowed for reasonable pay increases for public school teachers, while being mindful of the property taxpayers who fund public education.
- Reallocated cell phone emergency funds for local dispatch operations to support shared revenue payments to replace state general funds.

Taken alone, any one of the above measures puts added pressure on local governments to shift resources, modify budgets and erodes essential services in lieu of asking the property taxpayer for more.

Cost shifting...

An unfortunate trend over the last several years has been the increase in the shift of state services to the county level. Since 2006, unfunded and underfunded major state mandates have increased by 4% resulting in a \$6.9 million increase in Waukesha's County tax levy needed to fund these mandates.

As noted above, this trend continued in the 2009-11 state budget. The County's Health and Human Services Department took the brunt of the decreases in state funding. In particular, the governor's budget decreases Waukesha County's Health and Human Services Community Aids funding by \$425,000 and decreases Federal (IV-E) funding over \$250,000 for at risk children and families at a time when service needs are growing. These services assist in prevention and intervention to ensure child safety; working towards permanent placement for children who have been abused or neglected or who are at risk of abuse or neglect. Also, the Health and Human Services Welfare Fraud investigation state funding of \$112,606 is eliminated in the 2010 Adopted budget. In addition, budgeted tax levy in the Health and Human Services-Mental Health Services program

increases \$250,000 due to a shift of costs from the State for the care of children younger than 22 and elderly patients older than 64 at state institutions. Another concern is the use of one-time federal stimulus funding the state used to offset General Purpose Revenue and the impact on County programs in the future budgets, when the federal funding ends.

Moreover, during tough economic times, such as those we are currently facing, the need for county-provided services increases. For example, in Waukesha County, last year we saw an increase in the need for mental health care, alcohol and drug treatment, economic support and food stamps, adult and juvenile human services, jail corrections, law enforcement, District Attorney and circuit court services.

Another cost shift example is the shift in Medical Assistance expenses for children and elderly with serious mental health issues and treatment needs from state funded to county funded. These expenses, which are based on 2008 placements, will cost the county upwards of an additional \$500,000 annually. This one change had a large impact on the county tax levy, but also adds to administration of services for patients being served at Mendota and Winnebago State Mental Health Institutes, which counties have no control over current and future costs and daily rate charges.

Waukesha's response...

As Waukesha County's Executive, I could not continue to ask taxpayers for more of their hard-earned money without making changes to be more efficient and improve the way the County does business. Rather than pass the buck as the governor did, Waukesha County instituted changes similar to the private sector (consolidation, collaborative efforts and partnerships) to minimize the property tax burden on our residents. If the state adopted some of these same prudent business practices and budget policies, there would be more resources available to help fund many of its obligations (structural deficit) without raising taxes. Examples include:

As of 2007, Waukesha County requires new, non-represented employees to contribute about 1% of their salary to their retirement system account.

Waukesha County invested in a countywide wellness program with over one-third of employees voluntarily participating in this program. This investment will most certainly pay future dividends and save on costly health care costs.

Waukesha County negotiated higher co-pays and deductibles with its unions to gain better control over health care cost increases.

The answers to the state's fiscal troubles are not to immediately ask taxpayers for more. The situation continually challenges us to re-examine and reprioritize funding of essential services and programs, hold spending increases to minimal levels and consistently do a thorough review of the county's finances and delivery of services.

We are constantly being challenged to be more innovative and efficient without significantly hampering service to residents.

State must act now to save deer hunting for future generations

**By Rep. Scott Gunderson
(R-83rd District)**

In light of the historic declines in deer harvested over the past two seasons and the overwhelming sentiment by the hunters of Wisconsin, it is imperative that we act swiftly to safeguard our deer herd. Unfortunately, The Department of Natural Resources has turned a deaf ear to the hunters of this state when it comes to deer and deer population issues.

For years, the hunters of Wisconsin have expressed concern over herd reduction policies like the Zone-T Hunt and Earn-a-Buck, not to mention the CWD herd reduction zones. Many hunters protested vehemently to the minimization of our white-tail herd to near pest status when the DNR announced plans to "eradicate" CWD by lowering herd goals to 5 deer per square mile in huge areas of the state.

This fall, deer hunter dissatisfaction reached an all-time high as sportsmen and women across the state expressed their concerns about the drastic decrease in the number of deer harvested, which has raised many questions about the accuracy of the DNR's current herd estimates. During the 2009 deer season hunters registered the fewest deer in 27 years and 29 % fewer deer than 2008, which was already 26% lower than 2007. These statistics are staggering not only for their impact upon our hunting tradition in the state of Wisconsin, but also our state's economy. Right on cue, when the preliminary deer harvest numbers were released this year, the Department of Natural Resources reached into their bag of excuses and immediately trotted out the old and tired, "it was the weather" excuse. I am sorry, but after two consecutive years of reductions in the number of deer harvested in excess of 25% and with the '09 season recording the lowest deer harvest in 27 years; this cannot simply be explained away by mild weather and areas of fog across the state. The plain and simple truth is that years of Zone-T and Earn-a-Buck policies, coupled with the CWD herd reduction zones, utilized by the Department of Natural Resources, have had a significant negative impact on Wisconsin's deer herd.

The hunters of Wisconsin apparently understand something that the DNR fails to acknowledge in their official deer estimation formula, the S-A-K. Obviously, Zone-T and Earn-a-Buck policies drastically reduce the number of fawn producing does, which only naturally reduces the size of the deer herd throughout the state. For more than a few years now, the hunters of Wisconsin have

been decrying the lack of deer in the woods; while the DNR has consistently ignored these claims because they believed their S-A-K formula was nearly infallible.

However, there is significant evidence that the actual experiences of the hunters in the woods are far more consistent with the actual number of deer than the S-A-K formula utilized by the DNR. The number of deer carcasses removed by state contractors has plummeted for seven consecutive years, and is currently at the same levels as the late 1980s. At the same time, predation by an underestimated bear population and an ever-growing wolf population has decimated the deer population in vast areas of Wisconsin.

After much protest by deer hunters, the DNR finally took some of these factors into account, last spring when the DNR "adjusted" their deer population estimate from 1.7 million to 1.5 million to 1.3 million over a two short month period. That DNR "adjustment" represent a nearly 24% reduction in the deer herd population estimate. Quite honestly, Wisconsin hunters have every right to be skeptical of the DNR's deer population estimates.

Because the 9-day deer gun season annually generates \$1 billion of economic impact to our state's economy, this is an issue that impacts, not only hunters, but all Wisconsin residents. Quite simply the time for paying lip service to the task of restoring hunter confidence is long past. The time has come for swift action to protect our deer herd from further harm that may take generations to recover from.

For example, last year I called for a suspension of the 2009 December antlerless season as one small way to safeguard our deer herd. For future deer seasons, the Department of Natural Resources and the Natural Resources Board should drop any discussions of extending the traditional 9-day gun season to 16-days. Earn-a-Buck and Zone-T hunts cannot return in any form, no matter how the Department tries to rename or repackage them.

Finally, there has to be new leadership within the DNR from the top-down. It has become clear that the current leadership of the DNR has no interest in changing how they manage our state's deer herd. I firmly believe that only a new management team can get our deer herd management back on track.

Because of the deep tradition and the economic impact deer hunting has in Wisconsin, it is imperative that we act now before there are long-lasting and devastating effects on not only Wisconsin's white-tail population, but also our economy.

Restoring universal morality

**By Sen. Mary Lazich
(R-New Berlin)**

Conservatives are on a critical crusade during 2010. We want our country back.

Allow me to add to the all-important mission statement: We want our culture back, too.

