

FACTS & OPINIONS

On Public Interest Issues

Quotes

“The first effect of not believing in God is to believe in anything.”

— G.K. Chesterton epigram (1874 - 1936) English writer, philosopher, and lay theologian

“Already in the 1950s the phrase ‘I feel that....’ was replacing ‘I think that....’ in common discourse.”

— Jacques Barzun, (1907 - 2012) *The House of Intellect*, French-American historian and author

“‘Capitalism = Ecocide’ was one sign that caught my eye, along with ‘Fracking = Death,’ ‘Consumerism is Killing the Planet,’ ‘Nature Has Condemned Greed,’ and ‘Capitalism is a Crime.’ This is the socialist moment for the sustainability movement.”

— Peter W. Wood, National Association of Scholars, commentary on the People’s Climate March, 2014

People’s Climate March: The Face of True Belief #PeoplesClimate

By Dr. William M. Briggs, Ph.D., Cornell University

Ready for a surprise? I liked everybody I met at the People’s Climate March in New York City. I mean it. I liked them so much I hated what I had to write about them.

I liked the group which wore real cabbages for headpieces, including cabbage horns. I liked the anarchists from West Virginia University who were sure the capitalist system which allowed them to go to school and come to this march had failed.

I liked the guy who said he had home-built his own electric car which could go 100 mph for 100 miles, built from lithium batteries scavenged, somehow, from Chinese submarines.

I liked the young lady who said she had played in orchestras for major movies and who gave me her CD *Plastic Bag* (one song

features what sounds like one being opened). Remarkably, I saw separately (and without foreknowledge) three of my former students, all of whom I liked — and still like.

I even liked the young man from Deep Green Resistance who was advocating, but vaguely promising not to himself participate in, but would, he said, support wholeheartedly if it occurred, “industrial sabotage” and other forms of “militant action” against “nodes” which when taken out would set off “chain-reaction events” to destroy the country.

I liked that absolutely everybody was sincere, absolutely everybody was concerned, and absolutely everybody was kind, open, and eager to talk. It was a party and people were of good cheer. I enjoyed myself.

FACTS & OPINIONS

October 2014

Volume 20, Number 4

Dr. Don Racheter, President
Deborah D. Thornton, Editor

FACTS & OPINIONS is one of our quarterly membership newsletters, arriving in January, April, July, and October. It consists of short articles of public interest with an emphasis on current issues.

FACTS & OPINIONS is published by Public Interest Institute at Iowa Wesleyan College, a nonpartisan, nonprofit, research and educational institute, whose activities are supported by contributions from private individuals, corporations, companies, and foundations. The Institute does not accept government grants.

Permission to reprint or copy in whole or part is granted, provided a version of this credit line is used: "Reprinted by permission from FACTS & OPINIONS, a quarterly newsletter of Public Interest Institute." The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Public Interest Institute.

If you have an article you believe is worth sharing, please send it to us. All or a portion of your article may be used. The articles in this publication are brought to you in the interest of a better-informed citizenry, because IDEAS DO MATTER.

A Publication of: Public Interest Institute at Iowa Wesleyan College, 600 North Jackson Street, Mount Pleasant, Iowa 52641-1328. If you wish to support our efforts, please donate by sending a check to us at the above address.

If you wish to donate by credit card, please go to our website: www.LimitedGovernment.org.

PII is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization and all contributions are tax deductible.

E-Mail: Public.Interest.Institute@LimitedGovernment.org

Phone: 319-385-3462

Fax: 319-385-3799

Copyright 2014

Belief Versus Knowledge

Importantly, absolutely everybody *believed*. Everybody *believed* that the world was in deep kimchee, and they believed it was far past the time to do anything about it, which is why they believed something should be done now. Namely eliminate capitalism, which everybody disliked. Everybody *believed* that all the Arctic ice was melting, or already had melted, and everybody believed that climate change was already killing people — 30,000 a year murdered by climate change was the figure often repeated.

Many carried signs stating what they believed. "CO₂ dumping is morally wrong," "Fracking = Death," "Limit Temperature Increase by 1.5 Degrees." A group boasted, "We can end climate change." A lady had "If you like drinking water, stop ozone slaughter." A young lady had "We have a right to snow and ice." (Tell Iowans that come December and January!)

