



FACTS & OPINIONS

On Public Interest Issues

Quotes

Barry Goldwater

Five-term United States Senator from Arizona, Republican Nominee for President in 1964:

“Equality, rightly understood as our Founding Fathers understood it, leads to liberty and to the emancipation of creative differences; wrongly understood, as it has been so tragically in our time, it leads first to conformity and then to despotism.”

“The income tax created more criminals than any other single act of government.”

“Where is the politician who has not promised to fight to the death for lower taxes - and who has not proceeded to vote for the very spending projects that make tax cuts impossible?”

PII Urges Congress to Support Fiscal Accountability and Transparency in Infrastructure Spending

by Dr. Don Racheter, President, PII

Life-cycle budgeting will help to ensure fiscal transparency, reduced costs, and greater accountability in infrastructure investments.

Senator David Vitter (R-Louisiana) introduced legislation on March 20th that would require a comprehensive life-cycle cost analysis (LCCA) to be conducted for major infrastructure projects that receive at least \$5 million in federal funding.

This action is consistent with the drive for greater transparency in how all levels of government spend taxpayers’ money, long a special priority of the Public Interest Institute, its President Dr. Don Racheter, and the Iowa Transparency Project (see www.IowaTransparency.org for more information).

“We applaud Senator Vit-

ter’s vision and leadership,” said Racheter. “The Fiscal Accountability and Transparency in Infrastructure Spending Act will help fund more projects, creating jobs and driving economic growth by maximizing the infrastructure investments needed to repair and modernize America’s crumbling roads, bridges and highways.

“Life-cycle budgeting is long overdue and will help protect taxpayers from wasteful government spending.”

In a press release announcing the introduction of the Fiscal Accountability and Transparency in Infrastructure Spending Act, Senator Vitter said, “Congress needs to get serious about reducing federal spending on all fronts so we can get on a different, more sustainable fiscal path. . . my bill would help make sure budgets are open and transparent

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FACTS & OPINIONS

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Editor, Deborah D. Thornton

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Focus on Iowa Wesleyan College

Many Exciting Events At IWC This Spring!

During Women's History Month, students, faculty, and staff honored notable women graduates. "Women of Wesleyan Week," March 28-April 1, featured a full schedule.

"Iowa Wesleyan College has a long history of empowering women to achieve excellence," said Meara Habashi, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology.

On April 14, Iowa Poet Laureate Mary Swander presented at IWC, reading from her recent book, *The Girls on the Roof*, a Mississippi River flood narrative. Her program was informative and interesting.

This was followed on April 21 by a presentation of the work of contributors to the college literary magazine, *Design*.

Rounding out the 2010-2011 academic year, the annual Awards program will be April 28, in the Chapel Auditorium, followed by the graduation of our outstanding class of 2011 on May 1.

It has been another excellent and exciting year.

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What's New at Public Interest Institute?

Mount Pleasant Meeting Launched New Organization for Political Scientists

The first annual meeting of the Iowa Association of Political Scientists (IAPS) was held on March 11-12, 2011 at the Howe Activity Center on the campus of Iowa Wesleyan College in Mount Pleasant, Iowa.

The meeting was co-hosted by Iowa Wesleyan College and Public Interest Institute.

Speakers at the Iowa Association of Political Scientists annual meeting included Iowa's Second District Representative Dave Loebsack and Jeff Boeyink, Chief of Staff to Iowa Governor Terry Branstad.

Presentations were also made by Dr. Eduardo Magalhães III of Simpson College and Dr. Christopher W. Larimer of the University of Northern Iowa.

A business meeting was also held to adopt a constitution and by-laws for the IAPS, as well as to elect officers for the newly-formed organization.

Officers for the IAPS, elected at the recent event, include: Dr. Don Racheter of Public Interest Institute and Iowa Wesleyan College,

President; Dr. Christopher Larimer of UNI, President Elect; Dr. Dennis Goldford of Drake University, Past President; Dr. Eduardo Magalhães of Simpson College, Secretary; Amy Frantz of Public Interest Institute, Treasurer; William Parsons of St. Ambrose University, Program Chairman; and Dr. Tom Rice of the University of Iowa, Executive Director.

The Iowa Association of Political Scientists was established to provide professional development opportunities and the sharing of ideas among political science professors, high school civics and government teachers, and others whose profession is in the political science field, as well as anyone who shares an interest in the purpose of the IAPS.

The next annual meeting of the Iowa Association of Political Scientists will be held in Cedar Falls, March 2-3, 2012, hosted by the University of Northern Iowa. Those interested in joining should contact Dr. Don Racheter.

In other news, Research Analyst Deborah Thornton spoke in March at the Friday morning Des Moines Rotary Club. Research Analyst John Hendrickson continues his groundbreaking work on President Warren G. Harding.