Pick up the newspaper, turn on television, radio, or log on to the Internet and alarming stories that were unimaginable 10-20 years ago barely draw a blush today:

- The Milwaukee School Board votes unanimously to make condoms available free at many high schools. Milwaukee becomes one of the only districts in the country to provide contraception to students.

- A New Berlin high School student accused of using Facebook to blackmail and coerce male schoolmates into sexual encounters is found guilty of two counts of sexual assault.

- Two employees at the Baltimore, Maryland, branch of the liberal community organizing group ACORN are caught on videotape offering advice to a pair posing as a pimp and prostitute on setting up a prostitution ring involving more than a dozen underage girls from El Salvador and evading the IRS.

- The Culture and Media Institute reviewed popular songs listed on the top 20 from June 10 to July 22, 2009. An astonishing 69 percent of the songs made at least one reference to sex, alcohol, drugs, or contained profanity. Nearly half (46 percent) of the songs contained sexual lyrics and 31 percent of the songs referenced drugs or alcohol. Profanity occurred in 41 percent of the songs. The media has often praised the artists with some performing on network morning shows.

- The London School of Economics reports nine out of 10 teens will go online and view pornography.

- The Kaiser Family Foundation reports that 70 percent of the children viewing porn stumbled across it, many while innocently doing their homework and were not looking for it.

A raunchy Internet, road rage, metal detectors in schools and speech codes on campuses are just the latest examples of our cultural collapse, hardly a new phenomenon. A poll conducted during February 1996 by U.S. News and World Report and Bozell Worldwide found nine out of 10 Americans thought incivility was a serious problem. About half thought it was extremely serious. Seventy-eight percent said the problem had worsened in the past 10 years. More than 90 percent believed it contributes to the increase of violence in the country; 85 percent believed it divides the national community, and 85 percent believed it eroded values like respect for others.

Highly acclaimed playwright, journalist, Congresswoman and U.S. Ambassador Clare Boothe Luce saw the coming of our cultural

demise even earlier. Luce delivered a speech in Honolulu May 28, 1978, titled, "Is the New Morality Destroying America?"

Luce quoted Jane Addams who once said, "The essence of immorality is the tendency to make an exception of myself." Motives like selfishness and self-gratification rule the day. That sounds a lot like 2010 and the entitlement philosophy. Down and out, you say? Not to worry. The government will bail you out. Here comes a stimulus package. And another. And yet another.

Uncle Sam is the leakiest of life jackets as Luce spoke in Honolulu:

"Very little can be done by government to shore up the family, although a great deal can be done and has been done to hasten its collapse. But the real cause of the breakdown is the abandonment, by millions of people, beginning with husbands, wives and parents, of their interior devotion to the principles of the universal morality."

Morality unfortunately can't be legislated. If it could, my bill would have been drafted and introduced the very first day I went to Madison.

If Luce were alive today, she assuredly would advise a return to the qualities of the universal morality she laid out in her Honolulu speech: "truthfulness, honesty, duty, responsibility, unselfishness, loyalty, honor, compassion and courage." None of these characteristics evolve from government reliance. Government reliance only encourages less personal accountability.

Matthew Continetti of the Weekly Standard calls our social dilemma, "The Age of Irresponsibility." His solution is to embrace the values associated with adulthood: Independence. Self-sufficiency. Modesty. Responsibility. Decorum. Fidelity. Civility. These are the values that have, like the buttresses of a cathedral, supported American society for centuries"

Given our civilization's acceptance of values rated X, Continetti's suggestion sounds like a tall order. It doesn't have to be.

Luce told her Hawaiian audience during 1978 that we need to heed the deathbed comments of German poet.

"Let every man keep his own household clean, and soon the whole world will be clean," Goethe said.

Luce's wish during her 1978 speech rings true today:

"If not every American, but just every other American man and woman were to begin today to keep their households clean, this process of moral decay would immediately be halted."

Certainly, that would bring our culture back.

Another hospital tax?

**By Rep. Kevin Petersen
(R-40th Assembly District)**

"The nine most terrifying words in the English language are, 'I'm from the government and I'm here to help.'" Those words from Ronald Reagan still ring true today. This time government is expanding entitlement programs, underpaying hospitals, and increasing taxes on health care to pay for them.

Currently, a proposal is being lobbied in the Wisconsin capitol to tax 59 rural critical access hospitals. This tax would be similar to the hospital tax passed in the budget repair bill of 2009. The 2009 hospital tax exempted rural critical access hospitals such as Riverside Medical Center in Waupaca and Family Medical Center in New London.

The new tax proposal would undo the exemption and levy roughly \$10 million from rural hospitals. A portion of the new hospital tax would be skimmed and could be raided in the future. Governor Doyle has done this in the past with his veto authority. The rest would be used to garner federal matching funds through a formula using Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP).

Wisconsin's Federal Medical Assistance Percentage is roughly a 40/60 state/federal split. Once the tax money is skimmed, \$4.8 million will be left over. The remaining \$4.8 million would be matched by an estimated \$11.5 million from the federal government. In total \$16.3 million would be reimbursed to rural critical access hospitals.

Rural critical access hospitals serving few Medical Assistance patients would receive a smaller reimbursement.

Under the original hospital tax, out of 72 hospitals levied only 59 were expected to see a net increase through the hospital tax scheme.

The hospital tax was established because it created revenue to continue expanding entitlement programs and other bloated government spending. Furthermore, a hospital tax isn't obvious in the manner of an income or sales tax increase. Therefore, it's hard for consumers to pinpoint the tax or why their health care costs are going up.

Democrats passed the original hospital tax on a straight party line vote in early 2009. The tax has ballooned to nearly a billion dollars and is being collected from hospital patients in fiscal years 2009 and 2010. Over \$300 million of the \$1 billion was skimmed in the last biennial budget to close the budget deficit.

In the same biennial budget that increased the hospital tax, Democrats cut Wisconsin's Medicaid program by over \$625 million to balance the budget. Specifically, a cut of \$15 million was imposed on rural critical access hospitals. The new rural hospital tax proposal is suppose to fill the hole that resulted from the original cut.

Supporters are trying to sell the idea that if the levy is not passed, your local hospital will incur a 10% cut in Medicaid reimbursement. But remember, the only reason this tax is being proposed is because the Doyle administration and legislative Democrat leaders cut Medicaid in the first place.

Wisconsin's entitlement programs are running into fiscal insolvency. Who pays for government over promising and under delivering? Under this plan—you will—in increased health care costs.

Felons begin filing from prison cells to streets

**By Rep. Robin Vos
(R-63rd Assembly District)**

Gov. Doyle's ill-conceived Early Release program began early this year, allowing for the first round of 21 inmates to be released from Wisconsin prisons on to Wisconsin streets—including one inmate convicted of 5 OWI offenses. As a result of this, I joined 44 fellow legislators in sending a letter to Gov. Doyle (<http://www.thewheelerreport.com/releases/jan10/jan13/0113suderdoyleletter.pdf>) asking that he end the program, or at the very least suspend it until legislative committees have a chance to much more fully review the program. During the budget debate I was very vocal about the fact that it was dangerous to release prisoners in the name of fiscal savings. Especially considering the fact that the governor never was able to place a true cost savings on to the proposal.

According to the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau, there were too many factors involved to make an accurate prediction with regard to cost savings. In any case, whatever the true cost-savings of releasing prisoners early, no amount is worth the risk. While many states implemented some sort of "Let 'em Out Early" provision in recent budgets, Illinois is already seeing firsthand the dangers of such policies. So much so, that Gov. Quinn suspended (<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/elections/chicquinn-prison-06-jan06,0,3553011.story>) their early

release program last month, calling the idea a "big mistake." This is no doubt the right decision, considering the fact that of the 1,718 inmates released under the Illinois program, 56 have returned to prison. Of those, 48 violated parole terms and at least 18 were arrested for new offenses, ranging from battery to drug crimes. It's only a matter of time until we learn what consequences this reckless policy will have in Wisconsin.

