



State legislatures overstepping their bounds in presidential elections

Jean Barwick
6/8/2006

Since the 2000 presidential election we have been hammered with the outrage by Democrats that the election was "stolen" from presidential hopeful Al Gore, who received the majority of the popular vote but not a majority of the Electoral College. This constant refrain plays pretty well with the Democrats' base who seem to have little regard for the United States Constitution and even less regard for recent history.

In 1912, Woodrow Wilson, a Democrat, assumed our nation's highest office with only 41.8 percent of the national popular vote. His 1916 reelection bid was successful with 49.3 percent of the popular vote. Harry S. Truman, another Democrat, became president in 1948 with 49.5 percent of the popular vote. Democrat John Kennedy walked away with the presidency in 1960 with 49.7 percent of the popular vote. Richard Nixon, a Republican, won the presidency with only 43.4 percent of the popular vote in 1968. Bill Clinton moved into the White House following the 1992 election with a mere 43 percent of the popular vote. Fairing better in his reelection bid, Mr. Clinton received 49 percent of the popular vote. In 2000 George Bush won the office with 47.8 percent of the total popular vote. From these numbers, it would appear that the Electoral College has favored Democrats over Republicans in recent history and that Gore's failure was not the result of some vast right-wing conspiracy or a symbol of our failed government as the claims go.

Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution established the Electoral College as part of the transformation from colonial governments to a unified constitutional republic to appoint electors equal to the number of each state's congressional delegation. The House gives proportional representation to each state based on population and the Senate provides representation to each state equal to every other state. This arrangement guarantees equal representation and prevents states with large populations from imposing their will on smaller states. The Electoral College ensures that the president and vice-president are selected by a body of electors with the same proportional representation as the Congress.

A state-by-state campaign is underway to reform how each state awards its electoral votes in presidential elections. Proponents of the Campaign for the National Popular Vote (NPV) complain that presidential campaigns concentrate on and win electoral votes in battleground states such as Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Florida, disenfranchising voters on the losing side of those states. They argue that the major party campaigns operate with total disregard for the interests of Americans outside the swing states and the result is low voter turnout, racial discrimination and the future of American democracy. For the NPV compact to succeed, enough states with a combined total of the 270 electoral votes required to win the presidency must enact identical legislation requiring their electors to ignore the winner of their states' election and award the electors from each state to the candidate who wins the country's popular vote.

The NPV compact is not the first attempt to alter the Electoral College by amending the constitution but all have failed in Congress. The new tactic here is to by-pass Congress and change the laws through individual state legislatures. Under the NPV plan, as few as eleven states (compared to the 38 states required to amend the Constitution) pledging their electoral votes could alter the entire architecture of presidential elections.

If state legislatures have the power to award their states' electoral votes to whichever candidate they determine to be the winner, the representation guaranteed by the Electoral College is gone. Candidates would concentrate their campaigns in densely populated urban areas, particularly cities in California and New York. The NVP initiative has fraud, corruption and endless lawsuits written all over it.

The Colorado Senate voted to ratify the NPV compact in April, followed by California lawmakers in May. The compact is currently under consideration in New York, Illinois, Louisiana and Missouri. Interestingly, the NPV slogan is "Every Vote Equal" yet the legislatures of both Colorado and California by-passed the popular vote of the citizens on this important issue. They're likely getting in some practice for dumping their citizens' votes should they not be in line with the national popular vote down the road.



Canada, U.S and Mexico - one big, happy family

Jean Barwick
7/6/2006

In an attempt to assuage U.S. citizens' growing anger over the increasing burden of illegal immigration, the Senate crafted its immigration reform bill before passing it along to the Congress and the president ordered National Guard troops to the semipermeable membrane between the United States and Mexico, otherwise referred to as the border. While all of this theater was playing to an attentive U.S. audience, the Bush administration, without authorization from Congress, continued to broker a trilateral agreement initiated in 2005 with Canada and Mexico to establish trade and security policies that presented "new avenues of cooperation that will make our open societies safer and more secure, our businesses more competitive, and our economies more resilient."

Meeting in Waco, Texas on March 23, 2005, President Bush, Mexican President Vicente Fox and then-Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin adopted the Security and Prosperity Partnership, or SPP, and assigned as many as 20 ministerial-level working groups from multiple U.S. government agencies, including, e-commerce, aviation and maritime policy, and border and immigration policy to hammer out the details. The Canadian and Mexican governments have set up similar SPP offices.