We completed a first-ever survey of members' opinions and ideas for the Iowa Legislature and continued to promote transparency in government (see article on page 1).

Facts & Opinions Question of the Quarter:

Should Governor Branstad use the line-item veto to ensure a fiscally responsible budget for 2012?

Send your thoughts on this issue to us at
Public.Interest.Institute@LimitedGovernment.org.
We may publish some of your ideas in the next issue of *Facts & Opinions* in July 2011 and on our Website at:
www.LimitedGovernment.org

Support Fiscal Accountability and Transparency

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so that taxpayer money is not wasted.”

The Fiscal Accountability and Transparency in Infrastructure Spending Act:

- Requires an LCCA of at least 50 years for major infrastructure projects.
- Results of LCCAs must be published online within 72 hours to give taxpayers a transparent look at the real costs of projects.
- Roads and highways are to be built with real-world conditions in mind, utilizing the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' Mechanistic Empirical Pavement Design Guide, which allows engineers to input local conditions (like traffic

and weather) into their designs. This prevents roads from being overdesigned and has already saved millions in limited use at the state Department of Transportation level.

- Officials are encouraged to use alternate design and bidding processes to increase competition and decrease costs. This approach has spurred innovative designs and driven down costs across several states.

To view the Fiscal Accountability and Transparency in Infrastructure Spending Act and Senator Vitter's press release, please visit:

http://vitter.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressRoom.PressReleases&ContentRecord_id=c57e47e6-0a92-199f-8e92-63e051354d85

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Sanctuary City Policies Do More Harm than Good

by Jessica Vaughan

Director of Policy Studies for the Center for Immigration Studies

Proponents of the “Sanctuary City” ordinance in Iowa City said they were motivated to push this plan by a desire to help immigrants who are the victims of crime overcome their fear of authorities and to avoid burdening local law enforcement agencies.

Fortunately, city authorities were not swayed by these misguided claims and kept the needs of all city residents in mind, immigrant and native alike, when they rejected the proposal early in March.

While they may sound compassionate, in reality sanctuary policies do more harm than good, even in Iowa.

There is no official definition of a sanctuary policy, but typically the term refers to those jurisdictions that have policies in place to prevent or discourage local officials, usually police officers and social services workers, from questioning individuals about their immigration status, from reporting illegal immigrants to the federal immigration enforcement agency (ICE), or from denying services or benefits to applicants because they lack legal status.

Some cities have even

created municipal identification cards for illegal aliens.

Besides the fact that sanctuary policies undermine the rule of law generally (and are against federal law), the major problem is that they encourage illegal settlement. This tempts people to take terrible risks, place themselves under the control of dangerous criminals, and break more laws after arrival.

Illegal immigration today is not a benign and peaceful rite of passage to the American Dream; it is a form of organized crime.

Prospective illegal immigrants who come by land must contract with a smuggling organization and pay hundreds or thousands of dollars to arrange passage through routes that are controlled by Mexico’s drug cartels and operated by merciless “coyotes” who view their human clientele no differently than a drug load – a commodity to be moved as quickly as possible, for maximum profit.

The migrants are escorted to drop houses, where they are held and threatened with (or subjected to) violence until their friends or relatives can be extorted for more money. Then they are transported to

their final destination, where they are put in touch with yet another branch of the organization, which provides fraudulent documents (often a stolen Social Security number) and employment.

In the process, people are hurt, Americans and legal workers are boxed out of scarce job opportunities, the cartels and their street gang subcontractors are enriched, and taxpayers and law enforcement agencies are left to pick up the pieces.

A local government that puts out a welcome mat in the form of a sanctuary policy bears some responsibility for the human and community damage that results.

Defenders of illegal immigration often suggest that illegal immigration is like a force of nature that cannot be stopped without implementing draconian policies such as mass deportation, or that illegal immigration will decline naturally in difficult economic times; therefore, states should take no further action.

This argument is false – immigrants are human beings and in addition to reacting to conditions in their home

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countries (the “push factors”), they also respond to incentives and disincentives created by our government policies (the “pull factors”).

Because the federal government lacks the resources to deal with the problem of illegal immigration on its own, and because the economic, fiscal, and public safety consequences of illegal immigration fall largely on the states, state leaders must do what they can to help gain control of this problem.

At least 20 states have enacted measures to address illegal immigration. In addition, from 2006 to 2008, the federal government stepped up enforcement of immigration laws.

The result was a noticeable decline in the size of the illegal population. The Center for Immigration Studies estimates that the illegal alien population declined by 11 percent from mid-2007 to mid-2008, primarily as a result of the increased level of enforcement generated by both the Federal Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and state and local initiatives.¹

In states and communities that have not addressed illegal

immigration, but which have encouraged it, the story is different.