Many of the first 21 inmates released can be considered career criminals, so it won't be surprising when one or more of them commits another crime. Further, I am astonished that Democrats would stand for the release of a five-time OWI offender after the Legislature voted almost unanimously for stronger drunk driving penalties. It seems disingenuous. The priorities of Gov. Doyle and Democrats are definitely questionable, especially if they fail to follow Gov. Quinn's example by suspending the early release program.

By allowing felons back on to our streets, without so much as a warning to the residents of the neighborhoods they will inhabit, our families will be in danger of becoming victims of crime and violence that could have been very easily prevented. In Racine County, this is an especially serious issue, as we already have a very high crime rate. I would encourage you to contact Reps. Mason and Turner and Sen. Lehman (who all voted for the early release provision in the budget) and urge them to tell the governor to reconsider early release in Wisconsin.

Results, not rhetoric

**By Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner
(R-5th District)**

As I listened to President Obama's State of the Union (SOTU) address. I welcomed and supported his message that we need to improve our economy, get Americans back to work and better control government spending. The reality is that we cannot afford to continue down the path of being fiscally irresponsible as Wisconsinites are hurting.

I found it ironic that the President touted how the stimulus is working just one day after the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's front page headline was: "Economists See No Stimulus Jobs." The stimulus hasn't worked or gotten people back to work. Wisconsin's jobless rate was 5.9 percent in December 2008. This past December, with the stimulus, it was 8.7 percent. Each day throughout 2009 approximately 447 jobs were lost in Wisconsin. Those of us who voted against the \$787 billion stimulus package were not surprised with the Journal Sentinel's headline, as it is the private sector—the small businesses—the backbone of our country—that will give our economy real growth, not more government spending! Even after being passed into law, the stimulus bill—Congressman Obey's brainchild—is still adding up government dollars. The Congressional Budget Office now estimates the stimulus bill cost will be approximately \$862 billion—and there isn't much economic recovery to show for it.

Additionally, we've heard a lot about climate change over the last few months. I agreed with the President

when he said "providing incentives for energy efficiency and clean energy are the right thing to do for our future." AND when the climate change bill does just that, I would support it; but in its current form, it's a tax increase on all Americans and American businesses, with additional costs being passed onto consumers and millions of jobs being outsourced to India and China.

We have heard many eloquent words from the President over the past year, and again in his SOTU address. As our struggles continue, I hope the President's words begin to match his actions, especially when it comes to being transparent, reigning in spending and protecting our nation.

Closed door meetings are not transparency.

Continuing to push for a massive health care overhaul is not reigning in spending.

And as Massachusetts Senator-elect Scott Brown has said, "We should be spending taxpayer dollars to defeat terrorists, not to protect them."

Republicans are ready and eager to move forward. We really are. We have ideas and we want to do more and do better for America. As Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell said in the Republican response, "We want results, not rhetoric. We want cooperation, not partisanship."

This couldn't be more true. I am eager to work with the President and my Democratic colleagues to ensure America is prosperous again, and that she remains safe. I hope we can get started.

Perception vs. reality

**By Sen. Ted Kanavas
(R-33rd District)**

From the moment I began my service in the state senate I've also had a job in the private sector. My experience has mirrored the experience of most people with "real world jobs." Some years were good and some were bad.

Thanks to that experience, I know firsthand what politicians do in Madison can help and hurt the rest of us. I also know we need to rethink how our state views private business. It can no longer use employers as the state's personal piggy bank. And government must acknowledge that normal people, everyday taxpayers, can only sacrifice so much before it pushes them to their wits end - unable to sustain their quality of life or provide for their loved ones.

This is reality. But does everyone get it?

If you watched Gov. Doyle's State of the State Address you may question if the Democrats really know what is happening in Wisconsin. In case you missed it, during the final few minutes of the speech, the governor reflected on his two terms in office. To say the least, it was an interesting take on the past decade. It was also indicative of how delusional the Democrats are when it comes to the realities of our state.

Here are the last few sentences:

"When they write the history of this time, let them say

we met our generation's challenge. We helped those in trouble...we made health care available to our citizens...we educated our kids...we invested in our businesses and workers...we seized the new opportunities presented...and we moved boldly into the future."

If you or I were to write this speech, we would certainly tell a different story. Hundreds of thousands of Wisconsinites are receiving some form of government run healthcare, MPS is failing to educate the children of Milwaukee and the district is bankrupt, businesses are leaving the state at an alarming pace, and unemployment is near 9%. If that is our bold new future folks, then dark days are ahead.

The Democrats want us to perceive them as having done something, anything, over the last decade to improve our state. As we all know, in politics and in life, perception and reality are often two entirely different things. If you just listened to the Democrats, you wouldn't even know we had a problem. Forget our record unemployment...We seized opportunities! We moved boldly!

Tell that to the family that has gone from having Mom and Dad each working full time jobs, to Mom working two jobs and Dad working less time for less money. Families are looking for hope and the Democrats certainly didn't say anything to indicate help is on the way.

How much will Wisconsin pay for romance of trains?

By Jo Egelhoff
FoxPolitics.net

This high-speed rail business is way, way too expensive, for way too little impact. Yes, it's time to look a gift horse in the mouth. (In my graduate B-school days, it was a very common thing for Peter Drucker to say to his classes - always look a gift horse in the mouth.)

A boondoggle of epic proportions. This is nuts. Who told Jim Doyle he could go out and buy a couple of railroad cars, much less a bunch of track, much less find the cash to maintain those trains and tracks on into the millennia? I just don't get it.

I respect Tom Still, president of the Wisconsin Technology Council. He's well thought-out and not a flame-thrower. But on this one, he might not be registering with what's reality.

It's about time Wisconsin gets a good chunk of federal money, Still says, because Wisconsin has long been a tax donor state.

"For the better part of the past 50 years Wisconsin has been a tax donor state. And that means that our taxpayers send more federal tax dollars to Washington than they receive in return."

The expensive project is expected to create 13 thousand jobs. And, Still says, high speed rail could help foster high-tech collaboration between scientists, investors and businessmen from within the so-called IQ corridor region, which extends from Chicago through Wisconsin into Minnesota. That would better put our state in line with both coasts and the rest of the world.

Oh yeah, those are really good reasons. So we can get more federal tax dollars. So we can incur millions and millions more capital and operating expenses most assuredly the feds won't be covering. And so scientists and investors can ride back and forth? What?

Here, Still lays out 5 reasons why Wisconsin should be thrilled about this \$810 million. None of them hold adequate billion-dollar water for me.

Already, mayors are getting in line for extra money to build extra stations, much less considering whether the planned stops will make the system effective in the first place. Who is it that knows how much this whole thing is going to cost?

Time to re-read Patrick McIlheran. Last August he was cranked up about these really high-speed train fanatics. He talks about some huge numbers, like \$38 million a mile - and he counters the "freeways are subsidized too" argument.

Yes, well, freeways cost a fortune, too: The state's twice-a-century rebuild of I-94 south-

ward is \$2 billion.

But freeways carry many more people. Even in the European Union, rife with 200-mph trains and \$5-a-gallon gas, cars carry 76% of passenger travel, trains 5.8%. That's down from 8% since 1980, even as Europe built irresistible trains. Cars' share is up.