The task assigned to these working groups, operating under the auspices of the Department of Commerce through the North American Free Trade Agreement office, is to implement the Security and Prosperity Partnership by defining the specific goals and actions necessary to sustain North America as a viable economic entity and as a secure environment for its citizens now and in the future.

Not wanting to miss an opportunity to dilute the sovereignty of the United States, the "non-partisan" Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) developed a 59-page document in support of the SPP which details a five-year plan for the establishment by 2010 of a North American economic and security community. The document, "Building a North American Community," is based on the vulnerability of the United States on several fronts - national security, energy needs, global economic competition and the widening gap between the economies of the United States and Mexico, and, of course, the presumption that the United States has no control over any of these factors.

Described in the everybody-just-needs-a-big-hug language of the CFR plan, the three partners in the trilateral agreement are no longer referred to as countries - they are now a "community" in which we share people, prosperity, resources, corruption, poverty, and crime within a "common security perimeter." The plan describes a freer flow of people within North America and "harmonizing" visa and asylum regulations within the shared perimeter.

According to the CFR plan, there will be no illegal immigrants or undocumented workers. The "North American preference" plan will allow employers to recruit low-paid workers from anywhere in North America. The United States already enjoys this benefit of the partnership, but now Canada can work toward a "seamless North American market."

Buried in the fluff is the meat of the trilateral agreement - unparalleled U.S. foreign aid to the other two countries, specifically Mexico, in the form of "multilevel development" from the World Bank, long-term loans and a plan to pump private capital into Mexico. Integrating Mexican citizens into the U.S. Social Security system is called the "Social Security Totalization Agreement" included in the plan. To ensure equal education for all, the plan calls for fund development for educating Mexican students in the United States.

The closest any of the activity of the working groups has come to full disclosure is a bill introduced by Sen. Richard Lugar (R-IN). S. 853, titled "North American Cooperative Security Act" seeks to empower the Secretary of State to "establish a program to bolster the mutual security and safety of the United States, Canada and Mexico, and for other purposes." If the "and for other purposes" catchall doesn't make you nervous, nothing will. The bill, introduced on April 29, 2005 underwent two readings and was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations where it remains today. Let's hope it dies there.



Where have all the voters gone?

Jean Barwick
8/3/2006

The candidates have knocked on doors, made countless phone calls, eaten enough barbeque and ice cream to last a lifetime in an effort to get their message to the voters. At day's end, Williamson County will have a new circuit court judge and the winners of the Republican primaries for Governor, State Senator for the 23rd District and the U.S. Senate will emerge.

This has been an unusually long election season and by the November general election it will have taken up the better part of the year. Voter turnout statewide has been disappointingly low, particularly in Williamson County. At the close of early voting barely 4000 of the 105,000 registered voters in the county had cast their votes. The reasons voters stay away from the polls in such large numbers eludes us, but we continue to speculate and legislate, hoping for higher turnouts and parity among all American voters.

For decades various political groups have complained that the election process in the United States is deeply flawed and disenfranchises large blocks of citizens who could and would vote were it not for prejudice and corruption at the federal, state and local levels. The most recent example in our state was the Shelby County special election to fill John Ford's seat in the state legislature. Voting irregularities in Shelby County disenfranchised every legitimate voter who cast a ballot in good faith only to be betrayed by a handful of corrupt political operatives and poll workers.

Last month President Bush signed a bill which passed the Senate by a vote of 98-0 and the House by 390-33 to extend provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. This bill, originally signed by President Johnson, ended poll taxes and literacy tests that has been used to keep minorities from voting. There is no question that barriers to minority voting had existed and this bill was needed to end these unjust practices. Despite the overwhelming majority of votes, many state lawmakers objected to provisions in the law requiring permission from the Justice Department to amend their states' voting rules and requirements that ballots in certain communities be available in languages other than English.

In 1993, Congress enacted the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA). The so-called "Motor Voter" registration provision falls under this act and makes voter registration available at the same time as driver's license application or renewal. "Motor Voter" registration is an applaudable initiative but raises issues with people who obtain driver's licenses illegally. Also included in the

NVRA is the law requiring the acceptance of mail-in voter registration - another great initiative provided voters appear at the polls with valid identification and verifiable voting credentials. Provisions in the NVRA also provide for agency-based voter registration. This provision requires that every individual applying for federal or state public assistance or renewal of services be offered the opportunity to register to vote.

