

Donna Brazile Joins Tenth Dems University Event

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Tenth Dems was honored to have Donna Brazile, Democratic National Committee Vice Chair of Voter Registration and Participation (pictured below), join us on October 1 during our exciting Tenth Dems University event, Women in Politics. The panel included Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, YWCA Lake County President Janice Bennett, and Josina Morita, candidate for Commissioner of the Metropolitan

Water Reclamation District of Chicago. The discussion was moderated by author and lecturer Rebecca Sive.

Look for the November edition of *Tenth News*, which will feature a complete report of this memorable evening, along with an extensive photo album. ■

more pictures on page 4



Tenth News

www.tenthdems.org

OCTOBER 2015 Illinois Tenth Congressional District Democrats Newsletter Volume 12, Edition 10

A Conversation on Current Events with *Sun-Times* Columnist Neil Steinberg

by Carol Hillsberg

Claiming to be a humorist, not a political writer, *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist Neil Steinberg proved to be both a humorous and astute political observer at the Tenth Dems U event, Wednesday, September 9, at the Renaissance Hotel in Northbrook. Before an enthusiastic audience of approximately 75, Mr. Steinberg commented on a number of political phenomena in a rapid-fire stream of consciousness fashion, drawing on personal stories, current events, as well as Friedrich Nietzsche to make his points.

Mr. Steinberg described a conversation with his mother who was distraught over the fact that her cousin supports Donald Trump. Realizing that nothing will persuade this cousin, or other Trump acolytes, to come over to the other side, Neil knew that all he could do was attempt to comfort his mother. In contrast to the true believers on the right, Neil believes that liberal thinkers are thoughtful and therefore rarely feel the same certainty as his mother's cousin and her allies.

In an analysis of the actions of Kim Davis, a county clerk in Tennessee, Neil made the point that if we all enforced our religion



the nation would unravel. In refusing to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples because she is instructed by God, Ms. Davis is perpetuating a corrosive negative. She is letting her religious beliefs dictate her actions as an elected official, rather than the laws of the land as affirmed by the Supreme Court. She is attempting to harness the engine of government to force her religion on others. Indeed, religion and morality are not the same thing, according to Mr. Steinberg.

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Kim Davis Perverts the American Principle of Religious Liberty

by Steven Gan

I know we've all had it up to our necks with Kim Davis. In case you've forgotten, Davis is the Clerk of Rowan County, Kentucky. This four-time married woman who gave birth to twins out of wedlock became infamous when she refused to uphold the law of the land regarding marriage equality. Styling her dereliction of her duty as an elected official as an act of conscience based upon religious convictions, Davis prevented her office from issuing marriage licenses until a federal judge coerced compliance with the law by sending her to jail for contempt of court.

Davis now depicts herself as a persecuted victim of religious intolerance. She proclaims that God's law (as she interprets it) supersedes the United States Constitution. She thus perverts the principles of religious liberty enshrined in our Constitution.

Here's what religious liberty in the United States means to me. Americans can

- attend churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples of their choosing. Or not.
- publish, sell, and disseminate any kind of sacred religious text.
- write blogs, commentary, and opinions from any religious perspective.
- advertise religious meetings and schedules of religious events in newspapers and magazines, and on billboards, radio, and TV.
- pray quietly by themselves or joyously with others, whether out in public or in their homes.
- raise money to build religious hospitals, schools, universities, and other institutions.
- travel throughout the country proselytizing their religious beliefs.
- marry people of the same faith, or of a different faith.

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CONGRESS WATCH: Serious Issues Confront Congress This Fall

by Laurence D. Schiller



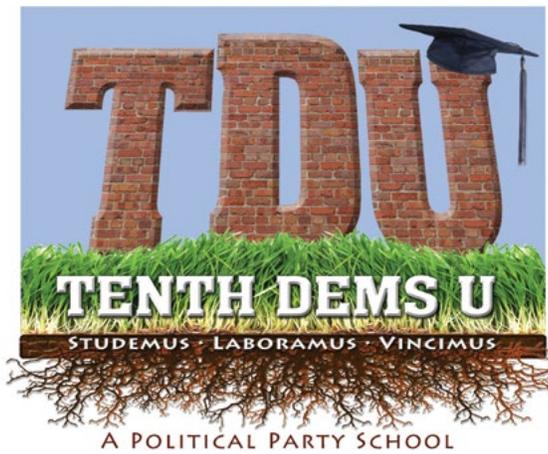
Although serious unresolved issues confronted Congress in early August, the GOP leadership decided to take off for a long vacation, leaving a whole series of fiscal deadlines looming in the fall, along with the military budget, highway bill, immigration reform, Iran, and other major issues sitting in the "inbox." While we've been alternately amused and appalled by the clown car of Republican presidential candidates, each vying to see who can present the most draconian plans to destroy unions, deport all immigrants, and in general transfer more wealth to the one percent while beating down the rest of us, the return of one of the most dysfunctional Congresses in history on September 8 should have forced the GOP leadership to put up or shut up on these pending issues. Instead, it led to an internal Republican leadership crisis that threatens to leave the Republican Congress even more dysfunctional than it has been.