And freeways bring in paying customers. Cars pay more in fuel and other taxes than is spent on building and keeping highways. The feds reckoned in 2004 that for every 1,000 miles traveled, cars paid \$1.79 more in taxes than their roads consumed in public money.

Passenger trains took in \$210 of net subsidy for every 1,000 passenger miles, that report found. While air-travel taxes, other economists say, cover the costs of airports and traffic control, fares don't cover trains' operating costs, much less the cost of tracks.

Paddy Mac info that really struck a cord with me was that rail travel isn't all that green. Now, this (May, 2008) was a discussion of "light rail" vs. the Fed-funded Doyle fetish of regular ol' rail cars (or in the new lingo - "high-speed rail"), but they surely must be similar situations.

Light rail in practice uses about as much energy to move a passenger a mile as does your average car, reports transit expert Randal O'Toole of the Cato Institute, the libertarian think tank. When it comes to carbon dioxide per passenger mile, light rail beats the average car only in some cities - mainly where electricity doesn't come from coal or oil. Nearly everywhere, you put out less carbon by driving a Prius than by taking the train.

This isn't what most people expect. Still, O'Toole, a longtime critic of light rail, confined himself to data from federal transit and energy agencies. When I checked with head researcher Steven Polzin at the transit-friendly National Center for Transit Research, he said the numbers were good and the conclusion true. Most people assume rail is far more efficient, "but the empirical data isn't very compelling," he said.

Read the whole thing. It's good stuff.

Here's more current info (2/2/10) for the inquiring mind on this rail business:

Is Obama spending rail monies wisely? The experts differ. Widely. Thoughtful responses. The guys concerned about spending inefficiently and/or ineffectively win the day for me.

This is a huge decision-I've got my ears cocked to learn how/when we plain old citizens can learn more and weigh in.

Pax Americana Institute's 2010 goals

By Executive Officers of the Pax Americana Institute

As we leave the legacy of 2009 behind us and step into a new decade, the Pax Americana Institute (PAI) is focused on and prepared for the long road ahead. To ensure the Midwest's only comprehensive conservative think tank is on track to advance the virtues of classical conservatism within local, state and national policy realms, we've articulated our 2010 Resolutions. We fulfilled every resolution set in 2009 and now wholeheartedly dedicate our time and energy to this year's goals:

1.) PAI firmly resolves to promote the success of our troops abroad. There is no greater issue than U.S. national security, and our security is dependent upon victory abroad. We resolve to continue communicating the message that our country is at war—not a conflict, not an action, not an “overseas contingency operation,” but a worldwide war where there is no substitute for victory.

2.) PAI firmly resolves to educate the American public and the world about the legitimacy of American leadership across the globe. Emerging competitive worldviews, such as the ideas promoted by Islamic fundamentalists, threaten the American identity in the same way that Nazism and Communism once did. We call on the Obama administration to promote an American grand strategy that illustrates the justice of the American cause and actively extends justice according to the non-negotiable demands of natural law.

3.) PAI firmly resolves to educate the American people that Iran and North Korea are dangerous, rogue regimes who must be contained and ultimately defeated. The development and use of nuclear weapons is intolerable; the human rights abuses of their own people must end; these illegal regimes must ultimately fail; and the only country capable of challenging these aggressor states is the United States.

4.) PAI firmly resolves to support the ongoing effort to secure the Mexican border. Millions of undocumented, illegal aliens attempt to enter the U.S. annually, including tens of thousands of intruders of other-than Mexican descent. We call on the Obama administration to communicate a clear strategy for immigration control that punishes violators of American law, deters illegal activity, protects American jobs, and prevents terrorists from gaining entry to our homeland.

5.) PAI firmly resolves to support efforts to means-test spending at the local level. In these difficult economic times, it is more important than ever for local, state and federal governments to live within their means. Government projects must pass the following litmus test:

is this project essential enough to take money from families who are already grappling with extreme financial hardship themselves?

6.) PAI firmly resolves to resist such vanity projects in Madison as the downtown library, Edgewater Hotel expansion, and commuter rail. All of these projects have merits, but none are necessary for the city to continue operation. None of them pass the above-described means test during a recession. If the projects are important to the “elite” of Madison, they can certainly come up with the funds to create them privately. This is especially true given Madison's recently demonstrated inability to efficiently provide even basic snow removal service.

7.) PAI firmly resolves to continue support for local, private initiatives to address issues of poverty, homelessness and hunger over the heavy hand of the government. As an example, in 2009, hard economic times forced the closure of the Catholic Multicultural Center in South Madison. After some negotiations, the Center was reopened under the ownership of a near west-side parish, Our Lady Queen of Peace. What followed was an outpouring of support, both from the parish and the city at large, and an increase in services to the poor.

8.) PAI firmly resolves to educate the public about the philosophy of limited government that defined the understanding of the American founding generation. Currently skyrocketing increases in taxes at all levels are matched only by the liberal agenda of skyrocketing government involvement in every aspect of daily life. Neither can be sustained.

9.) PAI firmly resolves to support the reduction of the federal government's corporate tax rate of 11%, which is currently the second highest in the world. The policies of exorbitantly taxing American companies while spending billions to “bail out” others on an ad hoc basis are incongruent and illogical. The most responsible and productive businesses are thus being unfairly punished even as their workers' jobs evaporate. We call on our government to think comprehensively about economic priorities and take measures consistent with their achievement.

10.) PAI firmly resolves to support Social Security reform that emphasizes the role of personal responsibility and privatization. This issue is likely to create the next great domestic budget crisis: estimates suggest that by 2017, the Social Security Trust Fund will begin running a budget deficit. The existing structure can be modified in ways that provide additional opportunity for individuals and families to better help themselves, plan for their futures, and customize their investments – all while reducing the involvement of big government and averting collapse.

Wisconsin citizenry political crown jewel of the nation

By Drew Davis
Executive Director, Pax Americana Institute

There is nothing more important to the perpetuity and prosperity of our nation and our state than an educated and engaged citizenry, regardless of its political persuasion. We all know Wisconsin has long been among the leaders when it comes to education, but over the last year the Wisconsin electorate has also made a name for itself as one of the most attentive, active, and articulate in the nation.

Wisconsin's Tea Party movement—a coalition of conservative liberals, moderates and conservatives focused on individual freedoms, limited government, the Second Amendment, defense, and secure borders—has become the crown jewel of Tea Party movements in the nation. With events attended by the thousands, it was a civic spirit that surprised both state officials and pundits around the nation, especially in the wake of an unusually long presidential campaign. While many Tea Party Patriots remain officially unregistered within the national movement, the latest number of parties within Wisconsin is 63—thriving from the far north woods to the southeastern cities.

What has differentiated Wisconsin's movement is the caliber of the dialogue and the unity among the organizations. While every political rally is bound to draw a few wingers—those who'd rather tote a sign with a swastika above the president's name than truly engage the policies—it has been a familiarity with our politician's voting records, with the real concerns of local school districts and chambers of commerce, and with the abhorrent levels of government spending that has defined Wisconsin's movement as an exceptionally well-educated, articulate, and serious coalition of citizens. Exhibited continually at events around the state by an impressive array of citizens, this competence was showcased by the national media over and over again throughout the summer and fall months. Knowledge is power; and in this context it creates very legitimate channels of challenge and scrutiny to which most politicians are not used to answering.

The second defining feature of Wisconsin's grass-roots movement has been its growing unity. In October of last year, 25 of the then 50 Tea Party leaders within the state came together at a leadership conference. The goal, however, was not to form a statewide

conglomerate or monolithic group. Remember, these civic leaders are bright, and they recognize that such cohesion would create a political-party feel, resulting in the inevitable consolidation of power within the hands of a few—which is half of the concern these Patriots have with our current system. Instead, the goal was to create multiple, coherent lines of communication and mechanisms for resource sharing so that event dates, locations and speakers could better be disseminated and better attended. It would be a loose confederation of effort.