In 2002, the federal government, responding to pressure from certain groups who were deeply disturbed by the outcome of the 2000 presidential election, enacted the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). This sweeping voting reform effort provides federal funds to states to replace punch card voting systems, and funds the Election Assistance Commission to set minimum standards for state and local governments in the administration of federal elections. Controversial from its inception, HAVA activists have pushed through legislation to allow voter registration on election day, provisional balloting, instant runoff voting and are actively pursuing voting rights for citizens with felony convictions. Amnesty for illegal immigrants will no doubt lead to further "enhancements" of HAVA laws.

So here we are. All the government assistance programs are in place to enhance the voting opportunities of every American - no poll taxes, no literacy tests, painless voter registration, provisional ballots, no picture identification, ballots in multiple languages, electronic voting machines and a wide window of early voting. Now all we need is some Americans.



Diversity is in the eye of the beholder

Jean Barwick
8/31/2006

It comes as no surprise to most conservatives that public pre-school, elementary and secondary education is the latest battleground for advancing the homosexual agenda. With institutionalized diversity training an accepted prerequisite for college enrollment across the nation safely in the box, pre-K and K-12 are the next planned target of increasingly powerful gay rights activists.

Heavily lobbied by gay rights groups, the nation's largest teachers' union, the National Education Association (NEA), has already established a history of introducing and passing a number of controversial resolutions to equip public school teachers with the tools to guide children toward the acceptance of same-sex orientation. Through carefully constructed language, like "need based curriculum," "bias-free screening" and a host of other euphemisms, activists hope to advance the homosexual agenda tucked among legitimate issues of race, disability, and gender bias in early childhood education.

Prior to their meeting in Orlando this summer, word leaked that the NEA had planned to introduce a resolution to advise and support public school teachers who wished to include developmentally appropriate same-sex marriage issues into their classrooms. In the midst of the unexpected controversy that followed the leak, the resolution was withdrawn at the request of gay activist groups.

To keep the door open for future passage, the educators easily adopted a compromise resolution as part of the B-10 Resolution on racism, disability, sexism, sexual orientation, gender identification discrimination and religion. The text of the resolution includes: "The Association also believes that these factors should not affect the legal rights and obligations of the partners in a legally recognized domestic partnership, civil union, or marriage in regard to matters involving the other partner, such as medical decisions, taxes, inheritance, adoption, gender identification, disability, ethnicity, immigration status, occupation, and religion." Although the original resolution was withdrawn, the educators laid specific groundwork for re-introducing the issue at a later date.

While the NEA seems determined to promote tolerance of alternate sexual lifestyles, it is decidedly intolerant of other issues that promote diversity. The group discourages competition by opposing school voucher programs, parental option plans, tuition tax credits, distance learning, and for-profit schools. Homeschooling is a favorite target of the left-leaning, elitist group. Resolutions at this year's meeting included the NEA demand that homeschoolers meet all the curriculum requirements of each state. Further, they called for the exclusion of home schooled children from public school extra-curricular activities. Vocal supporters and contributors to such lofty issues as global and multicultural education, global environmental issues and international codes of justice, the NEA still has time to kick some homeschooler off a public school basketball court.

The NEA is on the front lines of the social engineering that is reshaping our country. Parents must continue their vigil over their children's public education working with teachers to shape the public school curriculum, but having the courage and conviction to say no when the issues cross the line and become indoctrination. We are isolated from many of the polarizing issues in Williamson County schools, but they are coming, and we will have to deal with it.



On the ballot - one man, one woman

Jean Barwick
10/12/2006

Following the 2004 landmark high court ruling to legalize same-sex marriage in Massachusetts, hopes were high in the gay community that the favor of activist judges and local officials would have a cascade effect and same-sex marriage would become constitutional law in all 50 states. Those hopes have dimmed, however, as rulings in a number of states have failed to recognize the constitutional right of same-sex marriage.