With the Tea Party caucus threatening to shut down the government entirely if they didn't get their way over defunding Planned Parenthood, Speaker John Boehner announced his resignation. Then he and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R. KY) quickly pushed through a temporary measure that will keep the government funded into the middle of December.

So what's next? Neither of these leaders wanted a shutdown because they understood that a shutdown will inevitably damage the GOP brand, as it did the last time Republicans resorted to that tactic. But with Boehner gone, the next Republican Speaker of the House is bound to be even more radical.

Republican Congressman Bob Dold has sent emails to constituents in which he takes credit for helping to avert an end-of-September government shutdown by voting for the stopgap measure that funds the government through December 11. But will either he or Republican Senator Mark Kirk work to avert a shutdown when temporary funding runs out? Or take a stand on raising the debt ceiling, another imminent crisis? Will either demand that the radical elements in the Republican caucus

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Neil Steinberg Speaks at TDU Event

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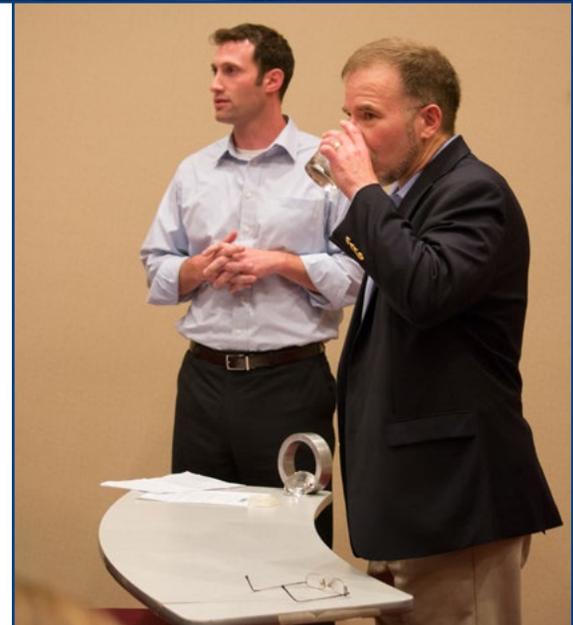
During the course of the conversation, Mr. Steinberg made pithy comments about well-known political personages here in Illinois. He considers Rahm Emanuel to be a shoe-leather politician who excels at greeting voters in unstaged settings. He considers Governor Bruce Rauner to be both grating and obnoxious and Senator Mark Kirk to be ungracious. He disagrees with Rauner's and Kirk's policies and feels that Republicans are good at coming up with negative ways to look at things.

Mr. Steinberg realizes that in politics and government one has to make hard choices. Otherwise, if all one does is "kick the can down the road," the result is "a room full of cans." Americans need to fight for something specific and recognize that government serves an important role to that end. However, he offered this caveat—quoting Friedrich Nietzsche: "Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster." In other words, if you're fighting terrorism, don't establish a prison at Guantanamo Bay.

Mr. Steinberg is a well-informed, articulate observer of the political and social world. Having joined the staff of the Sun-Times in 1987, he currently writes a column three times a week. In addition, he writes a blog (www.everygoddamnday.com), and is the author of seven books.

Another quote by the German philosopher Nietzsche applies to this Tenth Dems University event: "And we should call every truth false which was not accompanied by at least one laugh."

more photos on pages 6 and 8





Illinois Should Adopt Universal Vote-By-Mail

by Matt Flamm and Cary Shepherd



We have written a white paper urging the Illinois General Assembly to adopt Universal Vote-By-Mail (Universal VBM). Under Universal VBM, a ballot is mailed to every registered voter about three weeks before Election Day. The voter can return the ballot by mail or drop it in a secure drop box.

Universal VBM has been popular in Oregon, Washington, and Colorado. Turnout has increased significantly in these states because every registered voter automatically receives a ballot. Voters can research the candidates before voting. Universal VBM also eliminates waiting lines in high-turnout elections.