To my knowledge, Wisconsin has been the leading states in this respect and other states have certainly taken note. Grassroots leaders from around the Midwest have contacted those in Wisconsin for advice and counsel, and now Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Minnesota have begun to orchestrate leadership summits of their own. The trend has even gone national, as the country's first nation-wide Tea Party Convention took place earlier this month in Nashville.

The original summit in Wisconsin proved so successful that a similar meeting of leadership, this time of the 31 more-permanent conservative organizations in Wisconsin, occurred just recently in the Dells itself. Who knew that in a state as blue as Wisconsin there would exist 31 conservative organizations and 63 Tea Parties? I was surprised to discover as much.

There has been a major shifting of political tides within our nation this last year, first in the governorships of Virginia and New Jersey and now the Kennedy Senate seat in Massachusetts. All three were upset by moderates and independents unhappy with an unresponsive and detached political establishment. Regardless if you're a card carrying Republican or Democrat—and I am neither—there is a real lesson to be gleaned from what we're seeing in the local political movements of Wisconsin. When an American electorate, long degraded for its poor voter turnout and consistent civic apathy, becomes as charged, thoughtful, and determined as the one in our Badger State, there is going to be a serious change in the manner of governance.

With ten months to go, there are already 18 gubernatorial candidates. If you want to know which will win, put your ear to the ground and listen to the grass roots grow.

Talking points responses for Pax Americana Institute's journal 'The Collegiate Conservative'

Relationship with Russia:

It is absolutely in the interest of the U.S. to encourage closer ties with Russia in our many areas of mutual interest. Russia's explicitly aggressive actions and rhetoric have been somewhat scaled back lately as their economy struggles, offering the U.S. the opportunity to simultaneously offer Russia our cooperation in integrating it into the global economy while also leveraging that cooperation in such a way as to discourage further anti-Americanism. There is also a chance that the U.S. can help our European allies lessen their dependence on Russian resources (like natural gas) by continuing to diversify world supply. Such a strategy would indeed be a genuine new beginning and could prove very beneficial to the U.S. and Russia by maximizing cooperation and minimizing strategic competition.

It is impossible to forge any kind of meaningful new beginning with Russia. Russian geopolitical interests in the 21st century are polar opposites of U.S. interests in the region, and these interests have hardly changed since the days of the Cold War. Russia's invasion into Georgia proves that it still intends to have a direct influence on the control of the Eastern European states that it considers its buffer zone from the West. U.S. national security interests demand political self-determination in the same region and the spread of democracy, which outcome would be no more desirable for Russia today than it has ever been. The only hope is for Russia to become persuaded that the danger posed by U.S. influence is less than the danger of Islamist influence that could result from Iran's possession of nuclear weapons, but even this is unlikely considering the existing precedent.

Secure border initiative:

The unprecedented violence in the border region in 2009 is all the more reason to pay virtually any price to secure the area. Thousands have been killed in recent years in the out-of-control drug cartel wars just miles from the U.S. We have been lucky that we have not yet been more directly involved in those very hot drug wars. On top of the other exiting, growing problems of massive illegal immigration and the infiltration of the U.S. by Islamist terrorists, this situation is declining rapidly. It is critical that we match our efforts to date to increase the recruitment and training of Border Patrol Agents with effective support in terms of equipment and technology, the force-multipliers that permits our public servants to complete their missions efficiently and as safely as possible.

No border security strategy will be successful if it is not integrated into a broader strategy of immigration reform. Every bit as important as the creation of an effective barrier in the Southwest is the implementation of enforcement initiatives that link law enforcement resources in cities and counties across the nation with federal enforcement capabilities of DHS and ICE. Dozens of counties in the U.S. have begun experimental participation in the Secure Communities program, which identifies criminal aliens and coordinates the prioritization of how to handle individual cases. The program took thousands of criminal aliens off the streets of the U.S. last year and should be considered a model of future immigration enforcement efforts, but it is unclear whether the current administration will support its expansion. Serious immigration reform is needed, and the Secure Communities program is a model of success.

...roadmap for America's future

From page 3

ing \$39,000 for a family of four), and no tax loopholes, deductions, credits or exclusions (except the health-care tax credit).

The proposal eliminates the alternative minimum tax. It promotes saving by eliminating taxes on interest, capital gains, and dividends. It eliminates the death tax. It replaces the corporate income tax—currently the second highest in the industrialized world—with a business consumption tax of 8.5%. This new rate is roughly half the average in the industrialized world and will put American companies and workers in a stronger position to compete in a global economy.

Even without the Democratic spending spree,

our fiscal outlook is deteriorating. They are only hastening the crisis. It is not too late to take control of our fiscal and economic future. But the longer we wait, the bigger the problem becomes and the more difficult our options for solving it.

The Road Map promotes our national prosperity by limiting government's burden of spending, mandates and regulation. It ensures the opportunity for individuals to fulfill their human potential and enjoy the satisfaction of their own achievements—and it secures the distinctly American legacy of leaving the next generation better off.

Russia's role in the Iranian stand-off

Drew Davis

Executive Director, Pax Americana Institute

Just prior to the conclusion of 2009, there was a great deal of speculation that Israel would strike a series of Iranian nuclear facilities before the year's end to prevent the Ahmadinejad regime from producing a nuclear weapon. Those strikes have not yet occurred. While such an offensive certainly remains a possibility, the question many have been asking is how would Russia respond to an Israeli attack on Iran? In this short piece I will concisely examine the nuances of the current Russian-Iranian relationship, the options for an Israeli attack on Iran and how those attacks would affect Russia's role in the Iranian standoff.

Over the last two years, Russia has been negotiating the sale of an advanced, air-defense system to Iran for "defensive purposes." This S-300 long-range, surface-to-air missile system is capable of defending against aircraft, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles and is considered to be one of the world's best. The only thing that makes this system defensive, however, is putting the word "defensive" in front of it. In August, under pressure from the United States, as negotiations with Iran reached a new level of tension, Russia announced it was suspending the sale and transfer of the S-300 system to Iran and joining the West in a dialogue approach. It was a temporary victory.

By December 2009, the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council (the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China), together with Germany, were finally considering a new round of U.N.-sponsored sanctions. It was at this point that Russia's intensity to crack down on the Iranian regime seriously began to wane, for if the West wanted to impose new sanctions, Iran would only further be driven into the Russian commercial sphere of influence.

There is no doubt Russia is hugely tempted by this enormous commercial opportunity and recognizes it could have the best of both worlds if it also completes the deal of the S-300 system before a new round of U.N. sanctions, specifically aimed at the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, goes into effect, which would make such a weapons transfer illegal. On Thursday, January 28, 2010, Secretary of State Clinton announced the U.S. will present a paper to the five permanent members of the UN Security Council calling for such sanctions. For Russia, the clock is now ticking; for the Israelis, it never stopped.

To understand how Russia would react to an Israeli strike—a strike that may well occur if this round of

sanctions fails—it must first be understood that Russia's response would depend on the manner in which Israel attacked. If Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decided to utilize his world class intelligence officers—The Mossad—to sabotage and destroy the nuclear facilities, the covert nature of the attack would make it very difficult to publicly pin on anyone. In politico-speak, this is known as deniability. If the clandestine attacks were successful, Iran and Russia would be left without the political leverage necessary to hang the blame on Israel and could not reciprocate at the state-to-state level.