Lawsuits filed this year by gay activists in New York and Washington state were unsuccessful and these states upheld current state laws defining marriage as a union between one man and one woman. This summer, activist judges' lower court rulings to ignore state constitutional laws in Georgia and Nebraska were overturned. A state Supreme Court decision to legalize same-sex marriage is currently pending in New Jersey following decisions by trial and appellate judges that same-sex couples do not have a constitutional right to marriage. A similar case has been filed in favor of gay unions in Maryland.

California, often on the leading edge of liberal thinking, shocked the nation in 2005 by circumventing the state's legislative process to become the first legislative body in the United States to pass a bill legalizing same-sex marriage without a court order. A veto by Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger redirected the decision to the state Supreme Court to decide whether California will legalize same-sex marriage.

Next month, state amendments to ban same-sex marriage will appear on the ballot in Idaho, South Carolina, South Dakota, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Tennessee. Alabama approved the the ban in June of this year when when 80 percent of voters approved the measure in a statewide referendum. In an attempt to avoid the melee seen in Massachusetts, as many as twenty states have addressed the issue by including bans on same-sex marriage in their state constitutions.

Despite the groundswell of citizen initiatives nationwide, proponents of traditional marriage have failed to win the hearts and minds of Congress and the Senate to pass the Defense of Marriage amendment to the United States Constitution. This summer the Senate voted down

the measure and Congress could not attain the necessary two-thirds majority to pass it. As it stands now, the Full Faith and Credit clause of the U.S. Constitution recognizes the right of each state to define marriage and requires that every other state recognize that definition.

So what is it that bothers traditionalists about same-sex marriage? The overwhelming majority of us view marriage and family as the cornerstone of civilization and the hallmark of a stable society. Even in the face of an alarming divorce rate, we still regard traditional marriage and family as one of the most basic social and cultural institutions. For most of us, the real question is what happens to the institution of marriage and family itself should same-sex marriage become legal across the nation. This question has barely entered the national debate. Proponents of same-sex marriage argue now that it is an issue of civil rights. Opponents of same-sex marriage argue that abolishing the legal and social concept of marriage between one man and one woman, and fostering flexible family models to include any number of adults and children, also abolishes the rights and responsibilities of the traditional family that has endured for thousands of years. For most traditionalists, once marriage is defined to mean everything, it means nothing.



Our federal judges make new laws

Jean Barwick
12/7/2006

Late in November, District Judge James Robertson, an appointee of President Clinton, ruled that the federal government discriminates against blind people by printing currency that looks and feels the same in all denominations. The 26-page ruling follows a four-year legal battle waged by the American Council of the Blind in which the plaintiffs claim that the U.S. Treasury Department is in violation of the Rehabilitation Act which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in government programs. The Treasury Department issued no comment on the ruling and was given 10 days to decide if it would appeal the ruling. However, given that the Administration doesn't want any controversy, and it's your money they're spending, they will likely not appeal.

Government attorneys argued against the changes on grounds that varying the size or texture of the bills would make it harder to prevent counterfeiting. Costs associated with printing bills in varying sizes are estimated to be \$250 million for equipment and \$60 million in annual expenses. U.S. currency has undergone a number of size and material modifications since 1929 to discourage counterfeiting and to reduce production costs. If we add the expense of changing the cash infrastructure built around a particular bill size at ATMs, bill exchangers, cash registers, etc., not only in the U.S., but worldwide, this is easily a billion dollar decision. The counterfeiting issue could cost us untold billions.

A couple of points in the judge's decision stand out as agenda-making from the bench. First, the court points out that blind people must resort to "an impressive array of coping mechanisms" to function effectively in the marketplace, and the blind are often dependent on sighted consumers and salespeople for assistance with identifying their money. In the face of this dependency, the court ruled that the blind are denied "meaningful assess" to U.S. currency if they cannot accurately identify paper money without assistance from sighted persons.

Second, Robertson justifies his position against the fact that the United States stands apart from its peer nations by not producing currency accessible to the blind. Judge Robertson states, "We have evolved, however, and Congress has made our evolution official. by enacting the Rehabilitation Act, whose stated purpose is "to empower individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into society." He further states that since the U.S. is the only major country to have paper money of the same size, it shouldn't be a problem for us to change.

Perhaps this is a good idea. Perhaps we do need to do something to make it easier for the one million blind people in our country to use our money. But perhaps we should also make it easier for them to read labels and instructions on packages. Perhaps there are many things we should do, but the question is "Who should decide that?"