One young man wore a t-shirt which said, "Ask me, I'm the expert on the solution." I asked him what the solution was. He only giggled.

A set of marchers carried the sign: "Climate Change is real. Teach Science." I asked one holder, "Don't all teachers teach about global warming? Do you know any who aren't?" He said, "Oh, I just got the sign today. It's probably happening, though."

There weren't only signs. There were puppets, too. The largest was meant to be, I was told, Mother Nature, but it looked more like one of those frowsy fiftyish women in muumuus. Some befeathered native shamans capered about a paper mâché god. I was told they were offering it prayers. It was a popular display because the shamans were dressed in loin cloths and dancing.

On the south side of the park sat about forty yoga people. They had a sign which read "Earth Vigil." The crowd in the parade went nuts over the yoga people. One lady shouted happily, "Oh look! They're meditating!" The Hare Krishnas who Hare-Krishna'd by looked down their noses at the yoga people. A young man said he was happy the parade was inter-faith. He was excited about inter-faith, and noted especially that, to his understanding,



Buddhism “was very sex positive, unlike Christianity” and that a lot of people came to Buddhist meetings “to meet girls.” He also attended all the good marches, including Occupy Wall Street. To pass the time he took out his soccer ball and bounced it on his knee.

Some women from the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas passed by, carrying signs demanding justice. I asked one Sister what justice meant. She wasn’t sure, and neither was her sign-mate, but she told me to talk to the Sister in charge who, they said, might confirm that “justice” meant “acting in harmony with all creation.” She didn’t answer that, but lamented that it was difficult to attend marches like this because they had to raise their own funds, “which is now harder, since we’re all getting older.”

The two keys

It might not seem like it, but the two confused sign-carrying Sisters were the key to the parade. Rather, one of the two keys. Your reporter lost count of the number of times he asked somebody what the poster they were carrying meant, or asked why they had come, but who couldn’t answer except to point and say something like, “You should ask her. I don’t really know too much about it. I just came with my friends.”

This lack of curiosity was especially found in the union marchers, who always like a public event. Union members

thought their appearance would help increase jobs and pay, and the regular people felt it was an excuse to have a good time. It’s not that all these folks didn’t believe in “the cause,” but that they couldn’t or didn’t want to articulate it. Marching was just the thing to do.

The second and larger key was more depressing, best illustrated by the group representing Physicians for Social Responsibility, a group which had initially been against nuclear weapons, but seeing as that threat dwindled, and that the docs were unwilling to disband, they cast their eye towards global warming.

This was a group of scientists, so surely they would understand how science worked. I asked them how did they answer critics who showed that global temperatures for the last eighteen or so years bounced around a little, but showed no increase. Didn’t that mean global warming wasn’t true?

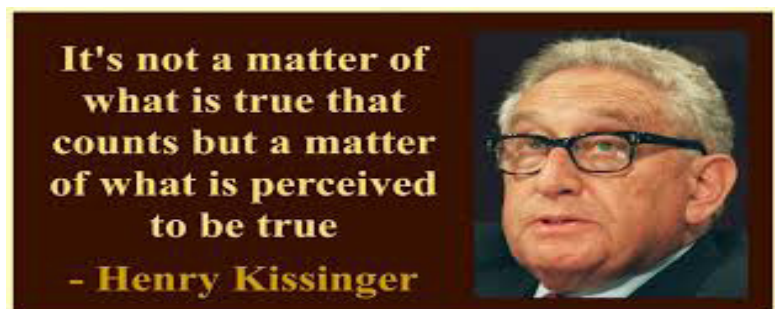
“It’s a temporary blip” said one. Another said, “A lot of the heat is in the ocean.” I reminded this doctor that the global climate models claimed to incorporate ocean circulation, and so if the models the IPCC

relied on missed saying the heat was in the oceans, the models must be wrong. So why did he still believe? He considered my question, but didn’t answer.

I asked him, as I asked many people, “Actually, for more than two decades, the models have been saying the temperatures would be way up here, but they haven’t increased at all, or only by a little. Doesn’t this mean we shouldn’t believe the models? That they are in error? Isn’t that the scientific way?” The doctor narrowed his eyes, now full of suspicion, and considered who I might be. He said nothing, even after a follow-up question.