Last July, however, Israel sailed one of its three German-made Dolphin-class submarines through the Suez Canal and into the Red Sea, putting Israel into a better position to utilize a sub for a rather overt cruise missile attack on Iran. If Israel elected to strike Iran via the sea, there could be little doubt that Russia would quickly finalize the sale of the S-300 system, allowing the Islamic Republic of Iran to defend itself in the future. The sale, of course, would completely negate a military option for the West unless it was prepared for an all-out-war with Iran.

An overt air-strike would yield a similar response from Russia. The sale and transfer of the S-300 system would be presumably definitive and harsh rhetoric chastising the Israelis for promoting instability in the region would roll off the tongue of every Russian government official. Looking down the road, the attack and destruction of current nuclear facilities may set back the Iranian nuclear program by a decade, but with an S-300 surface-air defense system, it may well go unimpeded in the future—if crippling sanctions from the U.N. do not catalyze a change in Iranian policy by then.

History has proven Israel will take action unilaterally if it truly desires. Iran knows this; however, it cannot leverage oil exportations to Russia to expedite the S-300 deal given the move would severely hurt an Iranian economy already on its leg.

Russia has repeatedly said that dialogue based on mutual respect and compromise is the only possible solution, and that it will work hard to preserve stability in the region. The Russian economy is in bad shape, and it desperately needs to gain admission into the World Trade Organization (WTO) to better globalize its markets. The only thing preventing this is its slow-to-mend relationship with Georgia, which remains the only country yet to approve Russia's admission to the WTO. To grossly upset Western nations with close links to Georgia is to lose admission into the WTO. It will be this reality that ultimately keeps Russia on board and in line.

Racine tea party draws 3,500

By **Nikki Ackerman**

Perhaps radio talk show host Vicki McKenna best expressed the sentiment of the crowd when she said, "The penalty for losing an election should not be losing our country."

The outrage and enthusiasm of the estimated 3,500 attendees at the Racine Bonfire Tea Party—held at a farm on Highway H in Franksville Jan. 16—was in no small supply, even as the tea party-goers stood outside in 27-degree weather for over two hours.

Holding signs with statements such as "If you aren't outraged, you're not paying attention," "Liberty, not tyranny," "No to Obamacare," "You lie!" and "Stop the spending," the crowd gathered to take a stand on a variety of issues ("TEA" is an acronym for Taxed Enough Already), however the overriding theme was the defense of individual rights and personal freedom.

Featured speaker Samuel "Joe the Plumber" Wurzelbacher referred to the Constitution as "one of the greatest documents ever conceived."

An Ohio plumber looking to purchase his own business, Wurzelbacher was shoved into the spotlight in 2008 after making an inquiry of then-presidential candidate Barack Obama. The plumber-turned-conservative-icon—who was infamously told by Obama that it's better to "spread the wealth around"—has since appeared at tea parties across the nation as a representative of middle class America.

"Education isn't just for your children—it's for you, too," Wurzelbacher said at the bonfire. "Americans should be reading about their history and their government. Get busy for an hour or half hour each night and take the responsibility of being an American seri-

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Planned Parenthood pushes intensive sex education for kids as young as 10

By **Ed Barnes**
FoxNews.com

"Stand and Deliver," a new report by the International Planned Parenthood Federation, advocates that children as young as 10 be given extensive sex education.

A new report by the International Planned Parenthood Federation is advocating that children as young as 10 be given extensive sex education, including an awareness of sex's pleasures.

The report, "Stand and Deliver," charges that religious groups, specifically Catholics and Muslims, deny their young access to comprehensive sexual programs and education.

"Young people's sexuality is still contentious for many religious institutions. Fundamentalist and other religious groups—the Catholic Church and madrasas (Islamic Schools) for example—have imposed tremendous barriers that prevent young people, particularly, from obtaining information and services related to sex and reproduction. Currently, many religious teachings deny the pleasurable and positive aspects of sex," the report states.

The report demands that children 10 and older be given a "comprehensive sexuality education" by governments, aid organizations and other groups, and that young people should be seen as "sexual beings."

"Young people have the right to be informed about sexuality and to have access to contraceptives and other services," Bert Koenders, the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation, wrote in the foreword to the report. It was his organization that helped fund the report.

The report argues that sex education should be "recast" to show sexuality as a "positive force for change and development, as a source of pleasure, an embodiment of human rights and an expression of self."

Much like a U.N. report released last August that advocated teaching masturbation to children (<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,543203,>

00.html) as young as 5, "Stand and Deliver" has set off a wave of protest among religious and conservative groups.

He said religions like Catholicism and Islam teach sex as part of a much bigger picture and that Planned Parenthood was trying to de-link sex from traditional values.

"It is part of an effort to get children to reject traditional values and accept a liberal American-European view," he said. "In many traditional countries—Catholic and Muslim—it won't work and should be seen as cultural imperialism."

Mechmann also charged that Planned Parenthood's report was compromised because it has a financial stake advocating the changes. "The difference between Planned Parenthood and us is that we don't make money off what we teach and say. They do. They make money off contraceptives and abortions," he said.

Michelle Turner, president of the Maryland-based Citizens for a Responsible Curriculum, said Planned Parenthood was simply trying to eliminate parental say.

"What are they trying to do? They are trying to eliminate the role of mom and dad in the family," Turner said. "For Planned Parenthood to decide that governments, private organizations and religious organizations should make decisions about kids' sexuality is just going too far."

"It is part of a bigger push to change the way we think about sex," she said. That sex is all about pleasure and there are no consequences. They are wrong. No matter how much we teach children, some will make mistakes. They will forget. And Planned Parenthood doesn't want to deal with that," she said.

"They see religious groups, especially those that counsel abstinence and waiting until marriage, as bad guys," she added. "We aren't."

Planned Parenthood said it was unable to comment because the report was issued by its European office and it was unable to contact them.

Did Rush 'ruin' 2009?

By **Nikki Ackerman**

"I hope he fails."

Four words that will live in infamy.

When Rush Limbaugh responded in early 2009 to a request to share his hopes for the current president's administration, he answered honestly—and, in my opinion—reasonably, intelligently and patriotically.

By saying he wanted the recently-inaugurated Barack Obama to fail, the radio talk show host was wishing success for America, for capitalism, for the preservation of the values, history and spirit of independence upon which our country was founded. He was saying he did not embrace the notion that one radical politician should be able to hijack this great nation that took years to build and get a free pass simply because of the "historical nature of his presidency."

He said: "I'm not talking about search-and-destroy, but I've been listening to Barack Obama for a year and a half. I know what his politics are. I know what his politics are, as he has stated them. I don't want them to succeed...What he's talking about is the absorption of as much of the private sector by the U.S. government as possible, from the banking business to the mortgage industry to the automobile business to health care...I do not want this to work."

Saying he passionately disagreed with the conservatives (are you listening, Bill O'Reilly?) who said we owed Obama a chance—because, seriously, how many liberals gave Bush a chance?—Limbaugh stated, "We're talking about my county, the United States of America, my nieces, my nephews, your kids, your grandkids. Why in the world do we want to saddle them with more liberalism and socialism? Why do I want that?"

Apparently The Daily Beast's Tina Brown named this statement as the one that turned 2009—which began with The Anointed One's blissful entry into the Oval Office—into a disaster of epic proportions.

Brown recently blamed Limbaugh—due to those four words—for the "big discord and toxic atmosphere in politics," and likened him to the "the bad fairy at Sleeping Beauty's christening." Describing the "incredible" inauguration as a "huge festival hope and renewal," she said that after Limbaugh's statement, "Pandora's box opened and the rest of the year has been this big discord and toxic atmosphere in politics and partisan divide and people shouting at each other and the tea parties and (talk of) death panels..."