It seems we go to a lot of trouble to elect a Congress to decide these things. Perhaps if someone held hearings they would find that a computerized reader given to every blind person would only cost 100 million dollars and would solve many more problems than money.

How did we get to the point where a single federal judge thinks he should decide that which we elected a Congress to do, even if he does think our European friends do have all the answers. The sheer audacity of this ruling makes yet another case to eliminate the lifetime appointment of federal judges.

I would like Congress to take up this debate to help the blind in a meaningful way. I would also like Congress take up the debate to limit the terms of federal judges and to impeach judges who think they make laws, not interpret them.



Personal responsibility gets an 'F' in the Duke lacrosse case

Jean Barwick
2/1/2007

If there were ever a case of learning things the hard way, the Duke lacrosse team rape case is it. We watched with concern as rape allegations by a black stripper were made against the mostly white Duke University lacrosse team. A long standing reputation of underage drinking and bad behavior by the lacrosse team preceded the rape allegation making it all the more believable. The unfolding case, which appears now to have

unravalled, exposes an alarming lack of personal responsibility that damages everyone involved personally, politically and professionally for the rest of their lives.

A narcissistic political opportunist, Mike Nifong, running for the Democratic nomination for district attorney in Durham County, capitalized on a rare political circumstance. Durham, North Carolina, home to one of the country's most elitist universities and marked by wide social, racial and class distinctions, handed Nifong a legal 'perfect storm' with arrogant, privileged white athletes, alcohol, sex, racial prejudice and damning DNA evidence on one side, and a poor, struggling black single mother on the other. In this case, as with all other cases in his charge, the district attorney was expected to manage the evidence and to be a fair and impartial minister of justice.

Nifong's political campaign immediately hit the print and broadcast media stage where he systematically pointed out that the lacrosse team's lack of personal responsibility lead to the transgressions against the accuser, or victim, as he referred to her. His public comments no doubt lead to widespread condemnation of the lacrosse team and heightened racial tensions in the community. In the days following the allegation and Nifong's public statements concerning the case, protesters converged on the campus demanding justice for the woman.

Over the past year, the case has begun to evaporate. The damning DNA evidence from the accuser that was supposed to be a slam dunk for the prosecution revealed genetic material from seven distinct males - none of which matched DNA from any member of the Duke lacrosse team. The accuser has changed her recollections of the incident a number of times since the first report. Now she's not sure a rape occurred at all.

The lacrosse case has degenerated into a travesty for everyone involved and the North Carolina Bar has finally decided to take action. Nifong has been removed from the case and has been named in a complaint brought by the Bar where he will be discussing his own lack of personal responsibility to the Disciplinary Hearing Committee.

Although most of the attention in this case has focused on Nifong's misconduct, he doesn't shoulder all of the blame for what has happened. The Duke lacrosse students and their accuser certainly bear an enormous burden for the tragic chain of events. This case dramatically illustrates the potential and very real consequences of the boy culture, arrogance and male privilege that is fostered in university athletic programs. No one expects universities to teach its athletes personal responsibility - that should be learned at home - but universities should hold their student athletes accountable for their behavior.

The very real possibility that the accuser lied about the rape looms large over the case and has all but derailed it. Although the lacrosse team is no model for good conduct and citizenship, the emotional and financial consequences of defending themselves against a lie of this magnitude will be felt by their families for decades. Failure to accept personal responsibility by the accuser in this case has longer reaching consequences for her three children. Most people accept the fact that engaging in risky behaviors will have negative consequences somewhere down the line. It's one thing to put yourself at risk but condemning your children to the same risk is unacceptable. By excusing her behavior and blaming bigotry, prejudice, sexism and closed mindedness for her lifestyle, we make her more vulnerable and put her children at greater risk. Accepting personal responsibility for one's actions is always the harder choice, and I see no victims here. Instead I see a group of adults who refused at multiple points to be the sole determinants in the choices they made. Let the chips fall where they may.