I never from anybody received an answer to any of these science questions. If anybody ever understood me, and most did not, the questions were beside the point. It didn’t matter what the science really said. These people *believed*. *And that is the danger.*

Dr. William M. Briggs is Adjunct Professor of Statistics at Cornell University. He holds an M.S. in Atmospheric Science and a Ph.D. in Statistics. He can be reached at wmbiggs.com. Originally published September 22, 2014. Reprinted with author’s permission.



To continue our publications, Public Interest Institute relies on the support of our readers. Please use the enclosed page to help us continue our work.

We Can Do It Better — Scotland and the West Parallels

By Marita Noon, Executive Director, Energy Makes America Great, Inc.

Even though they were disappointed with the outcome, Scotland's vote on the referendum for independence energized separatists' movements within the U.K., Europe, and the U.S. While Scotland voted "No," the vote caused enough concern in London, that, in effect, it won anyway.

Before the first vote was cast, the Scottish National Party had forced the British government to promise Scotland more control over its affairs. One of the major complaints of the independence campaigners: a government closest to the people makes better decisions than one far away — in the case

of Scotland, that government is in London.

But, the story in Scotland had another — less-reported — element: energy resources.

About 90 percent of the U.K.'s oil comes from Scotland and the oil-and-gas industry is the largest corporate taxpayer in Britain — but Scotland doesn't collect that tax. Taxes are collected and paid into the Treasury's coffers in London, which, then, spreads it around and gives some of it back to Scotland. Supporters of an independent Scotland believe it is being held back from its full economic potential.

Like Scotland, the excessive

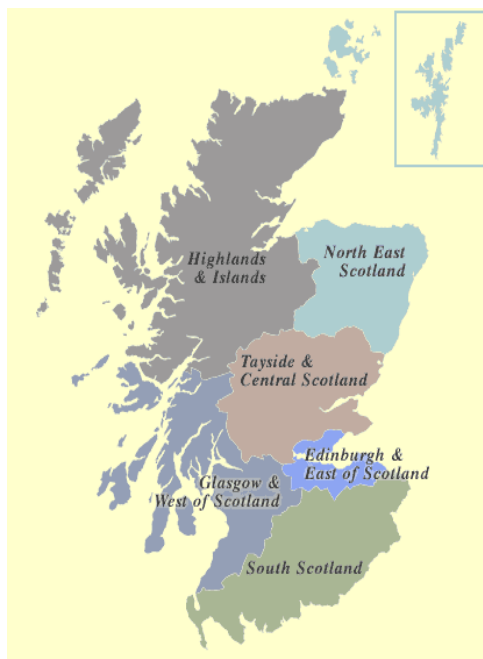
federal control of land and resources in the West is the root of a brewing rebellion.

The federal government makes decisions far away, in Washington, D.C., that hold back economic potential, which would benefit the states if they were allowed to be creating jobs and new wealth — resulting in an increased tax base.

As was the case in Scotland, Washington, D.C., has different priorities. If western states had more authority over the lands within their borders, they'd make better decisions.

The federal government abuses its ability to declare national monuments by putting massive swaths of land out of productive use. It is doing the same with the Endangered Species Act: introducing predators into active ranching regions and using protecting a lizard to prevent oil-and-gas drilling. It claims to be saving a potential owl habitat by stopping logging, resulting in overgrown, unhealthy tinderboxes where logging resources frequently go up in smoke. I could go on, as there are many more examples, but these are some of the

continued on page 8



Raising Minimum Wage Impact: Employee Hours Worked Could Be Reduced

By Dr. Ernie Goss, Creighton University

The current popular rant among many non-economists is that opposition to raising the minimum wage is equivalent to opposition to worker rights.

Those who are more intellectually curious will find there is no theoretical basis for this conclusion and empirical studies have come down on both sides of the argument — i.e. increasing the minimum wage is beneficial to workers, or boosting the minimum wage is harmful to workers.

Total wages in a state are the product of the number of hours worked and the hourly wage rate. Raising the minimum wage may diminish the number of hours worked to the point that total state wages shrink instead of expanding.

There are currently 23 U.S. states and Washington, D.C., that have a minimum wage above the federal level, and 27 states with a minimum wage that is at or below the federal minimum hourly wage of \$7.25. Since the beginning of the economic recovery in 2009 extending through 2013, the states with minimum wages above the federal level, compared to states with minimum wages at

or below the federal minimum, experienced, on average: 3.1 percent lower gross domestic product growth (GDP), 0.3 percent lower job growth, and 0.2 percent higher welfare payments.