Universal VBM would decrease the cost of Illinois elections by more than \$10 million per year. There would be no need to hire thousands of election judges and other election-day personnel, nor would there be a need to purchase and maintain voting machines.

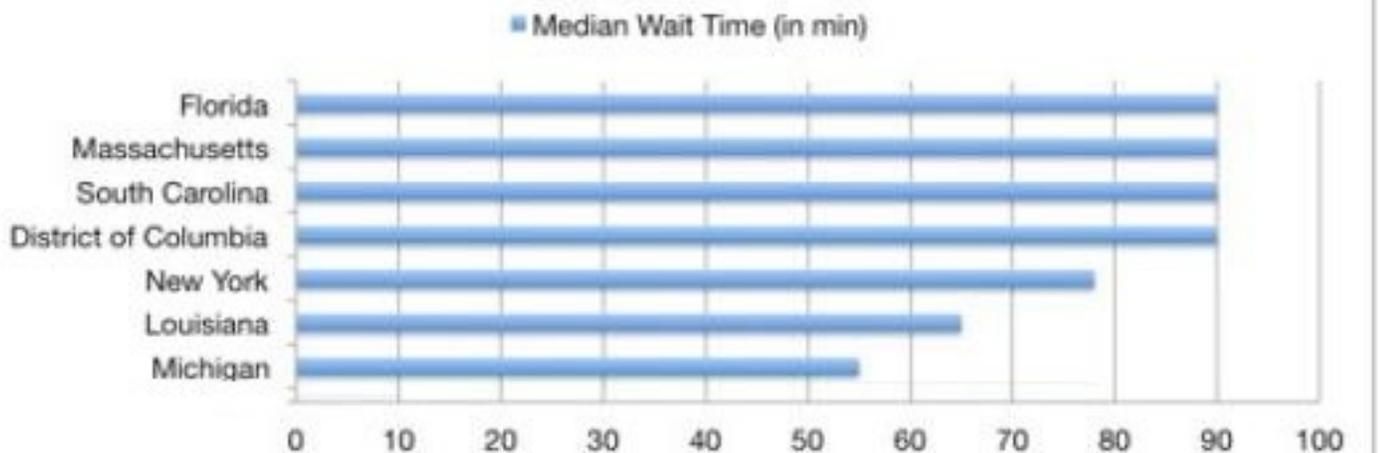
We propose that Universal VBM be tried on an experimental basis for the 2017 local government elections. Turnout in the 2015 local government elections was only 20 percent of turnout in the 2012 Presidential election, but the cost of running these elections was virtually identical.

Unlike some states which have restricted voting rights, Illinois has been a leader in encouraging voter participation. Universal VBM lets voters consider their votes more carefully and cast their ballots at their convenience, at a fraction of the cost taxpayers now pay.

To read the complete white paper, [click on this link](#). ■

Matt Flamm is a Chicago election lawyer and Palatine Township Democratic Committeeman. Cary Shepherd is a law student at the University of Chicago Law School.

The Waits at the Polls





Climate and Weather—Not Exactly the Same Thing

by Donnie Dann



It was a cold February in Washington, D.C., this year, and James Inhofe, a U.S. Senator from Oklahoma, threw a snowball in the Senate chamber as part of his argument that global warming is a hoax. This stunt evidences a real problem in the struggle to prevent climate change—confusion over the difference between weather and climate.

Every living thing on earth, including of course its human inhabitants, observes weather on a daily basis. Weather is what we perceive when we step outside—cold or warm, wet or dry, windy or still, and cloudy or sunny. But that is NOT the climate.

If you lived in much of eastern North America last year, or spent time on a ship in the mid-North Atlantic Ocean or the Straits of Magellan, your weather this past winter was much colder than normal. When people experience record colds and look no further than what their senses tell them, they might be skeptical about global warming.

But worldwide, according to scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the climate in 2014 was in fact the hottest since record keeping began in 1880. Moreover, the seemingly inexorable warming trend over the past 135 years is unmistakable.

The most thorough analysis I've seen confirming planetary climate warming caused by humans was published by the American Institute of Physics (AIP). (See <https://www.aip.org/history/climate/20ctrend.htm>) "Regardless of what had happened in past centuries, the warming since the 19th century was as certain a fact as anything in science" by 2012, according to Dr. Spencer Weart, former director of AIP's Center for History of Physics.