Call me biased, but it sounds like maybe Barack Obama—as well as everyone who voted him into office in a haze of misguided euphoria—should be held responsible for ruining 2009, and perhaps many years to come.

Did she ever stop to think that maybe all the shouting at town halls and tea parties had nothing to do with Rush, but everything to do with the current state of Washington and the people's rejection of the left-wing agenda Obama, Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid are trying to push through in the dead of night behind closed doors?

If anything, Rush Limbaugh should be thanked for not only giving us a heads-up on how Obama would govern (a question no one bothered to explore until it was too late), but for keeping us well-informed of each of Obama's policies, agenda items and half-truths along the way.

It has not been the easiest year for good 'ol Rush.

He was mocked at the White House Correspondents' dinner in May ("I hope his kidneys fail," comedienne Wanda Sykes said).

His doomed attempt to buy into the St. Louis Rams franchise came complete with 100% fabricated racist statements attributed to him (James Earl Ray deserves a posthumous Medal of Honor? Slavery "had its merits"? Yeah, Rush never said those things.) Ultimately Limbaugh was denied the Rams after he was determined to be too "polarizing" and "controversial" for the NFL. Unlike Pacman Jones and Michael Vick.

And to top it all off, his year ended with an ambulance ride to the hospital after experiencing chest pains during a Hawaiian vacation. Barely an hour or two had passed before left-wing bloggers were posting comments like "Rush Limbaugh dead at 58."

Well, Happy New Year to you, too.

Although one shouldn't feel too sorry for Rush—after all, he has a wildly successful career, millions of fans, more money than he will ever be able to spend and a hot, young girlfriend—to be blamed for ruining an entire year is no minor accusation. If only he did possess such power, I believe 2009 would have turned out a lot better than it did without the trillions of dollars being pointlessly wasted on "stimulus," without the furthering of climate change legislation and without health care reform no one wants taking up so much of everyone's time and energy.

The way I see it, Rush did not ruin 2009, but made a politically crummy year not only bearable, but hopeful and humorous.

On the other hand, Obama and his cohorts did everything in their power to dismantle in one short year a history that has stood for over two centuries. That, to me, seems pretty ruinous.

Let's just hope the damage can be stopped here and we can enjoy a much better 2010.

Nikki Ackerman is a staff writer with The Observer, a new conservative sister paper of the Express News.

...Racine tea party

From page 20

ously because if you don't, another country will."

Together for a common cause...

Preserving Constitutional rights and getting the country back on course were two themes that arose again and again at the event.

Mark Block, state director of Americans For Prosperity—which was one of the event's organizers—drew cheers from the crowd when he proclaimed it's time to reclaim Madison as well as Washington.

"Not only are we taking our state back, we're taking our country back," he said. "We've come a long way since April 15. Since then the tea party movement has exploded. If the elected officials aren't listening now, they will be in November."

Retired Air Force Lt. Larry Gamble, who spoke on behalf of the Oath Keepers, shared his favorite Patrick Henry quote: "The Constitution is not an instrument for the government to constrain the people, it is an instrument for the people to restrain the government."

When Pastor David King of the Milwaukee God Squad, and also a secretary of state candidate, gave the invocation, he prayed for a revitalization of the principles upon which America was founded.

"Thank you for the excitement going on right now and for the energy these people have to take the country and state back," he said. "We pray that this nation will once again be 'for the people' and 'by the people.' Forgive us for being slothful and unconcerned as we've allowed this nation to get onto the course it is now on."

'Remember in November'...

With a mantra of "Remember in November," several local representatives and the three U.S. Senate candidates hoping to unseat Russ Feingold in November—Republicans Dave Westlake and Terrence Wall and Constitution Party candidate Rob Taylor—shared their thoughts on changing the current state of the government.

Wearing his signature blaze orange, Westlake—who said the country's founders would be "ashamed and worried" about what is going on in politics—commended the crowd for putting their patriotism before their comfort.

"You're bundled up and freezing and you can't feel your toes, but you're out here for one common cause—because you love this country," he said. "I'm proud of you and the founding fathers would be proud of you, too...You're out here in the cold to fight for liberty."

Wall, a real estate developer out of Madison, who identified himself as a resident of Dane County—"I never say Madison," he joked—noted that "our American dream is eroding and being taken away from us by Washington."

He pointed out that "when you have a failing business, you take out the failing management team that put you there in the first place."

As an aside, Wall shared that Feingold rents space from him, saying, "He is my tenant and there's something deliciously sweet about seeing that check every month."

The Constitution Party candidate took things step

further, saying that most of today's elected officials are "turning their backs on God, trampling on the Constitution and not listening to we the people."

"Between the stimulus bill, bail outs and socialized health care, they're trying to turn this into a third world country," Taylor continued. "We've had enough and we're taking our republic back."

Van Wangaard, County Board Supervisor in Racine, said the voice of the people needs to be heard and that both sides of the issues should be discussed—openly.

"We need our legislators to understand we do not like these secret meetings and meetings without debate," he said. "They need to be working for us. We need to take back our government and turn this thing around."

The issues of the hour...

Bonfire speakers also touched upon some of the major issues—namely universal health care and climate change legislation—that are currently being debated across the nation.

Dr. Traci Purath, a neurologist at Wheaton Franciscan-All Saints in Racine, who practiced medicine in Ireland under socialized health care, said she will "never do it again."

"In Ireland, under socialized medicine, I had to tell those people 'You can't have it,' and I will never do that again," she said. "The truth they will not tell you is there is not enough to go around under socialized medicine. If you are pregnant, you won't get an ultrasound unless something is perceived to be wrong and if something is wrong, there are not enough neo-natal units to (fix the problem)."

In Ireland, a country of 6.4 million people, there are nine neurosurgeons whereas in Wisconsin there are 65 neurosurgeons, Purath said, adding there are no private rooms, but rather wards with 30 beds.

"In Ireland, have things changed? You bet," she said. "They realized socialized medicine doesn't work so they're privatizing."

State Rep. Jim Ott of the 23rd Assembly District—who, according to Block, is "leading the fight in Madison against this crazy climate change legislation"—spoke about Assembly Bill 649, which purports to create "green jobs."

Describing it as "feel-good legislation" that will be a "disaster for our economy," Ott said, "If we work together, we can beat this thing."

Adelle Weeks, a local teacher and climate change expert, also spoke out against the legislation.

"They have conspired over many years to spread this false climate alarmism, to deceive the public and push their agenda, and do it with our tax dollars," she said.

Although the event was scheduled to begin at 3 p.m., busloads of between 50 and 75 people continued to arrive from the Caledonia-Mount Pleasant parking lot until 3:55 p.m. While waiting for the program to begin, attendees enjoyed patriotic songs by Cheryl McCrary.

Nikki Ackerman is a staff writer with *The Observer*, a new conservative sister paper of the *Express News*.

Taxpayers fund abortions but not school vouchers

By Dr. Paul Kengor

In my last article, a somber remembrance of *Roe v. Wade*, I called attention to something that shocked readers: I noted that the Obama administration and Democratic Congress “rejected funding for school vouchers for poor children in Washington, DC, but supported funding for abortions for the mothers of those children.”

The contrast is breathtaking, but true. It’s another jolt to traditionally minded voters—especially pro-life Democrats and independents—who voted for “change” on November 4, 2008, and are now absorbing the change they authorized. In this case, the change stands in stark contrast to previous administrations and Congresses that prohibited federal funds to finance abortions in the District of Columbia. It veers well beyond liberals’ assurance that abortion merely be “safe, legal, and rare.”