Hating the rich - America's second favorite pastime

Jean Barwick
2/26/2007

In January Nancy Pelosi landed at the podium of the House of Representatives like she'd been shot from a cannon at a county fair. Decked out in her \$7000 designer jumpsuit, the newly sworn in Speaker addressed the House and the nation with the same tired mantra we've heard for years - "the Democrats are going to take America in a new direction . . ." "eliminate tax cuts for the rich . . ." "the rich don't pay their fair share. . ." The Democrat's rhetoric is carefully charged to provoke class envy and keep the American working and non-working classes believing that their economic plight is directly attributable to tax breaks for a privileged class who has become wealthy by exploiting the poor. Democrats again feel empowered by the American proletariat to legislate a trail of disastrous social and economic policies to redistribute the wealth of the American people. Such beliefs are the hallmarks of socialism.

Aside from Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, we're not sure who the wealthy are exactly because the definition continues to change at the whim of legislators on the prowl for more money, but we know we're supposed to hate them. Much of this hatred stems from the belief that most wealthy people inherited their fortune and didn't "earn" it, and, thereby, don't "deserve" it. Politicians, many of whom are quite wealthy themselves, often exploit this misconception to garner the working class vote. As with many things, the perception is quite different from the reality. In 2000, less than 30% of wealthy Americans listed on the Forbes 400 became wealthy through inheritance.

A number of interesting qualities characterize wealthy people, particularly the first generation wealthy. Most own their own businesses. Business owners are four times more likely to

become millionaires than people who are employed by others. 20% of affluent households in America are headed by retirees with the remaining 80% headed by the self employed. The wealthy are typically adept at managing assets and investments. Most first generation wealthy put a high value on education and are willing to make considerable sacrifices to achieve financial independence.

The economic freedom and mobile market in America consistently produce more wealthy individuals than any other nation. Business owners create millions of American jobs - nearly 60% of the private sector labor force. Employment and spending by the middle class and the wealthy in this country drive most of our economic activity, not to mention generating the tax revenues to support an increasingly bloated and insatiable government. Venture capital spawns new business which creates jobs, spending and tax revenues. Philanthropy by the wealthy supports countless charities, hospitals, schools and granting programs which in turn create opportunity, jobs, spending and tax revenues. And, yes, the wealthy pour billions into Democrat and Republican political coffers which creates more jobs, spending and tax revenues.

The insidious tactics to "raise revenue", the Democrats' euphemism for increasing taxes, by Speaker Pelosi and her tax addicted buddies in Congress are far too predictable. Marginalize a small, unpopular group whose vision, hard work and perseverance contribute immeasurably to America's prosperity. Never miss an opportunity to foster contempt of the wealthy by the working and non-working classes. Take their money and their property. Legislate more palliatives for the poor that have already made them fatally dependent on government handouts and destroyed their hope of ever extricating themselves and their children from the culture of poverty. Tax and legislate John Edwards' "two Americas" to the lowest common denominator creating a single hopelessly government dominated class in which incentive is not only obsolete but is punished by a tiny but privileged ruling class. Beautiful, isn't it?



Al Gore - global warming's Bigfoot

Jean Barwick
3/29/2007

While former Vice President Al Gore was jetting around the world promoting his global warming documentary and lecturing greenies about reducing carbon emissions, the Tennessee Center for Policy Research was quietly gathering information from public records about the Gore family's extravagant energy consumption at their Belle Meade home in Nashville. It turns out, the Gore family consumes more electricity each

month than the average American family uses in an entire year.

Kalee Krider, spokeswoman for the Gore family, defended the self-annointed poster boy for the global warming movement by pointing out that the Gores use "compact fluorescent light bulbs." Light bulbs? Does anyone really believe compact fluorescents offset the energy required to heat the Gore's outdoor swimming pool?

The Gores also "work at home," continued Krider. I thought the energy required to produce home office BS was pretty low, but the 221,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) required to fuel the Gore manufacturing operation compared to a national average of just under 11,000kWh per household, proved me wrong.

Perhaps realizing that readers might view light bulbs and the home office routine as shallow justification for her employers' conspicuous energy consumption, Krider threw in a few global warming "science" buzz words, like "carbon footprint" and "carbon offsets" to make us believe the Gores are actively engaged in true conservation of the earth's renewable energy sources. The former vice president, she explained, is asking every family (that would be every family in the world) to follow his example and calculate its carbon footprint to determine how much

heat its energy consumption contributes to heating our fragile earth and take steps to offset it. Krider failed to add that since the release of "An Inconvenient Truth," Gore's treatise on global warming, energy consumption of fossil-based fuels at the Gore home actually increased from 16,200kWh per month in 2005 to 18,400kWh per month in 2006.