In Dr. Weart's comprehensive history of the discovery of global warming, he explains: "The coup de grace for people who doubted the climate community's statistics came from their own ranks. A painstaking reanalysis of land-station data was organized by warming skeptic Richard Muller and funded by oil billionaire Charles G. Koch, a leading sponsor of groups that attacked the climate consensus. The study only confirmed what every other study had found. There was a marked recent rise, Muller's group announced in 2012,

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Kim Davis and Religious Liberty

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- minister to prison inmates.
- celebrate holy days.

This list is not comprehensive, but it demonstrates the extent to which our government protects religious liberty.

But Kim Davis maintained that her religious liberty was violated when the office she headed as an elected official issued marriage licenses with her name on them as clerk to same-sex couples. In other words, Kim Davis claims the right to impose her religious beliefs on the citizens of Rowan County, Kentucky. Even though she was a public servant employee who took an oath to uphold the Constitution, she asserted her religious right to refuse marriage licenses to gay Americans because of her belief that "marriage is only between one man and one woman." Issuing marriage licenses to gay couples would violate her "conscience," she claimed.

But what about the consciences of the gay couples whose civil rights were denied when their applications for marriage licenses were rejected before Davis was incarcerated for being in contempt of court? What about their dignity when they were turned away from the county clerk's office?

What really blows me away is Davis' attorney, Mat Staver of Liberty Counsel (not to mention former Arkansas Governor and presidential candidate Mike Huckabee, who rushed to depict Davis as a modern day Joan of Arc). I got sick when Staver compared his client to Abraham Lincoln and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. What nerve! The analogy that Kim Davis' anti-gay marriage stance is the same as Lincoln's bold stance against slavery and King's courageous fight against bigotry and discrimination towards African Americans is horribly disrespectful to the memory of these two great leaders. And in view of all the decades of discrimination and countless hate crimes perpetrated against gay Americans, it is downright demented.

Fortunately, although Davis is back at her job, as long as she continues to hide in her office with her door closed and the blinds drawn, the deputy clerks who are busy issuing marriage licenses can get on with their work and the taxpayers of Rowan County will be provided all the services due to them, regardless of their sexual orientation.

As for Mike Huckabee, he's just a footnote. Boy oh boy, did he milk all the fanfare surrounding Davis' release from jail, even offering to go back to jail on her behalf. The guy knows he'll never be president, but these photo ops will sure help to make him a highly paid regular on the Evangelical speaking circuit, where Davis no doubt will be his equally well-paid sidekick. ■



Let Us Count the Lies

by Barbara Altman

Last month in this newsletter I cautioned that the Republican Presidential debates serve as a vehicle for disseminating GOP propaganda and warned against accepting at face value any statistic quoted by a candidate. Now that I have watched all three hours of the second debate, broadcast on CNN on September 16, I must admit that I seriously underestimated the Republican candidates' capacity for dissembling.



Let's start with Carly Fiorina, poised to be the next runner-up, if not front-runner among the now 16 Republican presidential hopefuls. Fiorina markets herself as a self-made woman and successful CEO. We've all heard about how she was fired by Hewlett-Packard after running the business into the ground. So much for the successful CEO.

What was new for me was Fiorina's personal story. During the debate she described herself as someone who rose from secretary to CEO. The truth? The only time Carly Fiorina ever worked as a secretary was when she was a college student. It was a summer job. She comes from a privileged and well-connected background—her father was Dean of Duke University School of Law and later a Deputy Attorney General and then a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Carly graduated from Stanford, attended law school for a semester, and after earning an MBA was hired by AT&T as a management-trainee. So much for the Horatio Alger story.

Of course, Fiorina's most egregious misrepresentation of the evening, and the one addressed over the ensuing 72 hours by the news media, was her passionate, vivid description of a video she said exposed the harvesting for sale of fetal body parts. The problem? There is absolutely no connection between Planned Parenthood and the purported contents of the phantom video Fiorina evoked, even though the question she was responding to related to the Republicans' desire to defund Planned Parenthood. And although she strongly implied otherwise, Fiorina never saw the video she described.

Fiorina was not alone. Jeb Bush defended his brother's administration by claiming that, unlike President Obama, his brother, President George W. Bush, "kept us safe." Never mind that the September 11 attacks occurred on Bush's watch and there has been no foreign attack on U.S. soil under Obama. The Republican dogma is that Bush was not accountable for the September 11 attacks but deserves credit for their non-

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Climate and Weather

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that could only be explained as human-caused."