For example, in a study I conducted several years ago on immigrant gangs, I found that some criminal gangs actually moved their operations to Maryland from Virginia because of the lenient, “don’t ask, don’t tell” policies in place in jurisdictions like Montgomery County, Maryland, compared to more assertive law enforcement efforts targeting illegal alien gang members in Virginia.²

In that study I noted the case of Milton Calderon-Menendez, who was released by Montgomery County police in 2007 on a pending assault charge, even though officers knew he was an illegal-alien member of the MS-13 gang.

Calderon failed to appear for his hearing and soon after he stabbed a man in the chest while a friend beat the man with a baseball bat. Officers in Prince William County, Va., who also notified ICE, later arrested Calderon so that he could be removed after serving his sentence.

This case illustrates the value of screening even lower-level offenders for immigration status, detaining them, and working with ICE to have them removed – it prevents future crimes, spares future victims, and saves on future criminal justice costs.

In another example closer to Iowa, a vicious human trafficking ring operating in the Chicago area was recently brought down because an alert local cop who responded to a domestic violence call took the extra step to call ICE, which followed up with an extensive investigation.

Additionally, though not highly visible, immigrant and transnational gangs are active in Iowa.

In 2010, all three ICE regional offices made arrests of Mexican, Guatemalan, and Salvadoran members of MS-13, Florencia-13, Surenos, and other gangs.

Their criminal records included assault, drug charges, burglary, weapons, and child sexual assault, in addition to immigration violations.

Of course, victims and witnesses need not be questioned about their immigration status, but their abusers would not see justice if authorities failed to make use of immigration law tools.

It is widely recognized that employment is the most common incentive for illegal immigration to the United States.

The most effective way to prevent employers from hiring illegal workers is to mandate use of the federal E-Verify and Social Security Number Verification Systems. These

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programs enable employers to electronically verify the status of new hires (E-Verify) or the entire payroll (SSNVS).

Currently, 12 states require all or some employers to use these programs, and 12 more have such legislation pending. E-Verify and SSNVS work.

They help employers avoid hiring illegal workers and make it harder for illegal workers to dupe their employers with false documents. They are easy to use, accurate, and help reduce discrimination against immigrants while having broad public and bi-partisan support.³

The Obama administration has called E-Verify the “cornerstone” of its workplace enforcement efforts, and has requested funding from Congress in 2012 to continue improving it, such as by developing the capacity to better address identity fraud.

The biggest problem with these programs is that they are voluntary. Those employers that wish to continue hiring illegal aliens can excuse themselves from the process.

This is a significant disadvantage for law-abiding employers who must compete with them and for those U.S. and legal immigrant workers who are shut out of those jobs.

Iowa lawmakers should consider requiring all employers, or some sub-set of employers, such as public agencies and contractors, or employers in industries that have large numbers of illegal workers, to use these programs.

Instead of forcing the employees of public agencies to look the other way when they encounter people who lack legal status, local governments should encourage police and other officials to work cooperatively with ICE, especially to make sure that illegal aliens who commit other crimes are removed.

After all, the local police are going to be the first to come across those illegal immigrants who are causing trouble, and ICE agents need their help to do their job.

It is to be hoped that those in Iowa City promoting Sanctuary City policies now turn to other methods of helping immigrants.

Jessica M. Vaughan is Director of Policy Studies for the Center for Immigration Studies, a research institute based in Washington, D.C.

(Endnotes)

¹ Steven A. Camarota and Karen Jensenius, “Homeward Bound: Recent Immigration Enforcement and the Decline of the Illegal Alien Population,” Center for Immigration Studies, July 2008, <http://www.cis.org/trends_and_enforcement>.

² Jessica M. Vaughan and Jon D. Feere, “Taking Back the Streets: ICE and Local Law Enforcement Target Immigrant Gangs,” Center for Immigration Studies, October 2008, <<http://www.cis.org/Immigrant-Gangs>>.

³ Jessica M. Vaughan, “E-Verify Results Demonstrate Accuracy and Efficiency,” Center for Immigration Studies, May 14, 2008, Testimony before the Rhode Island Senate Labor Committee, <<http://www.cis.org/articles/2008/jmvttestimony051408.html>>.

Which of the Four Options will Schools Use?

by Deborah D. Thornton

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced in March that Iowa is one of five states receiving \$2.9 million to turn around persistently lowest achieving schools through the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program.

“When a school performs in the bottom five percent of the state and isn’t showing signs of progress, something dramatic needs to be done,” said Mr. Duncan.

“Turning around our lowest-achieving schools is difficult for everyone but it is critical that we show the courage to do the right thing by kids.”¹

The \$2.9 million will be competed out to local school districts, which will apply for the funds this spring.