On the other hand, these same high minimum wage states experienced a 0.4 percent lower increase in the median poverty rate than states with minimum wages at or below \$7.25.

Furthermore, Washington, the state with the highest minimum wage in the nation at \$9.32, underperformed the 27 low minimum wage states in GDP and job growth during

the recovery period, but did experience a slower growth in its poverty rate.

This analysis is certainly not definitive and does not control for other important factors influencing a state's economy. But it does at least question the popular notion, or "accepted science," that raising the minimum wage is necessarily a winner for the state economy.

Read more articles on Professor Goss' blog Economic Trends. Published September 22, 2014. Reprinted with author's permission.



All of our publications,
including
FACTS & OPINIONS,
are available for
sponsorship. Sponsoring a
publication is an excellent
way for you to show your
support of our efforts
to defend liberty and
define the proper role of
government.

For more information,
please contact PII at
319-385-3462 or
PublicInterest.Institute@
LimitedGovernment.org.

Lean Together, Not Apart

By the Independent Women's Forum

The Independent Women's Forum (IWF) released its newest book *LEAN TOGETHER: An Agenda For Smarter Government, Stronger Communities, and More Opportunity For Women* on September 1.

LEAN TOGETHER is 12 chapters, all written by female authors, and uncovers the issues and policy reforms that can move us in a positive direction towards thriving American communities.

The authors of LEAN TOGETHER include Sabrina Schaeffer, Executive Director, and Carrie Lukas, Managing Director of IWF, who are both committed to taking another look at government and its role in our lives, as well as encouraging women to be leaders in their lives, their communities, and our nation.

For too long progressives in Washington have put forth a picture of America in which government is the solution to every problem, where a nanny state dictates our children's lunches, provides one-size-fits-all health care, controls our education, and even determines what kinds of light bulbs we use. We've not only lost sight of what a healthy society looks like, but also forgotten that government is not the only – or even the best – solution to society's ills.

No society or government are perfect, but LEAN TOGETHER proves that we can certainly do better than we are today.

LEAN TOGETHER presents a better vision for America: Smaller government, stronger communities, a vibrant economy, and more opportunity for women and men alike. It covers a wide range of issues from childcare and early childhood education, to the workplace, food and agriculture policy, health care, poverty, technology, and more.

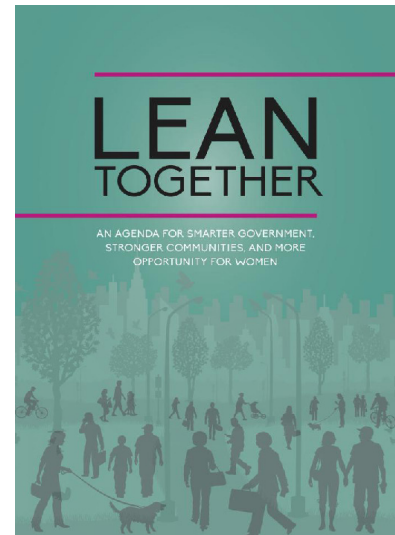
LEAN TOGETHER puts forth a positive agenda in which republican ideals of limited government, virtue, and self-improvement are re-imagined. It offers concrete policy solutions to challenges that face our country and especially women and their families that will rein in the progressive state, streamline government, and strengthen our economy.

The IWF doesn't believe in a go-it-alone society. That's why LEAN TOGETHER calls upon Americans – women and men alike – to join in making changes to ensure our communities provide greater opportunity and the potential for fulfillment, and to help us restore the idea that more freedom – not more government – is what will create true health, security, prosperity,

and ultimately happiness. Contrary to what many progressives today would have you believe, government alone doesn't create changes. Individuals and communities shape the world we live in and individuals create changes.

LEAN TOGETHER authors cover the issues and policy reforms that can move us in a positive direction towards thriving American communities. They include concrete steps for how our policymakers can institute practical changes in order to bring us in the right direction.

Reprinted with permission of the Independent Women's Forum, originally published September 1, 2014.