Need more evidence that this temperature trend is not part of earth's long-term regular heating and cooling cycles? Check out this recent article in *Scientific American*, in particular the top two charts, which show the unmistakable correlation between increasing atmospheric carbon and our climate's warming temperatures.

Global warming is not a hoax or some vast conspiracy by scientists and journalists. Rational, environmentally conscious people may ask themselves why many of their neighbors (and political leaders) continue to question the reality of increasing planetary temperatures. Yet skeptics do. One of the reasons they continue to do so, forcefully demonstrated by the Senator from Oklahoma, is the confusion between climate and weather. And this confusion is dangerous in the face of the scientific consensus on climate change. ■

Congress Watch

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behave reasonably? Not if history is any guide.

Dold voted in 2011 to shut the government down, falling in step with the Tea Party caucus, and has voted dozens of times, as has Kirk, to repeal healthcare for all Americans. Moreover, Dold will vote in October for a Speaker of the House who, according to all reasonable predictions, will double down on the GOP right wing's agenda. Republican hard liners have stated that they will not move bills forward—to fund the government or to raise the debt ceiling—that don't embrace their extreme agenda, in particular defunding Planned Parenthood and repealing the Affordable Care Act. President Obama has said he would veto any such bill. Congressional Democrats have additionally stated they want an end to the sequester that has been so damaging to the economy.

Watch carefully what Dold and Kirk do--and don't do--in Congress. And take particular note of the *meaningful* votes they

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Congress Watch

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cast. Do they vote with their party when the extreme elements of bills are still attached? It is easy—and convenient—to vote for abortion rights when you know that the amendment protecting those rights will be defeated anyway. But it actually takes guts and principles to vote against a completed bill with anti-choice language intact that is just daring President Obama to exercise his veto.

Watch this column. We will continue to track Dold's and Kirk's votes very carefully.

Here are some of the key issues that Congress needs to consider this fall, in addition to passing a clean funding bill and raising the debt ceiling:

The Highway Trust Fund and FAA - Congress has failed to find a long-term solution for funding our failing infrastructure. Just before the recess, the Senate passed a three-year highway funding bill, but House Republicans rejected it. Funding for the Federal Aviation Administration ends September 30th and for the Highway Trust Fund on October 29th. The sequester has forced the FAA to furlough air traffic controllers, resulting in flight delays. The highway trust fund has a \$16 billion shortfall, in part caused by falling gasoline prices that have diminished the federal taxes collected at the pump. But Republican leaders have rejected increasing the gas tax while proposing no alternative means of funding our highways.

Defense Department Funding - Tied up with general finance are the caps on spending imposed by the 2011 sequester agreement. The Pentagon has been hit hard by spending reductions, and while Republicans want to increase military spending, Democrats and the White House want to tie any increase to the removal of caps on nondefense spending. Other knotty issues concern the level of support for the fight against ISIL and closing the Guantanamo Bay prison. A final spending bill must be approved by January 1, 2016, or the Pentagon will not be able to authorize new projects or provide pay increases to troops. While Kirk touts his military record and Dold meets with veterans' groups, neither has supported the end of the sequester, which would allow increases to both active military and the VA.

Environmental issues - Kirk and Dold have portrayed themselves as environmentalists, but they will be tested as Republicans try to overturn the EPA's new climate rule for power plants (Clean Power Act), made final in August. Bowing to coal companies, the GOP has promised to weaken or eliminate the rule altogether. Republicans have also pledged to fight the EPA's new Waters of the United States rule and any international agreement reached in Paris this December designed to fight climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. With their party steadfastly in the grip of climate deniers and energy companies, we will watch carefully how Kirk and Dold vote. History tells us they won't buck their party except specifically in the case of Lake Michigan. They have been poor environmentalists, as groups such as the Sierra Club have noted.

Still, never one to miss an opportunity to sound like a moderate,

ComCon ArtWauk Open House a Festive Evening



Community Connection Corner

Tenth Dems Community Connection had a fun and spirited Open House during Waukegan's monthly ArtWauk celebration on Saturday evening, September 18th.

Bonnie Berger-Neel, Jim Neel, Lauren Beth Gash, Carolyn Rivers, John Shepherd, Karen Singer, and several others welcomed candidate representatives, friends, and many enthusiastic passers-by for an evening of camaraderie, like minds, and conversation about how the Community Connection office is about much more than just elections. The refreshments were delicious, and there was singing, too!

Also during the evening volunteers collected voter signatures on candidate petitions to ensure that great people get on the ballot, up and down the Democratic ticket.