One of four school intervention models must be used in each of the schools receiving funds. The models include the “Turnaround,” which involves replacing the principal and over 50 percent of the current staff, and the “Restart,” which can involve converting a school to a charter school. The other models are “Transformation,” which only requires replacing the principal – not other staff – and “Closure,” which requires the school to be

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How Redistricting Works in Iowa and What to Expect

by

State Representative Jeff Kaufmann, (R-Wilton)
Speaker Pro Tem of the Iowa House of Representatives

Last month the federal census report indicated that Iowa's population only increased by about 120,000 in the last decade, from 2,926,325 in 2000 to 3,046,355 in 2010, an increase of 4.1 percent.

The population of the United States as a whole increased by 9.7 percent. We now rank as the 32nd largest state population and 41st in population growth rate.

Now that we have the new population data, the process for redrawing Congressional and Legislative districts has begun. This is a process that happens every 10 years.

Iowa's redistricting process is indeed a good one. Many states use commissions and the process becomes very political, eventually including the courts to settle disputes. Iowa uses the non-partisan Legislative Services Agency (LSA) to create its Congressional and Legislative maps.

The following is a brief overview of the process and decision-making points.

First, the Congressional maps are drawn. Because of our slow growth, Iowa will lose a Congressional seat.

This is a negative development for our state given the accompanying loss of Congressional power as well as

the loss of an electoral vote in the presidential election process. One offsetting factor is the clout and seniority of our current delegation, especially our two Senators. Still one of our Congressmen will lose their job, and more importantly our state will lose some clout.

New Congressional Districts have to be within 1 percent of their ideal population and they can't split county lines. These requirements are of critical importance.

Next, new Legislative districts for the State Senate and State House of Representatives will then be drawn within these four congressional districts. They too can't vary by more than 1 percent and shall coincide with political subdivisions, meaning that the number of counties and cities that are divided shall be as few as possible.

There are 50 Senate Districts and 2 House Districts within a Senate District for a total of 100. Districts can't be irregularly shaped and must be reasonably compact. Most importantly, the LSA may only take population into account when drawing them. Political affiliation is not a factor.

On March 31, the first plan arrived, and must move to the floor for a vote. Meanwhile a

Temporary Advisory Commission has been holding at least three public meetings throughout the state. There are no amendments, just a YES or NO vote.

If the first plan is rejected, a second plan is delivered within 35 days of the rejection of the first plan. Once again the Legislature can only accept or reject...no amendments. If the second plan is accepted, it goes to Governor Branstad for a signature, or if rejected a third plan is developed by LSA.

Finally, if needed, the third plan will be submitted for a vote. In contrast to the other two it can be amended by the Legislature. A plan must be adopted by the General Assembly by September 1, 2011 and signed by the Governor by September 15. If this does not occur then the Iowa Supreme Court creates a redistricting plan.

As background history: in 1981 the third plan was

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accepted without amendment. In 1991, the first plan was enacted, and in 2001, the second plan was enacted.

The decisions made will affect all 150 Legislators, as well as the congressional delegation. For example, in most of my District, the 79th, we have had little population change. In comparison, there have been large population losses in western Iowa County. In further contrast, Polk and Johnson Counties (where I currently have two precincts) have grown significantly. These demographic trends ultimately will affect nearby areas.

One aspect of this redistricting process is sure. It is one of the best and will be as non-partisan as any in the country, the interests of all voters are being considered.

As Iowans we can be proud of this system.

If you have further questions or concerns about the redistricting process, please contact your local representatives directly or contact me at Jeff.Kaufmann@legis.state.ia.us.

Jeff Kaufmann is a State Representative from Wilton and Speaker Pro Tem of the Iowa House of Representatives.

Editor's note:

As of April 19, 2011, after the drafting of this article, the Iowa Legislature has passed the first proposed plan and it has been signed into law by Governor Branstad.

Additional information on the plan, including maps, is available at: Iowa Redistricting - 2011, <<http://www.legis.iowa.gov/Resources/Redist/redistricting.aspx>>

Which of the Four Options Will Schools Use?

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physically closed and students sent to higher achieving schools, potentially including charter schools.²

Given Iowa's poor record on establishing and supporting charter schools, and the role of the Iowa State Education Association in staffing decisions, it will be interesting to see the outcome of this opportunity.

(Endnotes)

¹ "Iowa To Receive \$2.9 Million To Turn Around Its Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools," U.S. Department of Education, <<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/iowa-receive-29-million-turn-around-its-persistently-lowest-achieving-schools>>, accessed on March 28, 2011.

² "Iowa, School Improvement Grants Application, Section 103(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act," Fiscal Year 2010, <<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/summary2010/iaapp10.pdf>>, accessed on March 28, 2011.