If you didn’t hear about this until now, don’t be surprised. Over 300,000 pro-lifers marched in Washington last month without notice by the mainstream media. So, I’d like to take a moment to explain what happened:

Last summer, in July 2009, the overwhelmingly Democratic House of Representatives narrowly passed (by a vote of 219-208) a bill permitting the D.C. government to use locally raised tax revenues to provide abortions, reversing a long-standing prohibition.

Almost all Republicans voted against the bill. They were joined by some (but not enough) Democrats. Unfortunately, because of how Americans voted on November 4, 2008, the extreme left has such a massive majority in Congress that legislators who think taxpayers shouldn’t pay for abortions couldn’t stop the measure from being passed. Worse, because Americans—who, in recent polls, describe themselves as more pro-life and more conservative than ever—voted for the most radical abortion-rights advocate in the history of the presidency, the bill had full backing from the White House.

And so, the change in favor of abortion funding came via a \$768 million D.C. Financial Services Appropriations bill that—here’s the kicker—also included termination of school vouchers for poor children in Washington, D.C., forcing those children out of private schools and back into public schools they fled.

Most Americans didn’t notice any of this, given that the mainstream media that serves as educator-in-chief didn’t dare highlight the story. Two sources that did notice, however, are worth quoting:

One is Rep. Joe Pitts, the Pennsylvania congressman who is a stalwart champion for the unborn. Pitts told

me: “It’s shameful that Congress has decided to use taxpayer dollars to fund the destruction of life in our nation’s capital but has denied funding for a successful scholarship program that allows poor children a chance at a decent education. The juxtaposition in policies could not be more disturbing.”

More disturbed than Pitts was Bill Donohue, president of the Catholic League, who was fit to be tied: “Following the lead of President Barack Obama,” said Donohue, “the House of Representatives passed a bill that would allow the District of Columbia to fund abortions. Also following Obama’s wishes, the same bill affirmed the ... congressional decision to end school vouchers there.”

“Here’s what it comes down to,” summed up Donohue. Poor pregnant women living in Washington, D.C. “will be told that if they decide to abort their baby, the government will pay for it. But if they persist in bringing their baby to term, the government will not help them to avoid the same lousy public schools that Barack and Michelle shunned for Sasha and Malia.” Donohue denounced the action as “cruel.”

No doubt, it’s an outrage. Of course, it’s also predictable. By and large, liberals oppose school vouchers but support legalized abortion. In that sense, this is nothing new.

What is new, however, is this sudden aggressive push by today’s “progressives” for taxpayers to fund abortions. This is the culmination of a progressive death march begun a century ago by Planned Parenthood founder and racial eugenicist Margaret Sanger, who preached extraction of “human weeds” from the gene pool in order to advance “race improvement” (her words). Today’s progressive heirs have taken Sanger’s torch and lit up the barn.

And thus, we now have—in no less than the nation’s capital—a poster-child for that grim progressive worldview. It’s a child who doesn’t get aid to go to a private school—even as his mother pays school taxes—but whose mother gets aid to abort the child’s sibling.

We’re not only losing our conscience as a nation; we’re losing our mind.

I know the response I’ll get from Democrats: furious emails, enraged at me. That’s sad. I’m simply reporting what happened. I didn’t vote for any of this. I plead with them: If you’re angry, write to the people in your party who are responsible. Only you can stop this madness. Clean your own house.

Dr. Paul Kengor is professor of political science and executive director of the Center for Vision & Values at Grove City College. His books include "God and Ronald Reagan," "God and George W. Bush," and "God and Hillary Clinton."

Global warming bill kills Wisconsin jobs

By Scott Manley
WMC (Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce)
Environmental Policy Director

Higher electric bills will not create jobs. Making gasoline more expensive will not create jobs. Significantly increasing the cost of doing business in Wisconsin will not create jobs. Taking more money from Wisconsin families will not create jobs.

Yet those outcomes are exactly what voters can expect if Wisconsin adopts Gov. Doyle's proposed global warming legislation.

Under the clever disguise of "green job" creation, Gov. Doyle is calling for passage of a Wisconsin global warming bill that will drive up our energy costs and result in staggering job loss.

A recent economic study by the nonpartisan Wisconsin Policy Research Institute (WPRI) found that adopting these expensive policies would result in more than 43,000 lost jobs statewide.

Driving these job losses are energy policies that will cost Wisconsin consumers billions of dollars over the next decade. For example, the proposed 25 percent renewable electricity mandate would cost electric customers more than \$16 billion alone. That's nearly three-times as much as Wisconsinites spend on electricity each year.

The so-called Low Carbon Fuel Standard would cost Wisconsin motorists more than \$3.2 billion in higher gas prices according to the WPRI study. This global warming gas tax could cost consumers as much as 61-cents per gallon according to a study by the Marshall Institute.

All told, these expensive policies are projected to cost each Wisconsin family more than \$1,000 each year by the time they are fully implemented. Worse yet, the supporters of this misguided bill have not identified any meaningful benefit that would be achieved relative to global temperatures or climate.

Wisconsin families cannot afford these tremendously expensive policies given our current recession and fragile economy. We find ourselves at an economic crossroads, and it's important to understand just how much is at stake as we choose the path forward.

Wisconsin proudly lays claim to the single-most manufacturing intensive economy in the country. Our family-supporting manufacturing jobs pay an average wage of \$62,959—more than 35 percent higher than the state average.

Unfortunately, we have already lost 160,000 manufacturing jobs in the last decade, including 60,000 jobs lost since 2008 alone. If we want to reverse this trend, we must find a way to control Wisconsin's electric rates, which have increased faster than any other Midwest state over the last decade.

Manufacturing jobs depend upon access to afford-

able and reliable electricity, and we cannot expect to attract or retain these jobs if we make electricity more expensive with go-it-alone state global warming regulations.

Voters understand that higher energy costs put jobs at risk, and they aren't willing to pay for costly new energy policies.

WMC commissioned a statewide poll last fall from a highly-respected national pollster. The polling data showed that while voters view jobs and the economy as the most important issue for the Wisconsin Legislature, global warming scored dead last with only 1 percent support.

By a three-to-one margin, voters oppose spending even \$25 per month to pay for global warming regulations. The intensity of this opposition was spread across the political spectrum, with Democrats, Republicans and Independents all opposed to paying more.

Voters are right to be skeptical of politicians who promise to create jobs by taking more money out of their family budget. The experience of European countries like Spain and Germany, who unsuccessfully attempted to create "green jobs" with expensive renewable energy regulations, should serve as a cautionary tale to Wisconsin lawmakers.

For example, Spain lost 2.2 permanent jobs for every temporary "green job" created through expensive government subsidies. Germany spent up to \$240,000 of taxpayer money for each "green job," and most of those jobs vanished when the government subsidies went away.

Wisconsin cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of Spain and Germany, and trade a handful of temporary jobs for the loss of many more permanent jobs.

Gov. Doyle's global warming bill will increase the cost of electricity, increase the cost of gasoline, make it more expensive to do business here than in other states, and take more money out of the pockets of Wisconsin families.

That is not a recipe for job creation.

Despite the authors' best intentions, the Wisconsin global warming bill will further accelerate the historic job losses that have already occurred. Rather than hitting our economy with expensive new energy regulations, the Legislature should help Wisconsin businesses pursue the research and development of clean energy technologies.

If lawmakers are serious about creating jobs, they should focus on cutting taxes, controlling government spending, reducing bureaucratic red tape, and putting a stop to lawsuit abuse. Each of these strategies will place Wisconsin employers in a better position to emerge from the economic recession, and compete for new jobs.