Gore defends his energy-rich lifestyle by claiming to maintain a "carbon neutral" existence through the purchase of "carbon offsets."

According to the environmentalists' theory, these carbon offsets indirectly reduce the net carbon emissions of individuals and industries by proxies that consume less energy or reduce their carbon emission and/or increase their absorption of greenhouse gases. In other words, Gore purchases carbon credits from sources that consume less energy than he does - sources whose carbon footprint is smaller than his. They consume less so Gore buys the privilege of consuming what they don't use, similar to the practice in the Middle Ages of purchasing "Indulgences." No actual energy product is transferred from one person or business to another in this offset transaction.

Gore buys forgiveness for his sin of consumption so he can keep sinning. The less well off worldwide, of course, cannot afford the indulgence of the "carbon neutral" lifestyle enjoyed by Mr. Gore.

Frequently left out of the Gore information packet is the fact that he and other environmentalists purchase carbon offsets through Generation Investment Management, a London-based investment and hedge fund firm with offices in Washington, D.C. Al Gore is the founder and chairman of Generation Investment Management. The firm's goal is to find and invest in companies that will pay off in terms of their enlightened approaches to alternative energy sources, the environment, and social accountability.

By their own business model, Generation Investment Management invests in or buys companies uniquely poised to take advantage of global warming issues with the capability to generate billions for investors, including Gore himself. Enabled by an adoring media that steadfastly refuses to present arguments to the global warming scenario, Gore jets around the world in search of new business opportunities leaving in his wake an ever growing personal carbon footprint and assuaging his guilt by purchasing carbon offsets from himself.

The Tennessee Center for Policy Research is absolutely correct to bring the glaring inconsistencies of the Gore lifestyle to light and expose him as an environmental fraud. Gore's hypocrisy discredits serious environmental concerns and the growing reality of dwindling natural resources shared by citizens worldwide.



Pelosi – read your job description – soon

Jean Barwick
4/26/2007

Nancy Pelosi's visit to Damascus earlier this month to open dialogue and broker a peace agreement between Syria and Israel was nothing more than a pathetic display of political theater. The congresswoman, a San Francisco Democrat, led a congressional delegation of four Democratic committee chairmen, another Democrat who is the House's only Muslim, and one Republican. Pelosi received reassurances from Syrian president Bashar al-Assad that he was ready to begin peace negotiations with Israel. The Speaker delivered a message from Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert that Israel was ready to engage in peace talks with Syria.

The Speaker's grandstanding for a sustained peace in the Middle East hit the wall when Olmert

announced that Israel had sent no such message to Syria via Pelosi. Olmert reiterated Israel's long-standing position not to engage in negotiations with Syria or any other state which sponsors Hamas and Islamic Jihad, supplies weapons to Hezbollah or supports terrorist activities in Iraq and Iran.

Perhaps someone should remind Pelosi that she is the Speaker of the House, not the Secretary of State. Members of Congress typically visit areas of conflict around the world to gather facts to make informed decisions about foreign policy, not to initiate diplomacy. Diplomacy lies within the purview of the executive branch of government, not the legislative branch. By attempting to initiate diplomacy during her Damascus trip, botched or not, Pelosi clearly exceeded her constitutional authority.

The executive branch of government controls foreign policy and the armed forces. Congress controls appropriations and advises and consents on appointments and promotions. Without this constitutional separation any member of Congress could negotiate with foreign leaders with full authority of the United States. The United States must deliver a single, unified message on foreign policy, not 538 messages, especially in regard to state-sponsored terrorism in countries like Syria and Iran. Speaker Pelosi is not allowed to direct U.S. military operations in foreign countries, nor is she allowed to initiate diplomacy in foreign countries.

Pelosi went to great lengths to express her solidarity with President Bush against terrorism but responded to criticism of her actions from Vice President Cheney with a crack about "the poverty of ideas of this administration . . ." Countering criticism from Republicans, a few Democrats and the media, Pelosi pointed out that several Republicans had visited Syria and met with Syrian leaders. The difference she overlooked is that the Republicans did not initiate diplomacy talks with terrorist nations.