**Call 319-385-3462
for more information on
the Public Interest Institute**

Do You Wish Your Country and Community Offered:

- ✓ A community that is safe & engaged, where people talk to each other and are there to help each other out in time of need?
- ✓ Plentiful job opportunities for everyone in your family, so that you can find a position that best uses your skills and gives you flexibility to be with your children or pursue other interests?
- ✓ Great educational opportunities and good schools that meet your family's needs as well as those of your neighbors?
- ✓ A robust marketplace, so you can access a wide variety of products and foods from around the world at prices you can afford?
- ✓ A culture that respects both women and men, girls and boys, and encourages the development of healthy relationships and self-images that are the basis for a happy life?
- ✓ A health-care system that works so that your family can get the care you need from trusted doctors at a price you can afford?
- ✓ A dependable and accessible safety net so those who are truly in need get the help they need to get back on their feet?
- ✓ A vibrant civil society, where community organizations, charities, and houses of worship can enrich our lives through volunteer opportunities, services, and religious activities?

Source: *Independent Women's Foundation*, <<http://inf.org/files/LEAN-TOGETHER-PRESS-KIT.pdf>>, September 1, 2014.

What's New at PII?

New policy studies published last month include #14-4: *A Citizen's Introduction to Federalism: Federalism and the Future of Constitutional Government* by Research Analyst John Hendrickson, and #14-5: Terry Moe's *Special Interest: Teachers Unions and America's Public Schools* book summary by Vice President Amy Frantz.

Research Analyst Deborah Thornton authored #14-3 *Geothermal Energy: Important Potential in the U.S. and Iowa* in August.

The September issue of *LIMITS* featured "Middle-Out' Economics," by Richard Epstein, and "Politics on the Bench – Iowa and Beyond," by Roger Pilon.

Iowa Wesleyan College Update

The Commission on the Future of Wesleyan is a strategic planning process that encourages us to step out of our day-to-day routines and discuss and focus on the future. We are creating a shared vision and goals and identifying priorities for our campus. We are using data to inform our discussions and decisions and recognize the financial impact of the choices we are making. We will develop the action plans that are needed to ensure that the college will continue to serve our students and our region well into the future.

The main goal for the third phase, November – December 2014, is to identify and develop dominant strategic themes from the planning exercises and data gathering and engagement phase. Those discussions will have generated a tremendous amount of data regarding stakeholders'

perceptions. The Commission, after a thorough review and analysis of the data, will identify five to ten strategic priorities and write concept papers that will inform stakeholders about those issues and their importance.

The concept papers will be brief and focus on facts without lobbying for a particular viewpoint. Topical areas contained in a concept paper may include historical context, regional or national trends, stakeholders' perceptions of the issue, strategic goals, and short- and long-term tasks.

Source: *Iowa Wesleyan College*, <<http://www.iwc.edu/commission/index.html>>, September 30, 2014.



**Public Interest Institute
at Iowa Wesleyan College
600 North Jackson Street
Mount Pleasant, IA 52641-1328**

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MAILED FROM ZIP CODE 52761
PERMIT NO. 338

continued from page 4

causes in which I've personally been involved and previously addressed.

Much like Scotland finally had enough of being under the thumb of British rule, the Bundy Ranch story — with total strangers converging in Nevada in defense of a rancher they'd never met — gave voice to an anger that has been building up in the West. Of all the western states, Nevada has the most federally managed land — more than 80 percent.

Utah has led the way by becoming the first state to pass legislation that calls on the federal government to begin to work with them on transferring federal lands to the state — as

was the ultimate intent of the Enabling Act that called for the federal government to “dispose” of the lands. More than 60 percent of Utah's lands are managed by the federal government, and those lands are often rich in natural resources.

The movement is growing. Several states, like Nevada, have created task forces to study issues surrounding how public lands controlled by the federal government would be managed if they were transferred to the state. Others, like New Mexico, are working on legislation and resolutions.

The leaders are pushing for victory. But, even if, as happened in Scotland, the self-governance of federal lands doesn't happen, a groundswell

of support could bring about policy changes that would benefit the West.

Let your state and federal elected officials know that you support state management of public lands and that you want decisions made at the local level — because we can do it better.

The author of Energy Freedom, Marita Noon, is Executive Director for Energy Makes America Great Inc. and the Citizens' Alliance for Responsible Energy (CARE). Together they work to educate the public and influence policy makers regarding energy, its role in freedom, and the American way of life. Originally published September 23, 2014. Reprinted with author's permission.