Keep your eye out for word on the next Tenth Dems Community Connection ArtWauk Open House and join us! ■

Dold has signed on to a meaningless Congressional resolution. With Pope Francis's visit to Congress on September 24, Dold and some other GOP Congressmen who knew that the Pope would make climate change a major part of his speech wanted to get on the record as agreeing with the Pope, Democrats, and the overwhelming majority of scientists who say the climate is changing and that human activity is to blame. However, it was all for show.

The non-binding legislation introduced by Dold and other Republicans on September 18 doesn't actually propose any policies to reduce greenhouse gases but merely calls for research into what could be done. Such Republican inaction is consistent with previous party unity against every climate initiative suggested by President Obama, from cutting carbon emissions by power plants to clean air and water rules enacted by the EPA this summer.

When it has come time to actually protect our environment, Dold has stood with his anti-environment colleagues. Just this past July, Dold voted with every other Republican member of Congress for HR 2647, The Resilient Federal Forest Act of 2015. The bill not only makes it harder to defend our national forests from intentional destruction, but it actually calls for more logging. So why was the bill passed by the Republican House? Because it would reduce the influence of the federal

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Congress Watch

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government and environmental protection organizations.

Once again, Dold's record and rhetoric don't match up. He voted for legislation that hurts the environment—and accelerates climate change—and then claims he might want to do something about it. It's just more hot air from Republican Bob Dold.

Immigration - With Donald Trump and the rest of the Republican presidential contenders trumpeting their anti-immigration agenda and railing at both the birthright provisions of the 14th Amendment and Obama's executive orders designed to protect undocumented immigrants from having their families ripped apart, it will be interesting to see what bills might come before Congress on this issue and where Kirk and Dold will position themselves.

Gun control - With the continuing rash of multiple murders this summer (South Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, Louisiana) and now the October 1 atrocity in Oregon, there have been renewed calls for legislators to face up to the NRA. Neither Kirk nor Dold has taken the lead in this arena, although Kirk has made it clear that there are south side neighborhoods in Chicago through which the wealthy North Suburban Senator won't drive.

Clearly, the Congressional plate is full, and while the GOP and its leadership will try to duck as many issues as possible, there are so many financial deadlines coming up that some significant action will have to occur or we will face another government shutdown. At some point senators and congressmen will have to take a stand and this, I believe, will expose Kirk and Dold for who they really are, conservatives who do NOT have the best interests of the middle and working classes in mind. ■

Republican Lies

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recurrence during his ensuing seven years in office.

Bush also repeated the Republican economic fantasy that by cutting taxes he will raise the middle class and working people's standard of living. Never mind that following tax increases under George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton the middle class thrived. And it is now undeniable that the Bush 43 tax cuts mostly benefitted the wealthiest Americans and are a major cause of the radically increased gap between the rich and the middle class and working people that even Republicans admit is a major issue for our nation. Of course, not one of the Republican debaters acknowledged the Bush recession—much less the Obama recovery, which they outright deny, contrary to fact.

Then there were the candidates' takes on science. Donald Trump told a story meant to perpetuate the myth that pediatric vaccination can cause autism. Shockingly, although the two physicians on the stage acknowledged that the study that purported to associate vaccinations with autism had been soundly discredited, both Ben Carson and fellow physician-politician Rand Paul criticized as government overreaching public health policies that mandate childhood vaccinations.

In a similar vein, Marco Rubio grudgingly acknowledged climate change by alluding to "some changes in the weather" (which reveals a dangerous ignorance of the difference between weather—a day-to-day local phenomenon—and climate, which takes the long, global view; see "Climate and Weather—Not the Same Thing" at p. 7). Having trivialized the issue, Rubio then made the factually bankrupt statement that any government policies to address climate change should be rejected because they would destroy the economy. And U.S. policies wouldn't make a difference anyway, he reasoned, because China is a worse polluter than the U.S. So much for environmental policy.

For his part, Ted Cruz repeated the false GOP charge that the multinational agreement forged with Iran to curb its development of nuclear weapons depends on Iran's inspecting its own facilities, or "self-inspections." You can support or oppose the agreement for any number of reasons, but the fact is that the inspection regime it creates involves 24/7 surveillance of known nuclear sites and permanent onsite presence of International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors.

So I repeat. If you find them entertaining, watch the next Republican presidential debates. But don't expect to learn anything—except, perhaps, the capacity of politicians willfully to distort facts and even to out-and-out lie. ■