We are constantly hammered with the Democrats' outrage that President Bush is exceeding the authority of the executive branch of government in his execution of the war on terrorism. Where is the outrage against Speaker Pelosi and her alternative "Democratic foreign policy?" Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA), who chairs the House Foreign Affairs Committee, describes the Democratic foreign policy as a beginning to restoring overseas credibility and respect for the United States. That Speaker Pelosi would present her conciliatory "Democratic foreign policy" over the foreign policy of a sitting president is not only an outrage, it endangers every American soldier and citizen in every part of the world.

Pelosi's trip to Damascus served two purposes, neither of which embraces the cause of peace in the Middle East: first, to belittle the United States and President Bush in the world theater; and, second, to galvanize anti-war loyalties at home. There are reports that the Speaker and Rep. Lantos are considering another diplomacy mission to the Middle East - this time to bring Iran into the fold. Pelosi's arrogance blinds her to the history of negotiating with implacable enemies. Her lack of wisdom blinds her to the consequences.



Equality vs. liberty: Liberals just don't get it

Jean Barwick
5/21/2007

The enlightened left never fails to raise the hair on the back of my neck several times a day. Whether it's the tone of a newspaper headline or the exaggerated political pique of a legislator or Hollywood know-it-all, I find myself increasingly troubled about what they actually want. The liberal dogma of fairness and equality and

their persistent romantic attachment to the socialist ideologies of minimum wages laws, sweeping immigration amnesty reform, progressive tax rates, class warfare and government-mandated largesse show that what they really want is equality of outcome. Leveling the playing field by reducing all of us to the lowest common denominator forms the emotional cornerstone of today's Democratic Party.

Most conservatives appreciate the historical and moral significance of the constitutional principle that all people are created equal under the law, but regard liberty as the highest form of equality from which all other political and social ideals evolve.

Liberty and the right of the American colonists to govern themselves ushered in the Revolutionary War, and it's not likely that a single colonist marched into that war with the hope of socialistic equality in his heart. Liberation from the British crown in 1776 brought instead the equality of opportunity. In a liberated society, the equality of opportunity is available to everyone regardless of social status, talent, ambition or physical and mental prowess. Because people are not equal in ability, ambition and effort, it's inevitable that, without government intervention, some people will excel at sports, some will become more wealthy than others, some will receive recognition in art and music. Most conservatives believe that the equality of opportunity is limited only by ambition, ability and an unwillingness to make short term sacrifices to achieve long term goals.

Since equality of opportunity allows individuals to achieve what they can, liberty often propagates inequality and this inequality inevitably impairs individual liberty. This consequence of liberty provides fertile ground for liberals, who believe there is a finite amount of wealth in the world, to exploit the natural emotions of resentment and envy of the non-working and working classes to achieve the desired sameness of outcome. Conservatives, of course, see the other side of the coin. How can we be equal when a small minority of citizens pays more than 40 percent of its income in taxes while the remaining 60 percent pay no income tax at all? No one with the slightest spark of rational thought can possibly call this situation equal.

Liberals' idea of equality is based on the fundamental inequality that they, rather than you, know what you are entitled to and how you should live your life. If you have more money than they think you need, they believe you are keeping it from someone else who needs it. They are fascinated with the idea that everyone should end up with the same amount of money after they redistribute the wealth, not just from the rich, but from middle class wage earners as well.

Over the last several decades, Democrats have escalated the polarizing politics of resentment and envy to the fevered pitch we enjoy today. The effect of this never-ending vitriol is the erosion of rational thought and bipartisan efforts to improve our society. Most of us remember the following words from civics class: from each according to his ability, to each according to his need. These words described the redistributionist equality of communist Russia. Not a day passes that we don't hear these same words from elitist and imperious elected representatives in the United States Senate and House of Representatives.

Local Democrats who call themselves conservative liberals deny the socialist trends of the national party, but their party just passed a 2.9 trillion dollar budget bill that contains the largest tax increase in the history of the world. We all need to debate this issue honestly and if the majority votes to move this country toward socialism, so be it. The capitalists can vote to leave even as they are now doing in Venezuela. But we need to stop the subterfuge that is being used to convince entire generations of Americans that the government can make better decisions for them than they can make for themselves.

These distortions are stupefying entire generations of Americans into trading away their liberty for the shallow promise of a better life that history has taught us, will never come to pass.